The frustration-aggression hypothesis: analysis and critique

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The central field of sociology is the study of social interaction. The sociologist is interested in human behavior as it is manifested in the social situation. He is interested in how people behave in groups: how they interact, how they arrange themselves in society, how they compete with each other, and how they cooperate with each other. Technically the sociologist likes to study the interaction between as few as two individuals, whether their interaction is momentary or permanent. He concentrates, however, on more nearly permanent groupings of individuals, from the smallest monogamous family up to the total world community.

The study of social man, in the broadest sense, describes the field of all the social sciences. For this reason it is difficult to draw a sharp line of division between the field of sociology and that of any of the other social sciences. In an effort to orient toward the problem to be considered in this paper, therefore, social interaction will be regarded as the primary focus of sociology.

Social interactions tend to become systematised, to form into definite patterns which are to be followed in contact situations between individuals or groups. The medium through which such patterns of social interaction are expressed is referred to as culture. Culture may be defined as the total system of values, attitudes, customs, techniques, symbols, tools, and artifacts by which a given group lives.¹ The culture has no meaningful existence of its own; it is culture only as it is borne in the minds of the individuals who share it. It lasts longer than any member of the group, because it is transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation by a continual process of social interaction. Social interaction need not be direct contact between two or more individuals; it may also be symbolic, carried on through the many cultural communicative devices.²

The infant born into the group finds a large part of his total needs and problems solved before him, and as he grows and participates in the culture of his group he is guided closely by habitual ways of doing things which have been building up since the group was first formed. The infant comes into the world with animal capacities and needs; the culture shows him how to utilize his capacities to satisfy his needs. The culture gives him additional needs, also, in the form of acquired drives, i.e., specific motives, values, morals, conscience, and the like. His basic needs — such as for food, drink, sex, etc. — are directed and modified, insofar as the form of satisfaction is concerned.


by the culture. It is through culture that society makes the social man from the animal man, and it is through culture that social man is enabled to function successfully in his group and the natural environment, and to meet his needs, basic and acquired. In this paper the needs and drives with which the human being is equipped innately will be referred to as his acquired needs.\(^1\) Without pursuing the matter, it should be understood that acquired needs are fully as real to the social man as basic needs, and they may have an insistence much greater than the basic needs.

If group life is to effectively meet human needs, it is necessary that men have some means by which their many contacts with each other can be made smooth. As has been said, culture performs this function. Thus, when two men in American society meet, they shake hands, speak a certain habitual set of greetings in the English language, "pass the time of day", conduct their business, or do whatever the occasion calls for, all in a set pattern. For the great majority of contacts the culture provides such a pattern of conduct, enabling the individuals to function in the interactive process with a minimum of doubt and uncertainty. Because of these patterns, the normal individual may predict with a high degree of accuracy what the response of another individual will be when the two interact.

The sociologist, in studying social groups, does not regard a social group as an organic entity distinguishable from its members. He finds, however, that each group is differentiated from each other group, that its members behave as members of their own group rather than as members

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\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 227-234; Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York, 1936), pp. 69-79.
of their own group rather than as members of another group. They have a feeling of esprit de corps, of belonging together. They tend to regard themselves as members of the in-group and to consider everyone else as part of the out-group.¹ Many social groups are composed of a number of smaller groups built on innumerable criteria: family, clan, race, religion, politics, interests, and the like. Thus in any large group of this sort there are a series of group interactions which obtain between it and other groups.

Although it is plain that the group itself cannot interact with another group, the same effect is obtained when a member of one group interacts with a member of another group. Each, in such a case, tends to represent his entire group to the other. The individual, regardless of individual differences or characteristics, is identified, both by himself and by the individual with whom he is interacting, with his group. In this process it is useful to use the term "stereotype"²—the ascription of qualities, often unreal and oversimplified, to a thing (in our problem a social group) when true knowledge is lacking or ignored. Stereotyped expectations of behavior form a large part of the mechanisms through which social interactions are patterned, even though they may be based on mutual ignorance.

Whether the process of using stereotypes to identify automatically

a member of another group, even when the stereotypes are based upon false conceptions, is "right" or "wrong" in terms of ethical consideration, the process has value for the sociologist. It gives, in effect, a form of group interaction, and is a large factor in determining what group relations really are. For example, two members of such groups as the Negro and the white do not interact as Tom Jones and Sam Brown, but as Negro and white. It can be seen that in almost any interaction between members of different groups there is an element of identifying the individual with his group and the use of stereotypes.

This process has been elaborated to complex proportions by society in many cases. Interactions between members of different castes in India for example, are governed almost completely by patterns based on the process of identification as we use it here. In the caste hierarchy that has developed, members of one caste may even pollute members of another caste by approaching within a certain distance.¹ Social classes in the United States have elements of stereotyping, although the possibility of class mobility allows some individuals to move from class to class and somewhat weaken the usefulness of stereotypes. It is clear, however, that this is the usual means by which group interaction is performed through the individual member of the group involved.

The United States, if looked at as a whole, appears as a symbiotic integral of a vast number of groups of different sorts. Thus there are the Negro, the white, the Jew, the Japanese-American, the Republican

¹Govind Sadashiv Ghurye, Caste and Race in India (New York, 1932), pp. 1-27.
the Democrat, the Protestant, the Catholic, the Mason, the New Yorker, the Georgian, and so on ad infinitum. All of these groups exist together in symbiotic relationships to form a huge state which is loosely knit in some respects, but is strongly nationalistic and closely knit in others. The North and the South may wrangle and struggle in domestic competition, but each is at the same time part of the same large in-group in interaction with a foreign nation. The relations between the groups which compose the United States are legally unified—continued conflict of a violent nature is manifestly impossible as long as the larger group exists as such—and each has adjusted to the others in some degree and fashion. The patterns of interaction between any two of the groups differ in respects from those between any other two.

The main interest in this paper is the system of interaction between whites and Negroes in a specific part of the American South. There are two of the largest and most important groups in the nation, and exemplify types of interaction and adjustment that are of great interest to the sociologist. It is necessary that a more careful observation be made of the total American picture, however, before Negro-white interactions per se can be considered. The problem has little meaning except insofar as it is considered in the total social context.

The American ideal is a fundamental part of the whole value system of American culture.¹ Using the "ethos"² of a culture as the prevailing system of values and attitudes which make that culture unique and


²As L. Kroeber, op. cit., pp. 293-295.
distinct from any other culture, the American Ideal may be regarded as the ethos of American culture. It permeates the entire culture. It is exemplified and adhered to in the idea structure of all the major institutions: familial, governmental, religious, and economic.

"The home of the brave and the land of the free", "John Q. Public", "the four freedoms", "the American way of life", and similar well-known statements and phrases characterize the American Ideal. Theoretically, each individual born in the United States may become President if he so aspires. Americans have to a large degree denied the existence or the possibility of class structure or any sort of restriction upon social mobility in our ethos. The American form of government is revered as the ultimate in guaranteeing freedom for the individual to realize his fullest potentialities. The typical American is characterized as being the most independent, self-reliant individual in the world.

This American Ideal is, in terms of Linton’s classification of cultural elements, a universal trait in American culture.¹ It is shared by almost every individual. It is taught in American schools and formal systems of education; it is constantly reiterated in media of communication - newspapers, books, magazines, movies, speeches, etc. - and it is safe to say that belief in the Ideal is transmitted, formally or informally as an integral part of the American culture to every participant in the culture.

Every American has a potential chance to make a fortune by his own

¹Ralph Linton, op. cit., p. 272.
skill or business ability. His chief purpose in life is to strive toward the goal of material wealth in terms of money and conveniences, and toward the power and prestige brought, in the minds of most Americans, mainly by wealth. The individual in American society, in short, can look forward to wealth, power, political prestige, freedom of religion, or almost anything that he desires, if he is willing to work for it and if he has the ability to attain it in free competition, according to the American Ideal.

An ideal is, of course, a condition that exists only theoretically. It is what the people adhering to it would like to see, and toward which they work, even though it may be virtually impossible to attain. Every American realizes, for example, that the chances of his becoming President are almost infinitesimal, and the vast majority of Americans do not set the White House up as their ultimate goal. The Constitution, however, states the qualifications for President in such a way that the only persons actually excluded are those under a certain age and those who are not born in this country. In practice there are many groups of people, theoretically qualified, who know that it is impossible for them to become President: Negroes, women, Jews, Catholics, etc. The specific goal, however, is not important for the purpose of this paper. The main interest is in investigation effects, if any, upon groups who, in practice, are automatically restricted in working toward the attainment of the American Ideal. Even though the individual may not attempt directly to reach such a goal as President or millionaire status, knowing that it is such a difficult task, there is still the possibility that he may feel that he is being restricted if he is told, explicitly or implicitly, that he cannot hope to attain the goal because of color,
sex, race or the like, when according to the American Ideal, which he supposedly shares, he could. The Constitution of the United States, expressing the American Ideal, would permit a woman to become President; a woman, however, knows that in actual practice her sex prevents her from attaining the goal. Thus, even though she may have little or no political ambitions, she may perhaps resent the situation which, notwithstanding the Constitution and the American ethos in which she is taught to believe, denies her the participation which she might otherwise have.

More pertinent for present purposes is the position of the Negro in the United States. The Negro is a group, separate from other racial and ethnic groups in the nation, set off from these other groups by stereotypes of color, speech, mannerisms, and the like. The cleavage between the Negro group and the white group is sharp enough to amount to a system of caste, particularly in the American South. Warner\(^1\) conceives of the Negro-white group differentiation as a system of two castes, each of which is stratified into classes; the white caste is dominant over the Negro. He justifies the use of the concept of caste in this situation by setting forth endogamy and barriers preventing the social mobility between the two groups as the two essential features of caste, pointing to the fact that inter-group marriage and social mobility is possible in a class society but not in a caste. Thus Negro-white intermarriage is not sanctioned in the American South.

actually it is disapproved in almost all the United States. "Social equality", likewise, is not permitted, and members of the white caste have sufficient solidarity to maintain that even an upper class Negro is "socially" inferior to any class white. There are indications that the caste line is being weakened at spots — many previously prohibited forms of social interaction between Negroes and whites are now allowed in practice — but it seems that for purposes of argument the caste distinction may be used legitimately.

The caste system, as mentioned above, is an extreme method of differentiating two groups which are in frequent contact. Dollard\(^1\) gives a good discussion of the methods of marking off one caste from the other in his study of Southerntown. Charles S. Johnson has provided excellent descriptions of the patterns of caste differentiation and segregation in several works. The Negro is an American; the white is an American; they are part of the same in-group or "we-group" in interaction with a foreign nation; but in relations between these two groups any Negro is definitely a member of the outgroup to any white, and vice versa. The whole system of segregation and racial etiquette is based upon this two-group division and serves to differentiate the two groups. There is little need to describe the patterns of segregation — they differ in detail in different parts of the country, are stronger in some than in others, and are so well treated in numerous works that it would be a

\(^{1}\)John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (New York, 1948 2nd Edition).
waste of time to consider them here. 1

Any American southerner is well versed in the many details of racial etiquette for his locale. The average white resident of the South, for example, is born into a culture containing patterns of race relations which lead him to feel that a Negro is inferior to him, that Negroes are not to go to school with whites, that Negroes are not to eat with whites, that physical contact with Negroes must be avoided in most situations, that he is not to address a Negro as "Mr." or "Mrs.", etc. The Negro in the South, too, has knowledge of these same details of etiquette, albeit from a different point of view. 2

The broad picture of the interactive positions of the Negro and the white in the United States, and particularly in the South, is primarily one of group accommodation. Many have seen slavery as the system by which the two races were originally accommodated, with the share crop and tenant practices, segregation, and the whole network of race relations simply substituting for slavery when it was abolished. 3 Accommodation involves superordination (the white) and subordination (the Negro), and seems to be characteristic of a caste structure such as is ascribed to the South.

Before moving further along, perhaps it should be reiterated that

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1 Charles S. Johnson, Patterns of Negro Segregation (New York, 1943, 3rd Edition); Bertram Wilbur Doyle, The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South (Chicago, 1937); Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma.

2 Bertram Wilbur Doyle, The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South (Chicago, 1937).

group interactions, such as are exemplified by Negroes and whites, are not confined to these two groups. Situations that share many common elements are in existence in all parts of the nation. Jews and Gentiles, similarly, are formed into two groups the interactions between which have some features in common with Negro-white interactions.\(^1\) Attention here is focused upon Negro-white interactions, but it should not be inferred that these are widely different or more important than many others, in terms of sociological principles.

A nearer approach may now be made to the problem of this paper: what are some of the effects upon the behavior of Negroes of the interactive process between them and the white group in the light of their common participation in the American ethos? The American Ideal denies the possibility of an inferior caste or group, yet the caste pattern of interaction seems to refute the ethos in practice. It would seem that there is a good possibility that the Negro, held in the subordinate position, is the scene of clashes between these conflicting elements of the culture. It is the Negro who is barred from actual participation as the Ideal provides, so that there are some grounds for assuming that he may show a tendency to react against the barriers that restrict him.\(^2\)

Neither sociology, nor other sciences, can draw verifiable conclusions by mere random observation or theorizing. It must, if it is to

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be classified among the sciences, use the scientific method of systematically observing the phenomena that bear upon the problem under consideration, from which it may form, by a process of logic, a hypothesis that fits the facts. The hypothesis must be tested and retested by experiment and observation before it can be of value for prediction to the scientist.\(^1\) In this paper, as indicated above, the problem of Negro behavior in the caste system of interaction will be considered. The full course of the scientific method—to a definitive testing of an hypothesis—will not be followed. Several things of value to a full use of the scientific method will be done, however: a hypothesis will be stated, a preliminary application of this hypothesis will be made to test the "fit" of it to the observed facts, and suggestions for further testing of a more operational nature will be made. Only through operational procedures may the development of a law of frustration and aggression—the hypothesis to be used here—be achieved.

The hypothesis of frustration and aggression is not a new one. It is the result of the efforts of a group of social scientists to explain phenomena of human behavior and motivation. In the chapter which follows, this hypothesis, as it has been stated and criticized by psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists, will be investigated, together with a review of tests made of it in actual situations of group interaction.

CHAPTER II

THE FRUSTRATION - AGGRESSION HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis to be considered for use in investigating Negro behavior in the Southern "caste" situation is that based on frustration and aggression. Only recently have there been systematic attempts to derive any sort of an hypothesis of human motivation and behavior from the concept of frustration, and even the foremost workers in the area would agree that the work done so far is of tentative nature. A complete hypothesis has as yet not been formulated, although there has been some very good work done both in laboratory experimentation and in theoretical consideration of various aspects of frustration. Much remains to be done in formulation of a more nearly complete hypothetical framework and testing this by experiment and observation.

In this paper primary emphasis lies in extracting some of the principles of frustration theory that are most applicable to the group situation so that they may be examined in the light of observed data. The task is somewhat simplified by the fact that one of the most active groups working in the field of frustration and reactions to frustration, that at the Yale University Institute of Human Relations, has published a fairly comprehensive hypothesis, which, although it has been criticized as being inadequate in some respects, represents the broadest theoretical attempt to date. This book, Frustration and Aggression, will constitute

\[1\] John Dollard, and others, Frustration and Aggression (New Haven, Connecticut, 1939).
a groundwork upon which may be critically reviewed other works that deal
with phases of the same concept. The most suitable plan would seem to
be to consider systematically the hypothesis as presented in the book in
an attempt to show how it may be applied to the Negro-white situation,
bringing in criticisms, modifications, and further views by other social
scientists at the appropriate places. It would be impossible in an effect
of the scope provided by this paper to manipulate adequately all of the
ramifications of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, but at least
reference will be made to criticisms, refinements, and conflicting hy-
potheses through a liberal use of footnotes.

The authors preface their hypothesis by defining several basic terms
specifically for use in the development of the hypothesis, and although
these may differ slightly from similar definitions by other scholars,
they will be used in order to be consistent.

The first factor to be considered in studying a situation of frus-
tration is that of "instigation". "An instigator is some antecedent
condition of which the predicted response is the consequence." An
instigation can be a directly observable object which causes the in-
dividual to desire to reach a specific goal, or it may be an internal
condition which is inferred by the behavior of the individual. Since
in many cases several instigators to a certain response may operate
simultaneously, instigation must be considered as a quantitative con-
cept which should be measured.

1 John Dollard, and others, op. cit., p. 3.
The instigator sets in motion, if it has the requisite strength, a behavior sequence which is terminated by a "goal-response". "The goal-response may be defined as that reaction which reduces the strength of instigation to a degree at which it no longer has as much of a tendency to produce the predicted behavior sequence."\(^1\) "An interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence is called a 'frustration'."\(^2\) Two conditions must exist in order to produce a situation of frustration: (1) the organism could have been expected to perform certain acts, and (2) these acts have been prevented from occurring.\(^3\)

There are, therefore, three factors as the basis for the hypothesis; the instigation, the goal-response, and the frustration. The normal completion of the behavior sequence and the achievement of the goal-response are not of interest for present purposes: attention is centered on what will happen when the behavior sequence is interrupted before it is terminated by goal-response.

The authors begin with the basic postulate that "... the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggressive behavior."\(^4\) Two years

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 6.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 7.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 7.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 1.
after the publication of the original hypothesis, however, this statement was retracted and revised to "Frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression."1 According to this statement, there is thus a hierarchy of instigations to responses to frustration, with the position of the instigation to aggression varying with a number of factors, such as individual experience, strength of frustration, cultural patterning, etc. The various instigations may be to a number of different types of goal-response, covering types of behavior ranging from constructive attempts to remove, avoid, or compensate for the frustrating object to severe psychological and social maladjustments. There have been numerous classifications of reaction to frustrations, classifying both the types of behavioral response and the mechanisms through which these responses may be expressed. Rosenzweig, for instance, has done some of the most definitive work in the field. He categorizes six main types of frustration situations and advances a concept of frustration tolerance based on certain factors in the life experience of the individual. He describes four categories of reaction to frustration: (1) Adequate and inadequate, (2) direct and indirect, (3) defensive and perseverative, and (4) specific and non-specific; these are based, of course, on different frames of reference for looking at frustration responses. The third category is also called ego-defensive and need

1Neal E. Miller, and others, "The Frustration-aggression hypothesis," Psychological Review, XXXVIII (July, 1941), 337-342.
persistence; the former can be expressed through extrapunitive, intro-
punitive, or impunitive mechanisms, while the latter, particularly in-
direct perseverative, cover many types of substitute responses.1

Ellsworth Faris lists and describes sixteen results of frustration, based on case studies of college students: (1) daydreaming; (2) delusion; (3) substitution; (4) sublimation; (5) devaluation; (6) projection; (7) suppression; (8) regression; (9) abandonment; (10) obsession; (11) resignation; (12) despair; (13) suicide; (14) rage, fury; (15) hysteria; and (16) aggression.2 The authors largely ignore the many possible responses to frustration by concentrating on aggression in its several forms of expression. Similarly, here only aggressive responses to frustration will be considered, but it should be stated that this is not meant to attribute exclusive importance or prevalence to aggressive behavior as a frustration response.

S. Stansfeld Sargent3 sees the frustration sequence as frustrated motive-emotion-mechanism-overt behavior. He fails to classify any general types of response to frustration, but rather sees these as variables according to the previous stages in the sequence, assuming a large number of different forms.

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1Saul Rosenzweig, "A General Outline of Frustration," Character and Personality, VII (September, 1938), 151-160.


Robert S. Sears carries the work set forth in Frustration and Aggression farther by saying that instigation to aggression is only one response to frustration and that the individual has three other major ways to behave: (1) he may continue the same instrumental acts toward the same goal-response; (2) he may perform different instrumental acts toward the same goal-response; or (3) he may perform different instrumental acts toward a different goal-response. This latter behavior would include regression, sublimation, and substitute responses.¹

Aggression is defined in two ways in Frustration and Aggression according to its relation to frustration: dependently and independently. The dependent definition of aggression is "that response which follows frustration, reduces only the secondary, frustration-produced instigation, and leaves the strength of the original instigation unaffected." It is independently defined as "an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism (or organism-surrogate)."² It should be emphasized that by definition, an aggressive response, whether or not expressed, has no effect on the strength of the original, frustrated instigation; it is assumed, moreover, that the instigation to aggression will build up again if the original frustration persists.³

In studying aggressive behavior resulting from frustration, the

²John Dollard, and others, op. cit., p. 11.
³Ibid., p. 50.
ultimate problem would seem to be the prediction of when and under what conditions aggression will occur. A number of factors must be taken into account, and it is in an attack on this problem that the authors of *Frustration and Aggression* make their broadest systematic contribution. With warnings that the data used are not adequate for "proof" or validation of the hypothesis — that they are merely suggestive — the authors proceed to derive seven postulates, stated in as near a quantitative fashion as possible. The problem here can best be attacked by considering these postulates, together with their implications for sociological application. The data to be used in this paper are not adequate to confirm or deny the validity of all the postulates, but it is hoped that they may serve to throw some further light upon them.

Before proceeding further, it seems appropriate to specify more clearly the definition of aggression. The authors' independent definition, that of "an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism (or organism-surrrogate)" will be used. It is felt that behavior which does have as its end result injury (in many forms, of course) to an organism or organism-surrogate is actually dependent upon the existence of frustration. Accidental actions which may seem to be aggressive will be excluded from the concept, except for those which may be shown to result from an instigation to injure. The distinction between indirect aggression and substitute behavior, although operationally specified by the authors, becomes obscure in many forms of behavior.

\[1\text{Ibid., p. 9.}\]
particularly in sublimations and displaced forms of aggression; an attempt will be made to adhere closely to the authors' distinction by applying the definition of aggression as rigorously as possible without losing its qualities of generality.

The seven basic postulates presented in Frustration and Aggression may now be considered; at this point little more will be done than to state them and discuss them very briefly, since the main discussion and use of them will follow as the materials are presented in a later chapter.

"The strength of instigation to aggression varies directly with the amount of frustration. Variation in the amount of frustration is a function of three factors: (1) strength of instigation to the frustrated response, (2) degree of interference with the frustrated response, and (3) the number of response sequences frustrated."¹ Each of the three factors influencing the amount of frustration, it must be noted, is a complex cluster of variable factors, and each of the three appears to be interrelated with the others. Thus, in investigating any frustration it will be necessary to probe as deeply as possible into the antecedent conditions in order to have some idea of how the quantification of aggression is achieved.

"The inhibition of any act of aggression varies directly with the strength of the punishment anticipated for the expression of that act. Punishment includes injury to loved objects and failure to carry out an

¹Ibid., p. 37.
instigated act as well as the usual situations which produce pain."¹

Thus, the second variable in the expression of aggression behavior is amount of inhibition; thus, according to the postulate, is positively correlated with the amount of punishment anticipated. The amount of punishment anticipated, however, is itself (as in the case of frustration) dependent upon a number of factors. It is felt that here, too, however, some degree of quantification can be achieved.

"In general it may be said that, with the strength of frustration held constant, the greater the anticipation of punishment for a given act of aggression, the less apt that act is to occur; and secondly, with anticipation of punishment held constant, the greater the strength of the frustration, the more apt aggression is to occur."² This, then, is the stated functional relationship between the strength of instigation to aggression, amount of punishment-anticipation, and amount of frustration. The expression of aggression varies directly with the amount of frustration, and inversely with the amount of punishment-anticipation.

The next four of the postulates deal with the direction of aggression. It is basic to the hypothesis that frustration may produce instigation to aggression, but since the expression of this instigated aggression is frequently inhibited, it must be decided in what substitute manner or toward what substitute object the aggression will be expressed.

¹Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²Ibid., p. 38.
"The strongest instigation aroused by a frustration is to acts of aggression directed against the agent perceived to be the sources of the frustration, and progressively weaker instigations are aroused to progressively less direct acts of aggression."\(^1\) This postulate, although simply stated, points up the definition of aggression: how direct must an act be against an organism or organism-surrogate before it can be shown to be aggression? This question is brought forth even more specifically in the next postulate:

"The inhibition of acts of direct aggression is an additional frustration which instigates aggression against the agent perceived to be responsible for this inhibition and increases the instigation to other forms of aggression. There is, consequently, a strong tendency for inhibited aggression to be displaced to different objects and expressed in modified forms. Socially approved modifications are called sublimations."\(^2\) It can be perceived that this postulate brings out the necessity of applying the definition specifically enough so that, in the case of aggression, it may be shown that there is "injury to an organism (or organism-surrogate)" intended. Too strict an application may neglect certain types of behavior which, in the fuller implications of the hypothesis, are actually aggressions, but the scope must be limited in order to be somewhat operational and "scientific".

Since self-punishment is necessarily involved, aggression turned

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 53.
against the self must overcome a certain amount of inhibition and therefore tends not to occur unless other forms of expression are even more strongly inhibited. If the amount of inhibition of various acts of aggression is held relatively constant, the tendency to self-aggression is stronger both when the individual believes himself, rather than an external agent, to be responsible for the original frustration and when direct aggression is restrained by the self rather than by an external agent.¹ Clearly aggression directed against the self will be difficult to analyze in some situations without some type of depth testing techniques; self-aggression and self-inhibition cannot be readily observed as can many aggressions toward external objects. Probably more progress has been made in studying self-aggression objectively by Rosenzweig.² His concept of "intropunitive" aggression as a mechanism which the individual may use in frustrating situations is applicable to this connection. Through his picture-Frustration technique, it can be seen that some individuals tend rather consistently to blame themselves for frustrating situations, and it would seem logical to assume that these individuals would resort to self-aggression more often than those who do not so frequently react intropunitive. In addition, the Picture Frustration technique offers some promise in determining what types of situations may call forth self-aggression rather than aggression against

¹Ibid., p. 55.

²Saul Rosenzweig, "The Picture-Association Method and its Application in a Study of Reactions to Frustration," Journal of Personality, XIV (September, 1945), 3-23.
external objects.

"The expression of any act of aggression is a catharsis that reduces the instigation to all other acts of aggression. From this and from the principle of displacement it follows that, with the level of original frustration held constant, there should be an inverse relationship between the expression of various forms of aggression."¹ There is much evidence to support the contention advanced in this postulate, but many persons apparently feel that it has only limited utility in the uncontrolled social situations. George K. Morlan sees a conflict between the theory of catharsis and that of the circular, interaction effect, in which expression of aggression, rather than relieving tension, causes further aggression and hate. A possible solution to this apparent conflict may be found by considering the anticipation of punishment, both in the form of super-ego conflict. Possibly many forms of aggression, whether expressed or inhibited, are in conflict with the individual's "Conscience", and can lead to further aggression rather than catharsis.²

Many of the implications of the cathartic effect will be indicated where they seem to be of importance, but the scope of this paper will not allow a full treatment.

A classificatory system of aggressive behavior, in keeping with the authors' definition of aggression, so that some basis can be established for applying more efficiently and operationally the foregoing postulates to observed forms of aggression.

¹ John Dollard, and others, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

CHAPTER III

CLASSIFICATION OF NEGRO AGGRESSIONS

The implications of the frustration-aggression hypothesis in a study of group interactions are numerous. It is a purpose of this paper to classify a number of forms of Negro behavior which, by definition, seem to be aggressive, and which seem to occur conjunctively with certain frustrations imposed by the caste system in a specific area of the South. The data are not adequate to show a definite causal relationship, and no attempt will be made to show that specific forms of aggression are related to specific frustrating situations. Certain techniques will be suggested in a later chapter, however, that might be used to probe more deeply into the problem so that some prediction might be possible.

To date there are available only two reports of investigations which specifically utilize the concept of aggression in a study of American Negro-white interactions. Neither study was designed primarily in terms of the hypothesis, with the result that the classifications thus derived are not satisfactory operationally. Both, however, have laid a pattern which can be the basis of a more systematic study, and have attempted to explain many forms of Negro behavior in a lucid fashion.
John Dollard, in his study of Southerntown, devoted several chapters of his book to describing Negro and white aggressions. His method incompletely validates his contentions, but he did a highly valuable work in identifying many forms of group aggression. His classification of aggressions covers a broader range of frustration responses than can be here considered primarily because his extensive use of psycho-analytic life history interviews enabled him to investigate more subtle forms, such as dreams and sublimations.

Dollard found that many Negroes recognize the caste system as frustrating, and he lists five broad types of response that they make:

They can:

(1) Become overtly aggressive against the white caste; this they have done, though infrequently and unsuccessfully in the past.

(2) Suppress their aggression in the face of the gains and supplant it with passive accommodative attitudes. This was the slavery solution and still exists under the caste system.

(3) Turn aggression from the white caste to individuals within their own group. This has been done to some extent and is a feature of present-day Negro life.

(4) Give up the competition for white caste values and accept other forms of gratification than those secured by the whites. This the lower class Negroes have done.

(5) Compete for the values of white society, raise their position within the Negro caste and manage aggression partly by expressing dominance within their own group and partly by sheer suppression of the impulse as individuals. This is the solution characteristic of the Negro middle class.  

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1 John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (New York, 1948).

2 Ibid., pp. 252-253.
Bollard proceeds from the broad picture of accommodation to more specific treatments of aggressions: aggressions within the Negro group; Negro aggressions against whites; and white aggressions against Negroes.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 267-313.}

In Chapter XIII, Aggression Within the Negro Group,\footnote{Ibid., pp. 267-313.} Bollard lists the following main situations in which aggressions are influenced or expressed:

1. Sexual jealousy (between women as well as between men).
2. Aggression arising from gambling.
3. Magical practices expressing injury and death wishes.
5. Idealization of personal violence.
6. Intra-family aggression arising through the weakness of family units.
7. Gossip.
8. Middle and upper-class exploitation of lower class.
9. A "Frontier Psychology" of lawlessness and lack of faith in the legal institution.

Bollard also lists nineteen types of aggression by Negroes against the white caste or against individual whites in Chapter XIV, "Negro Aggression Against Whites":

1. Murder of whites from ambush.
2. Fighting and direct violence.
3. Rape of white women.
4. Improvement of socio-economic condition.
5. Withdrawal of trade from white businessmen.
6. High labor turnover on plantations.
7. Leaving other jobs on slight provocation.
8. Withdrawal of deference forms and prestige acknowledgments to whites.
9. General lack of humble attitude.
10. Slowness, awkwardness, and indecision (lower class).
11. Telling tales to white sympathizers.
12. Displacement of aggression toward other groups.
13. Gossiping about whites.
15. Attitudes of distrust toward whites.
17. Jokes with aggressive elements.
18. Dreams and phantasies.
19. Aggression against whites through magic.
Dollard has accumulated a large number of significant data to illustrate and support his thesis, but the classification used lacks operational clarity. Using the frustration-aggression hypothesis, it seems quite profitable to undertake a classification that fits more closely the postulates stated in that hypothesis.

Hortense Powdermaker, after making an anthropological study of the same town studied by Dollard, produced a classification of Negro aggressions which differed somewhat, but not greatly, from Dollard's classification. Her primary emphasis is upon the slave Negro and the meek, "unaggressive" Negro who was quite common after the Civil War, and who is still to be observed frequently in the South. In her classification, Negroes may: (1) express direct aggression against whites, (2) substitute a Negro object for a white one, (3) retreat into an "ivory tower", (4) identify themselves with whites, and (5) assume the humble "unaggressive" role. This latter, she believes involves a feeling of guilt arising from a conflict between Christian ethics of love and feelings of hostility toward whites. The unaggressive Negro, however, compensates for his behavior by such things as feeling spiritually superior to whites, anticipating future reward; phantasy, jokes with aggressive elements, etc. This type is declining in number because of the lesser material reward it brings, the migration of Negroes to urban industrial areas, the decline in religious intensity, and the like.

1Hortense Powdermaker, After Freedom (New York, 1939).


Although the classification which she uses is of great value for illuminating some of the less direct forms of aggression, it yet fails to further the search for an hypothesis which has predictive value.

The data which are available for constructing a classification along the lines of the formal postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis are fewer in number and more restricted in scope than those collected by Dollard or Powdermaker. They are deemed adequate for our purposes, however, and it is hoped that they may be useful in stimulating more effectively operational study in the future. The method of collection was largely participant observation.

A topic of discussion frequently breached by the informants was race relations. This made possible the recording of many verbalizations of attitudes and forms of behavior which could be compared with more overtly performed behavior. In many cases, informants recognized that they were behaving hostilely and showed some understanding of the reasons for this behavior. Many, when the proper rapport was gained, readily described their perception of the frustrating nature of caste restrictions, although the number who could (or would) point out the compensatory nature of much of their behavior was not so large. In nearly every case the individual who admitted that he was performing an aggression was one who exhibited the most direct forms and who perceived the caste system as being most odious. Those who were most religious, on the other hand, rarely expressed overt aggression toward whites or Negroes, and verbalized the irksome character of the caste system less frequently.

The frustration that is an ever present factor in the Negro's life is the caste system and its patterns of segregation, discrimi-
ation, subordination, and the like. Since attention in this thesis is
directed toward a classification of aggressions, little time will be
devoted to a discussion of the nature of this frustration. Assumed
justification for this neglect is the fact that Negroes do recognize
the system as restricting and as an interference with their pursuit
of a full life as defined by American culture.

As might be expected from the importance of economic materialism
in American culture, one of the most common frustrations recognized by
the Negro is in making a living. He is restricted to the less skilled
occupations, in general, and to the lower wage brackets. He has, how-
ever, acquired many of the same secondary drives or motives as the whites
for material conveniences, many of which he is not able to possess be-
cause of his inferior economic position.

Education has become a highly desired value to many Negroes, par-
ticularly those of the middle class, who perceive it as one of the
best ways to overcome other frustrations. Educational opportunities
and facilities for the Negro youth, however, are not deemed equal to
those for whites, a fact which is resented by many Negroes.

Restrictions on social intercourse - the etiquette of race re-
lations - were recognized by Negroes of all classes as frustrating.
As the economic and the educational position of the Negro rise, he
becomes more critical of his position as an inferior social being.
It was observed that younger Negroes were more critical of the social
position which they held under the caste system than older ones.
Whether this is due to their youth or whether there is a trend away from
submissive acceptance cannot be said.
The consideration of caste frustration is beyond the scope of this investigation. It must be recognized, however, that the nature of these frustrations will have to be thoroughly understood before Negro behavior can be explained by the frustration-aggression hypothesis. To this end certain things about frustration will be suggested in a later chapter which may be of aid in future study.

It must be stated again that the classification to be presented here is not presumed to be broad enough to include all forms of Negro aggressions; nor is it presented as being definitive. The observations, although suggestive, are subject to personal bias and error, and are not sufficient in number or breadth to test fully the hypothesis. The very method of gathering the material deviated from the operational standard which is so necessary in social science. It is believed, however, that great value can accrue from using this material in order that some classification be set up that is more amenable to objective and definitive testing of the frustration-aggression hypothesis. In an effort to compensate for the inadequacy of this field study and other previous studies, a section will be included in this chapter which will suggest experimental designs and methodology for further study.

Looking at the information and keeping in mind the frustration-aggression hypothesis, it appears that aggressions may be successfully classified according to two criteria: (1) direction of expression and (2) mode of expression. Using these criteria aggressions would thus be classified as direct or substitute, according to the direction of
expression, and overt or covert, according to the mode of expression.

A direct aggression, which can be either overt or covert, is any act expressed by a Negro which has as its goal-response injury to a white person or persons, since it is assumed that whites are identified with caste frustration by the Negro. A substitute aggression, which again can be either overt or covert, is any act expressed by a Negro which has as its goal-response injury to an organism other than a white person.

An act, to be an overt aggression, must be accompanied by the expectation (by the person expressing it) that the organism toward whom it is directed will recognize it as intending injury. Covert aggression on the other hand, must be accompanied by the expectation (by the person expressing it) that the organism toward whom it is directed will not recognize it as intending injury.

It must be reminded that some forms of behavior which may seem to the observer to be aggressive may in reality be unintentional or accidental. The criterion must be established that there is some form of injury consciously intended before the act can be classed as aggressive. Evidently there will be many instances in which it is difficult to distinguish between intentional and unintentional acts which produce injury without the aid of special tools of measurement. The present approach is from the social rather than the individual standpoint, however, and interest is in discovering culturally patterned forms of behavior rather than exceptional instances.
As the illustrations are presented under the classification proposed, two topics will command primary attention: (1) the implications of the seven postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis for predicting the occurrence of a particular form of aggression in certain situations; and (2) the influence of social class in determining the expression of aggression. It has been stated before that the scope of this investigation will allow no definitive treatment of Negro aggressions, and, for the same reason, it will be impossible to develop fully a consideration of the above two factors. The preliminary work has indicated class to be probably a determining factor in the direction and mode of expression of aggression, but no defense of this hypothesis can be undertaken. Dollard, too, found that certain forms of aggression are typical of certain classes; that the individual learns forms of aggression which are culturally approved for his class status.\(^1\)

A direct overt aggression, as it is used here, is an act expressed by an individual which has its goal-response injury to a white person, and which the Negro expects to be recognized by the person toward whom it is directed as being aggressive. According to the hypothesis, direct overt aggression, because of the greater anticipation of punishment which necessarily accompanies its expression, tends to occur less frequently than other forms of aggression if the strength of frustration is held constant; this the data indicate to be true.

Direct overt aggression may involve either physical or verbal action. No case of direct overt aggression involving physical action was

\[\text{1 John Dollard, op. Cit., pp. 89 and 286-313.}\]
observed or reported during the period of the field study, although a few men boasted of having fought white men upon previous occasions. These men were all lower class. It is not known definitely whether their boasts were truth or not, but several informants found otherwise reliable told of infrequent cases of Negroes assaulting whites in past years.

A milder form of aggression which should be classes as direct overt aggression involving physical action is that of a Negro driving recklessly, blowing automobile horn, or otherwise purposely annoying a white driver. This is perceived as aggression by both white and Negroes, so that even if it is accidental the white will usually attribute aggressive intent to the Negro. Many Negro youths of the lower class were observed expressing this behavior, and some of them readily admitted to the observer that "they got a kick out of scaring white folks." There does not seem to be an unusually high punishment anticipation for this form of aggression, since in most cases the Negro is either not recognized or may remove himself from the scene to escape punishment.

Direct overt aggression involving verbal action is somewhat more frequent, particularly in milder forms, than that involving physical action. Two examples are presented from field notes here: the first because it was of a rather hostile nature and yet it did not produce punishment and the second because it seems to be growing more frequent with the growth of the Negro middle class.

Mac A. (lower middle class), a cook at one of the local restaurants, reported an incident in which a white man who was a frequent customer at the restaurant insulted him upon numerous occasions by shouting for
Mac to cook him a steak in a special way, using the term "nigger" when he shouted. Mac said that he submitted to this for a time, but finally he became angry enough to tell the white man that he was tired of such treatment and would hit him with a piece of stove wood if he persisted. According to Mac, the white man was so surprised at this unexpected hostility that he laughed the threat off, made no move toward retaliation, and from that time on called Mac by his first name. This story was checked and found to be correct except for a slight exaggeration on the threat.

Jack B. (upper middle class), operator of a Negro beer tavern and a veteran of World War II, was unusually successful at getting along with white salesmen without losing his feeling of self-respect. On one occasion, a new salesman acted rather haughtily to Jack and used the terms "boy" and "nigger" several times in address. Jack told him calmly that he would refuse to buy anything further from the salesman unless the latter were more polite. The salesman became angry at this expression of "uppitiness" but left before more serious trouble developed. The next week when he came his behavior was much more pleasant, and it was learned subsequently that he, upon reporting the incident to the sales manager of his company, had been warned to comply with Jack's request or be dismissed from his job, since Jack was one of the company's best customers.

Direct overt aggression involving verbal action can be expressed in milder forms which do not involve as high a degree of punishment- anticipation to the Negro expressing it nor as much injury to the white toward whom it is directed. An example of this sort noted frequently was the refusal of Negroes to extend the customary deferences to whites. Expression of aggression in this form may range from open insult to almost unnoticeable withdrawal of deference. The Negro may cast hostile looks toward whites, he may omit "ir" or "ma'am" in address, he may assume a general air of arrogance in contact with whites, he may refuse to speak to certain white acquaintances upon meeting them on the streets, and the like. In cases of this nature, however, the Negro knows that some type of punishment may possibly result, since he is angering whites by deviating from the customary patterns of interaction.

A direct covert aggression, as it is used here, is an act expressed by a Negro which has as its goal-response injury to a white person or
or persons, but which the Negro does not expect will be recognized by
the person toward whom it is directed as being aggressive. Direct co-
vert aggression, because of the low anticipation of punishment involved,
should occur rather frequently, according to the hypothesis. Since a
relatively large number of instances of this type of behavior were ob-
served, the hypothesis seems to hold true.

A frequently observed example of direct covert aggression is that
of pretended ignorance by Negroes (usually lower class) when they are
asked questions by whites. The observer was the object of this form
of aggression upon several occasions at the beginning of this inves-
tigation, when, upon asking another Negro where another lived, he would
be told by the questioned Negro that the latter had never heard of the
other. Subsequently it was learned that in many cases the two Negroes
were neighbors and had known each other for years. Many informants r
readily admitted that they pretended ignorance to questions asked by
strangers, because they did not feel they could trust strangers.

Another form of direct covert aggression is laziness and general
shiftlessness while working. This has been so common that it has
grown to be a stereotyped feature of the Southern lower class Negro,
in the minds of whites. Several Negroes admitted that they deliberately
performed slowly on most jobs, giving various reasons for such behavior.
Most said that they "gave the white boss what he gave them": since the
whites usually paid Negroes less and believed most of them to be natur-
ally lazy, the Negro worker need not perform any better than he was ex-
pected to. This behavior has become firmly ingrained into the life-
ways of some lower classNegroes so that even when working for themselves,
or for whites whom they like, they work slowly. It was noted that in
the community studied, a small proportion of the residents worked for
themselves or as semi-skilled laborers and where the rewards for better
work were evident, fewer cases of this type of behavior were noted. It
must be shown, in an act of this sort, that there is hostility involve-
ed before it can be classed as aggressive, since it may in some cases
be an acquired way of life.

This general type of irresponsible behavior has been the basis of
a number of forms of Negro aggression against whites. It has resulted
in a high rate of absenteeism from work, complaining about ailments of
various sorts, and the like. It must be noted, however, that to class
any one example of this type of behavior as aggression the intent to
injure the white object must be established. There are many cases in
which poor health, for example, produces poor work performance, so that
frustration cannot be regarded as the only cause of such behavior.

There are other types of direct covert aggression which do not take
place in direct interaction with whites, but which nevertheless have in-
jury to whites as the goal-response. A commonly observed example was
that of gossip. Many Negro women of the lower and middle classes who
were employed as domestics in the homes of whites were heard telling
gossipy tales about their employers or friends of their employers.
One man of the middle class, a store owner, had the reputation of being
the "big mouth" of the community because of his incessant gossip. It
was noted that this individual expressed almost no direct overt aggress-
ion, but identified himself to a large degree with whites rather than
with Negroes.
Elements of religious behavior would seem to be direct covert aggression, particularly those dealing with contrasts between the future life and this one. Middle class Negroes, who were found (by the family schedule) to have the highest rate of church attendance, were heard many times in and out of church to comment upon the rewards that would be regarded as equal to or even superior to whites. A more thorough investigation of religious behavior in connection with caste frustration would probably reveal that much of it could be classed as substitute behavior, but those elements which express wishes to see the relative positions of the white and Negro in a future life reversed seem logically to be direct covert aggressions. Many informants, almost all regular churchgoers of middle class status, told the investigator that they did not like to be treated harshly by whites, but that they did not resent it greatly because they knew they (the Negroes) would be rewarded in heaven.

Another form of direct covert aggression is joking about whites. This is a quite common form among lower class Negroes. The investigator heard only occasional jokes which had elements of hostility toward whites, but it was reported that these jokes were told with frequency and enjoyment in several of the community beer halls by lower class Negroes. One rather amusing instance of this form of aggression noted by the investigator was that of an emaciated white mongrel which had been named "white boy" by its owners.

So far the mere "constructive" forms of behavior (except for religious behavior with elements of aggression) which may be classed as direct aggression have been neglected. Since the authors of _Frustration and Aggression_ use the term "sublimation" to refer to socially
approved forms of aggression which are displaced to objects other than those perceived as frustrations, there must be posited a distinction between sublimations (which in this classification will fall under substitute covert aggression) and socially approved forms of direct covert aggression. There were several types of behavior carrying general social approval which were found in the study to have injury to whites as at least a partial goal-response.

Several middle and upper class informants who were working to keep children in boarding schools, trade schools, and colleges confided to the investigator that they would "show the white folks that Negroes couldn't be kept down permanently" or that "to help your kids get along in the white man's world you have to help them get a good education so they can take care of themselves." Clearly the instigation to this type of behavior has as its goal-response injury to whites and to the caste system which they represent.

A few middle class Negro skilled laborers in industry admitted to the investigator that they liked to work as skillfully as possible because, among other reasons, they knew they were proving their abilities to the superior to those of many white skilled laborers. They felt that in this manner they could "get back at" whites to some extent.

Several upper middle class persons who owned prized land, for which they had little use, refused to sell it ot white buyers simply

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because they did not want to give whites the satisfaction of owning the land. There were, of course, other reasons in most cases, but the elements of hostility to whites admittedly had some bearing on the behavior.

Direct covert aggressions form a continuum of intensity which shades off into behavior that is extremely difficult to define as aggressive. Approaching nearer these uncertain forms of behavior are various phantasies and dreams which have aggressive elements. Since no information was obtained on these forms of behavior in the study, it will be only suggested here that they seem to be forms of direct covert aggression as the term is here used. The injury which is intended in phantasy, although it does not actually injure the person toward whom it is directed, has some substance to the person expressing the behavior.

The example of direct aggression is not presumed to have been exhausted here. Only some of the more common have been used for illustrative purposes. An adequate field investigation would be able to describe aggressions far more extensively.

Aggressive acts which are not directed toward the object perceived to be frustrating are substitute forms of aggression. In general, they are directed toward other Negroes, particularly since there are frustrations from within the Negro group which arouse instigations to aggressions and supplement those aroused by the caste system. Other Negroes, being perceived as the causes for some of the frustrations which any Negro experiences, may thus also be the objects of some of the inhibited aggressions which would otherwise be directed toward whites.
John Dollard suggests that in any group there are innumerable frustrations imposed upon the individual by the in-group in the normal process of socialization. The aggressions which are instigated from these frustrations are in many cases channeled toward an out-group, but it is evident that the caste system inhibits some of the aggressions so channeled, particularly those which are direct overt. Thus it would seem possible, in the light of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, that much aggression would tend to be expressed toward members of the Negro group.

Substitute aggression, similarly to direct aggression, can be either overt or covert according to the mode of expression. Several types of substitute overt aggression involving physical action were observed during the field study. Most of these involved between lower class youths of about twenty years of age. It was also reported that there had been fights among adult lower class men upon previous occasions, but none of these fights occurred during the investigation. Although little fighting among adults was observed during the collection of the data used in this investigation, it would seem logical that this should be an important form of substitute aggression. It is believed that study of the community over a longer period of time, conjunctive with checking police reports, would confirm this conclusion.

Substitute overt aggression may also take verbal form. The in-

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vestigator found very little of this in his personal observations, but it was stated that it did occur in the beer and dance halls occasionally in the form of cursing, insult, and quarreling. Every case of this reported was found to have occurred among lower class persons of both sexes.

The materials upon which this classification is based are very inadequate for the illustration of substitute overt aggression. This does not necessarily imply, however, that this form of aggression is relatively unimportant. Dollard collected a large amount of information on it in his study of Southern town, and the investigator has formed the subjective impression that in other Negro communities it is a frequent form among lower class Negroes. A discussion will be undertaken in the last chapter of this thesis which should clarify the subject somewhat.

Substitute covert aggressions were observed frequently in the study. A substitute covert aggression is here defined as an act which has as its goal-response injury to an organism other than a white person which is not expected by the person expressing it to be recognized by the person toward whom it is directed as intending injury.

Gossip is a usual form of substitute covert aggression. The investigator, after he had established good rapport with his informants, heard many gossipy tales about various Negroes in the community. Although there were some individuals who were greater gossipers than others, the majority of persons with whom the investigator came into contact.

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could be relied upon for occasional gossip.

William P. (lower middle class), owner of a small grocery store, was known as the worst gossiper of the community. He gossiped about both whites (direct covert aggression) and Negroes (substitute covert aggression). Even a stranger could enter his store, strike up a conversation, and soon hear tales of "dirt" about various Negroes in the community. Mr. P. showed almost no overt aggression, but few persons, white or Negro, were safe from his tongue.

A general form of substitute covert aggression which was observed particularly among middle class Negroes was the emphasis placed upon class status by those of the middle and upper classes. Middle class Negroes, in conversation with whites, frequently make derogatory remarks about lower class Negroes. In discussions of race relations, for instance, many middle class Negroes were quick to blame lower class Negroes for the oppressions of the caste system and would often specify certain individuals in the community whom they considered offenders.

Race relations and general living conditions in the area were such that the middle class Negro could lead a relatively comfortable life if he exerted himself sufficiently. He showed some tendency, therefore, to substitute lower class Negroes for whites as the objects perceived to be responsible for frustration, and would seldom admit that the difficulties he experienced were due solely to whites. The caste system was recognized as frustrating, to be sure, but upon lower class Negroes was frequently placed some of the blame for its continued existence and its unpleasantness.

Very similar to this are the cases of some few Negroes of both lower and middle classes who identify themselves with particular whites to secure benefits at the expense of members of their own race. There are, of course, people of this type to be found in any group, but among
Negroes it represents a type of aggression to substitute for that which cannot be expressed toward the primary source of frustration. There were several Negroes observed in the study who had almost assumed a marginal position by their ingratiations to influential whites in the community. They were known as police, merchants, and the like as Negroes who could be relied upon to provide information about other Negroes which could not be procured otherwise. One man, who identified himself with his white friends consistently, was anonymously warned with threatening notes by other Negroes in the community that it was known that he was acting as an informer and that he would be punished if he did not cease.

The authors of Frustration and Aggression use the term sublimation to refer to socially approved modifications of aggression which are directed toward substitute objects and expressed in modified forms. According to this usage, it would probably be placed under substitute covert aggression in the present classification. A sublimation may express both direct and substitute aggression, in both overt and covert form, in the same act. Usually, a sublimation is substitute covert, but it is impossible to separate the direct and overt elements from the others. Consider, for example, a community improvement organization which had been formed in the community studied. The purposes of this organization were to develop the civic life, the recreational facilities, and the beauty of the community which it served. Through these purposes,

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1 John Dollard, and others, op. cit., p. 53.
it is conceivable that a modified form of aggression might be expressed toward whites because of the general function of improvement in the face of the caste system. The organization had also a social function: it was composed of entirely middle class Negro men who regarded meetings as a form of social enjoyment. Lower class men, although not excluded, were not welcomed to participate in the social part of the organization. Because of this function, a modified form of aggression might be expressed toward lower class Negroes. In addition to these two forms of aggressions, the real sublimation nature of the organization was as a release of tension caused by inhibited aggression through socially approved, modified forms toward substitute objects.

The inadequacy of the present data makes it impossible to consider sublimations to any appreciable extent. They would most properly be placed under substitute covert aggression, however, with the reservation that they are complex and do include other forms of aggression. Many of the socially approved forms of competition - economic, social, recreational, educational, etc. - may be sublimations traceable in the final analysis to frustration. Several such examples of this type of behavior have been included under direct covert aggression in this classification because of the evident hostility toward whites involved. Even these, however, had elements of sublimation as the term is used here. One of the most fruitful fields for future investigation of aggression is the sublimation of inhibited aggression.

The illustrations of forms of aggression used in this classification are at best sparse. It must again be stated that the types of
aggression used to illustrate each form are primarily for purposes of illustration and clarification rather than an inventory of Negro aggressions. References have been made several times to Dollard's study of Negro aggressions; his is probably the most complete investigation yet made. The classification advanced in this thesis, however, is intended to be a more nearly operational means of studying behavior, and particularly Negro behavior, to test the frustration-aggression hypothesis. It is hoped that this effort will provide a groundwork for fruitful study. The concluding chapter will be devoted primarily to summarization and to recommendations for using the classification in connection with the frustration-aggression hypothesis in future study.
A classification of Negro aggressions into four categories — direct overt, direct covert, substitute overt, and substitute covert — has been posited in the preceding chapter. In the presentation of illustrative acts of aggression in each category, occasional reference was made to the influence of social class, to the "fit" of postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, and the nature of the frustrations presumed to cause certain forms of aggression.

It has been indicated that individuals tend to express certain forms of aggression that seem common to the social class to which the individual belongs. Is there justification for assuming that social class is a determining factor in the expression of aggression? It was observed in the study that there were general types of aggression that seemed characteristic of each social class, but no attempt can be made at present to state that this is true. To learn what the relation is between the expression of aggression and class membership, the first step would be an analysis of class structure. Statistical correlations must be found between selected indices before a class can structure can be assumed to exist.

P. Stuart Chapin, one of the leaders in the field of sociometry, has constructed and standardized a scale to measure sociocultural
status. He gives an excellent discussion of the use of this scale and others in his Experimental Design in Sociological Research. Standardized scales have great value in sociological investigation because of their operational qualities.

The evidence of class stratification used in this paper was based on a non-standardized measurement. For the specific area studied, however, the indices used were pertinent and did furnish a rough means of class analysis. Since no statistical calculations have as yet been made to detect correlation of indices, it is impossible to attribute more than suggestive weight to the indicated class influences on expression of aggression. To investigate properly the influence of class, then, the group studied must first be shown to be divided into classes (e.g., upper, middle, and lower) by an analysis based on statistically reliable correlations between selected indices. For comparison of one group with another, standardized measurements of class structure must be used.

As a more specific illustration of the need for operational investigation of aggression, a sample design will be set up here which will present a method for class analysis, investigation of association between class and form of aggression, and possibilities for testing the frustration-aggression hypothesis. This design will follow the overall design provided in this chapter calling for: (1) analyzing class structure, (2) determining the relation between these two, and (4) testing the frustration-aggression hypothesis with the findings. The sample situation will be comparable to the one in which the observations used as a basis for this paper were made:

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The first step is the analysis of class structure in the community. The total population must be known so that a significant sample can be measured. Certain traits must be selected which are valid as indices of class. The best method for this selection is to question a number (a statistically reliable sample at random, for convenience) of individuals in the community for their rating of persons in the community by social level. Doing this, persons rated at the top, at the middle, and at the bottom should be investigated to determine what traits they possess (or do not possess) which are associated with their community rating. These traits which are found to be statistically valid can then be used for class analysis. In the present study, traits which seemed significant were family income, church attendance, educational level of head of family, number in family, number of persons per room, home ownership, age of family head, membership in civic organizations, and the possession of several material conveniences, such as electric refrigerator, electric stove, and the like. These traits seemed to assume a tri-modal distribution. Statistical calculations must be made to determine if each trait is valid for indicating social class. It should be noted that these traits differ with culture, making the use of a standardized scale difficult or impossible for use in comparing divergent groups.

It is assumed that the community has been found to be stratified into three classes - upper, middle, and lower. The number of people
in each of the classes must be known or calculated from the sample; it is important to know the relative size of each class. The next step is the observation of the group to record acts of aggression. In studying an entire community, controlled observation, as in the laboratory, is impracticable. For this reason, it is believed that direct field observation is the most satisfactory method that is presently available. The observer should be sufficiently acquainted with expressions of aggression to record every act which shows any indication of being aggressive, together with as nearly a complete record of the situation in which the act occurred as possible. Each set should be identified with the individual who expresses it so that it can later be tallied against the individual's class. The observer should attempt to acquaint himself with as many persons in the community as possible, and should observe them in as many different situations as possible. Only through long and careful observation can he record a useful number of acts of aggression.

No attempt can be made of the number of acts needed to be useful for testing the hypothesis. There is no way to determine the total acts which actually occur so that a significant sample can be known and obtained. It must be assumed, therefore, that the investigator is observing the activities of the community fully enough so that the acts which he records after a long period of observation are significant. He must base his conclusions on the number of acts which he records.

For purposes of simplicity, the recorded acts may be classified by the fourfold classification set up in this paper. Each act, as stated
before, must have been identified with the individual expressing it, and
the class to which this individual belongs must have been determined. A
scattergram should be set up with the three social classes on one axis
and the four forms of aggression on the other. Each of the recorded acts
found, by using the definition of aggression and by analyzing the situa-
tion in which each act occurred, to be aggression should then be tallied
on the scattergram. This is done by placing a mark, for each act, on the
form of aggression row under the appropriate social class column (which
the individual expressing it is found to be a member of).

No attempt will be made to suggest the actual statistical procedure
involved in manipulating the scattergram and drawing conclusions from
it. Since it is unlikely that the three social classes are equal size,
the number of acts of aggression must be weighed for each class. In
seeking a correlation between social class and form of aggression, a
multiple or curvilinear correlation technique would have to be utilized.

Assuming that there is a positive association of social class with
the expression of certain forms of aggression, a number of implications
can be readily seen. Why should a person of the lower class, for in-
stance, express more overt aggression than a person of the middle class?
Why should persons in the middle class characteristically express more
covert aggression? Examination of the information available from the
investigator's study points to the fact that values for each class are
different; because of this, punishment for aggression may have a dif-
ferent meaning for a person of one class than for one of another.
Lower class Negroes, it is the investigator's impression, fear jailing
less than middle class Negroes. Should it be shown that this is true,
it would seem to indicate that the Negro lower class places some value upon physical violence and the behavior commonly associated with it, while values of education, higher standard of living, religion, and the like are not sufficient to counteract the values of violence.

A hypothetical conclusion may be drawn from the scattergram that will serve to illustrate the implications of a significant positive correlation between social class and form of aggression. Suppose it is found that, of the four forms of aggression, direct overt aggression is expressed by the lower class 30% of the time, by the middle class 20% of the time, and not at all by the upper class. This should indicate that either the lower class is frustrated in greater amount that the other two classes, that it fears the punishment which it expects to receive less than the other classes, or that direct overt aggression is an acquired way of life for the lower class. This would give a basis for further study to determine the relative validity of these three conclusions. Very possibly each of the three has some validity. Should this be found, it would in no sense negate the frustration-aggression hypothesis, but should instead serve to clarify further the way that frustration impacts on the individual through his class, the values characteristic of each class which affect the anticipation of different types of punishment, and the values which affect the forms of aggression favored by each class.

Such an illustration is not presented as an hypothesis; it is primarily for the purpose of suggesting what sort of problem would be implied by a positive association between class and expression of aggres-
The ideals of each class would have to be determined so that there would be a basis for examining the amount of anticipation of punishment and the strength of frustration. A person who had little fear of punishment would be likely to express more overt aggression than one who feared punishment greatly, and a person who felt caste frustration (as well as other frustrations) most strongly would tend to express more direct aggression, other factors remaining constant.

This leads logically to a discussion of the use of the seven postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis for predicting the form of aggression. It is believed that social class influences are inextricably related to the full use of these postulates. In using the hypothesis, the sociologist or the social psychologist must find how the group influences the expression of aggression; this, it seems, will probably be found to act through class. The task is immediately simplified, because generalizations may be made if the class structure has been determined.

As a further step in this sample design, another hypothetical conclusion may be drawn for illustration of the use of the design in testing the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Suppose, for example, that it were found that of the total acts of aggression recorded, direct covert occurred 60% of the total, substitute covert occurred 20% of the total, substitute over 13%, and direct overt 7%. This would obviously support the second postulate of the hypothesis, that expression of aggression varies inversely with the anticipation of punishment. Since, of the total acts recorded, covert aggression (involving little or no
anticipation of punishment) was expressed 30% of the time, and overt aggression (involving anticipation of punishment) was expressed only 20% of the time, the postulate would seem valid. In addition, the postulate would seem to be supported by the fact that substitute overt aggression, which involves lesser punishment-anticipation than direct overt, was expressed more often than the latter. It would have to be assumed, however, that caste frustration was of at least equal amount to in-group frustration in order that this last conclusion be valid.

The evidence would also seem to support the fourth postulate, which holds that the strongest instigation aroused by a frustration is to acts of aggression directed against the agent perceived to be the source of the frustration, if it is assumed that caste frustration is responsible for the recorded aggression. This assumption cannot be made legitimately, of course, until the relative strengths of the three sources of frustration can be measured to determine if caste frustration is the strongest. Present information suggests that this is true, but it should not be assumed until reliable study demonstrates it to be true.

Without listing the postulates again, certain brief suggestions on the use or implications of each can now be made. Comments have been interjected occasionally in the body of the thesis, and these will be summarized and amplified here.

The first postulate\(^1\) states that the strength of instigation to aggression varies directly with the amount of frustration. For investi-

gating aggression, then, there must be some means of detecting the quantity of frustration which the individual experiences. On the basis of the existence of both basic and acquired drives, one could safely assume that there are both basic and acquired instigations to responses which can be frustrated. The strengths of instigation to the goal-responses in the case of basic drives, since these drives are inherited, are roughly the same. The degree of interference with them, however, is certainly influenced in some manner by culture, class, and group. Thus, it seems safe to say that for basic drives two things hold true: (1) the strength of instigation to the frustrated response is roughly the same for the majority of individuals in each culture, and (2) the amount of frustration (or the degree of interference with the frustrated response) is dependent upon social influences\(^1\) — in the process of socialization, by the cultural values, etc. — and may be different for each social class in a class-stratified society.

Acquired drives are dependent upon culture. The individual acquires them because they are provided by the culture as means of striving toward cultural values. Logically, then, the strength of instigation to the frustrated response in the case of an acquired drive is dependent upon social influences. As in basic drives, again, social influences govern the degree of interference with the frustrated response.

The first postulate of the frustration-aggression hypothesis holds the number of response sequences frustrated to be a factor in determining

\(^1\text{Ibid., pp. 55-90.}\)
the amount of frustration. The authors indicate that this may be due to the cumulative effect of residual instigations to aggression from previous or simultaneous frustrations.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 31-32.} Available data are very inadequate for considering this factor, but it should be noted that it must be investigated in connection with such other factors as strength of instigation to the frustrated response; degree of interference; availability, and use of substitute responses; frustration tolerance;\footnote{Saul Rosenzweig, "An Outline of Frustration Theory," in J. McV. Hunt, editor, Personality and the Behavior Disorders (New York, 1944), pp. 385-387.} etc. For sociological use, the number of frustrated response sequences can be investigated through the broader social situation: the number of frustrations an individual experiences are related to influences of social class, occupation, skin color, place of residence, and the like. This is, of course, a referral to the discussion of the influence of social class: if social class is correlated with the expression of aggression, then probably it would have some relation to the occurrence and experience of frustration. The second postulate,\footnote{John Dollard, and others, op. cit., pp. 37-38.} positing a direct relation between anticipation of punishment and inhibition of aggression, has been referred to occasionally in this paper. In keeping with the suggestion advanced herein that social class may be a determining factor in the expression of aggression, it is suggested that anticipation of punishment may be similarly related to class position.
Class values are conceivably of great importance for determining how punishment is anticipated and whether anticipated forms of punishment are feared or scorned.

The third postulate, which states that the expression of aggression varies directly with amount of frustration and inversely with anticipation of punishment, has been discussed briefly, making it unnecessary to treat it here. Suggestions have been made for studying the amount of frustration and the anticipation of punishment in the preceding paragraphs. The function of the third postulate is to express the relationship between these two factors in the expression of aggression.

The remaining postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis deal with the direction of aggression. It will be efficient to consider the fourth and fifth together, since they are closely related. The fourth postulate holds that "the strongest instigation aroused by a frustration is to acts of aggression directed against the agent perceived to be the source of the frustration, and progressively weaker instigations are aroused to progressively less direct acts of aggression." In Negro aggression, then, this would mean that the strongest instigation to aggression would be to those acts directed toward whites (assuming that caste frustration is the strongest frustration). Aggression directed toward whites involves a strong anticipation of punishment from whites in the case of direct overt aggression. Direct covert

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1 Ibid., pp. 38-39.

2 Ibid., p. 53.
aggression, however, involves little or no anticipation of punishment, since it is not expected to be recognized as aggression by the white toward whom it is directed. This, then, would imply that direct covert aggression would be a common, if not the most common, form of aggression.

Supporting this conclusion is the first part of the fifth postulate, which states that the inhibition (e.g., by whites) of aggression is an additional frustration which instigates the aggression against the agent perceived to be responsible for the inhibition (e.g., against whites). For all aggression aroused by caste frustration, there would thus be a twofold factor working to make for expression of the aggression directly against whites: whites are usually perceived to be responsible for the frustration, and they also usually inhibit the expression of the resulting aggression.

Although nothing can be suggested here that could be used to measure the satisfaction involved in the expression of a given act of aggression—to measure its cathartic value—it seems logical to assume, using the seventh postulate, that the expression of direct covert aggression has an important cathartic value. It is suggested here, also, that class may have an influence in determining the form of aggression and the direction of aggression. Thus, a middle class Negro, abhorring the use of violence, may tend to avoid any overt aggression, expressing largely covert forms or seeking substitute responses to the frustrated response.

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1 John Dollard, and others, op. cit., pp. 53.

2 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
The lesser class Negro, having less distaste for violence, would then be more apt to express overt aggression than the middle class Negro.

Class may be important in determining the direction of aggression. The middle or upper class Negro, inhibited in the expression of aggression toward the white caste, should tend to direct some aggression toward lower class Negroes or toward others in his class through competition of various sorts. The materials used in this thesis do not indicate what the influence of class might be upon the direction of aggression; therefore, no statement can be made suggesting it. A thorough investigation should consider the point by searching for some relation between the direction of aggression and class structure.

Aggression turned toward the self was not observed during the field study. For this reason, no suggestions can be made concerning it. This is not meant to imply, however, that it does not occur among Negroes, nor that it may be insignificant.

Before a summary of the foregoing discussion can be attempted, it would be appropriate to direct attention briefly toward the frustrations experienced by Negroes. The evidence indicates that there are three general categories of frustration which are experienced by the Negro: (1) frustration from the Negro group in the process of socialization, (2) frustration from the class system within the Negro group, and (3) frustration from the overall caste system. All three are, of course, related, but it is convenient to categorize them for purposes of discussion.

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1 Ibid., pp. 46-50.
Three problems present themselves in the study of the frustrations experienced by the Negro: (1) the possibility of demonstrating that the three situations presented above are in reality frustrating, (2) the problem of distinguishing each of these three from the others, and (3) the problem of demonstrating that these frustrations result in aggressions. This paper has indicated that Negroes do recognize the system as frustrating, and it has been suggested that aggressions occur correlative with caste frustration. Since the other frustrations were not studied, no assumption can be made of a direct causal relationship between aggression and caste frustration.

Whether it is possible, in sociological study, to distinguish between the three types of frustration is not shown by the observations made in the present study. If a correlation is found between expression of aggression and social class, there is a basis for predicting the occurrence of aggression in a given situation. The dynamics of motivation, however, cannot be fully understood until it is known what the true relationship between the frustration and the form of aggression is. It would be impossible to say, for instance, to what extent aggression within the Negro group is the result of frustration by the Negro group or is a deflection of aggression from whites to other Negroes. Conceivably a portion of substitute aggressions (considering the caste system as the frustration) are in reality direct aggressions (resulting from in-group frustration). This paper is an attempt to design an operational plan to study and predict aggression; it is recognized as only a first step, however, in the larger study of frustration and aggression.
In this chapter suggestions for more nearly operational study have been made, and questions and possibilities have been indicated. It can be seen that there is a great need for study of many aspects of frustration and aggression. The contribution of this paper is intended to be a design for studying Negro aggression. An outline summary should serve to state the design more succinctly:

(1) A statistical study of selected indices should be made to determine if there is a class structure in the group studied. Should a class structure be found, class divisions may be made on the basis of the distribution of the indices used; a tri-modal distribution of traits would indicate a three-class group.

(2) A field study should be made of forms of aggression in the group. Identification of the act of aggression with the individual expressing it is necessary so that the act can be compared with the social class of the individual expressing it.

(3) A scattergram should be constructed to determine the correlation between social class and form of aggression. The assumption is that social class is of importance; therefore, a positive correlation should be found. The amount of correlation forms a basis for the reliability of prediction of the occurrence of aggression.

(4) In an effort to understand the dynamics of aggression, the postulates of the frustration-aggression hypothesis should be tested; assuming that there is a positive correlation of class and form of aggression, the class factor should be used for a systematic testing of the postulates.

(5) Beyond the scope of this design, but of importance for adequate
study, is the study of frustration. Frustration should be investigated
to determine if it results from socialization of the Negro, class status
of the Negro, or the caste system. The postulates of the frustration-
aggression hypothesis are again of importance in studying the relation
between each of the categories of frustration (should it be possible to
distinguish between them operationally) and the forms of aggression
studied.

It is hoped that this design, together with the fourfold classification
of aggression posited herein, will be of value in future study. It
is suggested that modifications of the design may possibly be of aid in
studying aggression in other groups. An attempt was made throughout the
thesis to be specific for studying only Negro aggression in a particular
area, however, and no further claims can be or should be made concerning
other use of the design. Designs of this type, adapted to the area and
situation to be studied, provide a useful means for approaching opera-
tional study.
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