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MASS SOCIETY AS NON-LINEAR DEVELOPMENT:
A STUDY IN COMMUNICATION AND POLITICAL INTEGRATION*

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Non-Linear Development.

Studies of political development are often undertaken with the assumption that the various institutions of a developing society change at uniform and similar rates, or that at least the relations among these institutions are homeostatic. This approach overlooks an important and well documented source of variance, viz., the differential rates of change of various parts of society requiring adaptations in other parts of society, and the potential delays in these required adaptations.¹

A requisite for the integration of political systems is the linkage of large numbers of individuals through channels of social communication so that the heritage associated with the common characteristics of the members of the system may be shared and provide a basis for symbolic identification.² Cybernetic models of politics have postulated that communication is the cement which binds together the units of political organization.³

Few people can observe at first hand the sequence of acts which constitute even a small segment of the political process; men must depend instead upon a communication system to provide them with a comprehension of the substance of politics at any particular time. It is through the organization of the communications process that the host of random actions which represent the pursuit of power by people throughout a society are placed in some form of relationship with each other; that order is established in the sphere of power considerations and a society finds that it has a polity.⁴

Although political development is a complex phenomenon, recent literature has conceptualized it as consisting of

three phases; the traditional, the transitional, and the modern. In the first phase, there is a low degree of occupational differentiation in the local political community. The definition of the citizen role is based upon religious, ethnic or regional affiliations, and political communication takes place through networks of interpersonal contacts. Thus, in the American case, Tocqueville noted that the activities of political notables were a common topic of conversation.⁵

In a modern system, on the other hand, the populace is greatly differentiated occupationally, and the definition of the citizen role becomes more cosmopolitan in the sense that it necessarily includes as fellow citizens individuals who live far away, who are of different ethnic or religious stock, and so forth. This difference is the basis of many of the problems faced by previously stateless new nations.⁶ The increased complexity of the social order has two major consequences for the flow of political communication. First, the range of interpersonal contact among individuals becomes more occupationally limited.⁷ Persons who are in close touch with political matters come into contact with others who are similarly knowledgeable about politics, while individuals who are less involved with politics are insulated from interpersonal political communication. Since the rediscovery of the primary group reported by the publication of Katz' and Lazarsfeld's study of influence among housewives in Decatur, Illinois, it has been assumed that political news was diffused among the populace through a "two-step" flow of communication

whereby opinion leaders were influenced by the media of mass communications and themselves influenced others through interpersonal contact. It must be noted, however, that in the field of public affairs, there was a "lower rate of confirmed contact and role corroboration" than there were in the other influence spheres considered by the authors.⁸ The assumption of interpersonal political communication in urban industrial society, then, remains to be validated. We do know that a 1964 survey in Detroit revealed that "Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of the general population sample...reported that they had neither asked nor been asked for opinions on a major news topic during the week or two prior to being interviewed."⁹

A second consequence of the increased division of labor in society is that a communications industry develops and becomes differentiated, on the bases of both personnel and technology, from other sectors of society. While the relatively low level of interpersonal political communication which persists cannot provide the integrative force necessary in a complex modern society, particularly in terms of nationalistic rather than localistic citizen roles, the agencies of mass communication can, and do, fulfill this function.

The characteristics of the transitional stage cannot be delimited as clearly, for this stage can only be defined in terms of the other two. Thus, Pye suggests that the key structural consideration at this stage is the "bifurcated and fragmented" nature of the communications system. "...It usually involves in varying degrees one system which is based

upon modern technology, is urban-centered, and reaches the more Westernized segments of the population, and also a separate complex system which conforms in varying degrees to traditional systems in that it depends upon face-to-face relations and tends to follow the patterns of social and communal life."¹⁰

It is our contention that this formulation of communication systems in transitional societies is overly simplistic, for it assumes that as soon as urban centers develop, agencies of mass communication spring up and are immediately capable of fulfilling the integrative function of political communication. The concentration of dense populations in urban centers with highly differentiated occupational structures creates the necessity for mass communications institutions, but there is a lag between the development of this demand and its fulfillment. We hypothesize that at that point of time at which the political community has become too differentiated to be successfully integrated by face-to-face political communication, and before the agencies of mass communication evolve, there will be a decrease in the level of political involvement of the population, and an increase in the scope of governmental power.

There have, in fact, been a series of cross-national studies which lend credence to the notion that communications development lags somewhat behind the increasing complexity of social structures. Cutright, in a study involving data from 77 nations, found a high association ($r = .81$) between

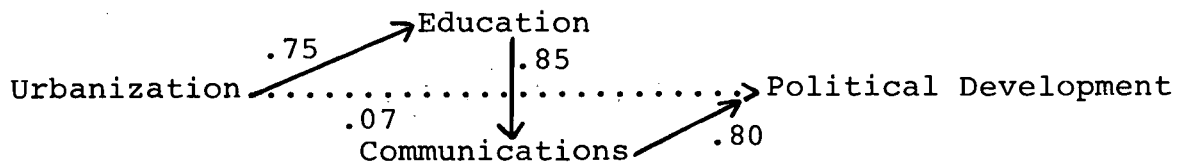
communication and political development, and that the most parsimonious equation for predicting development involved only urbanization and communication as independent variables.¹¹ This study does not confront the issue of popular electoral participation, nor does it differentiate between interpersonal and mass communications.¹² We shall see below, however, that the relationship between urbanization and communication has important implications for the understanding of the political structures of the American states, as well as for cross-national comparisons.

Daniel Lerner comes closer to addressing the question of participation when he speaks of two phases of mobilization. He argues that in the first phase, urbanization increases in society and, with it, production and availability of communication media also increase.¹³ This may be considered the media production phase.

In the second phase, literacy, which has grown under the influence of urbanization, leads to increased media use. This may be regarded as the consumption phase. Lerner's measure of media use is based upon mass communications: newspapers, radio and cinema. Media use, in turn, is a predictor of political participation. Thus, although he is concerned with differences in average voting turnout among nations rather than trends within any given nation, Lerner validates our assumption that information flow is related to popular participation in political life.

In a more recent study, McCrone and Cnudde apply a refinement of Lerner's thesis to the data utilized by Cutright. Causal relations are inferred from the correlations among Cutright's indices, and path analysis is used to demonstrate the indirect linkage between urbanization and political development.¹⁴ Specifically, as shown in Figure 1, increased urbanization leads to increased education; increased education leads to more widespread use of mass communications; when mass communications permeates society, democratic political development occurs. The direct linkage between urbanization and political development is negligible.

Figure 1. McCrone-Cnudde model of democratic political development, with path coefficients.



SOURCE: Adapted from McCrone and Cnudde, op. cit.

All of these studies are based upon cross-section data from nations in the contemporary world. After looking at our own concerns in terms of the developing nations, we shall apply the same formulations to intrasocietal differences to see if the hypothesized dynamics appear there as well. In this regard, the United States, as the "first new nation" shall serve as our example.¹⁵

Characteristics of Mass Society.

One of the primary definitive characteristics of mass society in Kornhauser's formulation is that there is high availability of a population for mobilization by elites.¹⁶ For such availability to exist, individuals must be related to each other not by common interests, but must rather base their relationship solely upon responsibility to a common authority. Where local involvements do not insulate them from such authority, they are subject to manipulation by the elites through nationally centralized organizations and communications media.¹⁷

Kornhauser does not argue that the growth of agencies of large scale communications necessarily expedites such manipulation, and it is assumed that local relations among media, consumers, advertisers, etc., rather than centralization of control, may dominate the structure of the communications industry. Therefore, it is proposed that just as a plurality of interpersonal interests can prevent the development of mass society by integrating the system at the local level, so can large scale pluralistic communications media serve this function. It is assumed that as social structure generally becomes more complex, political institutions will likewise increase in complexity and scope. In the absence of mediating influence, then, a great deal of power--power generally justified as being utilized "in the public interest"--will come to be concentrated in political institutions not responsible to a popular electoral base.¹⁸ When

institutions exist that can mobilize popular political participation, however, then power is shared by the electorate.

Integrative Communications and Mass Society.

As populations shift from rural to urban areas and the economy becomes structurally more complex, traditional networks of interpersonal communication are disrupted. We propose that in the absence of alternative integrating factors, involvement in the polity will decrease, and the scope of a government will increase, despite the fact that urbanization itself facilitates political participation. The question of defining such functional alternatives, however, remains an open one. An implicit notion in both the Lerner and McCrone formulations is that the written media can fulfill the communications function. We would reject this formulation on two grounds.

First, those segments of the population that are in fact highly educated and literate enough to read and understand the political content of the media are also those that fill elite niches in the social structure and hence are in contact with political events through the emergence of new interpersonal networks. Thus, the media system is superimposed upon a set of face-to-face relations for the upper social strata, while the less literate lower social strata have neither interpersonal nor media contact with political events. Even in the United States, with its relatively high level of literacy, we find the lower social strata reporting little political

information obtained through the mass media, and in fact a distrust of the written media.¹⁹

Second, there is an important difference among media in the degree to which the individual user participates in the communication process. In face-to-face political information flow, the individual is active, and therefore involved. When he reads a newspaper, however, he is passive. The intensity of the printed message is primary here. We assume that participation in the various spheres of social life is a cumulative process. That is, people who participate in some areas tend to participate in others as well.²⁰ Thus, we would expect "participatory" media exposure to be functionally equivalent to face-to-face contact.

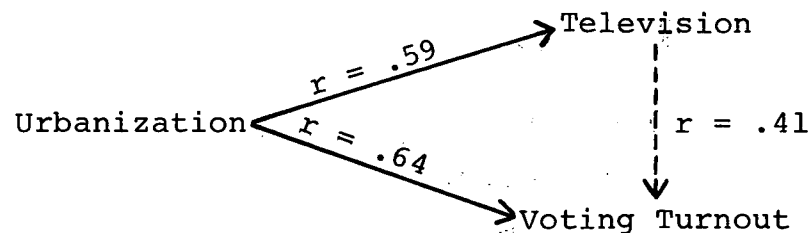
McLuhan suggests that television, like speech, is a "cool" medium. Both are high in receiver participation.²¹ We would expect then that as populations became concentrated in urban areas, political participation would be facilitated by the existence of television.

Integrative Communication and Popular Participation.

The studies cited above demonstrate positive relationships between urbanization and political development. Indeed, the cross-national data collected by the Yale political data program indicate that the relationship between urbanization and voting turnout is higher for the developing nations ($r = .64$) than for the total universe of nations for which data are available ($r = .38$). Were we to posit a strictly

linear causal model, the data would suggest that both television and voting turnout were consequents of urbanization, and that television has little effect as an intervening variable (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Zero-order correlations among urbanization, television density and voting turnout among the developing nations.*



*Urbanization is measured by the per cent of the population residing in cities of 20,000 or more, television density by the number of television sets per 1,000 people and voting turnout as the per cent of voting age population appearing at the polls.

SOURCE: Bruce M. Russett et al., World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964).

However, we posit interaction effects that lead us to reject linear causal models. On the one hand, urbanization per se is not a perfect indicator of economic development and increased societal complexity. Where urbanization merely represents the territorial concentration of people without a rejection of traditional patterns of communication, voting turnout would increase even in the absence of television due to the relative ease of mobilizing concentrated populations. On the other hand, where television is

found in the absence of high degrees of urbanization, it might be taken as indicative of increased social structural complexity in the absence of urban facilitation: a situation that may lead to reduced turnout rates. This, we presume, would be the case in a "modern agricultural" state, where modern technologies have been adopted, but where the resource base makes agriculture a more efficient means of production than manufacturing. Rather than assume that a shift from extractive to manufacturing industries is a necessary component of modernization, we leave the nature of this relationship unresolved.

Table 1 presents mean rates of voter turnout when conditions of television density and urbanization vary. Note that, as predicted, turnout decreases among countries with a low degree of urbanization as television density increases, and that television seems to have a powerful effect among highly urbanized nations.

Table 1. Mean voting turnout in developing nations, by television density and urbanization.

	Low television density (< 6 sets/1,000 pop'n.)	High television density (≥ 6 sets/1,000 pop'n.)
Low Urbanization	43.3% (n=8)	38.4% (n=7)
High Urbanization	51.3% (n=7)	73.4% (n=7)

While multivariate analyses with small case bases tend to be statistically inconclusive, an analysis of variance of the data in table 1 is useful in describing the factors operating here. Earlier studies demonstrate that urbanism is an important determinant of political involvement. Our aim here is to show that in addition, an important interaction effect exists between urbanization and television. Table 2 presents an analysis of variance of the data in table 1. Clearly the strongest effect is that of urbanization, and the effect of television itself is minimal. However, the effect of interaction between urbanization and television is an important one: the mean square attributable to interaction effects is almost three times as large as that due to television itself.

Table 2. Analysis of variance of voting turnout scores presented in table 1.

Source of Variation	Mean Square	Degrees of Freedom	F	P
Urbanization	3,174.4	1	9.04	< .01
Television	488.0	1	1.39	N.S.
Interaction	1,315.3	1	3.74	< .10
Within Class	350.9	24		

We have suggested above that urbanization itself is not a good index of social structural complexity because of the possibility of structurally undifferentiated urban concentrations,

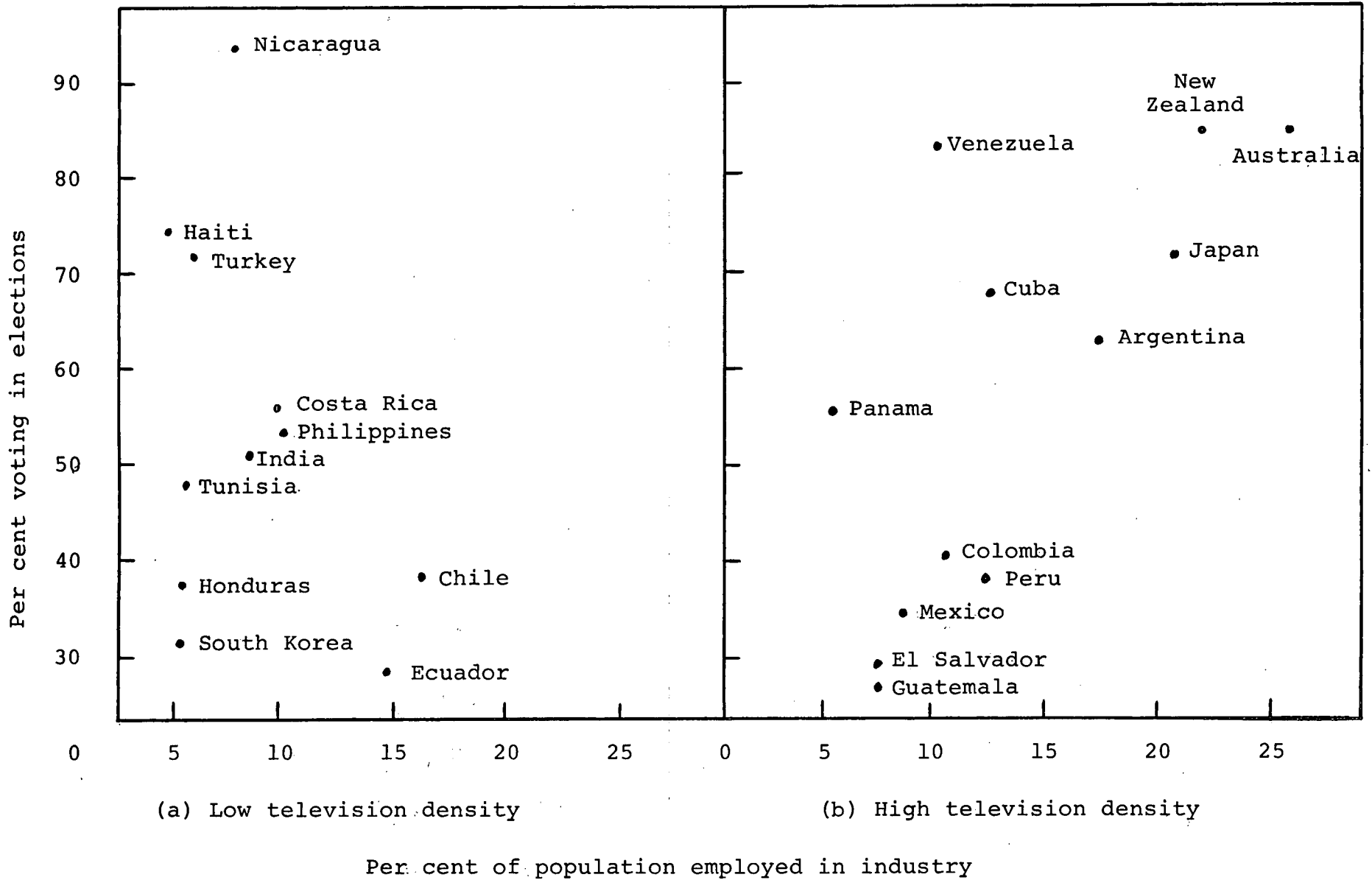
as for example in the case of Egypt.²² Industrialization is a better indicator of structural differentiation, and table 3 presents mean rates of voting turnout when industrialization and television density are varied. Television again is related to reduced turnout in countries of low industrialization, and to increased turnout in countries of high industrialization. Moreover, we see here that where television density is low, increased social differentiation leads to decreased voting turnout.

Table 3. Mean voting turnout in developing nations, by television density and urbanization.

	Low television density	High television density
Low Industrialization	59.5% (n=6)	42.9% (n=6)
High Industrialization	46.2% (n=5)	68.4% (n=5)

This effect is clear if we compare scatter diagrams of the relationship between industrialization and voting turnout in low and high television density nations, although again, the small case base for which complete data are available prevents us from drawing mathematically precise conclusions on the nature of the relationship. Note that in figure 3a, for nations where television density is low, voting turnout appears to be inversely related to industrialization, while in figure 3b, the high television density condition, the

Figure 3. Industrialization and voting turnout, by television density.



relationship is a direct one.

These data suggest three refinements of social science theory relating to the developing nations. First, we find that the relationship between economic development and political development (especially political democracy) is not a linear one, nor is it in all cases positive. The limitations on this relationship warrant further study.²³

Secondly, we find support here for Lerner's thesis that the balance of rates of growth in various sectors of society is a more important indicator of modernization than is development along any single dimension, and that "excessive growth in one phase of modern life, as compared with other phases, often does more harm than good."²⁴

Third, as a further specification of the above point, if the economic development of society and its concomitantly increasing social structural complexity surpass the ability of relevant mass communication systems to integrate a differentiated population into the body politic, then involvement and participation in political life will indeed decrease, and the detachment of the populace from the political process renders it open to potential mobilization by counter-elites who may capitalize on disaffection with the status quo.²⁵

Integrative Communication and Scope of Government.

If these patterns represent important dynamics in political integration, then they should describe the institutional structure of politics as well as the level of popular

participation, and should be found in the developed, as well as in the developing nations. Data are available to test the structural corollaries to the above hypotheses in the United States.

In electoral terms, we have defined mass society as being characterized by citizen disengagement. With regard to political structure, we will define mass society as a social system that is explicitly committed to the ideal of competitive participatory democracy while at the same time having a "totalitarian" government, which serves as the "sole value-producing, distributing, and consuming institution."²⁶ This has been referred to in the literature as broad "scope of government."

We hypothesize that in the presence of integrative communication channels, as society becomes more complex, the scope of government will decrease, as citizens both make more decisions themselves, and place greater constraints on their government. When such channels of communication are not available, however, scope of government will increase as a function of structural complexity.

A recent factor-analytic study of comparative political development in the American states provides us with data relevant for the testing of these hypotheses. Three factors emerging from this study provide us with operational indicators of government structure, systemic complexity, and integrative communication.²⁷

1. Government structure. A factor emerged from the analysis that was labelled (after Agger et al.) "scope of government." Variables loading positively on this factor were tax level per capita (.68), tax level per income unit (.82), spending level per capita (.76), and government employment (.77). Of further interest is the fact that both voting (.15) and party competition (.10) had low loading on this factor.

2. Systemic complexity. In the case of the new nations, we discussed urbanization and industrialization as indicators of social differentiation. In the present case we are concerned with a factor labelled "metro-urbanism." Among the variables with high positive loadings on this factor were urbanization (.76), population (.87), executive salaries (.90), ethnic diversity (.70), proportion in white collar occupations (.57).

3. Integrative communication. Here, the study of American states yielded a factor labelled "integrative message exchange." Among the variables with high positive loadings were education (.68), television sets (.77), telephones (.90), automobiles (.68). It is notable that despite the loading of education on this factor, newspaper circulation did not load highly on it (.44). We infer from this fact support for our earlier assumption that interpersonal contact, e.g. via telephone, and television communication share an integrative quality not characteristic of the written media.

Crittenden's factor analysis utilized a Varimax rotation, producing thereby factors that are not correlated with each other. It is our hypothesis, however, that bivariate relationships of the factor scores of the states will emerge when a third factor is held constant. Specifically, we propose that for states loading low on integrative message exchange there will be a positive relationship between metro-urbanism and scope of government. When integrative message exchange is high, however, this relationship will be inverse.

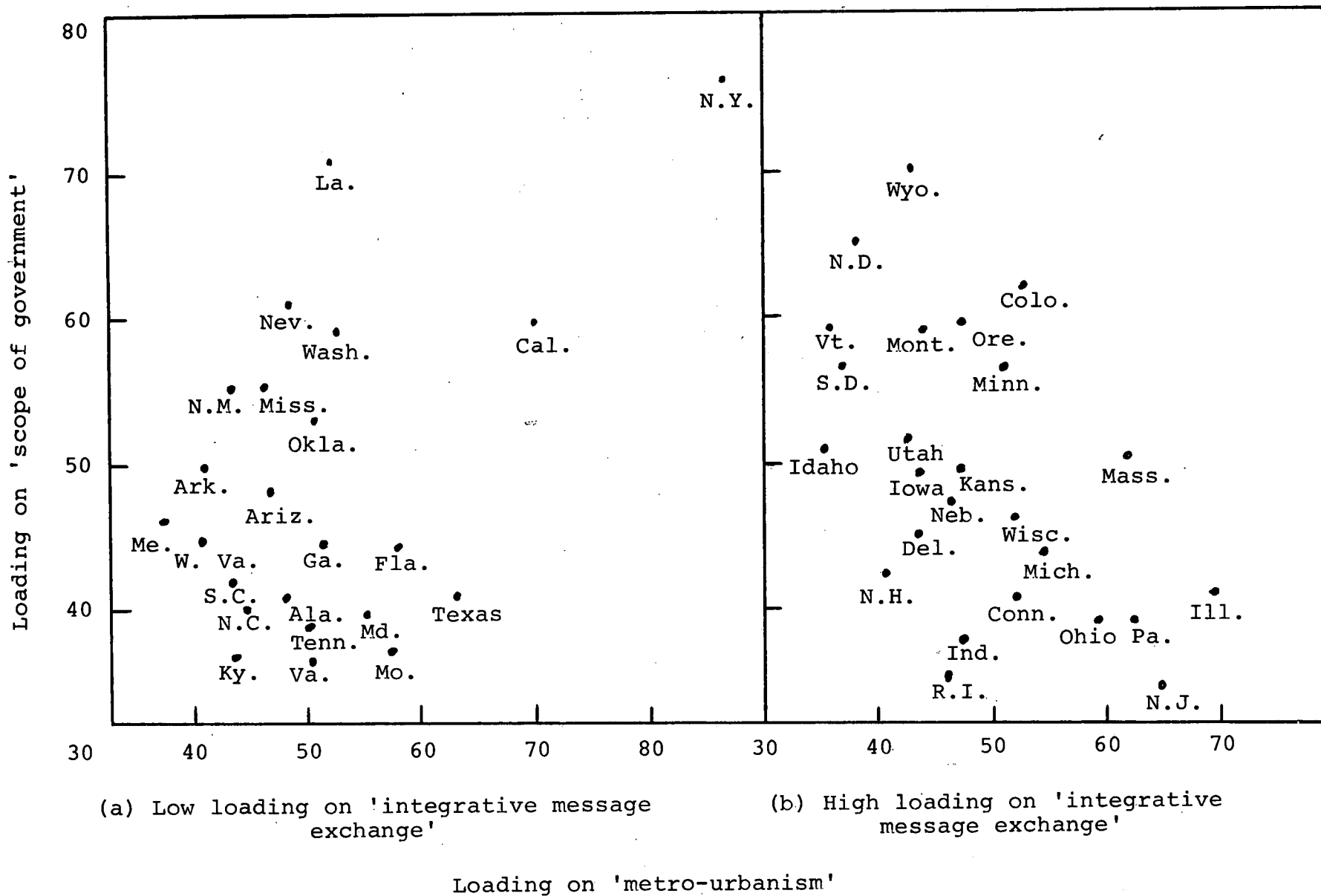
These expectations are confirmed by table 4. Scope of government is highest under conditions of uncoordinated development: high communication flow, low degree of structural complexity, and low communication flow, high degree of structural complexity. These data are easier to visualize as a scatter diagram, and are presented in that form in figure 4. Clearly, the relationship between metro-urbanism and scope of government is stronger for those states loading high on integrative message exchange than for those with low loadings on this factor.

Table 4. Mean loading on "scope of government," by integrative message exchange and metro-urbanism.

	Low integrative message exchange	High integrative message exchange
Low Metro-urbanism	46.8 (n=10)	53.9 (n=14)
High Metro-urbanism	51.9 (n=13)	45.5 (n=11)

SOURCE: John Crittenden, "Dimensions of Modernization in the American States," American Political Science Review, LXI, 4, p. 998.

Figure 4. Loadings on metro-urbanism and scope of government, by loading on integrative message exchange.



The Mass Society Model As An Evolutionary Scheme.

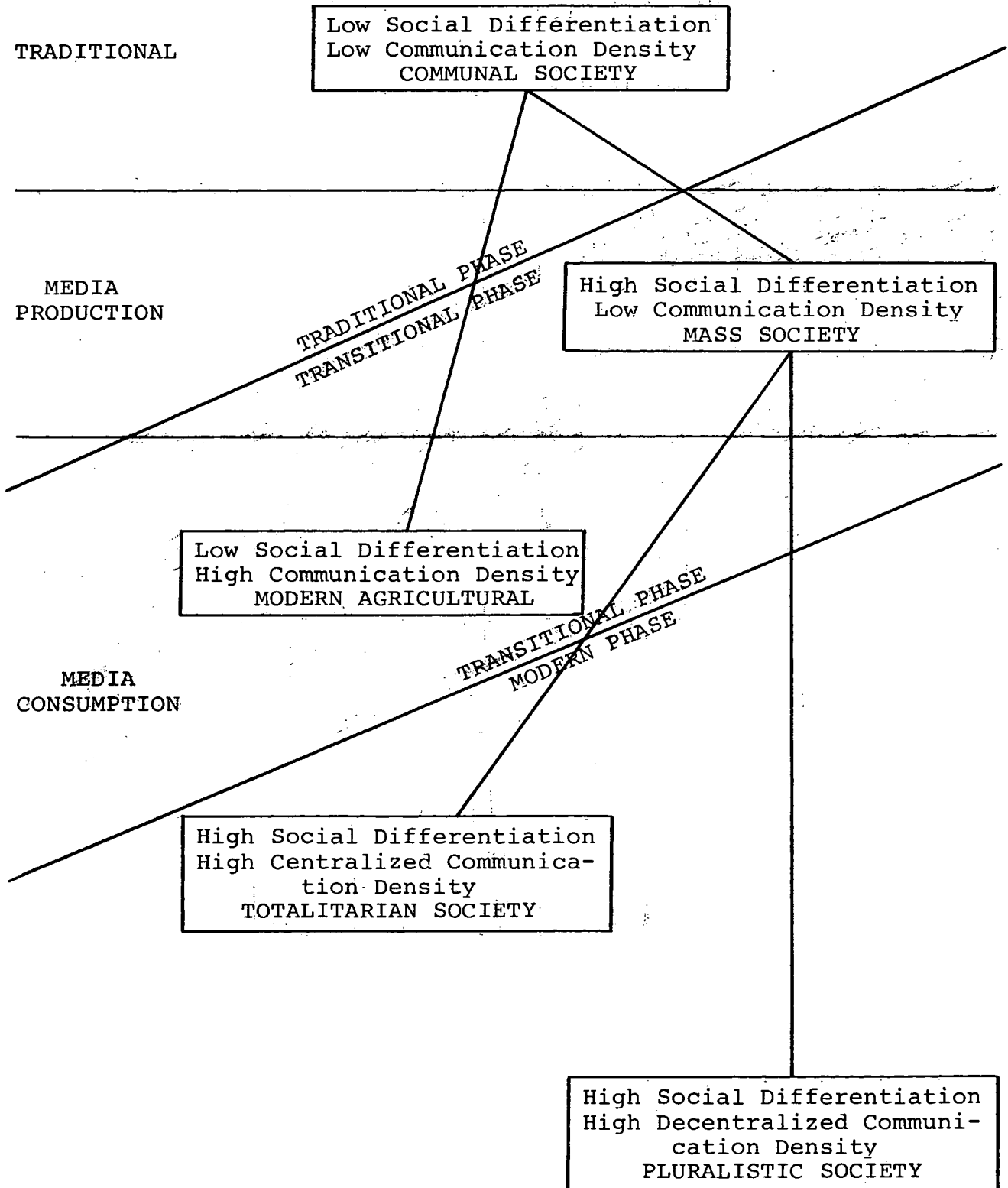
Kornhauser has defined mass society in terms of how accessible the elite is to pressures from below, and how available the general population is for mobilization by the elite.²⁸ Integrative communication may be assumed to facilitate the accessibility of the elite to the extent to which it is not controlled by the elite, while increased social structural complexity, especially the concentration of populations in cities and large-scale productive organizations, increases the availability of non-elites. Note, for example, the use to which the Communist Party has put the workers cell.²⁹ Given these relationships, we can in fact translate the present analysis into Kornhauser's typology of communal, pluralistic, totalitarian, and mass societies. Moreover, when viewed in a developmental context, Lerner's differentiation of media-production and media-consumption becomes more meaningful than the notions of 'transitional' and 'modern' societies. Those societies characterized by low social differentiation and low communication density will, in Kornhauser's terms, have low availability of non-elites, and low accessibility of elites. This traditional form of social organization appears in Kornhauser's theory as "communal society."

Since we have argued that stratification systems and communication systems may increase in complexity independently of each other, development beyond the communal society may, in the 'transitional' phase, be characterized by high social

differentiation and low communication density, or by low social differentiation and high communication density. The former, where we postulate that modern media of communication have not developed enough to adequately integrate a society replete with new structural complexities--Lerner's media production phase--is mass society. The social distance between elites and non-elites has been widened, and the gulf cannot be bridged by communications up or down. The latter case--and the only one in our own typology that does not appear in Kornhauser's scheme--is the modern agricultural society, which has adopted advanced technologies, but the economy of which is still based on extractive rather than manufacturing industries. Both of these types would be regarded as 'transitional' societies, but the former has not yet entered the media consumption phase. See figure 5.

If the communications industry develops to the point at which it can integrate a highly differentiated society, the mass society phase is passed. Depending upon the focus of control of the media, society can then be characterized as totalitarian or pluralistic, depending upon the degree of centralized control.³⁰ This of course does not discount the possibility of totalitarian regimes in modern agricultural states. Indeed, the logical extension of this scheme would be to differentiate these societies on the basis of centralization of control of communications.

Figure 5. Evolutionary scheme of social differentiation and communication density, showing prior typologies.



Note finally that our placement of the modern agricultural society in the transitional phase reflects popular usage in the social sciences, and implicit assumptions in the foreign policies of major contemporary world powers. We in fact prefer the image of an agricultural state protected by technology from the vicissitudes of climate to a world in which the strains of industrialization have been superimposed on every extant cultural system.

FOOTNOTES

1. See William F. Ogburn, Social Change (New York: Viking Press, 1950), pp. 200 ff.
2. Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (second edition; Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966), pp. 86-106.
3. See for example Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 77.
4. Lucian W. Pye, ed., Communications and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 6.
5. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Knopf, 1945), vol. I, pp. 248-249. For the case of the newer developing nations see Lucian W. Pye, Politics, Personality and Nation Building (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 25.
6. See Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Geertz, ed., Old Societies and New States (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 109 ff.
7. See Ithiel de Sola Pool's forthcoming report on acquaintanceship networks, and Edward O. Laumann and Louis Guttman, "The Relative Associational Contiguity of Occupation in Urban Settings," American Sociological Review, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 169-178.
8. See Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications (Free Press: Glencoe, 1955), p. 160.
9. Verling C. Troidahl and Robert Van Dam, "Face-To-Face Communications about Major Topics in the News," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. xxix, no. 4 (Winter, 1965-66), p. 628.
10. Pye, Communications and Political Development, p. 26.
11. Phillips Cutright, "National Political Development: Measurement and Analysis," American Sociological Review, vol. 28, no. 2 (April, 1963), pp. 253-264. See also Nelson W. Polsby et al. (eds.), Politics and Social Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 574 ff.
12. The index of communication development was based upon newspaper and newsprint consumption, telephones, and the number of pieces of domestic mail per capita.

13. Daniel Lerner, "Communication Systems and Social Systems--A Statistical Exploration in History and Policy," in Jason L. Finkle and Richard W. Gable, eds., Political Development and Social Change (New York: Wiley, 1966), pp. 195-205.
14. Donald J. McCrone and Charles F. Cnudde, "Toward a Communications Theory of Democratic Political Development: A Causal Model," American Political Science Review, vol. LXI, no. 1, March, 1967, pp. 72-79.
15. Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective (New York: Basic Books, 1963). For a statement of the role of pre-electronic media in integrating the American colonies see Richard L. Merritt, Symbols of American Community: 1735-1775 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).
16. William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), p. 33.
17. Ibid., pp. 93 ff.
18. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 298 ff.
19. See Robert E. Lane, Political Life (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), pp. 82-83; and V. O. Key, Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Knopf, 1965), pp. 345 ff.
20. For a discussion of this assumption see David R. Segal, The Socialization of Adolescent Politicians (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Chicago, 1967), chapter 2.
21. See, for example, Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), pp. 22-23.
22. See Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 87.
23. Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 27 ff.
24. Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society, p. 87.
25. Indices of normative integration other than political behavior yield the same pattern observed above. A study of incendiary forest fires in the United States, believed to be related to the imposition of controls by the United States Forest Service on previously uncontrolled lands, has shown that the rate of fire starts is roughly two

times higher in counties having a high level of social differentiation (as measured by percent of population employed in manufacturing) and a low communication density (as measured by number of telephones per capita) than in counties having any other combination of these characteristics. I am indebted to R. Brooks Sibley of the School of Forestry, University of Michigan, for making these data available to me.

26. Robert E. Agger, Daniel Goldrich and Bert E. Swanson, The Ruler and the Ruled (New York: Wiley, 1964), p. 7.
27. The data are taken from John Crittenden, "Dimensions of Modernization in the American States," American Political Science Review, vol. LXI, no. 4, December, 1967, pp. 989-1001.
28. Kornhauswer, op. cit., p. 40.
29. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (New York: Wiley, 1963), p. 27.
30. See Paul Kecskemeti, "Totalitarian Communications as a Means of Control," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. XIV (Summer, 1950), pp. 224-234.