Models of human motivation in sociology

"…social scientists as a whole have paid little attention to the foundations of human nature, and they have had almost no interest in its deep origins."

Edward O. Wilson, Consilience p. 184

Paper (work in progress) for the 5th annual konference of IACR
Debating Realism(s)
August 2001

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1 Introduction

The claim of this paper is that many sociologists have an insufficient understanding of the roots of human motivation and that this seriously hampers the effort to build theoretical models of society and social change. The points of the paper are extracts from larger work in progress (Alsted Forthcoming).

In his controversial book Consilience the biologist Edward O. Wilson claims that the goal of social sciences should be to be able to predict what will happen if society selects one course of action over another. The ideal should, in other words, be close to that of the natural sciences. In this, he says, the social sciences are doing badly (Wilson 1998, 181).

It is a common position within social theory to give up the ideal of natural science to accumulate knowledge. Social theory, it is said, cannot live up to these ideals, since its subject matter is far too complicated and has too many undeterminable variables.

This was true and still is. But perhaps not forever. The expansion of chaos-theory within physics, biology, chemistry - and now also sociology - has made the differences between natural and social sciences smaller.

Wilson answers that this is no reason to give up the ideal and the search for models with better precision (Wilson 1998, 208). Which path should we take to become able to tell a clearer story? Wilson recommends more inquiry into psychology by social scientists. I agree with him and I think the root of the problems is to be found in the unwillingness of social scientists to look closer at human nature (Alsted 1998).

Since I was an undergraduate, it has puzzled me why psychology was so absent from sociology. There is no other purpose with history, than the motives of each human being (Runciman 1989, 297). So to understand society we must understand the motives of human beings.

This was clear already to the early sociologists. As an example does the writings of John Stuart Mill include very specific statements on the nature of the human psyche (Liedman 1991, 175).

Other sociologists have since done the same. But sociologists understanding of the human psyche has since Freud been far behind that of psychologists.

In recent years some sociologists have acknowledged the importance of psychology. Runciman has stated that psychology points the way for a strengthening of sociological theory (Runciman 1983, 185). Some sociologists have gone even farther. Late in his career Neil Smelser has begun an inquiry into "the social edges of psychoanalysis" (Smelser 1998a). Another example is Slavoj Zizek, who with an astonishing production, has advocated the inclusion of psychoanalytical concepts in contemporary sociology (Zizek 1999).

1.1 How does human nature look?

One of the first questions to arise when trying to integrate sociology and psychology is that of essentialism versus anti-essentialism. To enquire into psychology's potential contribution to sociology, is to ask how human nature influences the construction of society.

With regard to their view of human nature, the many different schools of social theory can be divided on a continuum. One end of the continuum consists of theories of an essentialist position emphasising in different variants that man has an inner essence, drive or motivation, that influences the way society develops. In the other end of the continuum there is a group of theories holding the position, that man has no inner essence or that it is too complicated to understand and that the way society develops is governed by coincidence and that no larger patterns can be read out of history.

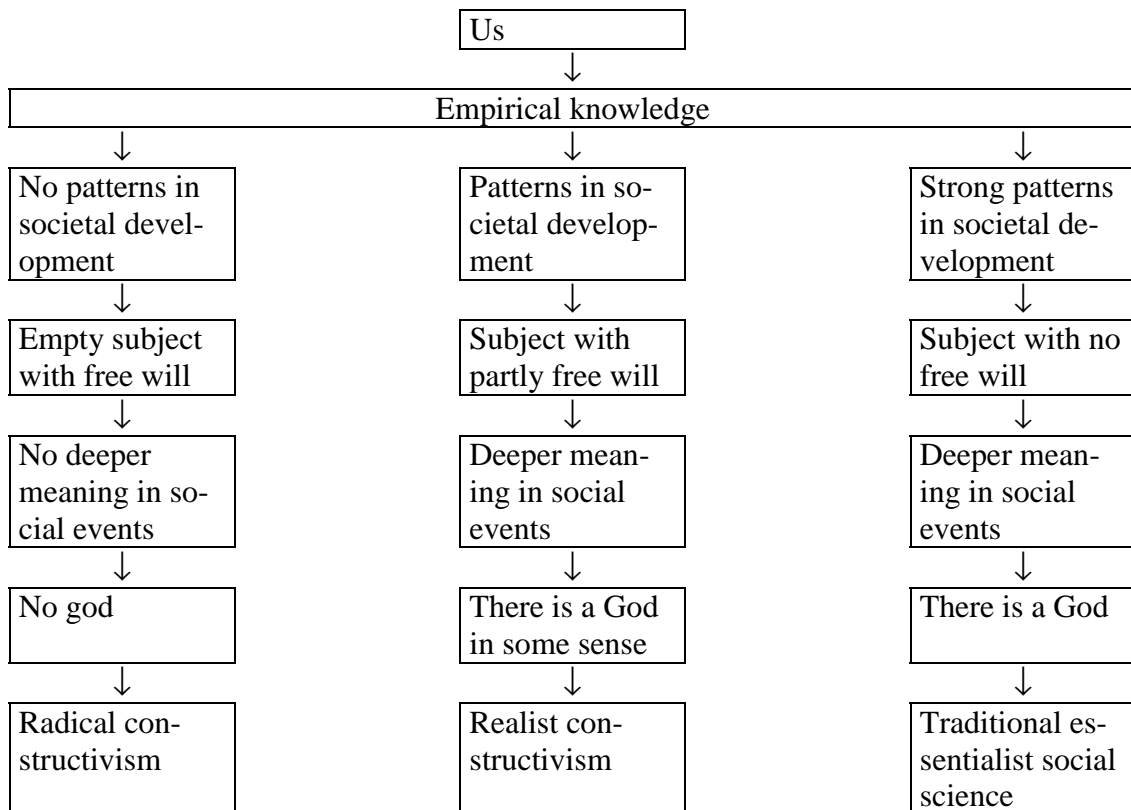| Independent reality					Reality dependent on us
Essentialism	Positivism	Structuralism	Critical realism	Social constructivism	Radical constructivism

The first group is commonly criticised for being overdetermined and rigid in its view of social change, whereas as the second group is accused of relativism and empiricism. Both criticisms are correct.

The essentialist positions have commonly reduced individuals to creatures devoid of will captured in the structures of society. What these theories have failed to see is that there is no such thing as the structures of society, since they are only present as psychological ideas shared by many people. So social structure is in effect psychic structure (see section 1.2). The essentialist conception of the dominating social/psychic structure has been very inadequate. Marxism claimed that human beings are guided by the economic structures, Parsons that we are guided by the normative structure and structuralism that societal structures dominate us. These mysterious structures have rigtly been criticised of being far from a world experienced as susceptible to individual influence.

The anti-essentialist positions, on the other hand, have commonly refused to accept any deeper reasons for observed patterns of behaviour. Giddens have denied that the concept of evolution has a place in social theory, while his own historical accounts documents clear large-scale developmental patterns. Social constructivism has rightly pointed to social reality as psychologically constructed phenomenon. They are therefore very concerned with relations and the need for dialogue, but has almost nothing to say of why we construct social reality as we do. This leads easily to relativism and context-near studies with no ambition of generalising findings.

Rorty has seemingly dealt with the problem of relativism by separating the world out there from truth. Since the establishment of truth is always based on language, it cannot exist independently of the human mind (Rorty 1989). This view presupposes that all truths about human desires and ideas emanate from language.

There is a third theoretical position between the to two radical poles: realism. It is important to separate realism and essentialism. Essentialism is the notion, that there is one and only one correct describtion of reality. Realism is the notion that there is a physical world/reality existing independent of human construction, Collin 50. Realists argue that the frames of human ideas and desires are set by biological and existential conditions that can be grounded in the outside world. The ideas and desires are then realised through language (among other things). Collin and Wenneberg argues for a constructivism that accepts an independent existence of the physical world and thus of human intentions (Wenneberg 2000, 179).

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Today most mainstream sociologists are either realist or radical socialconstructivists. Since Berger and Luckmans book it has been clear that the social world is a construction. The recent history of social science can be described as an oscillation between the standpoints of realists and radicals. Whereas arguments and concepts in a wide range of fields with-in social science have been revised, sharpened and improved throughout its history, the positions of realists versus radical socialconstructionists has only slowly, if at all, come closer to each-other (Wilson 1998, 186).

This paper will of course not provide proof of which of the two strands is the correct one. Such a proof is not attainable but is ultimately a question of belief. This does not mean however that it is impossible to increase our understanding of human nature. On the contrary, the main argument of this section is that we should not allow the lack of such proof to hinder an improvement in the precision of sociological models. I think the conflict between essentialism and anti-essentialism is one of the main reasons that social scientists have been reluctant to incorporate psychological concepts into their

theories. But this is a mistake. To look closer at human nature it is not necessary to choose between the above alternatives. Only it moves the problem from one level to another. The problem of god should not be discussed by reference to the question of human nature, but instead by reference to the question of how it is created (Wenneberg 2000, 144). Whereas this thesis describes the human nature, it does not offer any evidence as to how it has come to look this way.

This being said, the position of this author is in favour of realism. The realists are right in assuming an inner motivation, but it is far more flexible than is allowed for in contemporary sociological models. My claim is that if we do not accept some level of inner determination or motivation, we do not do justice to our empirical material and we end up with less informing theories, than we need to. To the radical socialconstructionists I concede that social reality is extremely complex and deeply influenced by factors such as context, co-incidence, free will and social construction of norms and institutions. Actions of small groups of individuals can have a very large impact on other people and we are not "cultural dupes". But these claims are not valid to a degree, that we cannot establish general knowledge of social change.

Rorty says lucidly that essentialism ultimately is to believe in a god. Since we know today that there is no god, there is no place for essentialism, only for contingency (Rorty 1989, 21). But we do not know that there is no god. We do not know what was before the big bang, we do not know, why matter can occur where emptiness was. As long as questions like these remain unanswered it is valid to search for an essence. Because what is the consequence of the denial of essence for the social sciences? It is theoretical poverty, paralysis. If we believe that there is no essence, we do not have to go through the troublesome pain inflicting work it is to discover it. Social constructivists are in the danger of letting the lack of an essence be an excuse for not looking for the basics of humans. Life does have an essence. It is extremely flexible and evanescent but it is there. It is this essence we will try to trace here.

The social sciences have the material (theory and empirical knowledge) to tell a clearer story it does today. This can be seen from the following example. It seems that large-scale history has certain patterns to it; i.e. technology seems to have improved continuously throughout human history, it seems that we have become better and better to organise ourselves across time and space, it seems that our respect for the lives of others have increased etc. However these patterns remain largely unexplained or explained by the loose concept of contingency by contemporary social theory (Alsted 2001; Giddens 1984; Mann 1986). I do not believe these patterns to be understood by claiming contingency. On the contrary, I think they can be explained by certain motivational elements in the human psyche. Society is deeply affected by our unconscious motives, as is the group (Ashbach and Schermer 1987, 27). These motives are by no means simple or easily understood and we may not ever understand them. But there is no reason for not looking. This is what the anti-essentialists fail to see and what the essentialists fail to conceptualise correctly.

1.2 *Refining the agent-structure analysis*

The second question to answer when working with both psychology and sociology is that of the relation between agent and structure. This question is closely connected to debate on the essence of the world. How one conceives of social structures is highly

dependent on which viewpoint one has on the deeper meaning of social life. It is the problem of the free will versus determinism. Are the actions of the individual determined by the free will of the individual or by the structural constraints on the individual? The discussion of the relation between these two aspects of social life has been with us since the antiquity and it remains a major issue today (Sørensen 1992). It is fair to say that the agent-structure problem is the most fundamental in the social sciences (Lloyd 1993).

The agent-structure relation is normally depicted this way:

Structure

↓ ↑

Agent

The problem for any social theory from groups to societies is that both the system and agents must be modelled (Hodgson Forthcoming, 15). The present agent-structure debate has run for nearly 20 years. Are there any truly new comments to add? I think there is, but let us first see what different strategies that are adopted in the question of agent versus structure. There are roughly three strategies.

The first strategy is to focus on the individual. This is the classic historical approach where important individuals' decisions in crucial moments in history are analysed. For a recent contribution within this line of thought refer to Simontons "Greatness" (Simonton 1994). This kind of analysis rests on the assumption that strong individuals can form history according to their own conscious will and tends to underplay or ignore the effects of largescale and structural factors. This is in many ways contradicted the empirical material.

The second strategy is to focus on the structures or other factors outside the control of the individual. Despite the recent years of development in structuration theory and social constructionism this kind of analysis is still popular. This is especially clear in analyses inspired by Foucault and Luhmann. Whereas the results gained by such analyses are often valuable and original, I think their theoretical basis is questionable. I think it is based on misunderstandings in two layers.

The first layer is the understanding of structures, discourses or systems. These are are often described as working outside the individual. But since the individuals are *the* material of societies there is no such thing as forces working outside the individual. When Foucault points to structures and Luhmann to systems, they are in reality referring to unconscious dynamics between people. These unconscious dynamics are then in lack of understanding called power and discourse or codes and communication. Since the unconscious dynamics are identified as such, the further investigation of their meaning and content is obstructed.

The second layer is the understanding of conscious versus unconscious dynamics. When indirectly focusing only on the importance of unconscious dynamics these authors only give us vague picture of the force of will and consciousness in societal de-

velopment. This means that the possibilities for understanding to what extent we can influence society are reduced.

These are the reasons that the third strategy remains the best and most popular available alternative in sociology: the mutual constitution of agent and structure. Here structure is to be understood very concretely as institution, habit, norm, routine or even organisation. There are several versions of this mutual constitution of agent and structure and it has now become mainstream theory in the form of social constructionism (Archer 1985; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984; Sztompka 1993). Anthony Giddens' depiction of agent and structure remains the most influential and will form the basis of our treatment here. One of Anthony Giddens' earnings is the conceptualisation and spreading of the relationship between agent and structure. Seemingly building on Berger and Luckmann he made it clear that agent and structure constitute each other.

Giddens' point of departure for a consideration of human motivation seems to be the concept of ontological security. To fight feelings of meaninglessnes and fear of chaos the individual creates a "cocoon" – a structure of habits and routines that keep chaos at safe distance. So Giddens points to the mutual constitution of agent and structure.

Giddens deliberately avoids all talk of human needs. This means that his model of human action and motivation lacks explanatory power. What Giddens tells us is how we constitute society – not why.

What is unsatisfactory about this model and of social-constructionism in general is that a weak model of the individual is used. Giddens' model of the individual psyche is "empty" of motivational content except from the need for structure. Whereas Giddens has rightly pointed to the duality of structure and the transformative capacity of the agent he has done so from a very vague description of the human psychological conditions. By rejecting any talk of human needs, Giddens refuses to conceptualise the wants, motivations and needs, that inform human action. My point here is that it necessary to do exactly that: generalise about human needs. It is necessary because it is the reality that we all live in and therefore it governs our way of constructing society. So although Giddens has written intensively on consciousness, self-identity etc. he has not incorporated a theory of motivation with his theory of society.

This is a serious problem since we are left with the impression that human beings can create any social structure they might conceive of. This means that the structuration theory and other related theories do not give us any tools to compare and evaluate different social structures. They are all equally possible and all equally good or bad.

But there are patterns in development given by the dynamics of motivation. These patterns, however, set only very broad frames for development. We are free to influence and change our lives, organisations and societies as we can within the limits given by our psychological motivations. However the patterns in structuration given by these motivations are ambiguous and hard to define. This ambiguïty accounts for many unnecessary divisions in social sciences, for instance the differences between structuralism and social-constructivism. Viewed properly there is no opposition between the two views. They can be united in a theory of motivation.

But whereas social science is rich in conceptualisations of structure, it is very poor on conceptualisations of the agent. Social scientists know virtually nothing about psychology and motivation:

The various sociological theories claims that the individual is driven by:

Body of theory	Assumption on motivation
Functionalism and institutionalism	Norms and institutions
Structuration theory, radical socialconstructionism	Contingencies
Neo-classical economy	Rational consideration
Liberal-realist international politics	Competition

All of the above assumptions on the motivation of the individual pay lip service to the insights of psychology. Human motivation is far more complex than most social theory allow for. How can we ever hope to understand how society is constituted if we do not understand both sides of the agent-structure equation? Only then can we construct more precise models of the constitution of society.

The agent-structure debate has come to an impasse. We all agree that they are mutual constituting. But nobody few analyse exactly how this happens. The agent-structure problem is thus at the root of several other major discussions within social theory.

1.3 The divisions of micro, meso and macro

The third question to be met before we embark on an integration of psychology and sociology is how to understand the division between the micro, meso and macro levels of society. The use of these levels in social theory is the concrete form of the agent-structure debate. The micro-level is the agent's domain, whereas the macro-level is the structures domain. In almost all theories of society it is possible to speak of different levels or layers (Collins 1988; Israel 1980; Smelser 1998b). These layers are often labelled the micro-, meso- and macro-level. Usually these crude levels cover a variety of sublevels. This is illustrated below.

Social level	Subject	Main division
Level 1	Individual	Micro
Level 2	Group	Micro, Meso
Level 3	Organisation	Micro, Meso
Level 4	Institution	Meso, Macro
Level 5	Structure	Macro
Level 6	Society	Macro
Level 7	Societies	Macro

What is a macro-level theory? Here macro-level theory will be used to connote what is often labelled grand theory elsewhere. It is theory that conceptualises the "big" structures of society and the major patterns of development. As compared to meso and

micro-level theories, macro-level theories aim to describe the large patterns societal change, structure and history. We can say that macro-level theories cover level 4 to 7 in our model above. The macro-level is treated by sociologists, political scientists, economists, historians etc.

Meso-level theories in the social sciences are the theories and concepts that help us understand society at an organizational and institutional level. In the model meso-level theories rudely cover levels 2 to 4. Most meso-level theories are developed to understand phenomenon with-in particular parts of society, i.e. government institutions, business enterprises etc. Meso-level theories are used in very different contexts from sector policy analysis to narrow case studies. The meso-level is treated by organisation consultants, business analysts, political analysts etc.

Micro-level theories cover understandings of the individual and the closest of his or hers relations. Micro-level theory is usually seen as psychology or as psychologically inspired. This covers the levels 1 to 3 in the illustration above. Micro-level theory seeks to understand the behavioural pattern of a single or very few individuals. This understanding can directed towards motivation, behaviour, power, emotion, co-operation etc. The micro-level is treated by psychologists, psychiatrists, biographers etc (Smelser 1998b, 1).

The social scientists of the macro and meso levels work to understand the dynamics of societies, institutions and organisations in order to understand why they change and develop as they do. It is their aim to understand common features of the actions and ideas of large number of people. The psychologists of the micro-level aim to understand the individual, how he changes and develops. In order to do that it has proven useful to develop theories to understand common features of large number of people. It is this part of psychology, that makes it interesting to social scientists.

Now at this point we should be aware of a very common problem related to this kind of analysis. The problem is related to the question of the validity of the layers. Are they reflections of the real world or are they mere analytical categories? The problem seems to be that there is no answer to this question. If we answer that the concepts are mere analytical categories, our theory becomes boring. If the concepts do not in any way reflect the real world, then they are of no special value to us and we might as well adopt some other concepts. If we on the other hand answer that they are reflections of the real world we will immediately be accused of reifying our concepts. This is of course also true since there is no such observable thing as a structure or a society or even an institution. And there is no way we can observe society as "above" structures or groups as "above" individuals.

Then why use a model with different layers? It is indeed the case that many do not use such a model. Another solution however is to develop an understanding of the layers that avoids both problems sketched above. This book will be structured as to deepen our understanding of agent and structure and to unify the concepts of the micro, meso and macro levels. At the same time each of the levels of meso and macro have distinctive problems of their own derived from the unclear agent-structure debate. These will be treated separately. We will begin the thesis with an analysis of what we have got already in the social sciences.

2 A model of motivation - towards a better grounding of macro and meso level theory

In this chapter an elaborate model of motivation will be constructed. As will be seen the model draws heavily on core psychological concepts.

Psychology and psychoanalysis has been criticised by social scientists of being to narrow in its focus. The history of one individuals psychological development does not have explanatory power on the societal level (Liechty 1995, 21). And since we cannot psychoanalyse every individual, psychoanalysis is not useful to the social sciences. The aim of this thesis is to refute this claim and to broaden the use of psychology.

I think there is much to gain for sociology if a general model of motivation is developed (Alsted 1998). In this chapter therefore, we will have a close look on the human condition, with the intention of understanding better why we act as we do in organisations and society. I have earlier stated, that this includes understanding the unpleasant side of social life, i.e. anger, jealousy and envy (Alsted 1999).

Fineman have had much the same experience and claims that students of organization can learn much from psychodynamic theory (Fineman 1993). In this chapter we will do just that: try to learn from psychological theory. We will go strait to the core of psychological theory: Freud's structural model of the psyche.

A puzzling tendency in psychological writing is that most psychologists seem to take the tripartite model for granted. Nevertheless it is rarely debated. The literature on the model is far from as rich as on many other topics within psychology. The reason for this could be that Freud's tripartite structure has become tradition, another could be that there exist very little direct empirical documentation for the structure of the psyche. The structure of the psyche has to be inferred from secondary observations such as behaviour, pathologies etc. This makes it a controversial issue to construct a model of structure of the psyche. We will try anyway.

2.1 The structural model of the self

The structural model of personality is perhaps Freuds singlemost famous contribution to psychology. This part of Freuds writings also developed over the years. Here we will use the later versions of the structural model formulated around 1926[1]. The classic illustration of Freuds structural model is as follows:

Superego
Ego
Id

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[1] The structural model is commonly accepted as the most useful and correct one (Arlow and Brenner 1964). Freud himself discarded the earlier topographic model.

The Id represents the unconscious part of the self. It contains the impulses of the drives and the repressed fantasies and wishes. To Freud the unconscious was mans repressed fear of his biological impulses, of his instincts (Løvlie 1982, 104).

The ego negotiates the demands of the id, the superego and the external reality. The ego is the seat of the "realistic" self image and identity. The ego is partly unconscious. The ego functions according to the principle of reality. The principle of reality is another important concept in Freuds writings. It was introduced in 1911 (Olsen and Køppe 1985, 344). This concept seeks to explain how the individual can postpone the immediate satisfaction of the drives in order to satisfy them in the longer term. The principle of reality is the force that restrain or repress the immediate needs of the drives. This is nescessary because an immediate satisfaction in many cases will be harmful to the individual. This is where the external reality comes into Freuds model.

The superego represents the idealized ego. It is the seat of internalized parental and social norms and rules. Part of the superego is unconscious.

Freud believed that the three forces should be in balance. None were better than the other.

The relations between the concepts of superego, ego, id and consciousness can be illustrated as follows:

	Unconscious	Preconscious	Conscious
Superego	X	X	
Ego	X	X	X
Id	X		

2.2 Is it still relevant?

But is this model still relevant? Three objections to the tripartite model can be outlined.
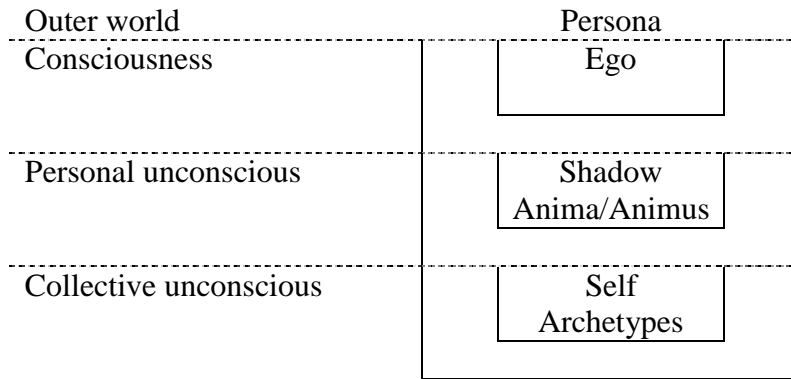
First, a number of authors criticise the tripartite model of splitting the psyche into parts and thus loosing the view of the persons psyche as a whole (Ticho 1982, 851). These authors include Adler, Horney and Lichtenberg – referencer (Lichtenberg 1991, 59). According to their critique the conflictual basis of the tripartite model underplays the development towards a harmonious self. It seems however, that a very large part of the critique is directed towards the drives rather than the structural model. The basis of the critique then is less the structure of the tripartite model, than the functions attributed to the id, ego and superego. It is true that Freuds model does not handle more recent motivational theories, such as Lichtenberg's or Maslow's very well. An alternative must treat this problem.

In the place of the three structures is often proposed an overarching self as the main and only psychic structure. This self is then the broad container initiating, organising and integrating experience (Lichtenberg 1991, 59).

I think such a model of the self seriously reduces the prospects for a detailed understanding of intrapsychic processes. As Kernberg has rightly stated this conceptualisa-

tion empties the concept of the self of all meaning (Kernberg 1982, 892). It is almost tautological: The psyche consists of the self, which is the main structure of the psyche. In other words it leaves the psyche as a black box. This critique then does not present us with a valid alternative.

Second, Jung can be said to have developed a structural model of the psyche that presents a real alternative to Freuds (Jung 1933; Jung 1960).

Outer world	Persona
Consciousness	Ego
Personal unconscious	Shadow Anima/Animus
Collective unconscious	Self Archetypes

Adapted from (Crain 1992, 292)

From my point of view Jung's model have two weaknesses. The first is that Jung did not in a clear way include the role of relations to the outer world in his model. As our discussions in section 5.2 showed, this must form an integral part of motivation and the psyche. The second weakness is that Jung's model lacks concepts that explain how the psyche develops. Through which mechanisms do the psyche mature and self-actualise? To the purpose of this work Jung's model does not do.

Third, a common critique of the tripartite model is that it is too global (Chasseguet-Smirgel and Goyena 1993; Horowitz 1993; Wallerstein 1991; Weinshel 1991)

One good example of this critique is Mardi Horowitz. He stated that the model is "too global and, so, unwieldy in adressing issues of change processes." (Horowitz 1993, 7). He therefore suggests the concept of schema. Schemas are learned throughout life and tell us how to love, fight, build etc. Certain schemas are related to the id others to the ego and others again to the superego.

And Horowitz is of course right. It is not enough to have a tripartite structure. We most also know what the structures contain. And this is exactly what Horowitz aims to do. Note that he does not discard the model, he elaborates. It is the general tendency among the critics referred to, that they do not present an alternative to the tripartite model. Instead they investigate so called "microstructures", such as Horowitz schemes. To me however Horowitz' schemes and other related concepts do not present a deeper understanding of the basic workings of the psyche.

In sum, it seems that there exists no real alternative to the tripartite model in explaining the structure of our psyche (Meyer 1991). In addition it seems that the critique of the tripartite model has more to do with its foundation in the drives than with the three structures themselves. As we discussed above the drives will not form part of this model of motivation, but the tripartite model will.

I believe the tripartite model to be valuable. There is a simple logic to it that is very difficult to reach with other models: The psyche mirrors the inner and the outer world through the id and the superego. To master the relation between these two the ego develops.

A new structural model of the psyche should however contain different deviations from Freud's original (and many later) presentation of the tripartite model (Arlow and Brenner 1964).

First, the id is often described/mistaken as the unconscious and then discussed as an instinct based residual structure rather than an independent entity. In this model it is agreed that large parts of the id is unconscious. But the id has its own dynamic components. The Id has processing capacities, preferences, ability for self-regulation etc. (Ticho 1982).

Second, the categories of unconscious, preconscious and conscious are seen as cognitive categories only. They have no content of their own, but only through the three instances. They describe the level of cognition in the psyche (Arlow and Brenner 1964). This means that all three instances can contain both conscious and unconscious elements.

Third, both id and superego are governed by feelings of pleasure and unpleasure. In many accounts only the id is in connection with these basics of the psyche (Arlow and Brenner 1964, 32).

Fourth, all three psychic instances are here seen as developed in parallel. Some view the superego as being formed later than the other instances (Brenner 1982).

Fifth, as to the meaning of the structure, the id, ego & superego are not containers, they are conceptual constructs meant to summarise findings of repetitive patterns of psychic functioning (Arlow 1991, 288). The three instances consist of a very large number of sub- or microstructures. However each of the psychic structures function according to different principles and therefore the sub-structures will follow these principles. We shall identify these principles in detail.

These are the main claims of the structural model presented here. They will be elaborated in what follows. As the critics say: we need more details. In the following we will discuss some of these details. The first question addressed is that of dynamics. The dynamics of the tripartite model must also prove useful. How is the relationship between the structures? As will be seen from the following, it is less in the structures and more in the dynamics we find disagreements.

2.3 Dynamics: compromise formation

The tripartite model of the psyche seeks to account for the observation that the psyche seems to speak with several "tongues". McIntosh has compared the psyche with a committee: Several actors that have to agree on an issue, each with his own will, McIntosh cited in (Pulver 1991, 165).

Conflict is important to the structural model since it is through exchange between the three structures that psyche develops. The exchange takes the form of conflicting priorities of the three structures. Solving conflicts and reducing ambivalence through compromise formation is the work of the psyche (Brenner 1982, 5-6; Schwartz 1991), Kernberg 1976, 59.

If pleasure and unpleasure is the basic way in which the psyche orients itself in the world, then conflict between the two can be said to be driving the psyche (Tyson 1991, 84). We have already discussed the basic elements of pleasure and unpleasure. But this does not explain much. If the world can be divided in pleasurable and unpleasurable events and feelings, then it should be enough for the psyche to avoid the unpleasurable and seek the pleasurable. As we all know from our daily lives this is not possible. On the mundane level of living pleasure and unpleasure is mixed. This fact of life applies on the psychic level as well. Some times the way to pleasure is through unpleasure or two different wishes for pleasure can be opposed.

In other words psychic life is one of conflict between different wishes. Brenner defines conflict as the situation when seeking pleasure arises unpleasure in the form of anxiety or depression (Brenner 1982, 70). An example of such a situation occurs when a child realises that his wishes (for pleasure) are in conflict with his mother's. Since rejection from the mother creates unpleasure (anxiety) in the child the psyche is confronted with a dilemma: Is it to postpone the wish for pleasure or is it to insist and risk further unpleasure? The solution of this problem is a compromise.

Compromise formation between different priorities is the work of the psyche. The tripartite structure is well suited to handle compromises. There are three elements in a compromise: a satisfactory amount of pleasure, a tolerable amount of unpleasure and a defence to protect the compromise (Brenner 1982, 109).

The three structures of the psyche are built to remedy conflicts as in the example given above. The function of the psyche then is to afford the fullest degree of pleasure compatible to a tolerable level of anxiety (unpleasure) (Brenner 1982, 119). This is done by compromise formations. These serve both the id, ego and superego and are compromises between them[2].

According to Brenner the ego must be seen as mediator between id and superego. There are several reasons for this

First, the more symmetrical model of the psyche offered here is developed as a consequence of Brenners insight that compromise formations are the output of the psyche. If compromises have to be negotiated it is because both parties have power to obstruct development if it is not integrated. This hints a more symmetrical structure of the psyche than is allowed for in Freuds model.

Second, this idea follows the insight of the objectrelationists that the psyche is born through the relationship with outer world. Consequently the psychic representation of the outer world relations – the superego – must be a dynamic force parallel to that of

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[2] Brenner has been critized of neglecting the contents of the psychic structures, placing too much weight on the dynamic side of psychic life (Schafer 1991, 304). I agree that this is a problem and it will be addressed below.

the id. If we are to take seriously the observations presented in theories that view personality as influenced by relations, we must alter the model of the psyche consequently. In Vygotskis, Leontjews and Kernbergs view the psyche is created in the process of relating to the outer world. This means that psychic management of these relations is as basic as wishes for personal satisfaction. Outer events arise emotional responses of the same intensity as inner events does.

It is not enough to say that each of the categories id, ego and superego are only constructed for analytical purposes. If we are to take our own model seriously we must stick to the assumption that the categories correspond to the reality of the psyche in some way. The following model claims that there are three fundamental organising principles in the psyche, that of the id, superego and ego. This does mean that there are three boxes or containers in our heads. But it does mean that the interwoven, overlapping, chaotic microstructures of the psyche each works according to one of these three principles. And the result is compromise formations serving all three principles.

2.4 Defence: Individuals' ability to relate

So what determines the individual's ability to relate is his tolerance of ambivalence in his own psyche and with the other. To differ between different levels ambivalence tolerance we must understand how the psyche copes with it. This is what we normally call defensive mechanisms.

So far we have identified the problem of motivation (ambivalence tolerance) as the ego's management of the conflicting priorities of id and superego. We have claimed that this happens through compromise formations. Compromises are formed from a satisfactory amount of pleasure, a tolerable amount of unpleasure and a defence to protect the compromise. The function of the defence is to exclude from the compromise formation excessive pleasure or unpleasure. In other words: everything that threatens the compromise formation.

In his lucid treatment of different concepts of defence (repression, denial, displacement etc.) Brenner finds that defence is when the ego "says" no (Brenner 1982, ch. 5). Every defence is to avoid excessive levels of ambivalence to interfere with the compromise formation or to distort the ego's functions. There is no special defensive function. All ego functions can serve as defences, helping the ego to say no. Thus, defences are ways to deal with ambivalence, to reduce it. The less ambivalence tolerance in the relating individual, the more defences are needed in the relation
- kobling med Illeris læringsteori: når udfordringen er for stor og ikke kan rummes indenfor eksisterende skemaer

In the preceding section on psychic development through life, I claimed that compromise formations and ambivalence tolerance become more and more efficient through life in normal development. This is the real observation made by the authors of stage theories.

How can we determine the efficiency of the compromise formations? This is a very difficult problem. Normally we imply, that if the ego as part of a compromise formation must say no to large or important areas of social interaction, we would call it inefficient.

One way to observe this increasing tolerance is by studying the development of defences though life.

Kernberg has introduced several relevant ways to separate different levels of psychic organisation and consequently different levels of defensive operations (Kernberg 1976; Kernberg 1980). For the present purposes Kernberg's concepts can be presented as four different levels of defence:
1. Identity diffusion (the schizoid level)
2. Splitting (the borderline level)
3. Neurosis (the depressive level)
4. Integration (the healthy level)

The first two levels represent serious mental disorders, while the second two levels are more normal. Level 1 and 2 interests us here because they are relevant to the understanding of defensive processes in groups.

Such a list however will vary according to the level of psychic development for the individual in question. What is an appropriate strategy for a normal 9 years old child, will lead to fixation and underdevelopment for a normal 25 years old adult.

Each of these corresponds to a typical age period in the stage theories. A tentative illustration of the correspondence could look like this:

Defence level	Typical Life period	Cognitive level
Identity fusion	Childhood	Not separating self and object
Splitting		Not Integrating good and bad
Neurosis	Youth and adulthood	Not integrating good and bad on a conscious level
Integration	Mature adulthood	Full integration

So the principles of this description of human psychic development are the following: There is no developmental plan laid down in humans. We are born with the potentially conflicting priorities of the psyche. What develops is the psyche and the ego's capacity to find increasingly efficient solutions to the conflicting priorities. To solve problems of motivation must be learned – it is not innate. In other words we learn to improve our psychic well being.

Another consequence of this model is that the timing of the developmental scheme can be different through history and across cultures. Furthermore there will be many different solutions to the problem of motivation. This means that the developmental sequence can be different from culture to culture, from sex to sex and from person to person. These variations can be explained by several factors: earlier experience, learning from significant others, cultural barriers and inducements to learning etc. Some families and cultures make it virtually impossible to establish relationships to help the individual attain psychic development beyond neurosis. Psychic development can be halted at all levels. If development stops at primitive defensive mechanisms it is la-

belled as pathologies, if stopped at higher levels it is labelled depression or resignation. On the other hand it is imaginable that in an ideal future culture the defence level of integration can be reached at the age of 18! And there might even be potentials of the psyche beyond what is labelled the healthy level here.

Another remark is that of historical relativity. Compromise formations are also historical constructs. Since it is integral to our psychic well being to maintain "good" relationships with other people we are marked by the spirit of our time.

These ideas of psychic development through learning do not mean, however, that we must give up all predictions of how people develop through life. We have learned from observation, that this learning follows certain patterns. Analysing these patterns can tell us more about the psyche and motivation. There still is a surprising similarity of psychic development from person to person.

2.5 *Psychological development through relationships*

Throughout life we seem to learn what "works" for us in terms of mental wellbeing. This learning takes place in the context of relating to other people. In this section we will have a closer look at how we relate to each other.
The fundamental point of object-relations theory is that we learn about ourselves through interacting with others. We see how they react on our actions. The basic ingredient of relations is thus mutual attention. We need response/reality testing from our surroundings. It is through relationships that we experience ourselves.

The ability to give attention to others and to receive it consequently becomes very important. The individuals' need for attention is virtually endless. But the ability to give attention (love) is not. The ability to give love is normally said to be dependent on self-love. What then is self-love? Following our investigation of the motivational sources self-love is connected to the experience of oneself as competent, stably receiving attention (love). This means that the emotional energy released through a relationship is closely related to the amount of attention invested in it. Relationships can be differentiated according to this principle.

Thus not all relationships are equally rewarding. Some relationships provide better conditions for psychic development than others. How do relationships differ? Lieberman et al conducted a very illustrative and eloquent study of development in encounter groups. Assessing the leadership of the groups they found that there are 4 basic leadership functions (Lieberman, et al. 1973, 233-239; Poulsen 2000, 39)[3]:

Emotional stimulation represents the revelation of feelings, personal values and attitudes by the leader and the encouragement of others to do the same.
Meaning attribution is the provision of concepts for understanding and explaining relations and events in the group
Caring is the offering of friendship, protection, acceptance, affection and love
Executive function represents provision of structures such as limits, rules, decisions and goals

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[3] See also Yaloms own comments on the study (Yalom 1980, 32-33).

These measures have since been used to develop leadership tests, plans etc. But I think they tell a truth not only about leadership but about relationships in general whether or not these are symmetrical (i.e. partners or friends) or assymmetrical (i.e. parent-child or leader-employee). Emotional stimulance, meaning attribution, caring and steering are central ingredients in every relationship from parent-child to couples, client-therapist and friends etc.

Lieberman found that maximal development of group members occurred with leaders combining these functions in a specific way – regardless of method. The relation between outcome and leadership style was as follows:

Leaders with moderate emotional stimulation had the best results whereas low or high stimulation yielded comparatively worse results. With regard to meaning attribution it seemed that the more the better. This was especially so when meaning attribution was directed towards the individual as opposed to the group. Correspondingly so with caring. The caring displayed towards group members the better results. Finally executive function or steering proved best in moderate amounts (Lieberman, et al. 1973, 240).

This is then the optimal form of relationships. But how does relations form in practice? It is the mutual negociation of emotional stimulance, meaning attribution, caring and steering. If two persons meet they will both "desire" and feel threatening the content of the relation. What a person will "desire" and feel threatening on a concrete level will depend on each persons character. On a deeper level the partly unconscious motivational elements will come into play. Following our model of motivation contact with other people satisfies some motivational needs and threatens others.

Contact can be satisfactorily for the motivational needs by giving stability, entertainment (affective pleasure), superiority (specialness), belongingness (social integration). It can be threatening by provoking anxieties of change, dependence and loosing individuality. In most cases it will do both these things and more.

Contact with other people creates both love and aggression. As with the process of psychic development ambivalence is a core experience in relations. Tolerance of ambivalence is central to the ability to relate to other people. This correspondence to mechanisms of psychic development is not a co-incidence, of course. Psychic development and relating are intimately connected. As was illustrated in the section on psychic development through life ambivalence tolerance in the individual develops while relating to others in what could be called a dialectic development sequence.

The capacity for establishing relations to others, whether superficially or deeply, is directly related to love. Love is the basic emotion needed to be able to supply the attention to others. It is commonly accepted that the ability to give love is strongly related to the love for oneself. But what is love?

As tolerance of ambivalence is paramount in intra psychic development, it is correspondingly so in love for others. Since other people often have motives and anxieties of their own, that threatens the individual, it is important to be able accept and allow for these in a relationship. Full ability for concern for others presupposes the integration of love and hatred (Kernberg 1976, 223). To have a deep relationship is only pos-

sible to the degree that one has integrated good and bad affects, i.e. motivations and anxieties.

2.6 The tripartite model and motivation

Then how can we use the tripartite model to understand motivation? As earlier mentioned there are some obvious strengths of the tripartite model. It allows us to understand the overall dynamics of psychic development. First of all we understand now, that there is no simple answer to the question of motivation. The psyche contains structures with potentially conflicting priorities. The ego has a central role in reconciling and mediating between these priorities.

So what the tripartite model illustrates is the lifelong process of integration of the ego. It can be said to integrate more and more aspects of the id and the superego – of innermost wishes and of reality. The longer this process has come, the richer the individual. What changes is the compromise formations in the psyche.

Much of Freud's, Kernberg's and others writings seem to be hinting at exactly this: The key to continuous psychological growth is the continued development of the ego. What these authors argue is exactly that we should integrate (learn to cope) larger parts of our anxiety, larger parts of the real world in order to create our own world.

The problem of motivation is that every wish for pleasure seems to release anxiety. How are we to pleasure maximize? We are not born with this capacity. We have to learn it through our own and society's experiences. Over time the management of pleasure vs. unpleasure is improved through a strengthening of the ego's capacities. Ego development is to learn to give more pleasure to psyche and to increase the tolerance for anxiety.

2.7 A summation of the model

We can now sum up the model of motivation. In its effort to understand and mirror the world the psyche comes into existence by separating and categorising internally different events and feelings. Throughout life this categorisation develops and in some ways becomes increasingly flexible.

The tolerance of ambivalence increases and thus the ability to mobilise emotional energy for a variety of purposes, i.e. work and family.

This means that we have the following concepts and behaviour patterns to adapt to meso- and macro-level theories:

- The main ingredients of individual life are threefold: joy of life, anxiety and defencive mechanisms. Since they are important to the individual they will also affect the relationships that he or she forms.

- The human psyche has the potential to develop increasingly efficient defences against anxiety and higher tolerance of ambivalence. Such a development makes

possible an increasing unfolding of capacities and resources (emotional energy) in the individual.

- A condition for development however is participation in relationships with high degrees of mutual attention and commitment. Psychic development is to a high extent determined by the quality of such relationships.

- Degree of psychic development can be measured from the forms of psychic defence employed by the individual.

- All social systems from groups to societies can be seen as expressions of a common psychic defence against ambiguity and are thus essentially compromise formations

- Performance of social systems on both meso- and macro-level is expected to be predictable from the ability to combine emotional stimulance, meaning attribution, caring and executive functions in the optimal blend

What consequences does such a model have for our understanding of meso and macro levels of society? One consequence is that we have to see our interactions both as defences against anxiety and as mediums of self-actualization.

3 Patterns on Macro- and Meso-level

Time has now come to explore the consequences of this model of motivation to the way we conceive of organisations, institutions and societies

The fundamental problem to solve is how we can accept both an individual foundation of motivation and a view of relations as the source of all that happens in organisations. We have learnt that it is not only possible but also necessary to attribute meaning to almost any object "chosen" by ourselves, to any social system developed by ourselves as the social constructivism claims.

But there are limits: First the priorities and defences of the psyche put certain limits and patterns to the way organisations are created. The agent-structure debate has taught us that structures are not given and external, but emanate from ourselves and that they can be changed. But the agent-structure debate did not provide us with two things. First we do not understand just how much we can influence structure and just how much structure influences us. Second we lack an understanding of the structure of the structuration process. With the present model of motivation we can now understand the principles under which structuration occurs.

Second history situates any social system (organisation, society etc.) in a context of competition with other equal entities. This means that history has a tendency to favour organisations that mobilise emotional energy relatively more efficient. If two sets of organisational forms are available and one seems to fulfil motivational goals better than the other everybody will opt for that. This means that over time we will have not just any organisation or institution we might conceive of. In contrast we will have structures that satisfies motivational goals better than earlier ones.

3.1 Agent-structure as compromise formations

In the preceding section it was established that the ability to relate rests on the efficiency of the psychic defences – the compromise formations. Above these were treated as an individual matter. But compromise formations also have a social dimension.

As was demonstrated above there is a close relation between the basic motivators and the key dimensions of relationships. I further stressed that the ability to engage in a relationship was dependent on the individual's level of psychic defence. But at the same time the only way to develop the psychic defences is through rewarding relationships. So which comes first? I suggest that the solution is not to state the priority of one over the other. In contrast the problem is essentially one of levels or systems.

When regarding the level of relations we are studying the internal workings of a system called a group, whereas when regarding individual defence mechanisms we are studying the internal workings of a system called the psyche. There is thus a hierarchy of systems. The problem of social constructionism is that they fail to investigate the workings of the psychic systems and how they spill over to the group system.

The reason that social constructionism has a valid point in questioning the "thruth" of all social facts is that the basic human motives can be satisfied in many different ways. Consider the width of the four basic ingredients of a relationship. They can be fullfilled in many different ways and still the psychic system will work.

When two people relate they do so expecting to gain pleasure with as little anxiety as possible. In order to be able to act together (or indeed to meet at all) and communicate they must have a common picture of the character of their relation. This picture can be labelled a compromise formation and is a means to reduce ambiguity by determining what their relation does and does not encompass.

Since the real intentions of each person are ambivalent both parties will rightly be suspicious of each other. To reduce ambiguity and thus anxiety such a relation is formed under a common compromise formation. In order to communicate at all in is necessary for each person to establish picture of the other in order to structure the interaction. The picture is in effect a compromise formation – a psychic defence against ambiguity.

Thus in order to maintain a friendship we agree to the compromise formation, that friends are loyal to each other, that they tell each other private matters, that the friendship has a story etc. These are rules we have to believe in order to maintain the close relation a friendship.

Correspondingly with working relations: In order to work with other people we agree on the compromise formation, that colleagues have a common goal, co-operate on tasks, that they work within fixed ours, that they keep their promises etc.

That these assumptions are psychic defences can be seen in the fact that they do often not hold. Friends are not always loyal, colleagues do not always have a common goal or co-operate. The social and individual reality is far more complex and ambiguous than the rules of friendship or colleagueship indicates. All relationships thus both have a symbolic representation and a real existence. The symbolic expression is a compromise formation.

This means that all social relationships are framed or protected by common compromise formations. This is what the words structure, institution and organisation indicate: common psychic defences in order to reduce ambiguity. We all have an interest in maintaining these common compromise formations since they are part of our psychic defence.

Social institutions, including group identities, are psychic defences making it possible for us to act together. Ritualisation of group activities is comparable to the psyche's ritualisation of relations and self-perception. When erecting social structures we protect ourselves from the ambiguity of social life and thus make it possible to act together on a larger scale. Social structures are the collective effort of many psyches defences.

This means of course that there is an intimate relation between the individual's level of psychic defence and the way he or she relates to common compromise formations.

3.2 What is the meso level?

Ritualisation or institutions further have the advantage of making it possible for many people to act together in a co-ordinated manner. When larger social groupings are formed to the benefit of all, the intense levels of attention kept in face to face relations can no longer be sustained. Such a decrease in structure would normally release pathological regression. To avoid this, these relationships are ritualised

Berger and Luckmann have treated the question of ritualisation (institutionalisation) thoroughly in their famous book (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Their answer is that the idea of society, institutions etc. exists in our minds only and that it is only through careful continuous maintenance that they continue to exist. The idea that a certain societal structure or institution exist continuously makes us act and speak accordingly, thereby making the institution exist.

The meaning then the levels is the following: The macro layers are macro layers not because they are at the top, but because they exist in many people's minds. The idea of being a Dane is shared by approximately 5 mio. people. The idea of working for the Danish government is shared by app. 1 mill. persons and so forth. This notion covers the relationship with people in society at large that you don't know but with whom you share occupation, nationality, belief etc. It is not only the number of people sharing an idea or identity that defines the macro-level, it is also their stretching in time. To speak of a macro-phenomenon often implies that it has endured for a longer period.

Correspondingly the meso layers are meso layers because a smaller amount of people share the idea of belonging to the scientific community or of working for Carlsberg. This notion covers the relationship with people in your organisations that you don't know personally but with whom you share identity etc.

This brings us to the microlevel. The micro level concerns ideas, feelings, identities, abilities that we share with no other or very few people. This we find in the partner/parent relationship: These are the most intimate relationship known. This type of relationship gives the individual feedback on actions and emotions on a very detailed level.

The difference between micro, meso and macro can thus be understood as a differentiation of relations according to the level of intimacy and attention given to each other. The close relationship will be termed micro, whereas the relationship based on rituals will be termed meso or macro. What differs between the types of relationship is the level of trust. The most intimate relations we have are with ones usually labelled "significant other" – parents and other primary caretakers during childhood and partners and siblings in adulthood. The limits between the distinctions are of course fluid. I.e. is an organisational analysis a meso-level or micro-level task?

In other words the meaning of a layered model is to designate how many people is covered by our concepts and hypotheses. It also goes with the idea that the levels affect each other. The levels or layers are interconnected. What happens in one layer affect the other layers. This means that outer layers are not reducible to core layers in the model. Society is more than the sum of individual agency. This means that ideas shared by the vast majority of people in, i.e. a society, that is a macro-level phenome-

non, unavoidably will affect and become shared by newcomers. On the other hand can ideas generated at micro- or meso-level under special circumstances be spread to many people and become macro-level phenomena, i.e. the rapid spreading of islam in the late 7th century.

The concepts of micro, meso and macro are thus about interaction and relations. The more people involved in the interaction and relation the higher level the social phenomenon is on. The levels can be said to be different levels in our identity. It is important to realise that they are all in our minds. Macro or meso layers exist because large numbers of people act accordingly, they believe in them.

If macro or meso layers are largely psychic phenomena as demonstrated by Berger & Luckmann then it is more obvious how our understanding of motivation affect our understanding of the social meso- and macro-level. If our understanding of human motivation is impaired, then our understanding of development in meso- and macro-level phenomena will also be reduced. For example, the conceptualisation of the individual used in a theory, either explicit or implicit, will always affect the concepts of the rest of the layers.

3.3   *The structure of structuration*

The individual will have the following priority when constituting structures: Reducing ambivalence. This has been expressed rather dramatically by Norman Brown. He sees sociability is a human sickness caused by our repression of anxiety for death (Brown 1959, 100). This goal can be met by almost any structure/institution. This is the need also discovered by Berger and Luckman, Goffman, Garfinkel and Giddens. We can now supplement their findings with the conclusions from the development of the model of motivation. This model indicates that all social organisations, institutions, norms, rules etc. will provide stability, opportunity to develop competence, opportunity to bond and opportunity to compete.

Opportunity provided by structure		Function of structure		Motivational goal
Opportunity to compete	↔	Emotional stimulation	↔	Self-assertive social relationship goals
Stability	↔	Caring	↔	Affective goals
Opportunity to develop competence	↔	Meaning attribution	↔	Competence goals
Opportunity to bond	↔	Executive function	↔	Integrative social relationship goals

These characteristics are held in any social structure generated by human interaction. This claim can be strengthened by saying that social structures are made to satisfy these goals. So the structuration process is not "blind" but happens according to the above rules.

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