

3. A Common Formulation in Politics, Sociology and Economics

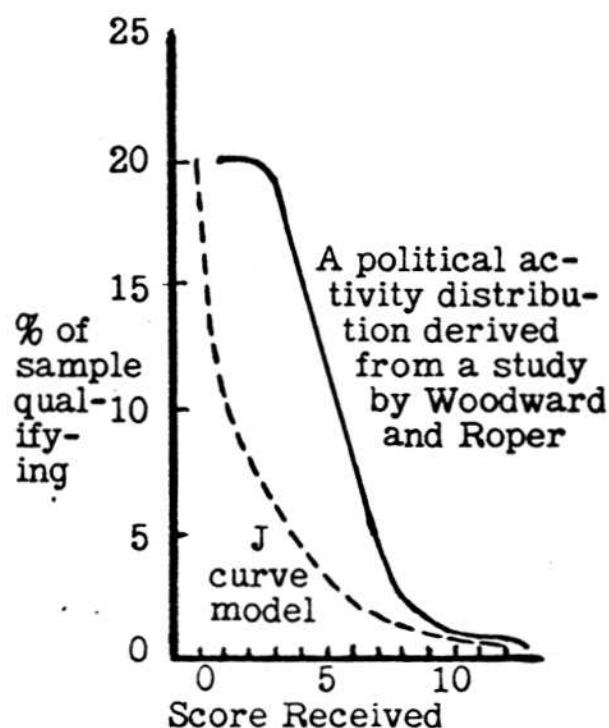
A unified, graphic conceptualization of the key variables of political science, sociology and economics is proposed. Populations (defined as reference groups) should be scored on their individuals' efforts and success at achieving power, respect and goods. The resulting distribution profiles can suggest propositions about relations among economic, social, and political practices. Myths of "demand and expectation" might also be translated into quantitative terms suited for comparison with actual distributions.

I. Power, Respect, and Goods Distribution Patterns

Political science, economics, and sociology center each about the study of a major value. In political science, the value of central concern is political power; in economics it is goods; and in sociology it is respect. Important problems of activity and distribution arise concerning these, and give shape to theory and research in each field. A general theory that would unite the three areas of concern by framing data in comparable form and by picturing the significant shapes the data assumes in each case could be useful to general social theory and disciplinary theory alike.

In an unpublished manuscript, this writer tried to define the relations between, and distribution of, political activity and leadership. Activity was considered as efforts toward power, and leadership as possession of power. When a population is scored on such activity and leadership, and the scores are plotted on a graph, they assume the shape of "J" curves (see figure below). The mass was relatively inert and then both activity and leadership curves decelerated very rapidly into the relatively few active and leading individuals. It was shown, too, that these curves indicated a condition sharply op-

posed to the widespread doctrine of participation and leadership in a democratic society, according



posed to the widespread doctrine of participation and leadership in a democratic society, according to which high activity and individual, shared leadership were the properties of the many, establishing a mythical J-curve that tends to be the mirror image of the reality curve.

In the suggested general theory of value distributions, power plotted as activity and achievement can be made analogous to the values of goods and respect, both also plotted as activity and achievement. The major hypothesis for the three values togeth-

er is that the achievement of power, goods, and respect is distributed in a pattern that forms J curves; power, goods, and respect activities are patterned in J curves also.

Finally, a third doctrinal curve exists, definable as the

of activity and achievement, and a general method for presenting the materials for analysis and generalization.

Several terms will be used to connote the major variables under study. They may be placed in the following matrix (see table below):

	<u>Power</u>	<u>Respect</u>	<u>Goods</u>
<u>Activity</u>	Politism	Sociability	Work
<u>Achievement</u>	Leadership	Prestige	Income
<u>Doctrine</u>			
concerning Activity	D_p	D_s	D_w
concerning Achievement	D_i	D_{pr}	D_i

Utopian distribution of activity influence within a reference group. This curve has no universal form, and even has no monopoly at a given time in the group. It is a kind of "demand and expectation" curve in which the "sky is the limit" on the one hand, and the de facto curves may be the limit on the other hand. It is constructed by asking a population what they believe should be the distribution of activity and achievement.

From the shapes of this trio of curves might be deduced important laws of political science, economics, and sociology. Most major principles of the several disciplines relate to them. Furthermore the interrelation of the fields is exhibited in them and may be deducible from their being applied to complex situations involving the several values. In addition, the curves point the way for uniting many now disconnected researches, lending them hypothesis, judgments of importance, and direction.

II. Criteria and Method

An understanding of the theory requires first a definition of key terms in studying activity and achievement, a set of criteria for discovering and scoring evidences

Activity is measured by criteria referring to these dimensions and includes evidence and indications that person "A" is acting role A_r regarding subject A_{rs} with force that mobilizes $\frac{1}{2}A_f$ part of his disposable energies at time 1. The achievement of A is measured by the comments of other role sharers as to his relative effects within the group or by external objective estimates of his relative position with respect to the value within the group among the role sharers.

A major step forward obtains when "A" (and all other actors) can be scored on activity and achievement. The conditions under which "A" may be said to have scores in activity and achievement are: that his role be ascertained for the scoring, that cross-references and conflicts of group belonging be taken into account, that his scores be relative to other rolesharers' scores and not be regarded as absolute (that is, his score is most valid if the curve of activity and influence scores in the group is known), and so on for his score in all other reference groupings in terms of which he acts. Some of the reference roles encountered in political study are the nation, party, neighborhood, or veteran's group (in its political frame). Some refer-

ence groups for activity and achievement directed at goods might be occupation or sub-occupation, shop or work group, local market, national market, international market, family (limited or enlarged to relatives and historically) (in its economic capacity), board of a corporation, executive committee, professional or trade association, regulatory body, agency, possibly many others not formally directed at income.

Reference groups for respect activities and respect achievement might be the whole nation as perceived, town, ethnic group, religious group, racial group, occupational group, work groups, family, sporting circles.

Once we have collected the profiles of populations, we can develop principles (1) from an analysis of the shape of the curves; (2) from analysis of the empirical or postulated shifts of the curves: e.g., height of modes on ordinate, change in slopes, and shifts to right or left; and (3) from analysis of special shifts of related reference (role) aggregates.

III. Types of Emergent Problems

Several kinds of problems that should be studied with the help of this general formulation may be exemplified.

Suppose we find that the profile of Work in the U. S. A. has become more skewed over the past century. Suppose then that the distribution of income in the past century has become less highly skewed. That is, in the case of work, the few work more and the mass less, and in income, the few get less and the mass more. Will the leadership curve have been changed the one way or the other in the interim? The politism curve? Is this a universally discoverable connection between goods activity and goods income? What types of "demand and expectation" or myth curves must have been experienced?

According to Pareto, myths (derivations) are functions of ascendent or incumbent elites and are not independently important. Does this mean that doctrinal curves can be plotted as incidents or consequences of the reality curves? Would this supposed dependence of doctrinal curves on activity and achievement curves be validated by such manageable cases as might be uncovered? Also can a considerable portion of political doctrine be usefully defined in terms of expectations and demands regarding activity and achievement?

Suppose a modal doctrine of a society or other role-collectivity asserts equal and high economic activity (work) and equal income, but work and income are not equally distributed or normally distributed. Is there a shift to other doctrines of goods? Is there a change in other doctrines of power and respect, and in their actual distribution patterns?

Suppose work and income exhibit J curves and it is shown that the correlation between the individual scores of the activity and achievement curves is low. Will the myth then be "economic activity is demeaning and irrelevant"? Are power and respect more important values under such conditions?

Suppose the work curve is much nearer the normal than the income curve: What will the doctrine be: aristocratic? redistributive?

Suppose the work curve is J and the income curve is normal. What will the myth be? "From each according to ability, to each according to his needs"? Perhaps the family is an example of this condition and doctrine.

Some trouble was experienced in the study of the distribution of political activity and leadership because of the existence of involuntary as well as voluntary refer-

ences, involuntary roles being roles that an individual is compelled to adopt, either by informal or formal sanctions, as in government or a business organization. Probably activity scores in involuntary organizations will be only slightly correlated with achievement scores. In considering respect configurations, could we expect sociability scores to be randomized in relation to prestige scores? Would the activity or sociability scores form a normal curve?

Certainly the concept of sanctions will play a large part in explaining changed relationships of curves and changed shapes of curves as we transfer our attention from voluntary to involuntary reference. But sanctions would be both cause and effect. Indeed the type and intensity of sanctions employed in a group may be a definable function of the several major curve relationships within the group and/or the difference between these relationships within the group and the prevailing, dominant pattern of curves in outside groups.

IV. Possible Early Successes

To satisfy the voracious appetite of the above theory for data is presently an impossible task. However, the following steps could be taken to advance the empirical character of the theory and to justify its general utility.

A certain amount of quantitative data already exists regarding distributions of activity and achievement in politics, economy, and society. There are some surveys of political activity and leadership, of income distributions, of work-rating in organizations (industriousness), and of social class configurations. These should be collected, put into the framework of the theory and analyzed for tentative statements of relation.

A considerable number of qualitative descriptions of activity and achievement conditions are to be found in behavioral science and fictional writings. Many historical writings, a number of classics of political science such as the books of Pareto, Tilgher, Simmel, and Michels, and various intensive anthropological reports bear evidence that would support or undermine relevant hypotheses.

Some tests or experiments might be devised to guide the theoretical development. For instance, a panel of judges might be recruited to give opinions on the condition that would result from certain postulated distributions. They might be given a list of possible conclusions to check and asked questions such as the following: "In a society or group in which the few have high income and the many low, what is likely to be the dominant myth of the society regarding the distribution of work and income, provided that the average person in the society works at a moderate rate and values money moderately?" The panel might even be provided with a set of curves and asked to draw a "missing curve."

The theory in partial form (concerning political power) has been used by this writer for teaching purposes. A gap between its promulgation and detailed validation need not deprive it of immediate heuristic value, especially since social theory is poor in devices for promoting integrative and precise thought. Moreover, there is a possibility of developing through the theory a general model of social action that will compete rather successfully for the scarce data that is provided for all models, whatsoever their nature.

--Alfred de Grazia
Princeton, New Jersey