

Choosing Models of Society and Social Norms

Improving Choices and
Quality of Life

ADOLFO CRITTO

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CHOOSING MODELS OF SOCIETY AND SOCIAL NORMS

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Adolfo Critto

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INTRODUCTION

1. Shared choice and social norms; present and future outcomes of own's and others' decisions.

People build their personal and social lives through continually and freely choosing and consequently engaging in shared, regularly repeated behaviors which make social habits or norms. Free choices lead to building, adopting and modifying social norms (habits), which in turn condition decisions.

Social norms are built through joint decisions and shared experiences (internal and external) of pluralities of persons involving reciprocal observation, communication and interaction.

Social habits or norms are in some way people's continuous shared decisions, in which previous decisions made by others and themselves provide and facilitate roads to be followed, thus influencing every new decision and behavior. In this way people continually decide and build, adapt and modify social norms.

Therefore, when deciding, people not only condition behaviors which are direct outcomes of decisions, but also condition future decisions; when people choose, they simultaneously decide for the present and for the future.

However, the facilitating impact of decisions derives not only from people's own previous decisions and behaviors, but from those of others, combined with theirs through communication and interaction, thus building social reality and social systems, made of shared regularly repeated behaviors, which I call social habits or social norms.

Individual's early experiences lead to social norms and models which function as "founding members" of individuals' "club of social norms"; serving as criteria for evaluating subsequent proposals for social norms.

2. Assumptions underlying social norms and their strength, influence, social norming.

Shared searching for solutions and their adoption is possible because people assume that they share (with others –with whom they identify– and with themselves) interest and capacity (for consistency) to build solutions to common and shared problems. Therefore others individuals' and own behaviors are considered as possibly being valuable models which deserve to be followed since it is assumed that people share them and regularly repeat them because they have found that they work and lead where they desire and need to go. The process is similar to that of a person lost in the countryside, who follows a path made by others' regularly repeated steps, assuming it leads where they desire and need to go. People look for well-trodden paths assumed to provide effective solutions, provided others (and themselves) act consistently.

Social norms take their strength from being perceived by persons as legitimate and even natural, and therefore deviations are disapproved and punished, while conformity is rewarded and reinforced by shared approval expressed in shared regularly repeated behavior.

Thus through social norms individuals exercise their power over others and themselves, and are subject to such power; although never losing the capacity to escape the influences of social norms by critical consistency analysis, leading to replacement or modification of social norms, through innovation. The continuous process through which people create, adopt, combine and modify social norms is called here social norming, through which all persons contribute to the storehouse of social norms, passed down through countless succeeding generations.

3. Building invisible social norms; frame of reference.

Social norms are invisible factors, observed in shared regularly repeated internal (thoughts, desires, feelings, decisions) and external behaviors. Such invisible factors involve views of the world and of

circumstances, as well as of what is desirable, valid and legitimate, leading to and explaining regularly repeated behaviors.

All individuals' psychological frames of reference are built of intersections of countless social norms, making "packages" or systems marked by stability and continually changing, like all life processes. Social norms also function as lenses through which people see reality even when individuals are unaware that they are wearing them.

By making explicit and understanding how consistency and social norms function in human life, the quality of decisions, social norms and life may be enhanced.

4. Awareness and free choice; components, causes and consequences of social norms; critical analysis; research and teaching on quality of decisions, social norms and life.

People are commonly unaware of such processes underlying personal and social decisions and social norms (or habits), and they take these for granted, as if people were simply carried along by the flux of life (social and personal). However, people's advances and fulfillment critically depend on their being aware of the following facts:

a. That they are thus jointly choosing, and conditioning their choices and habits (social and personal) by freely letting themselves be carried along by such a stream of shared habits and norms.

b. That all choices assume that people are thus solving problems.

c. That such assumptions are only partially correct, depending on whether people's choices, (and other people's choices influencing them in the process of social norming) side with consistency (i.e. reality, goodness and truth, made of the integration of variety by unity) or not. Imperfect solutions lead to contradictions among social norms, which in turn lead to tensions stimulating people to search for new solutions through social norming.

d. Therefore decisions and social norms need to be critically analyzed in terms of consistency, in order to adopt and reinforce the consistent ones, while rejecting and counteracting the inconsistent ones.

It is important to understand what the components of social norms are; why they were adopted (causes); and what consequences they have. This is an important aspect of critical analysis leading to increasing consistency in social norms.

For this scope it is important to develop professional roles and areas of teaching and research on the subjects of social norms and decision

making, their quality and how to enhance it, favouring quality of life and fulfillment, avoiding undesired and undesirable consequences.

5. Free choice acting through social norms. Reciprocal conditioning of free choice - social norms.

Free human decisions constantly create, adopt, adapt and modify social norms, which therefore are a consequence of free choices. Social norms condition decisions to the extent that persons freely let themselves be conditioned.

Therefore social norms condition decisions and decisions condition social norms, but the basic independent variable is free human decision.

6. Consequences of social norms, in terms of consistency and fulfillment; raw material; critical analysis; sound seeds.

Human decisions and social norms lead to fulfillment of individuals and reality if they adjust to consistency. This involves:

a. Striving to consider all aspects and parts of reality in a balanced fashion, without privileging or neglecting any of them.

b. Adhering to the integration of all aspects and parts of reality, in harmonious sub-systems making up each being or aspect; and in the harmonious system of systems (reality), where all beings belong and are fulfilled. Such harmonious integration is existence, truth, goodness and fulfillment, and it is the source of science and ethics.

c. Giving oneself to contribute to the fulfillment of all human and other beings and of reality.

d. Mastering for this purpose all impulses, appetites and habits (fashions, social norms, etc.), with effort and sacrifice; and lovingly giving oneself for the fulfillment of human beings (including oneself) and reality, as they deserve.

e. Combining the consistent components of social norms and models of various persons, groups and societies, and rejecting the inconsistent ones.

The model of consistency, explained in, A. Critto, [Overcoming Modern Confusion](#), (Lanham, Maryland University Press of America, 1999) clarifies at length the conditions listed above.

Social norms are always raw material and people are responsible for applying genuine consistency through critical analysis to detect in them consistent components (“sound seeds”) and also to cultivate, reinforce and spread them; and to detect components lacking consistency and counteract them; in this way people adjust, enrich and enhance social norms and their quality, contributing to quality of life and human fulfillment.

In this way people need to critically analyze the socio-cultural legacies received from themselves and from others (local, national or foreign). And they can combine and reinforce sound components, building new integrative models, policies and strategies.

7. Cooperative work involving or lacking consistency; functionality; critical analysis of decisions and social norms.

The joint shared exercise of human capacity for consistency leads people to cooperative work: (1) to find how everything fits together (integrated by unity, in what I call consistency), progressively uncovering how the pieces of the system and the puzzle of reality are inserted in it, discovering the hidden design; (2) of adhering (with respect and unconditional and disinterested love) to beings and the system of reality, based in consistency (harmonious integration of variety by unity); (3) freely and effectively contributing to their fulfillment (giving oneself and giving for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return).

When such joint shared exercise of consistency is spurious, that is, replaces integrative unity—which originates and supports all aspects and components of reality, without privileging or neglecting any, and leads them to fulfillment—by caprices, ego, impulses and fashions; people become prisoners to these, and engage in inconsistent (spuriously consistent) decisions, behaviors and social norms, which lead away from fulfillment (of persons and reality). This involves reciprocal reinforcement in deviation through complacency and complicity in rationalizations and other strategies to oppose truth, goodness and fulfillment. Thus, dysfunctional social norms function as Trojan horses, that offer spurious solutions and entice people with the lure of immediate attractions, without any warning label attached to them.

Decisions, behaviors and social norms, structures and systems are functional to the extent that they adjust to genuine consistency and

therefore contribute to fulfillment of persons and reality, as a result of free human decisions in social norming, focusing on integrative unity (the source of reality, truth and goodness) instead of enslaving themselves to partial fragments, impulses, ego and caprices.

To advance towards functionality –since social norms are never perfectly functional -, critical analysis distinguishes consistent aspects and components of various social norms and models, and combines and reinforces them, while rejecting and counteracting inconsistent ones.

8. Criteria for evaluating quality of decisions and social norms.

To assign priorities in the use of limited resources the following criteria are suggested and explained: functional interdependence; seriousness; urgency; effectiveness; cost-effectiveness; balanced satisfaction of various aspects and needs; correlational analysis (with changes over time), all based in consistency.

As criteria for enhancing the quality of decision making and social norms the book suggests, among others: (1) willingness to freely submit to individuals' and reality's higher goals and ultimate ends of fulfillment, with emphasis on spiritual, human and family values, serving unity; (2) use of effective means for such an end, (3) including self-mastery, discipline, method, effort, sacrifice; (4) and systematic use of information, organization, professionalism, etc.; (5) with balance, depth, healthy equilibrium between stability and change; (6) striving to insert every fragment, decision and event in the all-encompassing framework provided by the system of systems of reality; (7) thus avoiding unilateralism, pendularism, declarativism, rigid extrapolations, negligence, improvisation, egoism and psychological ceilings; (8) striving to consider all consequences and implications –up to the ultimate– of alternative decisions, behavior, policies, and social norms and models; (9) optimally employing training, research, science, technology, systematic planning, etc.; (10) looking beyond the immediate, the chain of links, not stopping until arriving at unity; (11) making explicit the limitations of our statements and the quota of validity of the opposite ones; (12) as well as the conditions under which a statement holds; (13) considering the worth of giving above receiving and that other individuals deserve as much as ourselves.

Stability needs dynamic change to remain vigorous and healthy. Change supports itself by stable factors, and strives to reach new stable

integrations. Both stability and change link living processes with unity in causal-functional systems. Elements lacking consistency invite change, and achievements involving consistency invite preservation.

Better decisions and social norms for a higher quality of life require identification of the contributions for human fulfillment deriving from education; health; housing; urban and rural development; labor; social development; communication; culture; family; spiritual and emotional realms; the economy; industry; agriculture; business, etc. This contribution requires the application of genuine consistency devoting all efforts to serve higher ends of fulfillment (in goodness and truth), adjusting all means, decisions, social norms, strategies and policies for this purpose.

All such sectors, as well as institutions and organizations within them (including activities, social norms and structures) need to be critically analyzed (in terms of consistency, which leads to quality of decisions and social norms), in order to improve adjustment to consistency and to the goals of fulfillment. Otherwise they may lead to outcomes opposite to those they are assumed to produce, and which justify their existence. Indeed, they may hinder rather than favour fulfillment.

The basis of all guidelines for quality of decisions and social norms is the absolute priority to be given to unity and consistency.

9. Risk of simplistic adoption of social norms and models.

It is common for individuals to assume that social norms, fashions and personal habits are appropriate and will lead to desirable consequences, and therefore they passively let themselves be led by social norms and models without critical analysis.

The book warns against the simplistic and the facile, leading people to uncritically adopt social norms and models, attracted by the halo of success (especially material success) surrounding them. Such simplistic acceptance tends to lead Third World people to combinations of inconsistent components of various social norms and models, e.g. First World materialism with Third World inefficiency, combining losses of spiritual, family and human values with losses in the economic, political, scientific and technological realms. It also tends to lead First World societies to similar undesirable combinations, falling into complacency when materialistic success goes to their heads.

10. Behavior, language, education, communication, consistency and social models and norms.

Behavior is language, sending messages to others and to oneself. It is more credible than words, as an indicator of people's real attitudes and feelings. Intentions and social norms may be inferred from behavior. The way in which reality "behaves" is also a form of language providing educational messages to individuals.

Through communication people share their experiences in the common task of discovering unity in variety and adhering to it. This common basis in consistency allows languages to be translated into each other.

Education (which is a process of reciprocal influence among people who jointly build and modify social norms) aims at allowing individuals to develop and adopt consistent social norms—as well as attitudes, feelings, knowledge and skills involved in them— leading to fulfillment. All individuals have the chance and responsibility to genuinely exercise their capacity for consistency in choosing and adopting consistent decisions, behaviors and social norms, and also for providing others and themselves with such models, which are the flesh of social norms. This is the field of education at large, including all forms of communication and interaction.

Formal education contributes to such educational processes in an organized, conscious and intentional fashion. However, formal education—as other forms of communication, influence and interaction— may genuinely develop (and contribute to) consistent social norms and models, decisions and behaviors, or they may serve the opposite. The first occurs when ultimate spiritual, human, ethical and social goals are served by effective means (professionalism, information, organization, discipline, etc.). Otherwise the latter occurs.

Unity, ideal language, dictates that all languages be adjusted to genuine consistency, uncovering systems of connections which bind all parts of reality to each other and to unity.

11. Responsibility and influence of citizens, leaders and scientists; power of social norms; sound social seeds.

The state and social organizations, institutions, norms and laws are the citizen's instruments. Citizens—and especially those endowed with special capabilities, such as leaders and scientists— are responsible for

guiding these organizations, through control, demanding state and other organizations and leaders to employ for the common good (contributing to human fulfillment) resources and authority received from people, applying high quality decision and policy making for such purposes. They need to become aware, communicate, organize and act jointly to serve such scope, in full social participation and protagonism.

People's internalization of social and legal norms makes these effective, and makes acceptance of authority and obedience possible. The state, social institutions and organizations, as well as power, authority, public opinion, laws, legitimacy, fashions and tradition, and statuses, roles and social structures and systems, are built on social norms.

Through social norming people have influence over their environment and all future generations, adding their personal "touches" to the chains of social and cultural heritage.

Sound social seeds (persons practicing genuine consistency; consistent social norms) need to be identified; communicated with each other; organized in sound networks and act jointly to serve common good; properly employing –instead of wasting– human talents.

People's responsibility grows towards those individuals who are closer to them (beginning with themselves) in time, space and other variables leading to more direct interdependence and influence. This involves a specially high responsibility from leaders, social scientists, authorities, parents, teachers and other influential figures.

People are responsible for reading messages of reality, reflected in obstacles, thus transforming these into assets.

If individuals fail to assume their personal responsibility no one can assume this role for them. It is wrong for them to assume that problems may be left for someone else to handle; or to shift from unbridled enthusiasm to bitter disappointment.

People in positions of leadership and influence should help clarify the role of consistency and the paths which lead to fulfillment through consistent decisions and social norms.

The media are responsible for offering sound and realistic instead of sick models which invite people to believe that inconsistent behaviors are natural, legitimate and unavoidable, thus exerting pressure on them to follow such models.

Individuals should participate on behalf of the common good, listening to others and working for their benefit, rather than using, abusing or dominating them.

12. Structural obstacles, social surgery.

Among the structural obstacles to human and social development and fulfillment is the negative role of the media, when they exaggerate and reinforce social norms and models that lack consistency, presenting them as legitimate, natural and unavoidable, hiding sound examples.

In a similar way people are caught by confusion and inertia, letting themselves be led by unmastered, unguided and uncontrolled social processes and routines, contrary to the goals of fulfillment of individuals and reality. Among these structural obstacles are the disorderly growth of bureaucratization, urbanization and migration; unbalanced distribution of wealth; the huge numbers of immediate attractions and concerns absorbing human attention, energy and time; psychological barriers; as well as the growth of superfluous and perverse needs, building materialistic myths such as money, power, pleasure and prestige, and using them to replace unity, truth, goodness, balance, depth and fulfillment. This substitution leads people to try to make up for their fulfillment deriving from unity's absolute source of harmony and integration of reality. They engage instead in desperate races searching and hoping to find the absolute in money, power, prestige, pleasure, drugs, violence, sexual promiscuity, etc.. People increase doses and speed, only to find their error, since money, pleasure, power, etc., are only fragments which owe their value and meaning to their insertion in the all-encompassing system of reality, based in the vertex of unity, unique absolute.

The structural obstacles referred to are invisible factors, made up of social norms. Lack of awareness thereof makes them more powerful, pernicious and dangerous. Like social norms in general, they need to be critically analyzed in their causes, components, dynamics and consequences, in order to tightly adjust them to the goals of fulfillment, instead of letting them serve the opposite. On the basis of critical consistency analysis, bureaucratic organization, urbanization, migrations, money, power, prestige, pleasure, drugs, sex, etc., may be properly employed as means to serve individual's and reality's desirable ends of fulfillment.

Other structural obstacles are, for instance, vicious circles of unilateral dependence; passivity of citizens failing to assume their responsibility; letting excesses of unintegrated information lead to confusion and intellectual intoxication; leading the mind to confusion through psychological barriers of mistaken definitions of what is or is not, and of what is possible or is not; leading the will and the heart to attach themselves to fragments, disconnected from their source and basis, as are caprices, ego an impulses when not subordinated to the system where they belong;

and therefore leading behavior, communication and interaction to wastage of opportunities and resources, destruction and lack of fulfillment, wrongly led by mind, will and heart.

To overcome such structural obstacles, which are made of social norms, as with social norms in general, critical analysis identifies components, their adjustment to consistency, their causes and consequences, and ways and means of readjusting and enhancing them, improving their adjustment to consistency, and therefore to the ultimate goals of fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Deep changes needed to overcome structural obstacles require 'social surgery' which should carefully discriminate what needs to be preserved and reinforced, not destroyed, from what needs to be eradicated; for this purpose careful information and planning are required.

13. Values; social norms; consistency; stability, change; growth and security.

Values are the most stable and deep layer of social norms, and therefore influence the whole social system and structures, made up of social norms. As with the rest of social norms, in any society, group or time citizens can choose, adapt, modify and employ existing values by applying genuine or spurious consistency. In the first case this leads to stability, growth and security in spiritual, family, interpersonal relations and emotional fields; and also in economics, politics, science and technology. In the second case, they lead to the opposite.

Although values are inherently stable, they continually change through social norming deriving from free decisions. Since these can never be perfectly consistent, change is always necessary, in a way that stability and change complement and support each other, through creative revitalization and preservation of advances.

14. The Sacred and the Expedient: The challenge for the American and Argentine societies.

The highest point of the pyramid of values is consistency, and next to it are the sacred and expedient value orientations, which assume that the value of persons and their behaviors derive from submission to higher ends, principles, and ultimate goals; or from the results of their behavior: their own effective achievements.

Consistency requires these value orientations to complement each other, employing effective means to serve ultimate and sacred ends. When

misplaced (i.e. not consistently applied), sacredness and expediency lead away from fulfillment, as happens in Argentina with a tendency to overemphasize sacred orientation to the detriment of effectiveness; and in the United States with a tendency to overemphasize expediency to the detriment of sacredness.

Such misplacement in Argentina leads people to tend to underestimate the importance of information, professionalism, organization, discipline, initiative and personal responsibility. This explains economic, political, scientific and technological insecurity and problems in Argentina. Some case studies (taken from the author's own research in various areas of public policy, including development, health, education, the environment and decision making) are used to illustrate how such underestimation of effectiveness occurred in Argentina and how this led to Argentina's economic and political problems.

Misplacement of the sacred-expedient axis leads people in the United States to overestimate ephemeral material success and self-interest, and to underestimate giving oneself, giving for the sake of the benefit of others, and unconditional love, this leading to spiritual, emotional, interpersonal and family insecurity and problems.

Such confusion involves misapplication (lacking consistency) of both sacred and expedient value orientations, ascribing sacred value to myths and panaceas of money, power, success, pleasure and prestige; and running after effectiveness (in the economic, political, technological and scientific realms) for nothing, since means are not employed to serve genuinely sacred goals (spiritual, human, family, interpersonal, ethical) leading to quality of life and human fulfillment and happiness.

However, in both countries sound seeds (individuals, groups, social norms and movements) counter the dominant trends work to serve sacred ends with effective means, in an integrated and balanced way, leading towards balanced growth and security in all realms, and enhancing quality of life and human fulfillment. Genuine consistency thus leads to growth, security and stability in the spiritual, interpersonal, family realms; and also in the economic, political, scientific and technological realms; through a balanced application of sacredness and expediency. In this way many Americans (not only Argentines) emphasize the importance of giving unconditionally to one's family and other people, and high principles; and many Argentines (not only Americans) emphasize the importance of effectiveness and responsibility in managing means.

Argentines, dazzled by First World material advances may face the danger of advancing in expediency, and effective work in practical economic and political matters, fascinated with these aspects and going

to the extreme, underestimating and neglecting spiritual, emotional, interpersonal and family values, in their endeavour to enter into the "rich men's club" of advanced industrial nations, which offer easy solutions under the seductive appeal of immediate gratification.

Although Argentines have abandoned some utopian fantasies, they are still struggling to overcome inconsistencies. Economic changes have not been inserted into a wider framework which can show how they may serve human fulfillment in a balanced way. A fixation with economic success has caused many Argentines to neglect spiritual and interpersonal values. In this way they may end up copying from successful First World models some inconsistent components of consumerism, materialism, hedonism, and self-interest, while abandoning their important assets, which are spiritual, emotional, interpersonal and family values. This leads to failure and frustration, like any "Tower of Babel" syndrome which harms both successful people and those attempting to emulate them. Among derived problems are war, drugs, corruption, feelings of emptiness, inequality, mental illness, suicide, loss of spiritual, emotional, economic, political and social security, among others, leading to losses in quality of life and human fulfillment.

To an alarming degree Argentines' efforts at adjustment treat symptoms rather than tackling the deep pathological roots underlying problems. Old deviations are simply replaced by new ones.

Americans too may face the danger of being dazzled by their own material success, neglecting and destroying spiritual, emotional, interpersonal and family values, crucial for quality of life and human fulfillment; this may bring an imbalance which will make them even lose their material advantages, after losing the human benefits they fail to derive from such advantages.

The hope is expressed that Argentines are learning from reality's "school of hard knocks", to combine the preexisting sacred orientation toward spiritual, interpersonal and family values with an effective orientation toward economic, political, scientific and technological means.

It is also hoped that in the United States growing awareness of the contradictions derived from misplacement on the sacred-expedient axis, may lead people to progressively place all resources and means to serve ultimate ends and higher spiritual, interpersonal and family values.

Such integration and proper insertion requires restless efforts to which both countries, as all societies, groups and individuals in the world, need to devote themselves.

Both models (American and Argentine, as well as all models in the world) need to be constantly re-evaluated and progressively adjusted so

they may better serve unity and fulfillment through consistency. Both wealth and power; and spiritual and ethical quality, require people to exercise strong discipline and self-control, inserting themselves in the system of reality (presided over only by unity), to resist the temptation of self-aggrandizement.

A survey research on value orientations of American, Spanish and Argentine university students, carried out by the author in 1962, as a Ph.D. dissertation in the Columbia University Department of Sociology (A.Critto, The Sacred and the Expedient) provides some empirical basis for this analysis.

15. How to choose genuine consistency in the midst of interfering social norms and values.

Individuals often believe they are prisoners of social norms and values, and e.g. that to curb corruption they need to sit and wait for decades or centuries for values to change. However, social norms and values are only raw material which citizens are called on to master and cultivate to contribute to fulfillment, through consistency. Societies, groups and individuals always have the option to genuinely employ their capacity for consistency for this purpose, influencing own and others' behaviors.

Important advances for reducing corruption in Argentina were made by a number of citizens and government officials who created a climate of transparency, and clear, stable, equitable rules of the game. Economic and political problems worked as lessons of reality, making people aware of the intrinsic injustice, perversion and illegitimacy of corrupt social structures, and some steps were taken to reduce corruption; people learned that the contradictions inherent in dominant social norms (which departed from genuine consistency) led to failure, frustration and self-destruction. However, once some relief of the more severe problems was achieved, citizens and leaders tended to relax their efforts, and corrupt individuals and organizations take advantage of such passivity; though the reforms adopted were sorely needed, they were not enough. For decades social norms favoured and tolerated improvisation and passivity in the face of ineffectiveness and corruption (by leaders, public officials and citizens), deriving from missapplication of sacredness-expediency; and such inertia was not eliminated. A destructive circle is set in motion when problems are only superficially treated. Argentines who believe that problems have been solved are setting themselves up for harmful, exaggerated alternation between euphoria and depression; disregarding the warnings of reality.

16. The challenge.

Given that Argentine society has largely tolerated efficiency and condoned corruption, how has it managed to preserve a relatively high quality of life? Because genuine consistency is present in virtually all realms to an important degree, restlessly fighting against such evils, to effectively serve higher ends.

The book poses a challenge to all societies: how to better, truly and fully learn the lessons of reality, adjusting decisions, social norms and models to genuine consistency by emphasizing unity and consistency, considering all aspects of reality in a balanced fashion, without privileging any over the rest, evaluating alternative choices and actions by referring to the broad, integrated, all-encompassing framework of reality.

This book aims to identify strategic areas for fruitful future research, thinking and action.

The book includes quotations from outstanding publications of all times, showing how the book's argument relates to others' contributions. Comments on quotations in end notes are not generally included. The reader will notice that often the quotation departs from the book's position, and often only partially coincides with it.~

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL NORMS AND CONSISTENCY

A. Social Norms

1. Definition of Social Norms

a. The Social norms as shared solutions

Social norms are shared ways of thinking, feeling, desiring, deciding and acting which are observable in regularly repeated behaviors and are adopted because they are assumed to solve problems. Social norms may reflect the application of either genuine consistency or spurious consistency. They are characterized by genuine consistency to the extent that they harmoniously coexist with the all-encompassing framework of reality; they reveal spurious consistency when they follow the attraction of immediate concerns and impulses.¹ While social norms characterized by genuine consistency lead to genuine solutions, the latter type of social norms lead to confusion, contradictions and frustration. Consistency builds social life, since it allows individuals to contribute to their own fulfillment

individuals' system of norms and between different individuals and groups, should be solved through the exercise of consistency which contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

b. Raw material for consistency and human advance

Social norms are raw material for the social exercise of consistency. Although they are not always used in a genuine fashion, they are necessary for any human advance and for the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Consistency, which identifies similarities, differences, relations and systems, is socially exercised through shared habits which serve as vehicles for thinking, desiring, deciding, feeling and acting, together with others, in harmony or in conflict. Indeed, such processes are comprised, to an important extent, by regularly shared behaviors. Social norms, as the human body, are vehicles for the expression of the spirit—which is the realm of consistency in human beings. They allow individuals to work jointly as members of a society and a family. Social norms build a bridge between physical and spiritual worlds. If they are shaped by genuine consistency, they allow spiritual values to illuminate physical existence; if social norms prioritize physical considerations over spiritual values, they will not contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Social norms are inferred from observation of shared, regular human behaviors, which are read as implicit language.⁹ Therefore it may be said that “every act of a person tends to turn a gesture” and “individual and society live a more or less public existence.”¹⁰ The language of behavior expresses social norms and allows individuals to communicate with themselves and with others. In this way, people are able to build and share the building blocks of human progress in culture, science, the arts, technology, economics, politics, ethics, justice, virtue, health, education and the family; this also allows people to achieve solidarity, cooperation, communication and peace. Such advances are genuine if they insert every fragment into the all-encompassing framework of reality, exercising consistency in order to enhance the quality of decisions and social norms; decisions and social norms must adhere to reality and unity, working for these ultimate ends and serving them with efficacious means, considering all aspects and implications and avoiding simplistic, unilateral approaches and ideologies.¹¹ Otherwise individuals are dominated by appetites, impulses and fragments; they lose their capacity to rise above immediate concerns and are shaken by contradictions. Because they are guided by spurious rather than genuine consistency, they cannot contribute to their own fulfillment, let alone that of others or reality as whole.

c. Assumptions, power, flux, free choices and consistency

The perception that social norms solve common problems is only partially valid. Each person and each group in each moment apply a highly complex system of social norms, different from those of others and from those applied in prior moments. Social norms contain an infinite number of components and combinations, some of which solve problems, others of which do not. Furthermore, the solutions proposed by social norms may work for genuine solutions which contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, or they may advance spurious solutions which actually create obstacles and impediments to fulfillment. Each society contains an infinite number of social norms, as do the groups and sub-groups within it. Each person thinks, desires, feels, decides and acts on the basis of a highly complex combination of social norms which is unique to that person or group at that moment, depending on free decisions and external and internal influences.

Systems of social norms are in continuous flux and change, although they also have basic elements of stability. A norm is born when individuals find that a behavior (whether internal, such as a thought, desire, feeling, or external), is functional for solving their problems, or for satisfying their needs, and therefore adopt it and repeat it regularly. It becomes a social norm when it is –practically from the outset– shared with others, who believe that they have common needs and problems which can also be solved by the common norms. Shared social norms are also based on the belief that different individuals have common capacities for evaluating the quality of norms. However, although all individuals share the capacity for consistency, not all of them use it equally well, nor with equal success. This gives rise to improper and insufficient solutions, or solutions which become such. Furthermore, the needs and perceptions of various individuals are different.

Emile Durkheim's concept of "social facts" is close to what we refer to here as social norms.¹² These are invisible threads which link individuals with each other to make social reality, with individuals acting as members of an orchestra playing a concert, complementing each other around common themes. Social norms are internal and external to individuals, integrating external influences and free decisions. Systems of social norms include visions of reality and of individuals, functioning as frames of reference used for viewing and interpreting everything. They thus include the "world views" which are "implicit in almost every act."¹³ Such visions are complex social norms which condition decisions and actions. They include more stable components, such as beliefs and values,

as well as more transitory and shallow components, which vary across different contexts and moments.

Social norms which are internalized and collectively shared by individuals as "opinion" lead individuals to submit to authority, power, government, institutions, the legal system, leadership and social stratification, and therefore underlie the very existence of these foundations of social structure.¹⁴ Therefore, social norms form the basis of government, authority and law by providing the basis for obedience to them and for their claim to legitimacy. Social norms are the motivational basis leading to respect for contracts and fulfillment of promises and encouraging people to accept social structures and stratifications. Social norms, also called customs, allow people to make the best of their achievements –of the solutions which they have chosen and worked for– allowing them to efficaciously plan means for serving ends.¹⁵

Social norms allow individuals to relate to each other in predictable and constructive ways, complementing each other in joint tasks and building social reality. This is the social dimension of human life, which is built by applying genuine consistency according to the laws of reality which are derived from integrative unity. In the case of sound norms, social norms enable people to come together in order to contribute to the common end of the fulfillment of individuals and reality. In the case of unsound norms guided by spurious consistency, recognition of the true, ultimate end of fulfillment is impaired by egoism, contradiction, conflict and destruction. Thus social norms are based on human free decisions, which are based, in turn, on consistency, whether genuine or spurious. In all cases, experiences and behavior are shared as a consequence of human beings' innate capacity for consistency.¹⁶ Social relations, the object of study of the social sciences, are made of social norms, which govern them, are fed by them, and are observable in behaviors.¹⁷ Behavior and social interaction are made and conditioned by social norms, and these are conditioned by behavior and social interaction.

d. Cultural heritage, inertia, free reformulation

Social norms transmit cultural legacies over the course of centuries and millenia. Individuals and groups grapple with the accumulated advances, struggling against the powerful force of inertia which predisposes them to leave definitively incorporated social norms unchanged. People believe that these norms must have been adopted because they were found to be valuable and desirable for satisfying needs and for solving problems.¹⁸ However, human freedom gives individuals

the power to continually evaluate the relative functionality of social norms which contradict each other and which are not adjusted to new conditions and objectives. On this basis of such evaluation, social norms can be modified and recombined according to the process of social norming. This is influenced by the genuine or spurious exercise of the consistency capacity, that is, either respecting all aspects and relations of reality or privileging impulses, caprices and immediate concerns. Thus social norms build culture and social structure through decisions regarding social interaction.¹⁹ The internal, invisible component of social norms endows them with greater strength, and thus human decision-making is more influenced by beliefs than by interests.²⁰ We see others and ourselves through social norms, which build shared images and define what is legitimate, desirable and appropriate. Social norms thus guide individuals along paths toward fulfillment or lack of fulfillment, happiness or unhappiness, depending on whether they are inspired by genuine consistency or not.

e. Need for further studies on social norms

In order to improve their choice and application of social norms, people need to further study how social norms are adopted, applied and modified and how they are affected by social norming and reciprocal influences. People need to study the assumptions underlying their behaviors and the criteria for selecting consistent components of social norms and rejecting inconsistent ones. They need to learn how to combine components of social norms and models, so as to make the incompatible compatible. People need to deepen their awareness of the effects of social norms and how they are affected by the fact that they act as invisible threads. This will help people learn how to use social norms to better contribute to human fulfillment. People need to study how to continually and progressively identify, evaluate and modify social norms according to the consistency criterion and how to use social norms as raw material for human fulfillment, through the exercise of consistency.

f. Critical evaluation of assumptions and legacies

Individuals look at their own and other people's experiences and behaviors as models to follow; those behaviors which are regularly repeated become social norms. Individuals follow the lead of other people because they assume that other people are capable judges of which behaviors work and which ones do not due to their shared capacity for consistency. Soon individuals realize that this capacity may be used in

either a genuine or spurious fashion, and that it is necessary to evaluate alternative models on this basis. As individuals need to investigate an infinite number of highly complex variables and relations, they need to reciprocally support each other, taking advantage of other people's efforts, knowledge, decisions and actions over time. All generations, groups and individuals advance through trial and error as well as through scientific methods and systematic analysis; these techniques allow them to add to what they have received and correct it, using the process of social norming.

Regularly shared behaviors acquire a strength of their own through social norms. They make one's own and other people's actions predictable, thus allowing efficacious planning and action in the future.²¹ Such regularity is made possible through social norming in the past, even the most remote past, and in the present. Present generations also interact with future ones, since present generations prepare their legacy of social norms for future ones. This allows individuals and societies to advance—and also to regress, potentially as far back as 'homo feralis'.²² Individuals also teach themselves and learn from their own habits, which become incorporated as social norms and treated as "second nature." Individuals adopt and repeat such habits because they assume that these behaviors will provide desired solutions.²³ Individuals copy others because they assume that all individuals engage in behaviors which they have found to be desirable.²⁴ However, it is necessary to evaluate this assumption and its quality in terms of one's own capacity for consistency, through critical judgment.²⁵

g. Stability and change, functions, complementarity

Stability and change complement each other. Stability preserves what has been acquired and stores information and knowledge, allowing accumulative advances in all fields and embodying them in social norms. Change critically analyzes what has been acquired in order to improve it. This makes it possible to advance toward moral consensus, which is necessary for social life and its advances.²⁶

Formal laws aim at reinforcing, identifying and stabilizing social norms that are considered desirable; they are obeyed only to the extent that they are believed to coincide with unofficial social norms.²⁷ Social norms are in perpetual flux due to ongoing processes of social norming in which the whole population participates.

These processes involve flexible adjustments of thoughts, feelings, values, decisions and habits of behavior, according to changing and different circumstances. Social norms resemble a river which is always changing, since its waters are in continual flux, but which also keeps certain

constant characteristics (such as its geographical location) and regularities (such as the volume of water, trends and seasonal variations).²⁸

Change occurs according to an order, within a system of stability. In this way, change and stability are both integral aspects of the integration of variety by unity, within the global expanse of the all-encompassing system of reality. Change and stability do not exist outside the realm of time, in the realm where unity fulfills everyone and everything in a complete fashion; in this realm, unity creates all the life and goodness which change can produce, and infinitely more. Unity does not need stability, since it is outside the eroding realm of time. However, within time, change and stability are crucial forms of adhering to consistency and applying it. Change is necessary for stability, and stability for change; both function to integrate and complement each other for the sake of the fulfillment of individuals and reality.²⁹ Taken separately, they lose meaning.

When individuals exercise genuine consistency, stable social norms favor constructive integration. However, if social norms "prevent social strata from mixing," impeding the advancement of the poor, or if they preserve "professional mannerisms" in a way that causes individuals' characters to become hardened, stability works against human fulfillment.³⁰ Social norms contribute to human fulfillment when they adjust and combine stability and change, contributing to the balanced and harmonious development of the whole and of each person within it, without privileges or rigidities.

People build and re-build social norms, searching for new approaches and new solutions for changing conditions. Social norms are preserved in order to capitalize on and take advantage of approaches that seem to have worked and especially those aspects of such approaches which continue to be functional under new conditions. The constant challenge is to identify what needs to be preserved, what to be changed, and how to change it; people need to learn how to combine stable elements with new components, using different sources in order to improve rather than worsen solutions in terms of their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

h. Impact of small acts of remote past, responsibility, gratitude

Small acts from the remote and near past have a great impact on the present and future; the present, in turn, has important repercussions for the immediate and remote future. Therefore, people bear responsibility for their behaviors and must be concerned about the implications these have in terms of the social norms embodied by different behaviors and

the type of influence these have on social, cultural and physical environments. Findings accumulated over the course of thousands and millions of years continue to influence people today through the complex network of social norms. Small influences and small findings in the past may be magnified exponentially over time, in the same way that a small deviation in the route of a physical object is magnified the further it travels. In this way all times—even prehistoric—are connected to the present.

Given such connections across time, people should be grateful toward past generations for the spiritual, cultural, social and physical advances they have bequeathed. Current generations can support themselves on these legacies in order to satisfy their needs in ways which now appear as "natural" and are taken for granted, but which are actually the result of efforts, sacrifices and creations over thousands or even millions of years. In fact, had past generations acted differently, some of the modern conveniences which we now take for granted, such as cars, computers, television, health discoveries, etc., might have been delayed—or might have been enjoyed even earlier. Different actions in the past might have led to different kinds of products and environments, not only due to technological developments in the material realm, but even more in the realms of arts, ethics, education, law, the economy and politics, especially in spiritual, interpersonal relations and family realms, which would be very different from what they are now.³¹

Individuals also depend on the actions and legacies of their specific ancestors. Just as individuals' ancestors bore a great responsibility toward the present generation, individuals now bear a great responsibility toward their descendants. All received chains are made possible by the system of reality, presided over by integrative unity, while the free contributions of human beings, using their capacity for consistency, complement what is thus received. Contemporary individuals bear a great responsibility toward future generations, which will be affected by their behaviors and their choice between consistency or deviation. Though individuals' influences are especially strong over their contemporary peers and immediate descendants, their influence never ceases or completely disappears, since they are submerged into the river of history. Contributions among generations, as among individuals and groups, are made through their behaviors, which are inspired and endowed with meaning by social norms, in which they become informally and formally organized. These norms are shared by individuals, but with social existence, their influence goes beyond the individual to groups.³² Social norms form the basis for reference groups, which allow people to share experiences and behaviors, giving shape and regularity to internal and external behaviors.³³ Each person repeats the process in his or her life,

continually drawing upon previous experiences, moments and stages and creating new legacies for future reference.

2. Trust in the guidance of one's own and other people's behaviors

Social norms are accepted because they are seen as solutions which individuals and other people have found useful for satisfying needs, solving problems and contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Social norms function as invitations which encourage people to share and repeat tested solutions. Shared and regularly repeated behaviors are considered as indicators—or proofs—of functionality. Therefore, social norms presume faith in one's own and other people's ability to properly exercise their capacity for consistency, i.e. to distinguish what is true, good, valuable and desirable from what is not. Therefore, individuals trust that following observed norms will enable them to achieve their desired ends.³⁴

For instance, when individuals follow a path in the countryside, they assume that it will take them somewhere they want to go, just as it presumably did for those who followed the path before, for instance, toward an important destination, or a town, or a stream, etc. They assume that there must have been a good reason why individuals repeatedly followed the path before. Individuals add their own steps to the path, thus reinforcing its attractiveness for the next passerby. Individuals may also open new paths, modifying the one they came across. All this illustrates the process which I call "social norming," which refers to the continual adoption and recreation of social norms.

The incorporation of new social norms is based on the conviction that the new norms will produce desirable outcomes.³⁵ Part of "imitation" can be reasonably founded, insofar as people adopt norms based on the reasonable expectation that norms which have been regularly followed by others must be useful for solving general problems and meeting common needs.³⁶ However, what is desirable for some individuals may be not for others, especially because some may be more concerned with satisfying impulses, while others may strive for genuine consistency and fulfillment. Returning to the analogy of the individual following a path in the countryside, in order to ensure that the hiker will be satisfied by following the well-trodden path, it would be necessary to clarify the needs and goals of previous hikers. So too with social norms, whose suitability or comparability should be clarified (and appropriate adjustments made) prior to their adoption.

3. Identification with others and with oneself, according to genuine or spurious consistency

Individuals relate to each other and share meanings, messages, goals, feelings, decisions and actions because they recognize the common capacity for consistency which everyone shares (although not everyone exercises it properly). The capacity for consistency allows people to find similarities between themselves and others in terms of what they search for and adhere to; individuals also note similarities between themselves and others based on their membership of the same species and their shared capacity for consistency. Beginning in infancy, individuals learn to see others as themselves and to see themselves as one of many others. This leads people to pay close attention to the messages implicit in their own and other people's behaviors, which reflect discoveries, judgments, desires, decisions and actions. They see such messages as their own. They see themselves as a part of the same reality as others, sharing, communicating, cooperating and integrating with others and with themselves. They relate to each other through knowledge, will, feeling and action, following genuine or spurious consistency. This is the basis for identifying, developing and sharing social norms—through the process of social norming—through interaction, communication, languages and reference groups, using genuine or spurious consistency. Social norms are adopted, accepted and shared on the basis of trust which individuals deposit in others and in themselves.³⁷ This trust is based on the belief of being similar, especially in terms of the shared capacity for consistency.³⁸ Therefore all individuals are "guarantors of truth," even when this capacity is improperly exercised.³⁹ In addition, individuals see others and themselves as "significant others" whose experiences offer a useful point of reference. Models offered by reference groups are accepted because they are considered desirable in terms of consistency. If this consistency is genuine, the models it informs will contribute to human fulfillment.

4. Formal and real social norms, force, ends, sanctions

Human beings establish formal norms as guides in order to reinforce, practice, discipline and coordinate those social norms they consider to be desirable. Social norms are thus codified in explicit legal, technical or

moral norms.⁴⁰ Formal norms are built to reinforce the real social norms contained in human behavior. Without the support of real social norms, formal norms lack real force and only lend themselves to arbitrary applications.⁴¹ Just as social norms are subject to the continuous process of social norming and are constantly readjusted in order to better consolidate accumulated experiences and advances, formal norms (laws, decrees, regulations, statutes) also need to be adjusted; otherwise, they lose motivational strength and fail to govern human behaviors.

Judges and government functionaries, and to some extent all citizens, need to constantly strive to interpret natural and social norms, which are sources of formal norms. They must define the goals and spirit of formal norms on this basis, in order to adapt their application to a wide variety of situations and changing circumstances and contexts, to basic values and ends, based on genuine consistency. This adjustment is performed by using real social norms to interpret, adjust and apply formal ones. The force of a social norm depends on its acceptance as legitimate and on the visibility of its intrinsic functionality. Sanctions established against violators are part of the effort to ensure collective and joint implementation of formal norms and to protect the interests and goals served by laws by warning and educating. This follows the model of unity, reality and nature, which establishes rigorous sanctions for violators of the laws of reality, with important educational significance.

5. Dominant and alternative social norms and values

a. Infinite possibilities, reduction, typologies

There are infinite possibilities for alternative social norms, so that to be understood, social norms need to be reduced to typologies dividing them into a limited and manageable number of types. Individuals, groups and societies choose from this limited number of possibilities, selecting social norms which they build and adopt by exercising their capacity for consistency. Some combinations of social norms are more probable than others, due to their compatibility or incompatibility in terms of consistency. Certain social norms coexist easily together, without contradictions, whether in terms of the whole of reality (genuine consistency) or in terms of fragments which purport to replace the whole (spurious consistency). Thus, for instance, human beings may discover and build norms of

knowledge by identifying regular relationships of causality which systematically link beings and aspects among themselves. By reducing the infinite number of possible combinations to those which are functional, typologies of combinations with high frequency and probability are identified. Associations allow people to establish which factors precede and determine specific results.

b. Dominant types in the United States and Argentina: expedient and sacred

In the United States, there is a general tendency toward combinations of social norms which place emphasis on efficacy, with a lesser emphasis on spiritual, interpersonal and family values. Such priorities have been associated with economic and political success, on the one hand, but also with weak family and interpersonal relations, as well as spiritual and emotional insecurity. In Argentina, in contrast, spiritual, interpersonal and family values tend to dominate, while concerns about efficacy receive less attention. These priorities have been associated with decades of weak professionalism, disorganization and indiscipline in economic and political fields; at the same time, however, family, interpersonal and spiritual values have remained strong. In both countries, groups may be observed which reflect alternative trends, as some Americans freely choose to prioritize spiritual and interpersonal goals and some Argentines champion efficacy. These alternative tendencies persevere despite the counter-pressure exerted by dominant social norms in each country. Normative combinations fight for hegemony in individuals, groups and societies, with certain dominant combinations coexisting with other, alternative tendencies.

B. Genesis and Change of Social Norms, and Consistency

1. Social norming: a receptive and creative process

a. Reciprocal influences between individuals and social norms

Individuals both influence and are influenced by social norms; while individuals are guided by social norms, they also create and modify them through the process of social norming. Social norming enables people to adapt, reformulate or reject the messages they receive from other individuals, in a complex and continually changing system within which some social norms grow and other vanish as they are submitted to critical evaluation guided by genuine or spurious consistency.⁴² All individuals continually recreate and reform the social norms which they apply in a partially conscious process of social norming which interprets, evaluates and partially adopts messages observed in one's own and other people's behaviors and languages. Individuals use their capacity for consistency and freedom to select, create and build from the repertoire of social norms available to them as raw material. In doing so, they must overcome obstacles of communication, including those related to linguistic performance.⁴³

Social norms influence and interact with each other, integrating themselves into combinations and sub-systems within social and cultural systems.⁴⁴ In this process, various norms grow, disappear or are modified or combined; the resulting combinations of social norms reveal myriad adaptations and are influenced not only by "great men" but also by an enormous number of individuals from the past and present, including even the most remote ancestors.⁴⁵ All contributions call for critical evaluation.

b. Strength of social norms and free social norming

Social norms exert a strong influence, providing models and examples reflecting the value attached to individuals and their behaviors. All individuals build their own package of social norms, choosing among the endless number of possible social norms, combining and modifying them, thus adding their own free decisions to the raw material of influences received from social norms.⁴⁶ Individuals reinforce social norms when they apply them; for instance, children reinforce the social norms imbedded in language when they learn to speak.⁴⁷ The exercise of genuine consistency in decision-making and behavior influences social norming (that is, the creation, adoption, reform or combination of social norms)

and ensures that the social norms and systems of social norms which people practice contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.⁴⁸

The strength of social norms derives from individuals' tendency to assume that they are inspired by consistency –whether genuine or spurious.⁴⁹ However, awareness of the fact that prevailing social norms are incomplete, and often unsound, leads to the development of new social norms and combinations in order to "mold" social processes and dominate one's own impulses, passions, desires and anxieties.⁵⁰ The control which individuals have over their decisions reinforces their self-esteem and favors consistent social norms.⁵¹ At the same time, the results of individual and social actions are influenced by other individuals, accidents and general causes, which are parts of the global system of reality.⁵² Individuals' external behavior derives from their psychological frame of reference, which is largely a product of the internalization of social norms. Through social norming, individuals condition the social norms which condition them.⁵³

Social norms place limits on human activity. However, these limits are derived from free decisions which, if guided by genuine consistency, contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, as in the case of norms encouraging fair play, honesty and cooperation by pursuing ultimate, higher ends rather than impulses and appetites.⁵⁴ Each individual freely ascribes meaning to things by interpreting the norms built by others, partially adopting and modifying these on the basis of new interpretations and new information, experiences and personal evaluations.⁵⁵ Thus individuals build their own vision of the world, which makes a frame of reference through which they interpret all beings, facts and decisions, building their own system of social norms, choosing among infinite possible combinations. This is the basis which people draw upon when they respond to and choose among situations and facts. All persons may be seen as points of intersection of countless social norms which converge in them. Individuals choose, modify and adapt specific social norms according to their frames of reference, which in turn are continually modified for each new decision and action and guided, to a greater or lesser degree, by genuine consistency, which leads people to respect relations of causality, harmony, meaning and ultimate ends.

In this way, the past lives on, albeit in modified form, as individuals internalize social norms which are the "products" of "all past times," even if individuals are not aware of this.⁵⁶ The influence of the past can be traced, much as a geologist analyzes sediments in the earth's layers in order to ascertain the influence of past geological periods. This points to the need for critical evaluation and for the eventual rejection or modification

of some social norms. In fact, each person, group and generation only passes on a partial selection of some of the components inherited from its ancestors; part is lost through neglect, oblivion, or critical evaluation and interpretation –and even the components which are preserved are modified and recombined. This process improves the use of freedom for critically evaluating the heritage of social norms and improving it in terms of consistency so that it better contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

c. Adoption and transmission of social norms, always freely modified

Social norms, inherited from previous or present generations, are revitalized by free choice. Whenever a social norm is adopted, individuals add a personal touch to it; therefore, the social norms which they share, transmit and diffuse are modified by personalized adaptations. Individuals not only freely choose but also modify social norms, thus limiting the influence of the past over the present.⁵⁷ Other people's influence and authority is only accepted when it appears valid, according to critical analysis using the consistency criterion, whether genuinely or spuriously.⁵⁸ All individuals change the social norms they adopt by joining them into complex combinations and by perceiving, interpreting, evaluating and modifying them in terms of their complex, unique psychological frame of reference and through their power of free decision, inspired by genuine or spurious consistency.⁵⁹ In this way, social norms are continually revitalized, both in normal situations and under extreme tension.⁶⁰ When a social norm is adopted, it is always adapted, such that the person passing on the social norm transmits a new norm. Social norms are therefore the joint product of received influences (of social norms, together with physical, biological and psychological influences) and free decision-making.

d. Identification with oneself, others and consistency through social norms; free choice and consistency

Individuals identify themselves with others and with themselves, as parts of a common reality. This makes people see others as extensions of themselves and themselves as extensions of others. People therefore look to themselves as well as others as reference groups and, on this basis, they interact with others and with themselves. Reference groups do not involve compulsion, but freely choosing and adopting some offered guidelines. Although individuals are aware of their differences from others, they also perceive how much they have in common. Individuals often feel as though they have become different persons, in as much as their capacity for

consistency allows them to evaluate themselves and to change and improve, following their own desires. The capacity for consistency is the first source of guidance and identification for individuals and makes it possible for them to identify with themselves and with others.

Social norms –the building blocks of social structures, relations and interaction and society– are built on the basis of consistency. Such norms are the "solid facts of society" which allow individuals to see themselves in others, as in a mirror.⁶¹ Social norms form the foundation for building a sense of self.⁶² This sense is present in all individuals, who receive social norms unfinished and adapt them through social norming.⁶³ For this scope, they combine received social norms with their own perception of the messages of consistency and new information. The capacity for consistency allows people to see others and themselves from the perspective of unity, which is a perspective which transcends privilege. It leads people to consider the influence of physical, social and cultural environments, organized in social norms, which function as raw material to be evaluated by exercising consistency and free decision-making powers.⁶⁴ The evaluation of one's surroundings and environment is an application of consistency and freedom, but it is also strongly influenced by the frame of reference of social norms –including beliefs, feelings, values, images, etc.– and personal circumstances. Such influences are used as instruments for evaluation and in turn are modified in the active process of the exercise of consistency and freedom.⁶⁵

Social norms do not replace freedom, but are created by it; they are "invisible hands" with limited power.⁶⁶ Individuals continually choose, reject and modify various social norms which offer incomplete frameworks which individuals need to complete, adjust, adapt and improve. Social norms therefore establish certain "styles of thought" and do not constitute "absolutely compulsive forces."⁶⁷ Social norms are continually created under the guidance of genuine or spurious consistency.

e. The free choice to analyze and control influences in order to serve human fulfillment

When people decide to modify social norms, the type of critical analysis they use will determine whether the changes they make are sound or unsound. Their changes will tend to build virtuous or vicious circles, depending on whether their critical analysis is inspired by genuine consistency or not. Individuals' choices are free but nonetheless influenced by social norms, just as social norms are influenced by free choices. Social norms strongly influence individuals, who create and modify them and, in so doing, contribute to human fulfillment –or to the opposite. Individuals'

actions are part of larger, collective efforts, in which it is crucial to clarify and acknowledge the contribution of each person.⁶⁸ Even when social norms are influenced by "great general causes," they depend on the free decisions of individuals who create and modify social norms, values and decision-making styles. As individuals engage in the process of social norming, they bring together and give shape to countless influences.⁶⁹

Free choice is reinforced through knowledge of social norms and other factors which individuals need to master and mold in order to efficaciously contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Knowledge of social norms enables people to avoid becoming their prisoners. It is also necessary to create seeds of change against the current of dominant social norms, enriching the spectrum of existing social norms. Powerful spiritual "muscles" need to be developed so as to contribute to human fulfillment, correcting excesses and extremes. The sacred "halo" which protects social norms in traditional societies poses obstacles to change, severely condemning violators and creating confusion when individuals face contradictory social norms. This problem may be overcome by clarifying the path of consistency; this shows people how to use professionalism instead of relying on luck, for example. It also causes people to reject contradiction and strive to move in virtuous spirals instead of vicious circles and pendular excesses.

2. Communication, interaction, reference groups

a. Learning from behaviors, explicit and implicit languages, and consistency

Consistent critical analysis of social norms and behavior requires people to distinguish between consistent and inconsistent aspects. Individuals ascribe meanings to behaviors as indicators of actors' ideas, desires, feelings, decisions, perceptions and implicit judgments. By studying behavior, people can learn implicit messages, which may help people to interpret their own reality and to take positions relative to it. By studying behavior (both explicit and implicit) and analyzing human interaction, people can better understand the role of social norms and thus emerge from chaos and confusion. Social norms are part of the language of behavior. When building, interpreting and adopting behaviors and social norms, people may apply either genuine or spurious consistency; depending on their choice, they will either improve or worsen the quality of the social norms, structures and systems which they gradually incorporate and store.

Individuals look at themselves and other people as reference groups, since all human beings are connected to unity, which serves as the unique firm reference point, through consistency. Individuals are not isolated from each other, nor are they the center of the universe; instead, they are harmoniously integrated, along with other people and living beings, into the all-encompassing framework of reality by integrative unity. The quality of individuals' decisions is enhanced to the extent that they understand their proper position within reality and use this knowledge in shaping their decisions and behaviors. This entails, among other things, consistent, critical analysis of the components, causes and consequences of social norms and of the messages received from themselves and others. In this way, people can communicate more clearly with themselves and with others and cultivate consistency, which contributes to human fulfillment.

b. Communication with others and oneself, integrating external and integral behavior

Behavior reflects the relation of individuals to themselves and to the rest of reality and its components. Indeed, behavior is an inseparable, integrated process, including knowledge, will, feelings and external action. Because of this integration, it is possible to infer internal behavior from external behavior, and this, in turn, makes it possible to communicate with oneself and with others. Behavior is communicative and serves as a model for others and for oneself. The meanings given to specific behaviors by different individuals inevitably vary, at least to some extent. Yet through the road of consistency, it is possible for these ascribed meanings to increasingly converge, thereby increasing the efficacy of joint action on behalf of human fulfillment. Convergence on consistency leads individuals to adhere to reality and strive to know it and to contribute to its fulfillment, in truth and goodness. This benefits all individuals, insofar as it promotes mutual respect, love and sharing of advances and achievements. Individuals observe and communicate with others and themselves, thus interpreting others, themselves and the whole. Communication is a basic component of knowledge and thought, of desires, preferences, judgments, ends, means, decisions and actions.

c. Explicit symbolism, language, codes, social norms

The explicit symbolism of language (spoken, written, gesticulated, etc.) and its codes enhances intra- and inter-personal communication. The language of behavior is understood with greater precision, fidelity and richness when it is accompanied by explicit symbolism. Educational and

legal systems, the media, social and political leaders, and reference groups not only teach through behavior and example but also through explicit symbolic language; indeed, all human interaction, joint tasks and organizations make use of explicit symbolism. They use social norms to build codes which serve as guides for interpretation, ascribing meanings to signs, words, human expressions or gestures, and also to processes in auxiliary instruments, such as computers. Such codes and signs serve as a kind of language for intra- and inter-personal communication. This book's emphasis in consistency and social norms and values is an effort in the direction of using explicit symbolism for reinforcing free consistent choices and social norms leading to human fulfillment and quality of life.

All social norms are expressed in languages –whether explicitly symbolic or not– and are thus shared and transmitted. Languages and their components are, in turn, built by social norms and help express and channel social norms. Communication is facilitated by the building of all components of culture and society, among them language, educational institutions, the media, legal systems and leadership. Communication enables individuals, groups and societies to pass on the advances they have reached and perpetuate the great richness of living tradition.⁷⁰ Social norms are the central vehicle in the crucial process of diffusion.⁷¹

3. Education

a. Education, social norming, consistency and human fulfillment

Education is one of the primary means for building, modifying and diffusing social norms, through a variety of experiences. Education occurs through formal and informal institutions, the media, and all kinds of social interaction and reference groups. Education is shaped by the process of social norming and fulfills its function to the extent that it is guided by genuine consistency such that it contributes to human fulfillment, through the harmonious fulfillment of all dimensions, with the help of high quality decisions and social norms. Without this approach, schools and educational programs may have unsound effects, even if large sums of money are dedicated to education; individuals may adopt dysfunctional social norms which privilege impulses and immediate concerns rejecting fundamental spiritual, ethical, family and interpersonal values.

Effective education requires careful analysis of all implications. Research on health education conducted by the author showed that formal

education is important for disseminating important information about health care and providing people with basic guidelines for improving their health and quality of life and for preventing death, disease and pain, but that family experiences, interaction with neighbors, colleagues and other individuals, the media and professionals (physicians, pharmaceutical companies, etc.) are also powerful influences.

The research also showed that these issues tended to be neglected by public and private organizations responsible for health care and society as a whole.⁷² In 1992, due to an outbreak of cholera in Argentina, a campaign in health education was launched to spread awareness of proper hygiene, which led to a significant drop in infant disease and mortality. This suggests that millions of deaths and untold sufferings could be avoided by using resources and means more effectively to serve desired ends, through proper health education.

b. Teaching with example, stronger than words

By adopting and practicing social norms, individuals send a message to others and to themselves and encourage the adoption of these norms as models. Individuals themselves are the first to suffer if unsound, contradictory social norms are adopted and the first to benefit if positive norms and attitudes are adopted in the face of difficulties. In the latter case, sound norms lead to the proper interpretation of obstacles, making them serve as stimuli for self-improvement. In order to educate others – and oneself –, it is necessary to first develop sound social norms in oneself, adopting, sharing and applying them, and adjusting one's own life accordingly. This involves engaging in consistent behavior, which is the main form of expression and communication.

When individuals attempt to encourage others to engage in behaviors which they do not practice themselves, their reluctance shows that they are not convinced of the desirability of such behaviors, and therefore they fail to stimulate others to behave accordingly. In contrast, consistent social norming contributes to human progress and fulfillment by practicing what is preached.⁷³ It takes advantage of difficulties in order to show how genuine consistency may use them to contribute to human fulfillment, instead of succumbing to discouragement, irritation, hatred and violence. The latter provide negative examples which impede advancement and fulfillment. They issue a negative message which neither educates nor stimulates people to adopt behaviors which contribute to human fulfillment. As a result, individuals and those whom they influence become victims of contradiction and fall into confusion.

c. How education contributes to human fulfillment

Sound education helps individuals to adjust their thoughts, attitudes, decisions and actions to unrestricted consistency, thus contributing to their own fulfillment as well as that of others and reality as a whole, in all its dimensions. Education fulfills its mission when it teaches people to develop and share sound social norms and reference groups which allow people to do the following:

- understand and apply the consistency criterion and derived criteria in explicit fashion as the first and most basic rule of behavior and decision-making;
- master themselves, their impulses and the environment;
- dedicate everything to the fulfillment of reality and individuals;
- adhere to reality and other individuals with love, giving themselves for their benefit;
- develop depth and balance;
- learn from difficulties;
- understand the importance of respect, communication, understanding, humility and love, and practice them fully;
- cultivate a positive image of themselves, of reality, and of the power of sound behavior;
- identify and understand social norms, their causes and consequences, and thus learn how to improve them;
- adopt sound models of individual and social behavior;
- distinguish between positive and negative elements in social norms and models, combining and reinforcing the first and counteracting the second;
- optimally combine stability and change;
- improve the quality of decision making by critically analyzing decisions, alternatives and consequences;
- contribute to their own integrated fulfillment and that of others and of reality as a whole, including spiritual, family and interpersonal dimensions, in addition to economic and political development and security;
- integrate all information into the systemic framework of reality;
- optimize the benefits of science, leadership, the media and education;
- see beyond immediate concerns, building a systemic, all-encompassing frame of reference in which to insert all findings, respecting higher ethical principles and norms.⁷⁴

These behaviors are encouraged by sound social norms which are developed and shared through sound education. Sound education also

allows people to detect and counteract the risks of pernicious social norms and models, including such dysfunctional tendencies as unilateral materialism and other modern myths; it discourages people from grasping at panaceas or tolerating perverse tyrannies which try to replace reality with fragments and impulses. Sound education is able to discourage people from privileging egoism, impulses and hedonism; it steers them away from searching for absolute answers in money, power, domination, success, prestige, drugs and other disorders.

Sound education spreads consistent social norms which discourage over-simplification, improvisation, shallowness, unilateralism, excesses, destructive tendencies, violence, hatred, self-abuse and exploitation of others, arrogance, and all movements which run counter to truth, goodness and the balanced and harmonious fulfillment of reality and individuals.

d. Sound models of sacrifice and commitment, beyond formalism

In order to develop and diffuse sound models through education, it is necessary to provide examples of the virtue of sacrifice and self-commitment. This is best done through reference groups which reflect the social norms practiced by parents, teachers, and various social groups and categories. These reference groups give content and efficacy to real education, through formal education and beyond, going beyond the objectives formally or verbally expressed by educational institutions, parents, leaders and authorities.⁷⁵

4. Improving decisions and social norms

To the extent that unrestricted consistency is applied, decisions and social norms contribute to human fulfillment. If spurious consistency is applied instead, people fall into confusion, blindness and ignorance as they try to replace reality and unity by fragments. Unrestricted consistency teaches people to properly center and focus their efforts so that they serve others, themselves and reality.

To the extent that people agree with prevailing social norms and find them to be reasonable, they willingly conform to them and do not need to be forced or compelled to obey them. For this reason, it is essential for people to identify and improve social norms, applying the criterion of unrestricted consistency to ensure that these basic tools for thinking, feeling, desiring, deciding and behaving will be sound.⁷⁶

C. Consequences of Social Norms

1. Power of social norms and of freedom

a. Social norms, freedom, consistency, awareness

Social norms and free choice are the main forces guiding behavior, influencing people's thoughts, desires, feelings and actions and building society, culture, the state and its component parts with the guidance of consistency.⁷⁷ If people let themselves be guided by genuine consistency, their decisions and behavior will lead to advancement and contribute to the "harmony of all the powers that surround them," through the intermediary of social norms.⁷⁸

Awareness about the influence of social norms and free decisions allows people to improve them and to weigh the consequences of adhering to genuine or spurious consistency, reinforcing the former and avoiding the latter.

Awareness allows people to guide social norming in a sound direction and make wise use of the legacy of social norms from past and present generations, which influence everybody, especially the young.

Through social norms, individuals' decisions and actions not only have transitory but permanent effects on themselves and others.⁷⁹ The basis of the power of social norms derives from the fact that people freely accept and internalize norms, as can be inferred from external behavior.⁸⁰ The task of identifying underlying social norms and making these "invisible threads" visible is an arduous one—but one which is crucial for managing important resources and contributing to human fulfillment through communication, cooperation, education and all forms of social interaction and organization, understanding the deep processes which underlie physical manifestations.

b. Authority, public opinion, social and formal norms

The power and influence of authority and public opinion, as well as formal norms and formal economic and political organizations, stem from their basis in underlying social norms. This invisible foundation can be inferred from individuals' deference to authority and public opinion, including the "tyranny of one's next door neighbor," revolutionary theories and any other forms which social norms may take.⁸¹

The power of social norms is clearly demonstrated by people's universal willingness to submit themselves to authority figures and by their obedience to the internalized social norms which are contained in popular

opinion.⁸² The strong influence of opinions over individuals and their lives reflects the strong influence of social norms.⁸³

Social norms apply genuine or spurious consistency. They are inspired by these and reinforce them. Acceptance of formal norms and belief in their legitimacy derive from the power of underlying social norms, which are "the law behind the law" sanctioned by "custom, the first king of man."⁸⁴ This makes it difficult to escape the power of prevailing norms.

c. Interaction between social norms and personal experience

Individuals perceive the system of reality and their place within it through the filter of social norms deriving from the genuine or spurious exercise of consistency. On this basis, they decide how to live their lives, exert their energy and wield their particular quota of influence. They thus modify reality according to their perception of it.⁸⁵ There are processes of feedback and mutual reinforcement between personal experience (including thoughts, desires, feelings, decisions and behavior) and social norms; social norms and personal experience interact and reinforce each other in the process of social norming.

The systemic character of reality implies that individuals not only wield influence over themselves and the rest of reality but are themselves influenced by the rest, through behaviors ordered in social norms.

The two-directional nature of influence contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, so long as it is inspired by genuine consistency. All this is part of the definition of reality.

d. Mastering impulses, trusting in reality and oneself

Individuals intuitively know that, faced with the temptation of impulses which blindly push them in certain directions, they are free to resist and may choose to embrace unity, reality and its laws instead. These are the laws of consistency, which transcend immediate, individualistic and momentary concerns and impulses. These laws promote a realistic approach which encourages people to believe in themselves and in reality and unity; they reinforce such faith and make it explicit, thus leading to sound social norms which contribute to human fulfillment. Personal examples of the benefits which derive from following sound social norms lead others to follow similar paths, trusting in their own and other people's capacity for consistency. In this way, people learn to use impulses, influences and social norms as raw material which can be molded to contribute to the inexorable triumph of reality and unity.

Instead, if people do not heed the laws of reality, and do not trust in it and in themselves, they are easily convinced to try to replace reality with fragments and impulses, even though this leads to discouragement, failure and frustration instead of fulfillment. Such mistrust reflects the unwillingness to dedicate oneself to reality and unity, with the necessary efforts and sacrifices this entails. Yet paradoxically, by trying to avoid sacrifices, people actually end up limiting themselves and denying their own freedom.

e. Integration of knowledge, will, feeling and action; acting following belief

The decision to embrace reality and unity (or not to) is an integrated, indivisible choice which involves a person's knowledge, will, feelings and actions. Consistency is the basis for knowing truth, desiring goodness and serving both. If it is replaced by fragments, as occurs when people exercise spurious consistency, it leads people away from fulfillment by not respecting all aspects and relations within reality. When individuals define something as non-existent, they act accordingly; for instance, if people believe that there is no way out, they do not try to find an exit. Similarly, if individuals consider themselves prisoners of their impulses, they act as such. They may even claim that doing so is not only inevitable but also desirable. Because they fail to look at reality as a whole integrated by unity, they cannot enjoy the benefits of the kingdom of reality and of consistency, and they desperately try to replace this kingdom. If individuals believe that a decision or action will have a desirable net effect, they will tend to adopt it.

f. Consistent perspective, definitions, experience, lessons of reality

By adopting a broad, balanced, long-term perspective which considers the system of reality as a whole, integrated by unity, people can prevent themselves from becoming caught up in the immediate attraction of impulses and fragments. Such a perspective teaches people to respect the whole system of reality and to love others as well as themselves, working for the benefit of all and contributing to human fulfillment. This leads people to respect all beings and aspects of reality, instead of privileging fragments at the expense of others. A genuinely consistent perspective considers all consequences up to ultimate implications and assesses the net effects of alternative choices and behaviors for the whole of reality.

In this way, individuals' definitions of reality and of themselves derive from the exercise of their capacity for consistency, according to which

they use their free choice to read and interpret reality. Such definitions influence their behavior, which in turn influences their definitions, in a reciprocal process of reinforcement. Definitions include cognitive, volitional, affective and behavioral components, all of which are integrated in experience. Images (of oneself, others and reality) reinforce will, feeling and action –and vice versa. This integrated experience interacts with reality, and reality responds with educational messages in the form of rewards and punishments.

Thanks to these messages, individuals can learn to gradually adjust their actions, using the guide of consistency, which liberates them from the prison of impulses and immediate gratification. Indeed, individuals can only learn to resist the pressure of impulses and the temptation of immediate gratification, which seduces people with the prospect of avoiding efforts and sacrifices, by adopting the broad perspective of reality and unity.

g. Models of consistency and inconsistency and collective self-image

Individuals' self-image is part of a larger, collective self-image of the group to which individuals belong. This collective self-image is embodied in social norms, which are enriched by interaction and communication and which make individuals see themselves either as masters or prisoners of their impulses.

Social norms and the behaviors in which they manifest themselves reflect the exercise of genuine or spurious consistency; they either adhere to reality and unity or reject them. Of course, no individual completely adheres to or absolutely rejects reality and unity; every person is always in an intermediate point between the two pure poles. Individuals' positions along the spectrum are transmitted through social norms which allow people to share their attitudes and behaviors with others, influencing others to practice consistency or the opposite. All behavior and forms of interaction, including the media, business and communication, reflect models which influence people to consistency or inconsistency.

h. Invisible fabrics related to consistency

Through a combination of social norms and free decisions, individuals continually build and readjust their psychological and social frames of reference, which include beliefs, values, opinions, preferences, goals, etc. These frames of reference condition behaviors, allowing people to indirectly observe the influence of social norms and predict their effects. If decisions and social norms are inspired by consistency, they will lead individuals in this direction and ensure that they have a positive influence on others, so that people can jointly contribute to human fulfillment.⁸⁶

Social norms also influence future generations.⁸⁷ If people fail to realize this, their lack of awareness increases undesirable influences.⁸⁸ The strong influence of social norms can be seen, for example, in the immediate influence of society and its persistent molding character.⁸⁹

Social norms have the strength of social facts.⁹⁰ Their "uniformity of effects" is no less real than that of cosmic forces.⁹¹ This is true even when the behavior which social norms predict appears to consist of completely spontaneous acts rather than fatally determined outcomes.⁹²

Social norms exert their influence through social and cultural environments which are built in order to meet people's "recurrent needs." Although people are only vaguely aware of their existence, they need these environments in order to think, just as babies need air to breathe; like babies who breathe without being conscious of doing so, people generally are not aware of the systems of social norms that influence them.⁹³

Social norms, including mores, are built by individuals who use them unconsciously, in the same way as personal habits.

Social norms are built on the basis of "interpretation" and "definition of the situation" which are based on preexisting social norms and modified by social norming, in a circle of reciprocal causation.⁹⁴ The same happens with world views.⁹⁵

Social norms combine into fabrics of invisible threads which are formed by and go on to condition free decisions. This leads to a certain systemic stability which allows people to predict human behavior and trust one another.⁹⁶

i. Social norms; liberation, wars, opinion, advances, consistency

Behavior is influenced not only by social norms but also through free decisions which allow people to create, adopt and apply their own social norms. The capacity for consistency allows individuals to create and select social norms by critically evaluating and examining them, thus building social life as a system.⁹⁷ Consistency allows individuals to liberate themselves from "chains" of social norms and institutions, making social norms and institutions into vehicles for liberation and fulfillment by making them explicit and critically evaluating them.⁹⁸ This allows people to use social norms and institutions to solve problems and satisfy needs, create order and preserve the integrity of the state.⁹⁹

Social norms have the power to achieve significant results, for good or evil, thanks to the firm conviction with which they are held when they are internalized (especially in the case of social norms which people create or "invent"). Wars are produced or prevented by such internalized social norms, more than by weapons, ships or stone walls.¹⁰⁰ Individuals'

decision to subject themselves to another person's authority derives from social norms which advocate this.¹⁰¹

Opinions and beliefs are social norms, that is, shared, regularly repeated internal behaviors which are reflected in external behaviors.¹⁰² The powerful influence of social norms enables them to exert a "tyranny of prevailing opinion" if people fail to critically evaluate them to determine their compatibility with consistency and the order of reality.¹⁰³ Any human advance is made by using social norms as instruments; indeed, even the evaluation of social norms is performed on the basis of social norms. The first of all norms –the norm of norms– is consistency, the origin of all other social norms and the ultimate criterion for evaluating and modifying them. Starting with early social norms (beginning with babies or "homo feralis"), people go on to accumulate advances by employing their capacity for consistency in search of solutions.

Even utopian thinkers and revolutionaries base their proposals on criteria supported by consistency –genuine or spurious– and social norms. These criteria are derived from previous social norms which provide the informational and orientative raw material people can adapt and use to build their own interpretations, decisions and actions, through free choice. In doing so, people rely on tools and styles of criticism provided by contemporary systems of social norms; they "cannot make a world out of nothing."¹⁰⁴ The past lives on within ourselves –even if we are not aware of this– through the legacy of social and cultural environments which have been internalized as social norms.¹⁰⁵ By understanding this, people are able to clarify how the past influences the present and, on this basis, how to improve their decisions, social norms, quality of life, and future.¹⁰⁶

j. The power of ideas, social norms and trust

The power of ideas may be seen in social norms, through which ideas are accumulatively built, preserved, shared, regularly repeated, stored and transmitted. Ideas can change the world.¹⁰⁷ They create government and they may promote order or chaos.¹⁰⁸ In either case, their power reflects the influence of social norms, since ideas are derived from social norms, and social norms develop, preserve and diffuse ideas, incorporating them into pre-existing frames of social norms containing previous ideas. Ideas derive from the joint efforts of individuals, groups and societies. Even utopias and revolutions are strongly influenced by preexisting ideas. Ideas, which are shared in social norms, not only determine material, military, political and economic changes, but also changes in personal and social decisions. Ideas therefore influence individuals' contribution to development and fulfillment and impact on decision-making styles and

the efficacy of human action.¹⁰⁹ This influence is linked to the inseparable integration of mind, will, feelings and action in human beings' experience.

Social norms are supported by the trust which individuals have in themselves and in others, based on the faith that they have in their common capacity for consistency. Such trust, in turn, builds social norms, is embodied in them, and is supported by them. Trust provides power and efficacy to social norms, which are internalized on the basis of trust. People also trust that the social norms they adopt will be respected by others. If they fail to have faith in this, they suffer from insecurity; this leads to paralysis and erratic, desperate movements. Confidence and predictability are fundamental for social advance and for the efficient functioning of competitiveness, especially in complex organizations.¹¹⁰ These qualities derive from social norms which sanction and reinforce shared trust. Not even language could be developed if social institutions were not underpinned by trustworthy social norms, which connect signs with sensations and ideas.¹¹¹

k. Conceptions of status and roles, social norms and structures, conflicts, stability, predictability

The status or position which individuals occupy in society and their roles or expected behaviors are defined by social norms. This makes for a structure of stable relations among individuals, creating social structures which distribute power, wealth and prestige. Various systems of social norms define status, roles and social structures in different ways, thus leading to tensions, conflicts, change and mobility within social structures, status and roles. Conflicts increase in strength to the extent that they are underlain by contradictory social norms, all of which have been internalized and claim to be legitimate, natural, expected and deserving acceptance.

The links social norms establish among individuals and groups derive from unity integrating variety.¹¹² If such links are adjusted to unrestricted consistency, they contribute to human fulfillment by respecting all individuals and relations and serving them, without privileges or exclusions, in terms of truth and goodness. Links thus established by social norms are causal and functional, insofar as they explain the existence and form of social reality; they are also ethical links, since they function as instruments for human beings' contribution to the fulfillment of individuals, society and reality. The links social norms establish among individuals and groups teach people, for example, not to subordinate one's relations to family, friends and colleagues to the selfish pursuit of personal gratification. Social norms which determine regular conceptions of status

and social roles allow society to function in a regular, predictable fashion. Although power, wealth and prestige may depend in part upon access to major institutions, these institutions are supported by social norms, which establish the characteristics which prestigious, wealthy or powerful persons are presumed to have, as well as their assumed value and legitimacy.¹¹³ It is social norms that convince people to respect these characteristics and attach high value to them. Social norms define social positions and conceptions of status, expecting certain behaviors (roles) of the individuals who occupy them.¹¹⁴ Such norms make networks of links which cut across individuals and keep them linked, making social structure and "role sequences" which may be functional or not for society.¹¹⁵ Regularity and stability in conceptions of status and roles are part of the stability of social structures and systems. They provide predictability to the responses of others and favor communication, organization, and free and efficacious personal and social decisions and actions.

I. Influence of primary groups and consistency

Social norms are first built and transmitted through primary groups.¹¹⁶ Primary groups have the first and most direct influence on individuals' thoughts and behavior and they profoundly affect people's basic values and beliefs. They act as "founding fathers," establishing criteria which strongly influence which ideas, preferences, values, goals and styles will be accepted in the future.¹¹⁷

Beliefs, values or preferences which are introduced later will be interpreted to an important degree as a function of previously internalized social norms. In addition, and most importantly, these proposed beliefs, values or preferences will be interpreted in terms of the consistency criterion, whether genuinely or spuriously applied. Indeed, the capacity for consistency precedes the primary group, with its message of integrated connection –of mind, will, feelings and action– to unity integrating all variety. It is this which allows people to relate to others on a higher level –of knowledge, desire, feeling and free decision and action.

Consistency allows people to connect –on this higher level– with primary groups. It also enables them to communicate with others and to acquire and share their mother tongue.

Consistency, as the first and foremost member of individuals' system of social norms, allows people to freely, critically and creatively modify social norms, even those derived from the initial primary group of childhood and the family.

Consistency and early primary groups are the most influential forces in individuals' lives, and their influence remains strong throughout

people's lives. This influence may be oriented toward goodness or evil; indeed, all the social norms acquired during childhood, both positive and negative, remain permanently embedded and continually contend for dominance.

Through the capacity for consistency, people have the possibility and responsibility of choosing, cultivating, exercising and developing sound seeds and counteracting unsound ones.

m. Influence over and consequent responsibility for others and oneself

Every individual has an important quota of power or influence over others (and over him or herself) which stems from constant interaction. Individuals' behavior sends a signal to others and functions as either a good or bad example or model; the messages transmitted through behavior are even stronger than words. Individuals continually interact, taking each other as models, even when they are not physically in contact. People are consequently responsible for their influence over others –the more so, the greater their influence.

People's influence over one another implies various kinds of power relations.¹¹⁸ Power relations are based on and maintained by social norms. The influence wielded through power relations not only affects external behavior but also internal behavior (thoughts, feelings, wishes, decisions).¹¹⁹ If individuals guide their influence according to the dictates of genuine consistency, they will contribute to their own and other people's fulfillment.

2. Functions of social norms

a. Solutions to common problems which need gradual improvement

Social norms offer solutions to individuals' common problems, offering them alternative choices about knowledge (what to think or believe), will (what goals to desire or prefer), feelings and action (what to feel and how to behave). The alternatives which are offered by social norms and shared by various individuals, groups and societies must constantly be evaluated in order to determine which ones best solve common problems. People must learn how to improve social norms in

cooperation with others and by themselves. When problem solving is guided by genuine consistency, it contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality; it enables people to find appropriate solutions to ethical and technical problems, introducing order into disorder, clarity into confusion, and consistency above contradiction.¹²⁰ This is a gradual and progressive process, and though it is never perfect, it consistently leads people away from the primitive stage of wild, uncivilized individuals (*homo feralis*) who lack a shared culture, language and information.¹²¹

Even when individuals are not in contact with others, they still retain an image of other people and may interact positively with animals and other objects (sometimes personifying other creatures or objects and assigning human power and presence to forces of nature). Moreover, isolated individuals can make advances in social norming by interacting with themselves and by interacting with unity governing reality. Yet individuals can more readily achieve better solutions when they interact with each other, since this permits them to resolve conflicts and contradictions among various proposals more effectively. Consistency leads people to detect the positive components of various proposals, and to combine and reinforce them, rejecting the negative ones.

b. Complementary nature of stability and change

Stability takes advantage of advances toward the final and ultimate goal of discovering the complete integration of variety by unity, adhering to it, contributing to it and enjoying it. It capitalizes and stores advances and passes them on to other people and other generations at different moments.

But at the same time that stability is needed to preserve accumulated advances, change is also necessary for such preservation in order to incorporate new advances and improve previous ones, progressively adjusting them to ultimate goals and adapting them to changing contexts and circumstances. In this way, both stability and change help promote the progressive and accumulative advance toward the fulfillment of individuals and reality, in the direction of perfect harmony and the integration of variety by unity (consistency).

Consistency requires change and stability in order to continually improve the balance of human creations, which rapidly become obsolete in some aspects, while others retain their permanent value for supporting vital processes.

Individuals must continually find, build and modify social norms in order to achieve better solutions, adjusting their norms to changing

circumstances and contexts. They must also learn to distinguish and preserve social norms (and aspects of social norms) whose validity is permanent, or at least more enduring. Once individuals find something that seems to solve a problem or satisfy a need of theirs, they tend to make it into a habit, thereby creating norms which, when shared, become social norms. When ways of improving these solutions are discovered, changes are implemented and various aspects are improved so as to be more adjusted to the consistency criterion. If this criterion is genuinely applied, people will be able to optimize the benefits derived from advances and their progress will continue.

Stability represents a kind of rest since it provides a way of conserving energy; once a solution is found, there is a tendency to stick to it. Individuals may rest and trust in social norms whose advantages have been demonstrated by others and themselves. In this way, the advances of individuals, societies and cultures are preserved. However, both sound preservation and change require active and intense efforts and devotion of all energies. Time is thus employed either for changing or for preserving, contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Each person's step is partial rather than final and forms part of a wider, inter-generational process, in which particular individuals, groups and societies contribute positive components and elements which deserve to be preserved. At the same time, individuals' decisions, actions and influences always need to be adjusted so they conform more closely to the reality derived from unity integrating variety. Decisions and social norms which are more consistent with reality need to be discovered and built under the guidance of the capacity for consistency. By using change and stability, actively and selectively, applying genuine consistency, people can better contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, in truth and goodness. The desire to maintain advances must be combined with the desire to improve them and use them as steps toward possible new advances.

c. Distinguishing what needs preservation or change, avoiding blind change and rigidity

By distinguishing which aspects of reality need to be preserved and which ones need to be changed, people are better able to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. This process of selection may be likened to the efforts of a composer who decides which notes to include and which ones to omit, or a sculptor who selectively chips away at a block of marble, or a teacher who decides how to mete out rewards and punishments. In performing this process of selection, individuals make

sacrifices and dedicate themselves in order to strive for spiritual perfection and the benefit of others. Consistency guides them in this task.¹²²

Unity does not change, since it is beyond time and serves as the basis for any possible change and stability. Individuals, on the other hand, are bound through their earthly existence to the realm of time; they are therefore called upon to engage in a tireless effort to distinguish, combine and reinforce the sound components of social norms and counteract unsound ones.

Change which is not properly oriented toward the fulfillment of individuals and reality is as dysfunctional as rigidity.¹²³ If, instead of focusing narrowly on self-centered efforts to escape frustration, individuals learn to properly interpret the lessons of reality and adjust themselves accordingly, they will prevent the build-up and irresistible pressure of the waters of an “immovable dam.”¹²⁴

Life ultimately defeats immobility, which signifies death. If social norms are not renewed and revitalized, they become dysfunctional. If individuals fail to learn this lesson of reality, they will encounter yet more severe punishments and launch a destructive cycle of unrealistic, extreme reactions.

d. Networks of roles, harmony, obsolescence

Social norms build networks of differentiated and complementary roles, thus promoting social and cultural interaction and progress, as well as human fulfillment. By differentiating roles and dividing responsibility for joint projects, all members of society can benefit from shared interaction.

Social norms link individuals to each other and to society, making behavior predictable and enabling people to work together in common projects for the benefit of all.¹²⁵ This gives rise to harmonious networks, based on mutual respect and service. In this way, people can continually work to overcome obsolescence without resorting to extreme, unilateral changes.¹²⁶

e. Legitimacy of social and legal norms; harmony among different people and their needs

The legitimacy of social and legal norms is based on their ability to contribute to human fulfillment by satisfying real needs, in truth and goodness; to be legitimate, social and legal norms must serve justice and the common good and solve ethical and practical problems by applying

consistency. The ultimate function of social norms is to direct behaviors, energies and human resources toward these goals.

Justice requires people to recognize the basic dignity of all human beings stemming from their common capacity for consistency. Justice therefore calls upon individuals to treat other people with the respect they deserve. Individuals' particular needs are determined by their relation with others and with themselves. All people's needs can and should be harmonized and made to coincide, following the lead of consistency, which establishes relations and links among all beings and determines the proper role belonging to each. Excessive formalism and inflexibility, as well as declarativism, make social norms inconsistent.

f. Legitimacy of procedural norms

The legitimacy of more specific, procedural norms is based on the goals they serve through substantive norms and depends on how effectively they serve these goals. To the extent that procedural norms contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, they serve and protect desirable ends and function soundly.¹²⁷ To the extent that they fail to do this, for example if they are transformed into means for other ends or treated as ends in themselves, they become illegitimate and dysfunctional, as in the case of bureaucratic sclerosis, excessive reliance on routine or formalism.

g. Sound social norms, networks of statuses and roles

Social norms are sound if they are inspired by genuine consistency, thus contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. They are fundamental instruments, together with the capacity for consistency, in guiding decision-making. Toward this end, social norms define frames of reference for defining reality, oneself and others; this includes definitions of networks of social positions (statuses), expectations associated with them (roles), desirable goals, and alternative means for achieving them. To the extent that they are inspired by genuine consistency, these frames of reference consider reality as a whole, integrated by unity, and study how each person and being fits into it, inserting "homo sociologicus" into the wider frame of reality, where he or she belongs.¹²⁸

Human behavior is highly influenced by social norms which define statuses and roles. At the same time, human beings freely create and modify social norms. If the norms they create are sound and inspired by genuine consistency, they will contribute to human fulfillment and optimize individuals' constructive potential.¹²⁹

h. Critical analysis of systems of social norms; consistency and fulfillment

Through tireless critical analysis of systems of social norms, including their causes and consequences, people can capitalize on advances and solutions which have already been achieved. They can combine and reinforce sound social norms and sound components of social norms, instead of blindly submitting to prevailing norms. If such critical analysis is guided by consistency, the social norming process will contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Social norms may be influenced by conscious and intentional factors or not, and in either case, the results may be very different from what individuals expect, desire or imagine.

It is possible to distinguish positive consequences in order to accumulate and capitalize on them, combining what is sound in various social norms and components to progressively improve decisions, behaviors and social norms.

This is part of the responsibility of exercising consistency and freedom; if individuals do not exercise their freedom, they will become slaves to forces beyond their control.¹³⁰

Crowd behavior is an example of what occurs when individuals fail to exercise their capacity for consistency and let themselves be blindly driven by influences and pressures.¹³¹

In less dramatic fashion, this happens each time individuals let themselves be driven by shallow considerations, following reference groups without critical, discriminatory analysis.

This again points to the need to make social norms explicit and critically analyze their causes, consequences and components, functions and dysfunctions; without such conscious analysis, it is impossible to discriminate sound from unsound components.

i. Freely giving oneself, or slavery to impulses

The continuous readjustment of social norms, under the guidance of consistency, allows individuals to freely and completely give themselves, following genuine consistency. In doing so, they fulfill their mission of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, instead of serving impulses and fragments. They also avoid falling into traps of negligence, inertia, fear or routine. Such deviations gradually cause people to become slaves and to depend on panaceas such as money, power, prestige, pleasure, drugs, consumerism and perversions.

3. Dysfunctions of social norms

a. Dysfunctional social norms, departing from consistency

Social norms are dysfunctional if they are not inspired by genuine consistency. Social norms may become dysfunctional by directly pursuing goals which deviate from truth, goodness and fulfillment or by interpreting and applying social norms deficiently, eg. at improper times and circumstances, without necessary adjustments and improvements based on critical and systematic evaluations. Dysfunctional social norms may lead people to privilege egoistic interests and permissiveness and yield to impulses, without consistently clarifying ends, means and predictable and desirable consequences.¹³² In this way, they differ greatly from sound social norms which build through spiritual values and ethics and encourage people to devote themselves to constructive family and interpersonal relations.

Dysfunctional social norms lead to unwanted, unpredicted and undesirable consequences. Certain social norms are functional only at certain times, under specific circumstances and contexts, in certain combinations and for specific individuals or groups. Therefore building functional or sound social norms requires people to respectfully consider all aspects and relations of reality, with the necessary effort and sacrifice.¹³³

People must not let themselves be led by configurations of social norms whose impact and influence is not known nor understood. Social norms cannot be understood if individuals do not communicate with each other, as in the case of mass ignorance or conspiracies or "spirals" of silence.¹³⁴ Insufficient awareness is also caused by the trend toward polarization and overestimating oneself, impulses or fragments, since these harmful influences remove individuals from the balance of consistent solutions.¹³⁵ This leads people to neglect ethical, spiritual, family and interpersonal values and to privilege impulses, egoism, pleasure, money, power, prestige, success and material possessions, and even perverse cults to ego such as racism or "racial superiority".¹³⁶

b. Combining the worst aspects of First and Third World models

The lack of critical evaluation inspired by genuine consistency may lead people to combine the worst aspects of First and Third World models, weakening spiritual, family and interpersonal development, fulfillment and security, without strengthening economic and political development and security.

This happens to many leaders and citizens in the Third World. They thus combine deficiencies in organization, discipline, professionalism, information, science and technology with the loss of transcendent values, such as unconditionally giving themselves to their families, to interpersonal relations and to ethical and spiritual goals.

c. Corrupting children, social complicity, destroying protective nets

Social norms which are not firmly founded in consistency tolerate the corruption of children by modern merchants of vice and fail to develop antibodies for preventing this: strong family and interpersonal relations, ethical and spiritual values and personal discipline. Spurious social norms let unsound seeds suffocate sound ones, without allowing individuals to freely choose. When individuals fail to consider the whole of reality and fail to respect the harmonious integration of all reality through unity, they cannot advance in terms of the whole, which allows for the fulfillment of every person.

All social systems contain openings through which people may introduce sound, or unsound, seeds.¹³⁷ The sound counteract the unsound, solving contradictions. Unsound social norms prevent human fulfillment and base their apparent legitimacy on spurious consistency through rationalizations. They thus weaken the protective nets of family and deny interpersonal, moral and spiritual values; they reduce self-mastery, discipline, effort, sacrifice and austerity. Such carelessness is taken advantage of by merchants of corruption. Even with formal barriers, if social norms are soft, for example, if perverse models are admitted into the home through the medium of television, corrupt influences have a free hand, with the complicity of society, in perpetuating their formidable contradictions.¹³⁸ Corrupt influences are practically invited into people's homes, schools and neighborhoods; they are welcomed and even paid for corrupting children. This cold and indifferent reaction in the face of the corruption of children aims to hide itself by closing people's eyes through rationalizations of spurious consistency, in contradiction and complicity. People use lofty terms, such as freedom, love and progress, to defend their rationalizations.

d. Reactions in the face of obstacles, tensions and contradictions

The conflicts, contradictions and tensions which beset individuals are opportunities for working toward higher integration, progressively adjusting one's thoughts and actions to the order of reality. Sound competitiveness and self-discipline gradually overcome contradictions, applying genuine consistency in order to respect, integrate and serve each

being and aspect according to what it deserves, as a function of its relations to the rest of reality and to unity which integrates and harmonizes them.¹³⁹ Otherwise destruction absorbs the energy people have available for building and prevents them from avoiding extreme situations and unbearable sufferings and frustrations which lead to major disruptions and pendularism.¹⁴⁰

Tensions and conflicts constitute new stimuli and challenges which offer people the opportunity to strive for greater harmony, at progressively higher degrees, developing consensus, starting from conflicts, and preventing disintegration.¹⁴¹ A functional analysis of social norms leads people to prefer those contributing to human fulfillment with the strength of shared habits, sharing advances through patient and sustained effort.¹⁴² Unsound social norms lead individuals and societies to stagnation, decay and destruction. They erode people's vigor by requiring them to devote their energy to defending themselves from disloyal attacks and traps. Even in the face of such pernicious pressures, individuals may react, thanks to their capacity for consistency, in a positive, constructive manner, deriving good from evil. Consistency is invincible, if genuinely exercised. Conflict, if channeled into sound and loyal competitiveness and guided by consistent rules of fair play, stimulates consistent responses and invites people to advance in excellence by stretching the boundaries of what is possible, without aiming to harm, destroy or supersede others.

4. Some special functions of social norms

a. Freedom, consistency, awareness and social norms

Social norms are social dimensions through which individuals exercise their freedom to choose unity integrating reality, thus choosing reality and contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Consistent or sound social norms derive from the genuine exercise of the capacity for consistency, which is the capacity for freedom; sound norms reinforce the exercise of consistency by spurring people to engage in tireless and complete effort, commitment and devotion. The improper use of freedom –through inconsistent social norms– actually enslaves individuals by compelling them to resort to devices such as spurious legitimation, blinders and psychological ceilings.

This occurs when social norms are considered as ultimate ends and solutions, replacing reality with fragments and impulses which are not submitted to unity and to the harmony of reality, even if they are given a

facade of spurious legitimacy. Such spurious legitimacy is reinforced by psychological ceilings and other mechanisms which distort people's vision and fixate it on immediate concerns. This damages people's quality of life and leads in extreme cases, to corruption, delinquency, perversion and destruction.

Obstacles derived from the improper use of freedom are painful, but they can make people aware, together with their underlying capacity for consistency, of the error of their ways, thus offering opportunities for reestablishing a proper relationship with reality and unity.

Obstacles can thus help people overcome and reduce contradictions and unsound social norms. Sound social norms provide models adjusted to consistency, which lead people to human fulfillment. Only if all aspects of reality and all their relations are considered is it possible to evaluate the consequences of the full range of alternative decisions and actions.

Individuals may advance toward completely free decision-making by dedicating and sacrificing themselves for the sake of high ends and values found to be valid. Although decisions cannot explicitly consider all aspects of reality, they are free insofar as people strive to consider these, being globally aware of their existence, as parts of the all-encompassing system integrated by unity. Without the proper will, individuals cannot possibly adhere to, respect and acknowledge the varied aspects and relations contained by the system of reality.

However, by striving to consider all aspects, freedom is exercised in all its potentiality; this reflects the exercise of genuine or unrestricted consistency, which, as the main dimension of human fulfillment, contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Social norms represent chains of shared influences which are enriched with each free decision; to the extent that freedom is exerted fully, that is, consistently, social norms are sound. With its consistent exercise, freedom grows and reinforces itself and individuals become freer. As such, they are better able to contribute to magnificent advances in science, culture, arts, society, politics, and the economy; these advances function as flowers in the immense garden of reality.

When, on the other hand, individuals use their power of free choice to submit themselves to impulses, in fact they lose their freedom. When spurious consistency is used against consistency, poisonous weeds grow which derive from not adhering to reality and unity.

Individuals' capacity for consistency is never extinguished, and at any moment individuals may resort to it in order to correct deviations and reestablish the proper connection with reality and unity. By listening to

their conscience (which is the ‘voice of consistency’), they can change unsound behavior into sound habits which become second nature.

To advance toward the full exercise of consistency, people must also use their own influence to contribute to the fulfillment of others, themselves and reality; they must follow the light of truth and kindle the flame of goodness and love, adhering to these values with the whole of their being.

Knowledge, truth, commitment and love must be directed toward reality and unity; people must dedicate themselves fully to these ultimate ends. If they do this, their decisions and social norms will reinforce and be reinforced by genuine freedom.

These requirements are all part of the act of embracing reality and unity, which reflects itself in sound social norms. This leads to deep satisfaction and happiness, protecting people against destruction, hatred and perversion.

Social norms and freedom are inseparable. Deep freedom consists in advance towards complete fulfillment of knowledge, love, action and happiness, and this, in turn, stems from dedicating oneself completely to unity and reality. Such complete dedication overcomes contradiction, chaos and confusion, hatred and destruction. Sound decisions and social norms are some of the instruments with which freedom and consistency build human advances. As with any instrument, however, decisions, actions and social norms are inevitably imperfect and require selective use of continuous adjustment and improvement. Awareness of imperfections is the first step and stimulus for redressing them.¹⁴³

Social norms serve to amplify freedom’s influence, through information, ends, decisions and action. They affect how individuals insert themselves into the wider system of reality and how they interpret the reciprocal influences between their decisions and reality.

Social norms help build the framework of reality within which individuals freely decide; at the same time, such decisions shape social norms, thus creating a circle of consistency—either genuine or spurious. Individuals’ views of reality are continually readjusted and transmitted through the language of behavior, which expresses how individuals see and evaluate reality, what alternatives of decision and action they consider and their implications and consequences.

b. Windows, mirrors, building tools

Social norms function as windows through which individuals see, understand and interpret reality and themselves. Individuals make systems

of social norms which provide frameworks for integrating all the information and social norms which converge upon them. These frameworks influence human decisions and actions, allowing people to predict the direct and indirect implications and consequences of actions and decisions; people are also able to anticipate consequences which cannot be clearly known, but are required by the notion of integrative unity, which governs relations among various parts of reality. Such frameworks allow people to understand their environment and the roles they and others occupy; this allows them to learn how people are all causally integrated.

The frameworks created by social norms are windows through which individuals express their feelings, wishes and behavior toward reality.¹⁴⁴ Individuals express themselves through social norms and these are fundamental parts of the reality of all individuals, part of their second nature; their frameworks are created by free decisions, using to a great extent the raw material provided by their own and other people's models of behavior.

Through social norms, individuals interpret reality, guide and express their thoughts, desires, feelings and actions. They are unique tools for building society and its products.¹⁴⁵

Through social norms, individuals partially see themselves through other people's eyes. If these are inconsistent they may harm; others may lead individuals to submit to unsound social norms of domination and injustice which are counter to reality, as when members of a discriminated minority see themselves as contemptible or pitiful because this is the image which others hold of them.¹⁴⁶ Other people's behaviors may be seen as indicators of their perception of reality according to shared codes.¹⁴⁷

c. Confidence, tranquility and support; confidence in consistency

Individuals tend to base their confidence on the support which they receive from others and from themselves; they gain tranquility by placing concerns in proper perspective, that is, by inserting them into the framework of reality.¹⁴⁸

Individuals tend to think that the messages they infer from their own and other people's behaviors reflect reality and truth, since the roads people choose are presumed to be desirable. The factor which leads people to trust is consistency, which people first perceive in themselves, since all individuals know, desire, feel and act by trusting in their capacity for consistency and consequently exercising it.

The extent of people's trust in one another is shown by the importance individuals attach to other people's opinion and by the fact that individuals usually strive to please one another, reassuring each other and giving each

other confidence by sending messages of approval, agreement, warmth, friendship, encouragement and peace. This reassurance has a pacifying effect, much as a mother's voice has for her baby or a friend's words do for someone in need of emotional support.¹⁴⁹

People engage in such reassuring gestures and messages all the time, offering comfort to each other by exchanging greetings and pleasantries whose literal meaning is unimportant (for example, when people engage in small talk about the weather). Individuals also try to reassure themselves by talking or writing to themselves. The main source of tranquility is the application of unrestricted consistency, which places each object in proper perspective.

d. Self-esteem, proving that sound behavior is possible

People need to see examples of sound behavior—one's own and other people's—in order to demonstrate that such behavior is possible, desirable and successful. In this regard, social norms which reinforce sound decisions and behaviors need to become second nature for all members of society.

Sound social norms lead to the kind of behavior which shows individuals what they (and others) can do, especially with respect to mastering themselves and their impulses and using consistency to orient their thoughts, desires, feelings and actions toward reality and unity.

In this way, behavior sends out a message which shows individuals who they are and what they (and other people) can do. People can lift their self-esteem, with realism and without vanity; people become sound seeds and encourage others to do likewise, in a virtuous circle which is strengthened through social norming.

5. Functional implications of structural conditions

a. Negative social effects of bureaucratization and urbanization

Growing dependence on complex forms of interaction and organization can produce social and cultural traps, as in the cases of disorderly urbanization and bureaucratization. People get bogged down in endless chores and immediate concerns which preoccupy them and thus prevent them from seeing the wider framework. This leads to confusion and lack of productivity, since people try to replace the whole with

fragments and lose sight of the forest for all the trees. They approach tasks from a shallow perspective which ignores the consequences and implications of decisions and actions.

As a result, the negative effects of modern structures may supersede the positive ones, tyrannizing individuals and creating a sorcerer's apprentice syndrome, i.e., unleashing forces which people cannot understand or control. This also happens when people attempt to manipulate biological and natural processes, creating uncontrollable monsters.

b. Breaking through bureaucratic labyrinths and psychological ceilings

People can create conditions which promote social justice and human fulfillment by breaking through the bureaucratic labyrinths which result from complex modern organization (in society, government, the economy and the city). In addition, economic and political systems must be subjected to social control so that the common good is served rather than narrow interests and society's most pressing needs are met.

Finally, weaker members of society need to be helped to overcome their feeling of impotency and their negative self-image by breaking down psychological ceilings. This allows for the better use of resources in line with the needs of the whole population.

c. Power, success, arrogance, adulation, confusion, recovery

Power, success, arrogance and adulation have a strong tendency to distort and confuse people's perspective, preventing them from listening to sound voices which remind others of the "voice of conscience" or consistency.

Power, money and success dazzle people –both those who have them and those who aspire thereto. Wealthy, powerful and successful individuals are flattered by those who strive to be like them and who try to obtain their favors, and such flattery dazzles and misleads both parties. Wealthy, successful individuals are surrounded by persistent praise which tends to go to their heads, encouraging them to believe that they are omnipotent and superior (even though they remain insecure since the "voice of conscience" constantly reminds them of their distance from reality). Those who surround the powerful and successful are most often drawn by the prospect of taking advantage of the benefits to be obtained by being close to those in positions of power.

The tendency to misplace oneself due to aspirations of power, prestige and money can also be seen in academic and intellectual realms, and even in public service and religious organizations. True friends, who are committed to telling the truth and giving honest, objective advice, are not listened to.

Successful individuals and their court of adulators tend to dismiss criticisms as proof of jealousy. In doing so, they tend to tolerate mediocrity, corruption and decadence. They waste the opportunity to correct their errors and avoid the consequent damages.

After falling, however, the formerly powerful become better listeners in a belated attempt to correct past mistakes. It is never too late for new opportunities, implanted in the deep roots of humility and realism, where the lessons of reality may be properly learned.

D. Social Norms, Invisible Threads

1. Making them explicit, freedom, fulfillment and consistency

a. Social norms as a lens to see reality; need for explicit identification and evaluation

Social norms are invisible threads inferred from internal and external behaviors. The reality of social norms is not only what can be seen, but mainly what cannot be seen, more specifically, the decision-making processes related to the application of consistency and the external and internal influences which determine which behaviors will become social norms (habits). Once people become aware of these processes, they are better able to understand and improve social norms, following consistency and favoring human fulfillment.¹⁵⁰ They can exercise their freedom more fully once they are able to detect the use of spurious consistency, including prevailing myths and belief in magical, spurious solutions. When people make social norms explicit and critically evaluate them by exercising their capacity for consistency, they enhance their freedom and ability to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality through enhancement of those social norms.

It is important to make social norms explicit since they are the lens through which individuals see and evaluate reality, its parts and themselves, defining goals and means for reaching them. Therefore, if social norms are carefully and critically identified and analyzed, they can be used to help find the road to truth and goodness. Under these conditions, social norms allow people to integrate the various parts of reality into a wide and meaningful framework. Individuals are powerfully affected by social norms, but they are generally unaware of the complex effects which genuine and spurious consistency and external and internal influences have upon norms.

Social norms must therefore be carefully examined, evaluated and improved so as to contribute to human fulfillment via the road of genuine consistency. Since social norms are used to evaluate social norms, it might seem that all judgments would be on shaky ground, much like an imaginary shipbuilder ordered to rebuild his ship while on the high seas.¹⁵¹ The firm point of support, external to this circular process, is consistency; through genuine consistency, people can become aware of and escape the trap of blindly self-reinforcing social norms. Consistency allows human beings

to freely examine, evaluate and improve social norms. It permits people to use their capacity for selecting social norms and making new contributions inspired by consistency.

b. Liberation through greater awareness of social norms

Human freedom and fulfillment are enhanced by increasing awareness of social norms, past and present, including habits, customs, images, definitions, values and preferences, and subjecting them to critical, systematic and careful analysis. This enables individuals to choose the best combination of social norms, by considering the predictable consequences of decisions and actions which they influence and are influenced by. In this way, "luck" is replaced by the free, cooperative choices of countless numbers of individuals who contribute to each social norm and decision. Individuals may consequently use their influence over reality contributing to fulfillment with greater freedom and efficacy. Otherwise they lose their freedom of choice, relinquishing it to social norms.¹⁵² Individuals need to identify the social norms which underlie the prevailing "will of the age" (that is, the views, desires and feelings which typify individuals and groups in society at a particular moment in time) in order to be able to predict the behaviors which countless individuals practice and analyze their purported solutions. In this way, people can make explicit the thoughts, desires, feelings, decisions and actions which are implicit in social norms. The "will of the age" has dominant and alternative trends in various societies, groups and sub-groups.¹⁵³

Because people generally fail to identify the components, causes and consequences of social norms, they tend to be insufficiently aware of certain critical facts. Individuals do not realize how pressures of the "collective mind" and the "psychological crowd" tend to reduce their freedom.¹⁵⁴ They do not appreciate the influence which past generations and present contemporaries have on them through social norms.¹⁵⁵ They are also not aware how powerful and durable social norms are.¹⁵⁶ They overlook the uniform effects of "collective tendencies"¹⁵⁷ and they do not search for the causes of what seem to be "spontaneous and motiveless phenomena" which arise in society.¹⁵⁸ Individuals tend to ignore the consequences of their habits and customs for a long time and do not realize how social norms affect the progressive formation of trends by conditioning how people define their situations.¹⁵⁹ Individuals fail to recognize that their "world view" –which is made of social norms– profoundly influences the assumptions which underlie their regular behavior.¹⁶⁰ They are usually not conscious of the existence of social norms

and relations which can only be observed in the social activities which they condition.¹⁶¹ Individuals tend not to see the invisible chains which social norms place on people's behavior when they fail to critically evaluate and control them; individuals tend to believe instead that they are the masters of others when they are actually even greater slaves.¹⁶² People also tend to believe that they are "quite exempt from any intellectual influences" from "defunct" intellectuals, influential leaders or inherited theories.¹⁶³ Finally, people are even less aware of the fact that they internalized most of these hidden influences at a very early age.¹⁶⁴

c. Inserting human advances in a wider framework; contradictions, boomerangs, cross-pressures

Individuals tend to be unaware of the cross-pressures which multiple reference groups exert upon them. As a result, they accept norms which contradict each other and which contradict their deep aspirations, principles and goals, hidden behind countless daily experiences.¹⁶⁵ Despite advances achieved in the fields of science, technology, information, computers, cybernetics, organization, management, media, etc., human beings have nonetheless continued to produce destruction, unfulfillment and unhappiness. This is the great paradox of our time, and it is caused by the failure to follow genuine consistency and to insert all actions, intentions and social norms into the systemic framework of reality. The lack of awareness which Malinowsky noticed in "savages" may be observed even more in contemporary "civilization," in which people pursue money, prestige, power, success and pleasure without asking why and for what purpose—questions which can only be answered in terms of the genuine and deep aspirations of the absolute, i.e. consistency.¹⁶⁶ Individuals are unaware of the powerful influences of the reference groups they belong to, as well as groups they do not belong to.¹⁶⁷ Even non-conformity and rebellion against the norms of one group does not reduce individuals' dependence on other social norms and reference groups, although people are rarely aware of this.¹⁶⁸ Of course, awareness of the various influences of multiple reference groups increases people's freedom by reducing blind subjection to forces which are not understood or controlled.¹⁶⁹ Otherwise social norms are adopted in a non-rational, compulsive, unconscious, mechanical fashion, and this limits freedom.¹⁷⁰

d. Effects of social norms' invisibility: inconsistency, destruction

The invisibility of social norms reduces people's capacity to control them through methodical and critical analysis and the specification of

implicit criteria. Since they are invisible, social norms favor myths, contradictions and destructive effects. Social norms have more tyrannical power when they remain invisible, hidden and disguised; this prevents people from identifying and evaluating their functions and dysfunctions, and their latent effects. This, in turn, prevents people from using social norms effectively to serve human fulfillment and desired ends.¹⁷¹ Such invisibility derives from –and leads toward– the failure to question and critically analyze the criteria which each society, group and person use to define truths, values, procedures, statuses, and generally all social norms, decisions and behaviors.¹⁷²

By making the criteria underlying social norms explicit, it is possible to overcome contradictions. Otherwise, such contradictions may lead to the destruction of individuals and societies through dictatorships, wars and crime, disintegration and massification. This occurs through social processes which individuals do not control, as in crowd dynamics, which lead people to unilaterally privilege certain aspects and to deny respect to individuals and aspects of reality.¹⁷³

e. "Social unconscious" explicated by awareness

Explication of the "social unconscious" increases freedom, encouraging people to apply genuine consistency in order to build an all-encompassing mental framework which conforms to the system of reality. In this way, people can counteract the temptations of immediate attractions and remove obstacles to human fulfillment. All people, no matter how primitive or advanced, unconsciously inherit the social norms of their society and group beginning at an early age. According to Carl Gustav Jung, the human unconscious is the depository of inherited patterns of life and behavior (which we refer to in this work as social norms). These patterns (social norms) exert an influence over individuals which is "outside the control of the conscious mind" and may reinforce or hinder intentions and behaviors.¹⁷⁴ Through their capacity for consistency, individuals may connect with their unconscious by increasing their awareness and searching for links among the components of reality of which they are part.

When human beings' orientation to reality is not a matter of conscious reflection and does not freely apply genuine consistency, their perceptions will be obscured, as are the images that occur in dreams.¹⁷⁵ This involves replacing unity with fragments and privileging partial and immediate concerns (while free conscious exercise of consistency integrates all of them in a system). In order to avoid this, people must strive to increase

their awareness of all aspects of reality and their systemic, causal-functional relations; they must aim for depth and balance, considering every specific observation as the tip of an iceberg, and probing to discover a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of thoughts, decisions, actions and social norms.

f. "Social unconscious", highly valuable raw material and trap; language

The social unconscious contains valuable raw material which must be consciously used; its contents, causes and consequences must be made explicit through the exercise of consistency, in a process similar to that of identifying psychological inconsistencies. Both require constant and systematic effort, guided by consistency. The social unconscious is thus a fundamental channel for taking advantage of, transmitting and preserving the advances achieved by individuals, groups and societies. By drawing explicit attention to social norms, their components, causes and consequences can be better understood. Once it is inserted into the framework of reality, the social unconscious—made up of invisible social norms—is used to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality by improving underlying social norms. In the same way as the psychological unconscious, individuals' social unconscious is driven by invisible forces, with causes and consequences that individuals fail to understand, as occurs with distinctions and groupings implicit in one's mother tongue.¹⁷⁶

By drawing attention to the invisible threads of social norms—which are to an important extent stored in language—freedom and efficacy for human fulfillment are increased. All human behavior is language which expresses internal and external reality. By making behavior explicit, people come one step closer toward making the social unconscious, which is made of social norms, conscious.

g. Unconscious influence of social norms improved through consciousness; obeying and questioning legacies

The unconscious influence of social norms is taken as natural and unquestioned; individuals are influenced by social norms without really noticing it. However, social norms are imperfect human constructions, which continually require study and critical and scientific analysis. People need to clarify how and why social norms emerge and what their consequences are; people also need to discover the best strategies for improving norms so that they contribute to the fulfillment of individuals

and reality. As human constructions, social norms are not directly visible and have to be indirectly inferred from observing behavior, much as the unconscious has to be inferred in the realm of psychology.¹⁷⁷

All individuals, and especially social scientists and leaders, are responsible for discovering and explaining the hidden forces that act upon them. It is surprising that they generally fail to do so. This is due to the fact that they take social norms for granted, in the same way they ignore bodily functions –such as breathing or heart beats– until problems arise which force them to focus on these processes and react. Such focus –in relation to physical processes– is aided by scientific study in the fields of biology, anatomy, physiology, etc.; in the case of the social unconscious, by the social sciences.

In this way, individuals can better identify and understand the roads which have been followed by using their capacity for consistency to build, choose, adopt and transform social norms inherited from others and from themselves; they can analyze the past and present consequences of these norms and the means for improving them. In order to make the legacy of social norms more effective, beneficial and permanent, it is important to understand why social norms were created and accepted in the first place. People need to listen to the messages transmitted by inherited social norms, studying how they were shaped by the context in which they were created and how this differs from the present. They need to clarify why norms were modified and what results present and future modifications would produce in different contexts.¹⁷⁸

Social norms develop through a systemic network of multiple shared personal decisions which form the social unconscious and may be converted into a conscious or unconscious "common will" through processes of social norming and interaction.¹⁷⁹ The lack of carefully defined ends and means and the lack of planning explain why so many results are unpredicted and undesired. This shows the need for identifying the various forms, both hypothetical and real, of the common will which are expressed in the countless contributions of individuals and groups in society; these should be analyzed so that people can learn how to make better contributions to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. In this way, unwanted and harmful consequences are reduced, and desirable, beneficial results are increased. When efforts are oriented in a constructive direction, even if they do not achieve what they were specifically meant to, they nonetheless serve other positive values, much as the practice of gathering together to pray for rain may not necessarily produce rain but may end up strengthening social solidarity.¹⁸⁰ This also occurs when people resort to trial-and-error methods, although the results obtained are

generally less effective than those achieved through systematic, rational analysis.

Awareness of the social and cultural forces which influence human beings, including influences inherited from past generations as well as those transmitted by contemporaries, enhances freedom.¹⁸¹ Lack of awareness leads to a kind of subjugation, as people are controlled by forces beyond their knowledge and control, including past generations which may have no direct connection to or interest in current society and its members.¹⁸² Awareness helps individuals to modify the influence of networks of social norms so that they serve desirable goals and real needs, thus enhancing freedom.¹⁸³ Expectations that social norms will somehow magically produce desirable solutions are unrealistic and will have negative results; individuals need to exercise their quota of influence so as to ensure that social norms make a sound contribution to the order of reality.

2. Inserting social norms in their context, evaluating legacies

By inserting social norms into the wider and systemic context of reality integrated by unity, people are able to advance in terms of genuine consistency and discard spurious elements. This requires constant efforts to consider special and different contexts, as well as the origins and consequences, both short-term and long-term, of social norms; in this way, social norms can be improved and combined so that they better contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. The processes of searching for solutions, internalizing and communicating them are complex ones which are sustained social interaction and must be subjected to careful analysis.

Individuals integrate the solutions or social norms they choose into systems, using either genuine or spurious consistency. The latter involves attaching themselves to fragments, replacing reality and focusing only on short-term, immediate implications, instead of inserting everything into the context of reality integrated by unity, which is the true source of meaning for everything. When individuals believe the solutions they build are functional, they adopt and share them as habits, making them into social norms. But since the functionality of social norms is only partial, and is not constant, people need to continually evaluate the appropriateness of the social norms they have adopted, preserved and modified; they must link these with reality, inserting them into this all-

encompassing system. By doing so, people can improve social norms and ensure they will increasingly contribute to human fulfillment and answer questions which are sources of anxiety or fear, filling in empty holes and correcting the deficiencies of prevailing systems of social norms.¹⁸⁴

Toward this end, it is important to consider the conditions under which social norms solve problems, for better or worse.¹⁸⁵ Modern advances result from the free choices of countless individuals, groups and societies who, over countless moments of history, have interacted in countless ways.¹⁸⁶ The social norms modern individuals inherit are the aggregate results of innumerable decisions and creative efforts made by countless individuals throughout time.¹⁸⁷ By analyzing this legacy, people can prevent unpredicted and unwanted consequences and contradictions, integrating them in higher realms where the genuine interests of participants converge.¹⁸⁸ In this way, it is possible to attain desirable, intended results that promote human fulfillment, taking advantage of sound social norms and creating new social norms and new combinations of norms that benefit individuals as well as others, in the present and the future.¹⁸⁹

E. Language: Special Case of Social Norms

1. Language, thought, desires, feelings, behavior

a. Consistency as language, behavior, meaning

Language is a means for developing and communicating thoughts, feelings, desires and experiences to others and to oneself; as such, it is a decision-making tool which influences and is influenced by consistency. Consistency is the model of all languages, which may be read in reality and in its laws. The ultimate meaning which individuals search for is the underlying system of links which binds all parts and aspects of reality together and to integrative unity. This system is the order of reality. Every human behavior –and therefore language– reflects a relation, whether genuine or spurious (i.e. freely referring to the whole system of links, or arbitrarily privileging fragments), to integrative unity.

Individuals communicate with themselves by observing and interpreting their own internal and external behaviors, and this allows them to improve their behavior by harmoniously inserting it into the system of reality. In doing so, individuals strive to advance toward reality, truth and goodness, and even though they can never completely realize these, they can gradually advance toward them. If people choose to apply spurious consistency by privileging fragments, ego and impulses, they go backward instead of advancing toward fulfillment, goodness and truth.

Language offers a behavioral model to others which may be either genuine or spurious. This may or may not be accompanied by explicit, symbolic signs –especially words and gestures. The great language of human existence is that of consistency, which is expressed in the behavior of the whole of reality– a self fulfilling "invisible hand" which human beings can "see" and "read" (in the laws of reality) through their capacity for consistency (or reason). Individuals' behavior will contribute to the fulfillment of others and themselves to the extent that they aim to follow the model of genuine consistency, freely exercising such 'great language of human existence', not allowing any fragment to distract them or deviate from that path.

b. Language, unity, social norms, communication

The language of unity and reality functions as an expression of spiritual life within a universal system exempt from contradictions (overcome in

the inexorable fulfillment of the harmony of reality) and built by integrative unity, the basis of being, truth and goodness, with valid solutions in terms of the total system of reality. Human behavior is always meaningful, and it is therefore a language expressing people's siding with or against consistency, through various thoughts, desires, feelings, actions, ends and means.¹⁹⁰ This is the source of all the particular, imperfect languages which individuals progressively build as they seek to discover and explicate aspects of unity and reality—including their language—and their relations with them through their capacity for consistency. This allows people to translate languages into each other, and to discuss the validity of statements.¹⁹¹

If individuals fail to respect total reality, striving for ephemeral gratification through spurious consistency, language is used against consistency and fulfillment, and confusion, error, contradiction, lack of fulfillment and destruction derive. Sound language, on the other hand, is a tool for describing being, truth and goodness, interpreting reality and adhering to it and contributing to it, as part of human behavior. It is a tool for stating and specifying consistency and for building an appropriate relation to it. Sound language also serves as a means for transmitting messages of truth and goodness, and for sharing social norms and the whole of internal experience—thoughts, desires, feelings.

Individuals build language in order to build a bridge to unity, themselves, others and the external world. They build this bridge with social norms, of which language is an essential component and instrument. Language therefore makes sharing possible. All social norms are forms of language, and all languages are made of social norms. Every human behavior is a form of language and a means of communication with oneself and with others, with reality and with unity.

Behavior, as language, is a fundamental vehicle for exercising consistency and promoting the fulfillment of all individuals, contributing to the enrichment of reality, according to their mission. Every human behavior reflects individuals' internal thoughts, will and feelings, and involves exercise of a language expressing them.

c. Behavior as language, above words

Human actions provide sources of reliable information about thoughts, intentions, feelings and implicit codes. They need to be interpreted considering the whole of behavior. Propositions expressed by behavior are more reliable, precise and assertive than those expressed in words. They express individuals' intentions and the social norms they share.¹⁹²

The codes which individuals express in their actions (such as their behavior toward food or sex) are made of social norms which convey meanings; these norms help people interpret the meanings of different behaviors.¹⁹³

Words are behaviors which may be interpreted even against their explicit symbolism. If people's verbal behavior is separated from (and even contradictory to) the rest of their behavior, their language will become spurious and formalistic. Individuals invest in their real behavior because they believe in it, and their behavior thus indicates whether they follow the axis of reality integrated by unity, or a fragment, impulse or ego, capriciously imposed.

d. Language, unity, consistency, linking spiritual and physical, codes, meaning, progressive adjustment

Language is an instrument for relating to unity and for connecting the physical world to the spiritual world of consistency.¹⁹⁴ Language is a tool to be used in the effort to discover, adhere to and serve consistency. It provides concrete, physical shape to the invisible reality discovered and adhered to through the exercise of consistency. Such invisible realities are also deliberately represented in expressive symbols to which specific meanings are ascribed, and in chains of symbols which refer to other symbols.¹⁹⁵

The system of language which individuals employ reflects their thoughts, will, feelings, decisions and actions. It offers people the possibility of dialogue with unity, others and themselves. Once advances have been achieved, they are generally preserved in the form of social norms and thereafter accepted as "second nature." Thus language expresses all human achievements. It is an instrument for human integration in the exercise of consistency. It is a fundamental instrument for growth, development and the fulfillment of individuals from the earliest age.

Individuals influence themselves and others through the language of behavior, which is loaded with meaning, whether it is spoken or not. People offer models through language, either contributing to human fulfillment in truth and goodness or the opposite. Naming things and using the language of words and symbols makes it possible to be more precise and to refer to things that are complex and invisible. It allows us to deliberately refer to the links of consistency which are the scope of internal human behavior (mind, will and feelings), and to work with them relating them to the global experience linking internal with external worlds. Such statements and descriptions are valid to the extent that they reflect internal and external reality and are not distorted with lies and declarativism, since the validity of any language of behavior derives from its adjustment to

reality, through consistency. Thus language may serve genuine or spurious consistency, leading to truth and goodness of to the opposite.

Links of unity in variety, which languages strive to detect, adhere to and serve, provide meaning for messages and permit the process of communication which allows people to share in the exercise of consistency and act jointly. Languages contain codes which function as tools for connecting the physical, biological dimension of human beings with the spiritual realm of consistency.¹⁹⁶ In this way language mediates all human internal activity of mind, will and feelings, decisions and behavior, as the instrument for the performance of their linking or consistency operations. Language accompanies all internal and external behavior (knowledge, will and feelings as well as action) and is therefore an integral part of the exercise of consistency. This explains children's capacity to "rapidly acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity" and suggests that language is a natural tool for the exercise of consistency.¹⁹⁷

Language and communication help people share social norms through the joint exercise of consistency. They contain codes which ascribe meanings to behaviors, signs and symbols in order to interpret reality and guide decisions and actions.¹⁹⁸ Codes help people adjust signs and their meanings in order to improve their representation of and connections to unity in variety or consistency.¹⁹⁹ This governs individuals' communication with themselves, others and integrative unity.

e. Substruction of typologies and classifications implicit in systems of language and thought

The process of substruction allows people to clarify procedures of thought and language, implicit in typologies and classifications. The latter derive from simplifications and combinations of dimensions and categories, reducing countless cases, dimensions and categories to a few types.²⁰⁰ Systems of thought and language evolve together by sharing categories and ideas and by storing and communicating the products of human beings' exercise of their capacity of consistency. Part of the task of language and communication –with oneself and with others– consists of ordering the immensity of variants of reality into categories, dimensions, relations and systems. This allows people to improve their awareness and understanding of integrative unity by taking advantage of their capacity for consistency, which provides them with a direct connection to unity, although only through modest advances in terms of ordering, classification and discovery of relations and systems.

Although people learn a lot from facts and models, the system of social norms which guides their lives is to a large extent indirectly acquired

through explicit symbolic language, that is, through the adoption of determinate words, expressions and concepts. People internalize the norms implicit in language quite deeply and are generally not aware that they are doing so. People not only use language for building and communication, but as a kind of reservoir for storing social norms. In this way we can say that the "history of the human mind" is reflected in the evolution of language.²⁰¹

Individuals grow, develop and fulfill themselves by exercising consistency; this allows them to escape death, ignorance and confinement by emerging from the closed, secluded capsule of the self to communicate with and love others and unity.²⁰² Not only human behavior but all products of culture contain messages of communication, as the result of the "anonymous work of unconscious generations" as well as the constant, conscious efforts of specific individuals, groups and societies.²⁰³

Through precise language, individuals strive to identify and analyze the links and connections implicit in behavior. In order to do so, it is necessary to elaborate words, languages and grammars for building thought, decisions and behavior, and for communicating with oneself and with others.²⁰⁴ All knowledge, ideas, analyses, syntheses, integrations and inferences are developed with the help of explicit and symbolic language. Language is an instrument for human fulfillment and happiness, connecting individuals to the "real world" (both visible and invisible), and therefore not "merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection."²⁰⁵

The referential and inferential symbolism implicit in language helps people draw their images of the world and of themselves, shaping their interpretations of what they see and thereby guiding their thoughts, decisions and actions. Referential symbolism helps people unfold the systemic potentialities of consistency and order variety by explicitly linking the various parts and aspects of reality to the complex nexus which unites and integrates them, based on integrative unity. This explains why all societies place a high priority on developing a "sure, complete and potentially creative... apparatus of referential symbolism."²⁰⁶ This referential symbolism is a crucial aspect and tool of the exercise of capacity for consistency, available to any human being.

Language is an instrument for discovering and adhering to consistency, "transcending the immediately given... in individual experiences" and organizing these on the basis of integrative unity.²⁰⁷ Thanks to their intuition of integrative unity, people can think and speak about what is real and what is possible, and of the conditions making it possible, without necessarily seeing it; they can infer the existence of something based on

previous knowledge, much like the existence of the planet Pluto was inferred from observations of deviations in the orbits of other planets, before being able to observe it. This illustrates the importance of making the consistency criterion and its implications explicit, in order to improve its application in the development of knowledge, decisions, behavior, social norms and quality of life. It also dramatically illustrates the importance of the referential symbolism of language, which serves as a great model for efforts to represent, understand and integrate everything.

f. Language as a tool for behavior, social norms and advances

Language provides tools for deciding, acting, knowing, communicating, advancing and surviving and invariably accompanies all these activities. It helps people to create, adopt, modify and exercise social norms and store knowledge; it also is an intrinsic part of scientific achievements and efficacy. Indeed, practically all human activities (whether internal or external, psychological or physical) are carried out with the aid of the linking tools involved in language (including all behavior), its building and its interpretation. Thus various behaviors are made possible to the extent that "the concepts of those things [is] built into the language of our culture."²⁰⁸

Language functions in such a way as to build, accumulate, store and communicate thought, desires, feelings and decisions. Language is made up of certain kinds of social norms, and at the same time, it plays a crucial role in any system of social norms. It functions together with intellectual and spiritual processes (of thought, desire, emotion and decision-making) in order to provide a foundation upon which to build other social norms.²⁰⁹ Like social norms, language may be guided by either genuine or spurious consistency.

Language represents a means to give human discoveries about reality a symbolic expression, to identify them, fix them in our attention and memory, distinguish them and communicate them, also expressing attitudes and adhesion to them.

g. Conceptual and empirical indicators, genuine and spurious symbolism

Language is a tool for exercising consistency, which allows individuals to represent the system of reality by organizing ideas and messages into categories, dimensions, relations and systems. It thus accompanies the whole process of thought, knowledge, research and science, as well as the formation of desires, feelings, decisions and actions. As such, it is

guided by genuine or spurious consistency. Language gives rise to conceptual indicators, which are dimensions or concepts that can be related to each other and from which other dimensions or concepts may be inferred. These conceptual dimensions are tied to empirical observations through empirical indicators. Concepts –dimensions, relations and systems– are the mental building blocks of an integrative, all-encompassing explanation of reality (in terms of unity in variety).

Symbolic language and empirical indicators provide concrete expression to theoretical meanings and physical expression to the invisible links (dimensions, relations, systems) binding the varied parts of reality together. Unity, which is the basis of these links and of reality, can thus be inferred through language. As spiritual, biological organisms, human beings are able to connect with physical reality, using stimuli, messages and observations from reality to interpret and connect with unity, which is the invisible basis of reality and can be inferred from the integrative links (dimensions, relations, systems) binding reality. Empirical indicators are inferred from observations of spoken and written words, gestures, symbols and all other behaviors.²¹⁰ They thus provide physical expression to the processes of consistency.

Behavior functions as language, since it sends messages to the actors themselves as well as to others. Such messages are supplemented by verbal and written symbols and other codes, which are specifically designed to better express the complexity of links of unity in variety. This may be done in a true or false manner, however, depending on whether it is guided by genuine or spurious consistency. Different languages (and variations within the same language by specific groups and individuals) lead to various forms of classification; these various forms of classifications derive from different applications of consistency.²¹¹

h. Memory, integration and external tools

Language facilitates the storage and retrieval of information, knowledge, desires and feelings, and of products (personal, social, cultural) built by persons through them, contributing to their integration, preservation and accumulation. In order to remember, it is necessary to integrate memories into a system with meaning; this entails a reconstruction, or construction built out of our relation to a "whole mass of organized past reactions or experience".²¹² Physical signs which help people preserve and remember links of consistency can take the form of any number of cultural products, including documents, monuments, habits of behavior, oral traditions, etc. Integration is the main factor which makes

memory possible. Physical elements are only supplements which allow people to rebuild the past through reintegration. If people rely too heavily on external tools, their thinking and memory may suffer. Just as Plato warned that the use of written language could cause people's capacity for memorization to degenerate, so too can exaggerated reliance on external aids (such as those employed by modern technology, including television, computers, etc.) lead to the deterioration of the mind and will.²¹³

i. Signs, conceptual and empirical indicators, and inferences

Signs are tools which relate objects and concepts to each other and to physical observations. Therefore they are important tools in the exercise of consistency and intelligence, since they allow people to derive meaning from insertion in the whole. All parts of reality –objects, aspects, concepts, beings, fragments, etc.– are related to each other. By discovering the relations which link parts of reality together, people progressively discover the meaning of these parts. To know such relations allows people to take one part (object, concept, being, aspect, etc.) as a sign of another. When people discover relations among concepts, they gain conceptual indicators of related concepts; when people discover relations between observations and concepts, they acquire empirical indicators of the concepts, dimensions, variables or categories to which their observations refer.

People use inferences to discover chains and systems of indicators by exercising their capacity for consistency. Language is concerned with indicators; as an instrument of consistency, it seeks to link concepts together, build conceptual indicators and relate them with observable signs, which can be heard, read and touched. In this way, people build empirical indicators which connect ideas with signs. Language thus contributes to the integrative processes of knowledge, understanding, imagination, memory, etc.²¹⁴

j. Invisible links, joint task, binary connections, consistency-contradiction, advance, limits

Human beings are spiritual beings integrated with physical bodies. Human beings' spiritual nature is found in the capacity for consistency, which allows people to gradually advance toward finding all the links among countless parts of reality, even the smallest, thereby linking the spiritual with the material. It also allows them to find, adhere to and serve the harmonious (i.e. true and good) nature of such links, leading to existence and fulfillment. Connections function as invisible threads –visible only

through the application of consistency— which not only link objects together but also allow individuals to communicate with each other and with themselves.

Individuals can only handle, communicate and share a limited amount of information. Moreover, the concepts, relations and systems they employ create only a rough approximation to reality, which considers only a highly limited number of aspects and leaves others out. Therefore, people must engage in a constant, gradual and arduous task in order to advance in the direction of perfection, although they will always remain distant from the theoretical ideal.

Individuals work with binary connections, which are able to find order thanks to their permanent connection with unity. Although it is only possible to say one thing at a time, the multiplication of binary connections, which connect every aspect of reality with all the rest, thanks to the shared central pillar of unity, allows people to bring order to the "many features" of behavior displayed at the same time.²¹⁵

If people use genuine consistency to discover these connections, following the guide of unity, goodness and truth, they open the door to genuine knowledge, free will, feelings and action. If, on the other hand, they choose contradiction, they will close the door to unity, reality and fulfillment. Binary connections are enriched through their integration into systems of higher complexity, which link them to integrative unity. Because people are able to use their capacity for consistency and human freedom to open the door to unity, they possess great dignity and potential. At the same time, they also need to be humble and acknowledge that their advances toward unity are only gradual and are inevitably accompanied by severe limitations and obstacles. This is a great challenge: individuals must give themselves completely to reality, integrated by unity, from which they receive everything, and to which they belong. Just as human beings are limited to gradual advances in their search for unity, so too are they limited by difficulties and delays in communication, which requires constant, step-by-step efforts to accurately transmit and translate messages. Poor communication and growing distortion may emerge, illustrated by distortions in rumors.

Individuals form part of variety, in its physical dimension; this gives them a position in the whole and provides them with a perspective which is both illuminating and limiting. This is also reflected in language, which creates both the potential for as well as limitations on thought and communication. Communication is made with others and with oneself, as individuals evaluate advances in cooperation with others or with themselves. Even when individuals communicate and interact with

themselves, they do so as part of interacting and communicating with others, which is a part of reality they cannot ignore, because consistency is exercised personally and socially at the same time.²¹⁶

Every product of human activity –internal and external alike– is a joint task. Language is an instrument which efficiently accompanies such activities and produces slow but significant advances. These activities and efforts need to be constantly renewed in order to discover the richness of invisible threads (dimensions, relations, systems, social norms, etc.) and contribute to their harmonious integration for the fulfillment of individuals and reality, under the guidance of consistency.

Words are dynamic, with multiple meanings, as parts of the system of reality and thought to which they belong. Their meanings vary according to changes in time, circumstances and the frames of reference of those who send messages and those who receive them.²¹⁷

k. Communication with others, oneself, reality, unity; functions of language

Language is a means for communicating with others, oneself, reality and integrative unity, on which reality is based. Not only is language composed of social norms, it also transmits and develops them. Through the language of their behavior, people express social norms without being fully aware of doing so. This increases the strength of social norms and diminishes the freedom of individuals, reinforcing rigid and dysfunctional stabilities in social structures and systems.

Language is creative and active communication which builds and transmits social norms, relations and cultural and social structures; it communicates advances as well as defeats and reversals, which in turn give form to languages and their changes.

Language accompanies advances in the discovery of links, systems and unity; it helps people to understand others and themselves and is inseparably linked to thought.²¹⁸ A kind of internal dialogue (with others and oneself) is thus necessary in order to advance an individual's use of language.²¹⁹

As an instrument of thought and communication, language serves the process of social norming. Social norms and structures will be sound and will contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they –and the language which expresses them– are continually subjected to critical analysis, adjustment and adaptation.²²⁰ Individuals' behaviors are a message to themselves and to others.²²¹ Behavior also expresses conceptual indicators which link dimensions to each other.²²²

2. Language, behavior and social norms

a. Behavior as language, social norms, interpretation codes

Behavior is language, insofar as it reflects a person's thoughts, purposes, decisions and meanings. Behavior is guided by the same internal and external influences which condition symbolic language, including social norms and reference groups. Social norms provide codes which allow people to infer meanings from behaviors; in short, social norms may be inferred from individuals' behavior. Social norms and language are part of the same social and human reality and reinforce each other. Intentions, decisions and other components of internal experience are reflected in behavior, whether verbal or non-verbal.²²³ By sharing social norms, individuals implicitly agree to share the ideas, goals, information, attitudes, feelings, preferences, beliefs and values underlying social norms. At the same time, social norms are given a distinctive, special seal by each person who uses them, due to individuals' power of free choice and the unique convergence of influences on any given person.

b. Need for research on the quality of social norms and decision making

It is extremely important for social research to focus on social norms, communication and language in order to determine how and whether social norms are inspired by consistency or by unmastered impulses.²²⁴ Given their pivotal role as invisible threads moving human behavior, social research must also study how to assess the meaning of social norms. Social research must be concerned with how social norms incorporate new links that integrate variety into dimensions, relations and systems and how social norms and language influence the development of society, culture and science.²²⁵

In addition, social research should also focus on language and communication in order to learn how language deciphers and discovers hidden meanings which need to be discovered through consistency.²²⁶ It should study how signs emerge when people search for the links which bind objects and give them meaning; in this way, researchers can better understand how individuals discover and build language in the collective cooperative process of social norming. Social research should also focus on how social norms and language shape knowledge, will, feelings and action with genuine or spurious consistency. On this basis, research can help people to understand themselves and others, including their decisions

and actions, better. In sum, social research should analyze how individuals make decisions and how social norms influence the decision-making process, which factors influence social norms, what consequences social norms have, and the influence of genuine or spurious consistency over social norms and decisions, and therefore on quality of life and human fulfillment.~

CHAPTER TWO

GUIDE TO CHANGE AND DECISION-MAKING QUALITY

A. Basic criteria and strategies

1. Fulfillment of individuals and reality in all sectors of activity

a. Fulfillment through unrestricted consistency; critically challenging assumptions

The goal of human fulfillment is attained by exercising unrestricted consistency, in all sectors of human activity, which lead these to genuinely serve fulfillment of various human and reality's dimensions, values and goals, which they are assumed to serve. Individuals create institutions in a wide variety of sectors, such as education, health, urban development, labor, the economy, industry, etc., in order to promote policies for the benefit of society and its members. This leads people to assume that the social norms, structures and practices prevailing in these sectors are aimed

at contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality and working for their benefit. However, prevailing social norms, structures and practices often have quite different purposes and consequences. For this reason, a central purpose of this book is to analyze and clarify the goal of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, and to identify methods and strategies to ensure that resources and activities in these sectors really contribute to fulfillment and overcome the constant temptation to ignore consistency and submit to undisciplined impulses.

In order to attain the goal of fulfillment, consistency requires people to respect all beings, aspects and relations of reality (adhering to them, loving them, and contributing to their fulfillment), without privileging or neglecting any and considering the full consequences of their choices, including their ultimate implications.

Consistency requires respect for the positions determined by relationships derived from integrative unity, the basis of reality. Such positions make the being of each being. People must devote themselves completely to this goal, dedicating all their talents, means and resources to it. This is what is implied by the requirement to adjust one's behavior to the consistency criterion. In the educational sector, this leads people to develop and share sound social norms; in the health sector, to the balanced and full functioning of all human dimensions. In housing and urban and regional development, use of the consistency criterion generates policies which provide an appropriate realm for human functioning; in labor relations, it produces policies which benefit society and individuals through their proper insertion into productive activity.

With respect to the family and interpersonal, spiritual and cultural dimensions, it creates balance which leads toward complete fulfillment. In the economy, politics, science and technology, people optimize available resources and use them efficaciously to serve the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

b. Education: developing sound social norms

In the educational sector, policies contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that decisions and actions, as well as social norms, structures and systems, encourage individuals to develop and adopt social norms, decisions and behaviors deriving from the exercise of genuine consistency by mastering impulses, fragments and influences as raw material to serve fulfillment of all persons and beings, in truth and goodness, giving oneself completely to such purpose. Educational policies should prompt people to adhere to reality and to integrative unity, on which it is based; which leads to harmonious fulfillment in truth and goodness,

freely and consciously chosen. People should be discouraged from catering to fragments and impulses, in their thoughts, will, feelings and behavior. Appropriate social norms and decisions derive from the complete and harmonious exercise of people's capacities, talents and energies, presided over by the capacity for consistency, leading them to serve reality; they motivate and teach students to apply themselves in this manner. In so doing, sound social norms and decisions contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Educational policies should teach people the importance of mastering impulses and appetites and submitting these to spiritual and ethical values. People should also be taught to respect, love and serve all individuals, unity and the harmony of reality. By sharing and transmitting these lessons, social integration, cooperation and solidarity are enhanced. People can learn to contribute to the fulfillment of all beings, in goodness and truth, using the most efficacious means. They learn to consider the system of reality as a whole and to respect all aspects and relations, as well as the laws written in reality by integrative unity. This teaches people to make optimal use of information, professionalism, organization, discipline and systematic methods, to serve spiritual, family and interpersonal values. In this way, they combine consistent ends and means, submitting impulses, influences, fashions, etc., to them as raw material. If policies and actions in education are not adjusted to these conditions or norms, they produce dysfunctional effects, including failure and frustration. This occurs, for example, when students are prepared for roles which they will not occupy or when their self-esteem is lowered. It also occurs when students are taught perverse social norms or fashions which stimulate superfluous or perverse needs. Without sound social norms and consistent policies, students are overexposed to undesirable and erroneous models which are misrepresented as unavoidable, natural and legitimate by social interaction, communication, the media, business, politics, etc..

c. Health: balanced fulfillment of dimensions

Sound policies in the health sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they contribute to the full development, exercise and fulfillment of individuals in all their dimensions –physical, spiritual, social and cultural. Given the close connections among these dimensions, individuals need to learn how to develop them in harmonious fashion, reinforcing their capacity to fight against internal and external threats. Advances in this direction are achieved by exercising genuine consistency, which generates sound decisions, actions and social norms. To become truly healthy, in the integrated and full sense, people

must devote themselves not only to their own well-being but also to that of others, reality and integrative unity, with sacrifice and self-mastery. They must discover means of contributing to the fulfillment of others and themselves, respecting, supporting and loving everyone. This ensures that all energies, resources, organs and processes promote the harmonious fulfillment of individuals and reality, with balance, firmness, flexibility and depth. This produces full health, according to the guidance of consistency. Advances in the health sector thus require the full and active participation of the entire population, in order to harmoniously satisfy the real and genuine needs of all individuals. For this scope health education and prevention are crucial. Efforts to replace laws of nature are equivalent to the unwitting actions of the sorcerer's apprentice, who unleashes forces which he does not understand and is unable to control; such efforts must be avoided.

d. Habitat and housing

Sound policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality by promoting stability and providing protection and security against risks, adjusting habitat and housing to differential realities and the needs of various groups. They foster family development and enable people to rest and meet their needs for hygiene, nourishment and education. Through proper housing, people can cultivate and develop spiritual, cultural, educational, economic and physical environments and resources and they can learn to insert themselves into various realms, including the personal, home, neighborhood, regional, national and global. In addition, proper housing provides privacy. Proper habitat and housing is derived from the exercise of genuine consistency and favors and reinforces its exercise.

e. Urban, rural and regional development, and the environment

Sound policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality by developing healthy physical, psychological, social, cultural, political, economic, moral and spiritual environments. The type of sound policies which make such a contribution possible derive from and reinforce the exercise of genuine consistency, giving priority to the common good and truth effectively supported above egoism, impulses, improvisation and contradictions. They promote exchange, cooperation and coordination and also contribute to the fulfillment of individuals in the realms of health care, education, recreation, communication, social interaction, social mobility, migration, and social, economic and political services.

f. Labor

Policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality through the balanced, constructive, consistent, creative and cooperative exercise of their productive capacity. This allows individuals to help satisfy their material, social, cultural and spiritual needs, as well as those of their families and other people.

Sound labor policies enable people to insert and integrate themselves into society, mastering themselves and their impulses, enhancing security, self-confidence, self-esteem, humility and realism. To this end, occupational roles should be adjusted to conform to the capacities, needs and vocation of each person, group and society; occupational guidance, education and preparation should be provided. Attention should also be paid to the personal and family needs of workers.

When the criterion of genuine consistency is applied, not only do the goods produced by people's labor contribute to the symphony of joint social production, but the division of labor and the personal and social activity of working also increase fulfillment. Once again, the proper functioning of policies in this sector derives from and reinforces the exercise of genuine consistency, which leads to consider in a deep and balanced fashion all human needs and capacities, and how to make capacities serve needs in truth and goodness.

g. Social welfare and solidarity

Policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality insofar as they optimize the well-being of all individuals, helping them all meet their needs, especially those who have greater difficulties. Solidarity is exerted through the practice of giving and receiving, and all individuals benefit both by giving and by receiving. This derives from and reinforces the exercise of genuine consistency.

Social welfare includes the balanced fulfillment of all aspects and dimensions of all individuals, including spiritual, emotional, social, economic and political development and security. Social welfare policies need to cultivate balance, with special and differential protection and support for the weaker and needy.

The abundance of some should assist the needs of others. Individuals and society should not be indifferent to the needs of others and must not be allowed to exploit and corrupt society's weaker and most vulnerable members, such as children, the mentally ill, elderly, etc.

These individuals should be treated as all individuals would like to be treated.

h. Family, interpersonal and spiritual values; culture, science, technology, communications, recreation, sports

Policies in these sectors contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they harmoniously exercise human dimensions, under the guidance of genuine consistency. This includes the cultivation of physical and biological dimensions and discipline over impulses and fragments. Individuals need to direct their attention, energies and resources toward desirable, meaningful ends and learn to completely devote themselves to these ends in a relaxed but energetic manner.

They need to dedicate themselves completely to giving, and giving themselves, to others and to the order of reality, making this the focus of their lives.

They need to share with others and provide them with sound models and examples through their behavior, social norms and reference groups, education, the media, etc. In this way social norms and decision-making styles are improved; this enhances individuals' quality of life and promotes the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

i. The economy

Policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that economic means are employed to serve final goals of fulfillment of reality (and all persons within it), including spiritual, family and interpersonal values. These are chosen under the guidance of genuine consistency and inserted into the system of reality.

This requires people to place money, goods and services, possessions, and wealth at the service of such goals. Dysfunctional ends and needs which deviate from consistency must be avoided. Sound economic policies imply mastery over the environment; this, in turn, requires people to consider the full implications of their economic choices and behaviors and their impact in terms of people's physical, social, cultural and spiritual well-being as well as their role in promoting the family, quality of life, justice, equity and solidarity.

Sound policies discourage people from adopting egoistic attitudes and behaviors which treat money, consumerism and material success as panaceas and final ends, placing them above spiritual, family and interpersonal considerations.

Such policies also discourage improvisation and encourage professionalism, the sound use of information, discipline, effort and systematic approaches and methods.

j. Industry

Policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they follow the dictates of genuine consistency and promote industrial activity which contributes to employment and provides means of subsistence for people, which are employed to serve human fulfillment. Sound industrial policies allow people to obtain resources to improve their quality of life and to solve problems related to health care, communication, food, clothing, housing, etc. for increasingly broad segments of the population.

Such policies enrich cultures with exchange; they cultivate people and contribute to discipline, training, systematic methods and organization. When industrial policies are guided by consistency, they discourage industry from creating working conditions which are harmful to workers; they deter pollution and the deterioration of physical, social, ethical and spiritual environments.

They curb industry from producing harmful stimuli, such as drugs, weapons and poisons; they also discourage industry from stimulating consumerism, superfluous needs, excesses, luxury, violence, arrogance, laziness, materialism, hedonism and shallowness.

k. Agriculture

Policies in this sector contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they exercise and reinforce genuine consistency. In this case, agricultural policies provide humanity with raw materials for food, clothing, habitat and other needs: they provide employment and security for many people and help overcome isolation, injustice, marginality, dependence and exploitation by central and urban areas.

Sound agricultural policies encourage the sound distribution of the population, encouraging people to settle in rural areas, instead of exacerbating disorderly migration and excessive urban concentration.

Such policies contribute to the progress and quality of services and of life in rural areas, ensuring that health care, education, communications, information, housing, political organization and participation and other services are not inferior to those in urban settings. These services must be adapted to the particular characteristics of each zone and geographical area, social stratum and group.

They are improperly or inadequately used when they lack coordination with local wants, needs and habits. Sound agricultural policies also require a balanced and harmonious relation to nature and the environment.

l. The political system: legislative, executive, judicial

Policies in these sectors contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they ensure that law, public administration and judiciary system effectively serve justice and the common good. This requires that policies are guided by genuine consistency and meet the following conditions.

- Politics must ultimately aim to promote the fulfillment of individuals and reality by genuinely serving the common good, justice and individual freedom.
- Efficacious means must be adopted to serve these ends.
- Accountability, the sound use of information, social participation and control, professionalism, and efficient organization need to be emphasized.
- Resources must be optimally employed.
- Corruption, inefficiency, improvisation, interventionism, protectionism, statism, dictatorship and totalitarianism must be avoided.
- Concern for the environment must be respected.
- High quality decision making in leaders, authorities, public servants and citizens must be cultivated as must sound social norms and systems.
- Spiritual, ethical, social, cultural and physical environments must be improved and protected.
- Mutually reinforcing sound influences must be encouraged through sound models, reference groups, communication, the media and education.

Soundness and high quality are judged in terms of consistency.

m. Common factors to all sectors

Various sectors of human activity will contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality to the extent that they are guided by policies which are derived from and reinforce genuine consistency. This means that they must provide deep and meaningful solutions to problems and encourage individuals to solve their problems by themselves, working together with others rather than in isolation. In this way, the autonomous development of individuals is strengthened rather than dependence and passivity. In all sectors, it is essential to stimulate high quality decisions and sound social norms and systems. The fulfillment of individuals and reality must always be held up as ultimate ends, serving truth and goodness and emphasizing spiritual, family and interpersonal values. These ends need

to be served with efficacious means, appropriate use of information, professionalism, organization, discipline and systematic methods. Individuals must dedicate themselves fully to fulfilling these requirements and all other conditions derived from genuine consistency, as explained in this book.

n. Systemic relations among sectors; virtuous and vicious circles

Genuine consistency, when applied to various sectors, produces a virtuous, self-reinforcing circle. Spurious consistency, on the other hand, leads to a vicious circle. This may be observed, for instance, in the relation between housing and urban and regional development, health, nutrition, the family, culture, communication, political participation, the economy, agriculture, industry, science and technology.

Genuinely consistent behavior in one sector favors genuinely consistent behavior in others, which in turn advances the fulfillment of reality and all individuals –in all dimensions and in terms of their balanced integration. Spurious consistency inspires unsound behavior in all sectors, creating a vicious circle.

o. Minimizing deviations and risks

In all the aforementioned sectors, decisions and activities, as well as social norms and systems, are often guided by spurious consistency and thus fail to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, and even contribute to the opposite. This situation may be clarified and improved by trying to identify factors of genuine consistency, which advance the fulfillment of individuals and reality, and contrasting these with factors of spurious consistency, which do the opposite. The former factors should be reinforced and the latter counteracted.

Factors which lead to deviations are reflected in all sectors. In education, the development and diffusion of perverse social norms produces atrophy, disintegration and social conflict, prompting people to submit to impulses instead of mastering them. This, in turn, engenders low quality decision making and social norming. In health, the application of spurious consistency reduces people's defenses against disease and death; it also causes people to neglect education and prevention in health care; and to fail to harmoniously exercise all dimensions, respecting laws of reality and ethics.

Spurious consistency in the housing sector fosters promiscuity, disorder, instability and insecurity. In urban and regional development, deviations lead to isolation, marginality, dependence and deterioration of

the environment. Unsound social welfare policies indulge dependence and paternalism instead of favoring initiative, responsibility and personal and social development, thus facilitating the vicious circle of poverty, marginality, passivity, injustice and resentment. Policies related to culture, recreation, sports which encourage a spurious use of free time cultivate perversion, self-destruction, tedium, emptiness, irritation, frustration; this causes people to lose a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives and turn to abuse of alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity, laziness, consumerism, violence, crime and other perversions. In the economic realm, unsound policies treat economic success as a panacea and ultimate end –instead of properly considering it as a means for serving higher values. This stimulates superfluous and perverse needs and ultimately destroys wealth and damages the environment; it also decreases spiritual, family and interpersonal development, stability and security and leads to a consequent decline in the quality of life, as well as unemployment, destruction, poverty, injustice, violence and war.

2. Overcoming shallow analyses of policies

a. Assumed and real effects, misleading facades

People who assume that outward appearances are a reliable indicator of underlying contents are always incorrect, at least in part. They are also at least partially mistaken when they assume that the more money they devote to a problem, the better their chances of solving it. For example, individuals who believe that high expenditures on education, health or social welfare will automatically lead to higher human fulfillment and quality of life are bound to be disappointed. Such assumptions are unfounded because money is often not directed toward promoting the fulfillment of individuals and reality, but rather is used for satisfying impulses and lower interests. Furthermore, financial resources are used ineffectively and inefficiently, without considering different conditions and needs of various sectors, regions and moments. Decisions and decision-making styles may not be sound and may be plagued by improvisation and insufficient professionalism, use of information, organization, discipline and method as well as by lack of concern for final human and spiritual goals of fulfillment of persons and reality. Poor organization and insufficient social participation, inflexibility and bureaucratic pathologies may also prevent people from adjusting means

to ends and from engaging in sufficient effort. As a result, their efforts may be dysfunctional and counterproductive. This is reflected in the common discrepancy between nominal objectives and observed results, as may be seen in the various sectors:

- **Education.** Educational activities are assumed to help students develop and adopt decision-making styles and social norms that are functional in terms of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality; nominally, they follow the goals and guidelines of genuine consistency, which encourage the full exercise of people's capacities, virtues, high values, critical judgment, self-esteem and positive image of reality. However, in practice the outcome is often quite different, as students are plagued by insecurity and a sense of inferiority and impotence. They often repeat courses and abandon school. Students' needs are not fully considered, especially those of students from low socioeconomic groups and remote areas, whose reality is not adequately taken into consideration when programs and plans of study are designed. These conclusions are supported by observations from a study conducted in the Argentine city of Córdoba where students who had flunked first grade anywhere from two to six times were studied at home by university students as private teachers.¹ The study found that not only did the school label these children as hopeless, leading them to repeat first grade several times, the parents of these children also would tell the university researchers and private teachers not to waste their time on their own "thick headed" children. However, after a few months of support, all these children were promoted to second grade, since they overcame the self-fulfilling prophecy which decreed that they could not possibly advance.² This points to the need for educational policies to cultivate a positive image in students of themselves and of reality, so as to produce higher quality decision making and sound social norms. Both formal and informal means, including the media, should be used for these ends.

- **Health.** The health sector is assumed to promote individuals' physical, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and moral health, avoiding excesses, promoting personal autonomy in harmonious integration with nature and environment, preventing and alleviating suffering disease and disabilities, and postponing death, for all individuals, with equity. However, despite these goals, activities in the health sector often lead to quite opposite results due to excesses in medical manipulation and remedies, which reduce people's defenses. A lack of health education and prevention leads to problems, including unnecessary treatments and

surgery and drug addiction. There is a tendency toward mechanical compartmentalization of problems and preference for fashions and routines over substantive solutions losing sight of ends and serving commercial manipulations, fashions and fictions.³

This demonstrates the need for a strong emphasis on prevention and health education in health care as well as efforts to integrate physical, psychological, social and spiritual approaches, inserting health behavior in the overall framework of reality, paying attention to all relations and implications, up to the ultimate of these.

• **Housing.** Activities in this sector are assumed to help citizens enjoy a home environment with adequate nutrition, rest, creativity, thought, study, work, family and interpersonal integration, security, privacy, hygiene and health.

In practice, housing often consists of small, insecure, inhospitable homes which do not provide a favorable environment for realizing human potential and fulfillment.

Even in grand, luxurious homes, egoism, isolation and unfulfillment may prevail, as in the Vanderbilt mansions.⁴

• **Urban and regional development.** Activities in this sector are assumed to encourage the healthy growth of social, political and economic relations, with functional integration, communication, exchanges and division of work, allowing for the provision of services to meet the balanced needs of all individuals. In actual practice, however, urban and regional development often results in isolation, marginality, tensions, mental pathologies, crime, violence, family decline, environmental deterioration, the proliferation of superfluous and perverse needs. Poor and rural areas wind up subsidizing rich and urban areas, and the gap between the two tends to widen.⁵ Richer, urban areas are increasingly afflicted by disorganization, disintegration, poverty and crime.

• **Labor.** Labor policies are assumed to provide employment opportunities which encourage individuals to perform meaningful tasks and realize their potential to the fullest. In so doing, individuals are assumed to be able to take care of their own needs and those of others, beginning with their family. In fact, labor policies often lead people to work too much, in jobs which are not suited to their capacities, training and vocation. They produce high rates of unemployment, labor instability and low salaries. This leads to frustration, deterioration of personal, family, social, economic and cultural life, and decline in the quality of life.

- **Social welfare.** Policies in this sector are assumed to help satisfy basic needs and increase fulfillment and quality of life, especially for the weakest groups in society –women, children, minorities, the disabled, sick, marginal, elderly, etc. Social welfare is intended to remove obstacles which prevent people from solving problems by themselves, encourage social participation, and provide adequate methods and resources. However, the system often is impaired by excessive bureaucracy, formalism, declarativism, inefficiency and corruption on the part of government and private organizations. Unfortunately, all too often it breeds passivity, dependence, and chronic deficiencies on the part of the needy. It fails to generate creative and productive activity for retired people, making it difficult for them to remain integrated members of society and precipitating sickness and death. Social welfare frequently exploits the weak and fosters the corrupt and inefficient use of resources designated to meet their needs. It lacks adjustment to consistency, which would lead to devotion (giving oneself with effort and sacrifice) to serve fulfillment of reality and human beings, giving balanced consideration to all aspects and implications, in terms of truth and goodness.

- **The family.** Although there is widespread concern about problems associated with the weakening of the family, including social breakdown and the spread of drug addiction, alcoholism, violence, crime, mental illness, and other social problems, nonetheless not enough attention is paid to strengthening the family by reinforcing values which encourage people to give themselves to others –beginning with their own family– unconditionally, thoroughly and deeply, with a sense of moral responsibility. Instead, the family is considered as a means for lower ends, as a way of acquiring money, power, success, prestige or pleasure. In this way, individuals come to feel that they are able and entitled to manipulate spiritual and human dimensions and avoid subordinating themselves to reality, integrative unity and higher principles, which require that individuals' thoughts, will, feelings and behavior are not tied to narrow self-interest. This leads to replace family by sexual promiscuity and by "living together", while gratification may be derived from it.

- **Free time, sports, culture, science and communication.** Activities in these sectors are assumed to help develop various dimensions of individuals, enabling them to rest and engage in pursuits which bring them joy and satisfaction, contributing to harmonious human fulfillment. However, these activities often come to be handled by individuals and groups without scruples who take advantage of the weakness of others,

especially children and young people, leading them to corruption, violence and other destructive activities. People are encouraged to alleviate boredom and frustration with drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and violence. They are taught to copy foreign influences, discouraging local creativity. People learn to passively accept and condone the destructive influences of the entertainment industry and television.

Science and technology are not dedicated to the service of human fulfillment and fail to develop an integrative, systematic approach which considers wider implications in terms of the system of reality. Instead of integrating science, technology, philosophy, ethics and humanities, knowledge is compartmentalized into distinct disciplines rather than systematized.

Concern for fragments and service to them replaces concern for unity and reality and for harmonious insertion of fragments therein. The integrative approach of this book attempts to respond to such a deficiency.

- ***The economy.*** Economic growth is mistakenly assumed to automatically create wealth and improve people's quality of life, living standards and employment opportunities, thus contributing to human fulfillment and happiness. In fact, there are real dangers entailed by placing too strong a focus on economic success; when economic growth is treated as a panacea, people tend to neglect spiritual, family, interpersonal and cultural values and tolerate an inequitable, unjust distribution of incomes and wealth. Economic policies also become dysfunctional by advocating unsound policies such as state interventionism, protectionism, inefficiency, corruption, deficit spending and rampant inflation; they lack clear, objective, stable and equitable rules of the game and fail to consider long-term implications, contributing to fulfillment of persons and reality.⁶

- ***Industry.*** Industrial growth is assumed to increase employment opportunities, efficacy and efficiency in economic production and, in so doing, elevate and generalize living standards and quality of life. Industrial growth is also presumed to stimulate habits of discipline and cultural exchange, in order to satisfy human needs in a balanced manner, thus contributing to human fulfillment.

However, often industrial growth gives priority to its own needs above human needs, and individuals are forced to adapt themselves to the rigid demands of industry. Industry can provoke disruptive migrations of the family and its advances are frequently used as instruments against morals, spiritual life, quality of life and emotional security. Industrial growth often encourages people to uncritically and passively adopt foreign products,

customs and social norms; it promotes consumerism and superfluous and harmful needs, damages the environment, causes unemployment, builds monopolies, and creates inhumane working conditions. Egoistic interests and unmastered impulses prevail over goals of human fulfillment in genuine common good and truth.

• ***Agriculture and the rural sector.*** Activities in this sector are assumed to generate sources of employment and build human roots on the land in harmony with nature and the environment. They are intended to avoid disorderly migration and urbanization; to contribute necessary products for human welfare; and to provide rural inhabitants with opportunities comparable to those of urban ones. However, in actual practice, activities in this sector often generate dependence, weakness, poverty and marginality of rural population; this engenders –and is reinforced by– a sense of powerlessness and psychological ceilings. It perpetuates and widens differences with urban areas and results in serious deficiencies in social services and communications for rural areas; this, in turn, prompts more dynamic elements to migrate to the cities (or abroad), thus weakening rural areas even more, in vicious circles.⁷

All this leads to the decline of the family, interpersonal relations, spiritual values and quality of life, as well as environmental deterioration.

• ***Legislative and political activity.*** Legislative and political activities are assumed to contribute to the common good and justice. However, they often stimulate passivity and dependence, interventionism and protectionism; they also accept and support low quality decision making, inefficient functioning of the bureaucracy, privileging egoistic interests, corruption and injustice. They tend to copy harmful endogenous and exogenous social norms and models, and they fail to use the powers and resources entrusted by citizens to political authorities for the benefit of society.

b. The challenge of optimizing functioning of all sectors

In all sectors, policies need to focus on contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, following the guide of genuine consistency. Short, medium and long-term implications, up to and including ultimate implications, must be considered; everything must be inserted into the framework of reality, and be devoted to harmoniously serving its fulfillment, and balanced fulfillment of all persons within it. Human beings have the crucial mission of developing policies and structuring activities

in the aforementioned sectors so as to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality rather than the opposite, through the genuine employment of the consistency criterion and derived criteria, strategies and conditions.

c. Strength of the informal

When society demands change or stability, reality will respond, over and above the demands of authorities and formal laws. Indeed, the latter depend on the social norms created by individuals.

Therefore it is fundamental that citizens, leaders and authorities use their capacity for consistency to cultivate knowledge, will, feelings, decisions and behavior and build social norms, processes, structures and systems which will produce desirable outcomes in terms of fulfillment of persons and reality.

d. Consistency evaluation and change of social norms

Knowledge of the role of social norms in the fulfillment of individuals and reality allows people to detect, cultivate and strengthen norms which contribute to such fulfillment and counteract those which obstruct it. People can better use social norms as instruments of free decision making and behavior. This is a great challenge for individuals and societies. Each new decision can revise all previous decisions and actions, one's own as well as those of other people, and all social norms deriving from them. Results must therefore be evaluated in terms of consistency and each decision, action and social norm must be rebuilt accordingly, cultivating sound human and social seeds and rejecting sick ones.

It is essential for people to be aware that sound and sick social norms exist in every society, group and person and to learn to distinguish among them. This demands intensive work, using thorough information and analysis, dedication and commitment. By not doing this, Argentine society (and other societies) have allowed themselves to be led astray by unsound leaders, theories and social norms. This can be seen in prevailing attitudes which considered inflation as natural and expected problems to be solved by government, by manipulating exchange rates, for example, without attacking the roots of the problem. This created confusion, made policies less transparent, increased government and social expenditures relative to income, and prevented clear and stable rules of the game.

All these problems started with the simplistic idea that underlying problems either could not be solved or could be solved easily. Both positions prevent rigorous and intensive efforts to search for and

implement realistic solutions. Given a prevailing feeling of powerlessness, disorder and confusion, individuals adopt an “every-man-for-himself” approach and strive to satisfy their own egoistic interests at the expense of the common good. In the last few years, a favorable change has been initiated in Argentina –although only partially, and only in some aspects– with strong societal and governmental efforts to identify and fight against certain unsound social norms.

e. Analysis underlying social norms and decisions in societal changes, e.g. the Soviet Union

Negligence in analyzing underlying social norms and decisions may lead to failures, as in the case of Soviet leaders who refused to acknowledge any development which did not conform to their narrow vision of reality. This applies to the present leadership of the former Soviet Union as well, who seem to simplistically believe that it is possible to create a new system without considering the whole complex of dimensions analyzed in this book. Their behavior would benefit from an analysis of the social norms and systems that existed up to 1989 as well as which ones have been changed and how. Leaders should consider various alternatives of new systems to be built and their predictable consequences and implications. They should also bear in mind the pendular trends which follow after situations of severe repression. In all societies, whatever their degree of stability or change, it is necessary to analyze underlying social norms and processes, which always include powerful ingredients of change and stability, sound and unsound elements. People must look closely to see beyond formal change, recognizing that transitions to democracy and capitalism, for instance, do not necessarily eliminate materialism, which is common to both Marxism and liberalism.

3. Criteria for assigning priorities

a. Criteria for improving the quality of decision making

Every decision implies a choice among alternative paths, selecting some and discarding others. To contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, it is necessary to adhere to the criterion of consistency and derived criteria, thereby preventing risks and guiding stability and change. The consistency criterion leads people to apply the following operational criteria as they establish priorities:

• **Functionality and system.** This criterion establishes the extent to which the solution of one problem affects the solution of other problems, given the systemic relations among all parts and aspects of reality. It takes into consideration the fact that fulfillment of reality as a whole, and of its parts, is a harmonious, systemic process of causal-functional integration. This criterion leads people, for instance, to consider how certain education policies affect health care and industrial competitiveness, and vice versa. Functionality is usually reciprocal. However, the systemic asymmetries require people to assign priorities to those actions which will systemically be most influential in contributing to the fulfillment of the whole – including other dimensions and areas– and all its parts.

• **Seriousness and centrality.** Certain needs and problems are more central than others in terms of their impact upon the harmonious fulfillment of individuals and wider systems. Such centrality depends, first of all, on the hierarchy of needs and values within the systemic harmony of the person and of the wider systems of society, nature and reality. For example, when human fulfillment is valued as an ultimate end, moral corruption is more serious than physical disease and freedom is more central than pleasure. Second, centrality depends on the hierarchy of goals established by individuals; when genuine consistency is embraced, family and spiritual values, self-mastery, depth, truth and goodness, love and commitment to others are placed above materialistic goals and hard-won skills are valued above natural faculties. Third, the centrality of a problem depends on the magnitude (size or depth) of the damage it inflicts (or may inflict). Fourth, a problem becomes more serious and therefore more central to the extent that it causes irreversible or long-lasting damage, as opposed to ephemeral symptoms. These factors are mentioned to illustrate the complexity of the issue, without pretending to be exhaustive.

This may also be illustrated by considering the relative seriousness of various problems in the health sector, all of which deserve attention but compete for limited financial resources. The problem of high infantile mortality due to deficiencies in preventive medicine, health education and environmental sanitation outweighs calls for increased investment in research for refinement of heart transplants. All dimensions, aspects and needs deserve attention at their level and contribute to harmony of that system –and all systems.

• **Urgency.** Even when a problem may not be one of the most serious ones, in an emergency it deserves immediate and priority attention, as in the case of the repair of a bridge required for the satisfaction of other needs,

e.g. travel to work. When an aspect which contributes to the harmony of the system needs attention, any postponement disturbs the system. The longer the delay, the more urgent it is to solve the problem, and its seriousness increases. All aspects are important for the harmony of the whole. There is greater urgency when delays may lead to irreversible losses or damage or aggravate the underlying problem.

- **Efficacy.** The consistency criterion also requires people to search for durable, efficacious solutions which tackle and eradicate the underlying causes of problems. This requires people to analyze needs and problems from the perspective of the wider system, clarifying deep, underlying roots and causes –and not just superficial symptoms (which are only the tip of the iceberg). A common illustration is that of teaching the poor how to fish or to cultivate, instead of just providing them with food. It is more efficacious to invest in health education and prevention than in assistance, although the latter is also required as part of the integral solution.

- **Cost-benefit analysis.** Individuals possess a finite amount of resources which they are able to invest to contribute to the growth of life and fulfillment. To the extent they consider cost-effectiveness, people are able to make better use of their resources, rather than squander them. Consistency leads people to assign each aspect –of life and fulfillment– the appropriate means for contributing to the optimal, harmonious fulfillment of the whole and all of its parts. In this way, means and resources are coordinated and organized to achieve their most efficient use in terms of the ultimate ends of fulfillment.

- **Balance between needs with high and low priority.** Consistency requires people to consider all aspects of reality and their systemic relations, up to their ultimate implications. In this way, people can decide how best to assign their attention, effort, time and resources in line with the particular circumstances of each problem. In this way, vital needs can be satisfied through the balanced application of the criteria of functionality, seriousness, urgency, efficacy and cost-benefit analysis, all of which are important considerations for the harmonious fulfillment of individuals and reality, in all their dimensions. If a genuine need is neglected, even if its priority is low, this priority becomes higher since the balance of the system is disturbed. Every aspect, however small, deserves respect. This requires people to consider the complexity of systems and to advance gradually in a succession of steps. The way in which government prepares –or should prepare– its budget of resources and expenditures gives an idea of the

complexity entailed in assigning priorities, resources and efforts. In a similar fashion, each person and society continually adopts decisions which imply choices about priorities, but they are generally unaware of their complexity. The same happens to the great majority of leaders and authorities.

• **Based in consistency.** All criteria for assigning priorities are based on genuine consistency, considering and respecting the whole framework of reality (as presided by unity) and all beings and aspects that are part of it, in a balanced fashion, thus contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Functionality pays special attention to identifying and solving those aspects and problems which are most likely to have beneficial effects for the rest of the system. Centrality focuses on problems and needs which are not being adequately addressed relative to others, considering the systemic structure of reality and its sub-systems. Urgency refers to those problems whose solution cannot be postponed without irreversible damage. Efficacy looks for solutions which make real, durable contributions and address underlying causes, considering insertion in the system of reality. Cost-efficiency emphasizes solutions which cover more needs and lead to a greater benefit to the system and its parts through an efficient allocation of scarce resources. Finally, balance focuses on issues and strategies which serve human fulfillment and carefully take the balanced system of reality into account.

b. Correlational analysis, typical profiles, fitness, deviations

Systemic relations among factors, aspects and dimensions may be observed in correlations which show regular patterns of interaction deriving from reciprocal causation. These correlations reveal the functional structure of relations which determine the existence of each being and its fulfillment; a proper understanding of correlations is therefore essential to achieve solutions of various problems which contribute to fulfillment. Through correlational analysis, people learn how and where to devote their time, energies and resources, since correlations partly reflect the functionality, centrality, urgency, effectiveness, cost-benefit and balance. They derive from functional adaptations which individuals choose, implicitly applying such criteria. They can help to visualize the role of each aspect, need and problem within the whole and the contribution of each to the balanced fulfillment of human beings and reality. Correlational analysis indicates which patterns of interaction lead to the harmonious satisfaction of all dimensions and problems. It allows people to analyze each situation, need and problem, considering the extent

to which it is satisfied, or unsatisfied, as compared to the rest. Correlational analysis also helps people to appreciate how particular satisfaction of particular aspects contributes to the satisfaction of the system as a whole; this, in turn, enables people to decide which aspects and needs need to be attended to right away, since their postponement is an obstacle to the fulfillment of the whole.

By analyzing the performance of various sectors in various models of society, it is possible to evaluate them and clarify the regular consequences of various strategies and actions. If we compare, for instance, different rates of illiteracy and infant mortality among various countries or regions, we may evaluate how one country's rate of infant mortality and level of illiteracy compare to the international average. If we find that the rate of infant mortality is significantly higher than that found in other countries with similar literacy rates, this suggests that there is a special problem with infant health and mortality in this country. Similarly, if a country has literacy rates which are significantly lower than in other countries with similar rates of infant mortality, this reveals that there is a special problem with education and literacy in this country. These conclusions are based on the assumption that relative levels of infant mortality and illiteracy respond to the choices and evaluations which various societies make, using their consistency capacity to decide how to allocate resources. Unusually high rates of infant mortality or illiteracy indicate a need to reevaluate the existing allocation of resources and attention.

Furthermore, if people's criteria for determining how to attend to various needs are not adjusted to genuine consistency, this will lead to general, systemic problems which threaten the survival of individuals, groups and societies. This will stimulate correction, through the free, consistent and rational application of the "survival of the fittest." There is therefore a correlation between behaviors –which are structured in social norms– and the results of such behaviors –which strive for fulfillment and survival. Given these correlations, it is reasonable to look for patterns which express typical relations between normal levels of satisfaction of various needs. Such an analysis is made possible by individuals' capacity for consistency, which leads them to appreciate the value of various paths for contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, which includes survival and more.

If a need is not properly attended to, reality will punish such neglect, and this will move individuals and societies toward correction – consistently striving for fitness for survival, but more so for fulfillment. This leads people to approach the normal level attained in various societies which have learned how to exist, survive and grow, as a general, long-

term trend. In this way correlational analysis helps people to anticipate consequences and to guide decisions, behavior and social norms in order to adjust them to consistency and serve fulfillment and allow survival.

c. Success and validity, unfounded inferences; the Soviet Union and long-term correlations

The assumption that typical correlations are desirable is only partially founded. Judgments about functionality and effectiveness may be mistaken. In the same way, even if a society seems to be successful, this does not mean that its model, decisions and social norms are appropriate, valid and true. It is possible that punishment of deviations may remain hidden or delayed. For this reason it is important to analyze the conditions under which certain factors lead to specific consequences.

Comparing the experiences of other nations and regions can be useful so long as one does not assume that the apparent success of some of these countries (at certain points and in certain aspects) necessarily implies that their underlying theoretical model is correct, or that all the traits of the model are functional. For example, some supporters of the Soviet model used to contend that the theories applied in the Soviet Union had passed the "test of life"; these supporters asserted that the Soviet model was a valid one and cited increased production of energy, iron, etc. as proof. They dismissed the need for methods and techniques such as survey research to demonstrate superiority.⁸ Of course, long-term developments showed the weaknesses inherent in the Soviet model which (in the long term) produced quite different results from those predicted in earlier, optimistic assessments.

When done properly, comparing different experiences can allow people to detect deviations from "normality" and can suggest functional relationships. Certainly, the definition of "normality" will vary according to changing conditions and contexts; nonetheless, normality usually involves at least some sound elements which allow for survival. However, individuals must be cautious because elements of spurious consistency may give the appearance of normality and desirability to solutions which do not contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

d. Correlations, limits, functionality, cycles: partial and total, deviations, progressive adjustments

When a regular, repeated correlation between various factors or variables is detected, this may indicate that the factors are functionally interdependent and mutually reinforcing. For instance, if low rates of

illiteracy coexist with low rates of infant mortality, this suggests that the two factors reinforce each other or at least that one is reinforced by the other, or both by a third one. To establish whether the correlations detected are in fact desirable for human beings and for reality as a whole, individuals need to consider as many factors and relations of reality as possible. Then people can make inferences about how one factor, decision, solution or social norm contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

The level of fulfillment of correlated factors is assumed to follow a typical pattern, whereby the fulfillment of one factor is assumed to naturally correspond to certain levels of fulfillment (or lack of fulfillment) in other factors. Assuming that typical patterns have certain advantages for the fulfillment of individuals and reality, these patterns are accepted as natural and desirable. Such an assumption is only partially legitimate, however, since in practice there are many distortions which must be corrected in wider cycles of reality, and all are corrected in the total cycle of reality, which has the invincible force of fulfillment. However, it is reasonable to assume that, given the existence of causal-functional relations, different dimensions linked with real and natural needs will be mutually dependent. This may be observed in functioning systems, which cannot survive or dramatically change if they do not correct important deviations from typical patterns of reciprocal relations necessary for systemic, harmonious, constructive functioning according to the laws of reality and nature.

A second legitimate basis for assuming that typical patterns of correlations are desirable rests on the knowledge that these patterns are products of social processes directed by human choices and consistency, which lead people to direct their efforts toward satisfying various needs in combinations which progressively approximate the total harmony of reality, in which individuals and reality fulfill themselves. In this way, the wisdom of reality and accumulated wisdom of individuals are combined and reflected in the reciprocal influences and complementarity of various aspects or parts of reality. However, it is necessary to take into account that such human intervention is only partially guided by genuine consistency (and human exercise of consistency can account for only a limited part of countless aspects, relations and systems of reality), and that observed typical patterns are only partial and transitory combinations which do not reflect the complete integration or inexorable fulfillment of the system of reality, which includes cycles of cycles, millenia, and beyond. The judgment of reality and of consistency is only partially reflected in the relations contained in typical patterns.

Therefore the desirability of “normal” patterns of correlations among variables should be subjected to critical evaluation and analysis in order to determine the priority that should be given to satisfying each need and, accordingly, how resources should be allocated. Such analysis requires people to apply the criterion of consistency and derived criteria. Various statistical procedures for studying correlations also allow people to analyze relations among dimensions.⁹ At the same time, correlational analysis and other quantitative techniques are seriously limited, since they do not provide a full account for information and data and consider only partial aspects, which are abstracted from their context.

Correlational analysis therefore should serve as only one point of orientation for decision making, which needs to be inserted into a wider and deeper analytical framework based on consistency, which considers all aspects and relations of reality, without privileging or excluding any of them. Statistical analysis must not be taken as a panacea (of fragment consistency) and must not be a substitute for deep, flexible thinking, creativity, imagination and analysis.

4. Consistent use of human quota of influences

a. The most valuable resource: human capacity for consistency

The most valuable resource which individuals have is their capacity for consistency, which allows them to contribute to human fulfillment (including their own) and the fulfillment of reality. By applying consistency, people are able to exercise and integrate their higher faculties –thought, will, feeling, free decision and action, embracing reality and integrative unity. This allows individuals to contribute to fulfillment, instead of isolating themselves by serving egoistical, self-centered ends and submitting to impulses and fragments; they are able to achieve happiness and satisfaction rather than failure and frustration.

Societies advance not so much on the basis of their physical or economic resources but thanks to their human resources. If citizens apply their capacity for consistency in a genuine fashion, their decisions, social norms and systems will contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality; spurious consistency will lead to the opposite. In the Netherlands, for instance, limitations of climate and soil stimulated greater creativity and a strong ethic; the Dutch invented glass houses, for example, which allowed them to develop and grow flowers throughout the year and to

become world leaders in this respect. Other countries, rich in natural resources, do not realize that their progress does not derive from resources received from nature, but rather depends on whether these resources are used efficiently to serve consistent ends.

Proper use of resources does not simply produce material advances; genuine consistency requires resources to be dedicated to serving being, truth and goodness, cultivating spiritual, family and interpersonal values. Only in this way can people significantly improve their quality of life and contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, e.g. the Dutch agricultural advances would become wasted efforts if not harmoniously inserted in reality, serving spiritual, family and interpersonal values.

b. Influence over oneself and the environment

Social norms and systems are built through internal factors (mind, will, feelings, decisions) and external actions (which are conditioned by internal factors). As such, they are guided by genuine or spurious consistency and accordingly produce either meaningful progress or regression. Individuals influence themselves and others through their social environment (including social norms and models), which is guided by either genuine or spurious consistency. This environment is itself created through individuals' free decisions, in which people exercise their capacity for consistency. There is a circular, mutually reinforcing relationship between individuals and their environment; just as individuals are influenced by the social conditions which surround them, they can affect these conditions by exercising their capacity for consistency. In doing so, they influence themselves as well as others who depend on them. They also change social norms, structures and systems in the direction of fulfillment or the opposite. In the person-environment relationship, the person has the innovative, creative role, since the environment (to the extent that it is not a product of free human intervention) derives from the tightly adjusted system of laws derived from integrative unity, the great creative source.

c. Two main gifts: consistency and the freedom to exercise it

Individuals not only have the capacity for consistency. They also, as a component of this capacity, have the power to choose how they will exercise it: whether they will be loyal to it or challenge and reject it—in other words, whether they will exercise genuine or spurious consistency. Human beings are born with this capacity, as a pure gift of existence, derived from the integration of variety by unity. Genuine consistency

involves exercising consistency with purity, cleanliness and proper thoughts, will, feelings and actions. It is the sound seed which promotes truth, goodness and the fulfillment of individuals and reality, contributing to social advancement through society, culture, science and all human creations.

Individuals therefore have the innate, potential capacity for consistency and the freedom to actually exercise it. This allows them to enhance the quality of their decisions, social norms, structures and systems, and ultimately their quality of life, so long as they do not choose to follow spurious consistency. This provides a source of hope in the midst of the corruption, confusion, perversion and deviations which prevail among so many individuals, groups, societies and cultures.

These social ills never destroy individuals' powerful resource, their capacity for consistency, which remains latent (if not active) in all individuals and which may be stimulated and supported in order to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

d. Sound networks and leadership

Human resources yield their best fruits when they cultivate the capacity for consistency in each person. In order to yield such fruits, individuals need to organize themselves in sound networks with sound leadership, able to inform, clarify and guide the population in sound directions. Otherwise, this crucial resource is wasted and people are paralyzed by a feeling of impotence derived from inconsistency, which prevents their full exercise of consistency. Surveys which the author has conducted in Argentina since 1962 show the strong aspiration toward consistency in the population. Such an aspiration prevails in Argentine society, but its strength and fruits are limited by the prevailing lack of communication, lack of integration in sound networks and lack of efficient organization.

e. Rewarding the sound, punishing the sick

Social norms inspired by consistency are the means by which individuals can optimize and take advantage of their capacity for consistency, rewarding sound behaviors and punishing sick ones. Consistent social norms reward individuals who work for the common good, encouraging and allowing them to play the roles for which they are suited rather than putting obstacles in their road and compelling them to use all their energies simply in order to overcome these obstacles. Consistent social norms define roles which allow each person to make more and better contributions to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

f. Distractions and waste

Social norms and structures suffocate human resources when they cause people to scatter their energies and talents among thousands of insignificant and shallow engagements and relations, routines and rituals. This is the case with bureaucratic labyrinths which constrain functionaries and citizens, wasting their energies and preventing them from devoting themselves to deep and balanced consideration of the most appropriate decisions and actions for themselves and for society.

h. Awareness and decision-making quality

Lack of awareness of ends, means, social norms, and their causes, consequences, obstacles and risks reduces the quality of decision making. Improving decision-making quality requires individuals to freely support and adhere to reality and to underlying unity, thus contributing to human fulfillment.

Many individuals fail to ask themselves about their goals and do not analyze which are the most effective means to attain them; they do not examine whether their goals contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality or not and they do not examine the obstacles, risks, and beneficial or harmful consequences of social norms. Decision-making quality is crucial for human fulfillment, insofar as both require consistent adherence to reality and integrative unity, identifying and overcoming inconsistencies and contradictions, and identifying and supporting sound seeds of consistency.

To this effect, people must make sound use of conscience, communication and social organization. For these reasons, this book aims to help clarify how to improve the quality of decision making and the social norms, structures and systems derived from it.

Indeed, the effort to clarify people's thoughts and adjust their will, feelings, actions to appropriate, sound ends entails getting people to embrace reality and unity and exercise genuine consistency by devoting themselves fully to reality and unity.

5. The need for rigorous evaluation methods

Consistency requires individuals to constantly evaluate the consequences of alternative decisions and actions they have tried or considered, as well as the assumptions and theories on which these are

based. People need to consider the effect these have had, analyzing whether they contributed to or detracted from the fulfillment of the order of reality –and, as a consequence, the fulfillment and happiness of human beings.

In order to carry out such a process of evaluation, people need to build a systemic and all-encompassing frame of reference which is supported by actual observations. As in this book, there should be an ongoing confrontation between theoretical inferences and empirical findings, in a continuing dialogue between the two.¹⁰

6. Cultivating consistent social norms and values

a. Consistent or inconsistent responses within a sacred-expedient value framework

The same value may be used in a consistent or inconsistent manner, depending on the wider system in which individuals insert it and how they use it. It may lead to tolerance or persecution, depending on the context and manner in which it is applied, including the way individuals perceive each other and the way they interpret various scenarios and situations. These become a part of people's values and are used differently, depending whether they are inspired by genuine or spurious consistency.¹¹

The choice between a consistent or inconsistent orientation is a choice between alternative values, attitudes, perceptions, preferences and decisions.

Change is an integral part of any value system and affects not only shallower preferences and motives but also deeper values and beliefs, as well as all the intermediate orientations or attitudes in between. For instance, although dominant values in the United States and Argentina generally tend to be stable, such that respective tendencies toward expediency and sacredness may be observed, there are nonetheless continual variations as individuals freely choose their own value frameworks, adopting positions which are favorable or contrary to consistency, depending on their responses to varied influences.

Indeed, consistency-inconsistency is the main value dimension, and persons are permanently able to choose one pole or the other –at any point-through decisions of the moment making stable (regularly repeated) shared decisions and behaviors (social norms).

b. Values are not immutable traps; sacred-expediency and economic growth in Argentina

Values are not invincible and immutable traps. The mistaken belief that they are makes them so, in a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is possible, for instance, to apply sacred and expedient values in either a consistent or spurious manner, depending how they are combined with other orientations, attitudes and approaches and depending whether this is done in a way that supports genuine consistency or the opposite. This shows that values are not invincible obstacles to development –economic and non-economic– as cultural explanations often claim. A real obstacle is the belief that values are invincible obstacles, which acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹²

In Argentina, the same cultural factors which led to spectacular economic growth in the first three decades of the twentieth century led to economic stagnation over the subsequent six decades. Cultural factors were therefore not the sole determinants of economic performance; other factors, including social norming and free choice (siding with genuine or with spurious consistency), were crucial. It is particularly important to focus on the choices which Argentines have made in response to hardships and difficulties. Hardships provide an alarm signal which encourages people to acknowledge the disastrous consequences that result from a lack of concern for efficiency and results. However, even in the face of severe hardships, individuals can either choose to learn from them and find appropriate solutions or they may choose to ignore reality, attempting to hide from reality by means of spurious consistency, using additional fictions and rationalizations for hiding previous ones. Argentine economic stagnation is attributable to the latter.

Cultural factors influence the way prosperity or difficulties affect human behavior and social norms. When cultural orientations over-emphasize sacred and expressive values, improperly treating them as appropriate means as well as ends (e.g. expecting solutions to come from luck, charismatic leaders, formal declarations or magical means), economic growth tends to be less stable and to give way to stagnation and decline. Societies which overemphasize and misplace sacredness and expressive values also have a dangerous tendency to reduce the chances for sustained economic growth by allowing foreign interests to take charge instead of developing their own initiative and responsibility, as in Argentina at the beginning of this century. This led to widespread disregard for the importance of information, professionalism, discipline, organization, austerity and efficiency, as an Italian visitor traveling through Argentina in 1911 observed.¹³

Sacred and expedient orientations are compatible, complementary orientations which are both required by consistency. Each needs to be applied appropriately: expediency toward means and sacredness toward ends. By applying both orientations in a balanced fashion, professional, efficient and effective means may be used to serve spiritual, family and interpersonal goals and higher, transcendent principles.

c. Social maturity, in terms of consistency and fulfillment

Societies mature to the extent that they progress in terms of consistency, that is, to the extent that they cultivate balance, self-discipline, control over impulses and complete self-sacrifice on behalf of truth and goodness, adhering only to unity and reality (in goodness and truth) instead of being prisoners to fragments and impulses. Individuals in mature societies hold a deep, realistic, long-term perspective which inserts everyone and everything into the framework of reality, which guides people and shows them how and where to devote their energies, time, efforts, resources and sacrifices.

Maturation occurs when individuals, groups and society as a whole advance toward making the best use of their capacity for consistency in making choices (which give rise to social norms and systems), respecting all aspects and relations of reality, as integrated by unity.

Maturation occurs when members of society act with cautious consideration rather than with haste or desperation; mature individuals do not act on impulse and confusion but, instead, weigh the whole, balanced picture of reality and eschew unilateralism, pendularism, shallowness, carelessness, extremes and excesses. Mature individuals and societies adopt habits and social norms derived from consistency and take advantage of them, using them to identify their weaknesses in order to overcome them. Maturity therefore leads people to contribute to human fulfillment (including their own and that of others) and to the fulfillment of reality, cultivating sound seeds which lead to such mature fruits.

d. Values and change

There is a common tendency to mistakenly believe that individuals, groups or societies need to completely change their values in order to achieve economic, political or ethical progress. Such an erroneous belief functions as a psychological ceiling or self-fulfilling prophecy which prevents people from finding real solutions, distracts them from important issues and problems, and leads to manipulation, confusion, exploitation,

self-destruction, cultural invasion and social disruption. Instead, people must analyze their own values in order to identify sound or consistent elements and combine these with sound elements from exogenous value systems and others built with their own capacity for consistency; this allows people to optimize their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. “Traditional” values, such as strong family ties and spiritual and religious values, should be combined with “modern” values, such as professionalism and an emphasis on the wise use of information, systematic methods, discipline and austerity. In this way, spiritual, ethical, social and cultural advances are combined with economic, political, scientific and technological advances, with the latter serving the former.

It is important to realize that various types of value systems can be used to achieve economic and political goals. Traditional values (such as strong family ties and religious beliefs) can be respected and maintained while reinforcing attitudes and behaviors conducive to economic growth and political stability. It is unrealistic to think that deeply rooted traditional values can simply be eliminated by decree; moreover, the loss of such values would lead to a deterioration in individuals’ quality of life. Attempts to eliminate traditional values imply a lack of respect for people and constitute a manipulative violation of their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

This paves the way for a cultural invasion by foreign values and traditions, with accomplices in the local society who aid in their society’s domination by foreign interests. Local interests and groups will be left at the mercy of ambitious groups (both foreign and local) who disregard the interests of society and act without scruples. This prevents people from combining consistent endogenous and exogenous forces and brings destruction rather than advancement.

B. Means for Improving the Quality of Decision Making¹⁴

1. Unrestricted consistency

a. Conditions for improving the quality of decision making

Conditions for enhancing the quality of decision making are derived from consistency and include the following:

- Faith in reality, in integrative unity (which is the basis of reality) and in oneself;
- Confidence in one's own responsibility and capacity for adhering to reality and unity in a coherent fashion;
- The determination to adhere to reality and unity in all one's thoughts, desires, feelings and actions;
- Dedication to the goal of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, with balance, depth and complete self-sacrifice on behalf of being, truth and goodness;
- Effective service of this goal through efficient means, including professionalism and the systematic use of information, organization, coordination and cooperative and team work, method, discipline and austerity;
- A refusal to replace reality with fragments or impulses as well as a rejection of passivity, excessive reliance on routine and formalism, unilateralism and improvisation;
- The use of science, technology, planning and evaluation in order to overcome improvisation;
- A willingness to tackle the root of problems with preventive approaches, evaluating functional relations and the relative importance (seriousness) and urgency of problems;
- An ability to see, adhere and serve the complementary nature of stability and change;
- Communicating, disseminating and sharing solutions through social norms inspired by consistency, planting these as sound seeds;
- Organizing, planning and acting efficaciously;
- Considering reality as a whole, integrated in an all-encompassing framework.

Fulfillment of these conditions enables people to enhance the quality of their decisions, social norms, structures and systems and thus reinforces freedom and contributes to fulfillment of reality and of all persons and beings within it.

b. Genuine rationality in decision and action

Genuine rationality is an application of genuine consistency which systemically bridges the gap between goals, needs and problems, allowing individuals to direct fragments so they contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Through genuine rationality, people learn to consider the wider framework of reality, which neither privileges nor excludes any fragment, but considers all alternative contexts and all possible implications. This is not rationality in the sense of a calculated search for self-interest and personal advantage but rather describes an orientation adhering to the wider realm of reality and unity, including all beings within reality; it encompasses thought, will, feelings and action.

Genuine rationality leads toward the systematic analysis of reality, examining alternative paths, their possible implications and consequences. These are considered using reality as one's frame of reference. Different contexts, circumstances and conditions, as well as relations among different parts and aspects of reality, are also subjected to consistent, systematic analysis. On this basis, people can freely and consciously decide how to contribute to fulfillment, integrating various parts into the system of reality, serving existence, truth and goodness without privileging fragments or immediate concerns.

2. Deviations which reduce the quality of decision making

a. Improvisation

Improvisation is a deviation from consistency which involves insufficient adherence to reality and integrative unity; instead of focusing on these, it attaches itself to fragments. As a result, improvisation implies the lack of a firm and stable reference point, on the basis of which connections and inferences of unity in variety may be made.

The lack of adherence to reality and unity is reflected in passivity, indifference, laziness and carelessness, as well as a negligent approach toward decision making, behavior and building and adopting social norms. Individuals are tied to immediate concerns and narrow, partial interests which block their view of the whole, resulting in a short-sighted, distorted and unbalanced perspective.

Improvisation implies deviation from the path of consistency and a refusal to give oneself completely to consistency. This denial of reality

(to which all people belong) and integrative unity (which is the basis of reality) means that people do not give them the attention and loyalty they deserve. By giving in to improvisation, people follow fragments and impulses, without mastering or cultivating them so that they serve reality and unity, and therefore being, truth and goodness. Improvisation thus gives rise to and protects dysfunctional social norms and structures. It distracts individuals from their proper role in reality through typical deviations directly opposed to consistency.

These include unilateralism, pendularism, a faulty perception of reality, declarativism, a tendency toward undifferentiated transferral of models from one context to another, and the lack of a sense of responsibility.

b. Unilateralism

Unilateralism privileges particular aspects of reality instead of embracing reality, unity and all of humanity through a complete and balanced approach. Unilateralism privileges certain fragments and neglects or underestimates others, thereby escaping the requirements of consistency. It avoids the effort of analyzing and respecting all aspects and relations of reality and submits instead to the attraction of impulses, simplistic solutions and laziness. When individuals adopt a unilateral approach, they fail to acknowledge the merits of other people and other courses of action, pursuing self-gratification and wallowing in self-complacency. This is propagated by social norms which magnify the merits of one's own group and ignore the merits of others.

Unilateralism manifests improvisation by concentrating attention on narrow fragments and privileging these, to the detriment of other aspects and relations in reality. Among common unilateral orientations are the tendency to privilege certain dimensions or variables over others (e.g. sexual impulses, relations of production, race, economic factors, the ego) and the bias toward particular disciplines and professions. Unilateralism implies oversimplification, as occurs with common biases, stereotypes and prejudices, which range from small, insignificant deviations up to extremes of arrogance, intolerance, racism, materialism or hedonism, all of which substitute the ego for reality, unity and consistency and lead to devastating consequences.

Individuals can always rely upon their conscience or capacity for consistency which stimulates them to search for the system of systems, which can only be reached through integrative unity. This allows people to critically analyze social norms and contexts, overcoming unilateralism. In order to do so, it is important to properly interpret reality's educational

messages, which punish unilateralism with failure and reward consistency with success.

c. Perverse pendularism

Over time, unilateralism alternates between one extreme and another as a result of inconsistent answers to reality's messages, in particular, to the warnings entailed by obstacles and sufferings.¹⁵ These hardships give people the opportunity to acknowledge the dysfunctionality of each extreme position. Individuals need to engage in a constant, endless effort to correct their actions and remedy their shortcomings. They must adopt an approach somewhat like that of a golfer who adjusts each of his or her swings, taking corrective actions if the previous swing was too long or too short; through this sort of successive approximation, the golfer is able to make each swing more precise and effective.

People do not always learn the right lessons from reality, however; instead of adopting a balanced approach which works to gradually correct deviations (as the good golfer does), people often fall into the trap of perverse pendularism which reacts in an oversimplified manner, overcompensating for previous mistakes by embracing the opposite extreme. In the case of perverse pendularism, there is no deep change, since the different approaches people adopt continue to be flawed by a lack of realism, oversimplification, unilateralism and excess. Their responses reveal the absence of a balanced approach to reality and a lack of support for unity, which underlies and integrates reality. Although perverse pendularism functions in many ways like a vicious circle, the changes it produces are more of a spiral than a circle, since people never return to exactly the same point.

d. Faulty perception of reality

When individuals focus on capriciously chosen fragments detached from the system of reality, they adopt a spurious relation to reality derived from spurious consistency (or inconsistency), which discards unity as its ultimate reference point and instead embraces fiction and illusion. Reality is replaced as an all-encompassing and balanced system. People avoid efforts to consider and respect all aspects and relations of reality up to ultimate implications; people's desires, feelings and actions are shaped accordingly. People renounce their mission and capacity for building, creating and producing in terms of the unique system of reality, integrated by unity, which is the source of being, truth and goodness and governs relations between itself and all individuals.

e. Declarativism and hypocrisy

Declarativism consists of declaring formal support for something without acting accordingly, thus misleading oneself and others by trying to avoid the effort and sacrifice of facing reality and its difficulties. Such inconsistency is usually called hypocrisy. Declarativism and hypocrisy involve a direct, deliberate challenge to consistency, reality and unity insofar as people are aware, at least at some level of consciousness, that their declarations are false and are meant to deceive others and themselves. This contradicts reality, truth and goodness by contradicting unity which integrates them.

Declarativism may range from a simple game of hiding what is disagreeable, to following habits or social norms without deliberately embracing contradiction, to deliberately hiding from reality in order to legitimize one's failure to fulfill one's own responsibility, mission and duty. This is done through spurious consistency, which disguises disloyalty and treason, challenging reality through games of fantasy. Such games maximize contradictions, confusion and blindness, and move people away from the path toward truth, goodness and fulfillment; people are pushed toward destruction, attaining only an ephemeral postponement of the educational punishments meted out by reality.

f. Rigid extrapolation of social norms and models

Improvisation is also associated with the tendency toward undifferentiated transferral of social norms and models from one context to another, based on the false assumption that desired results can simply be extrapolated from one context to another. People falsely assume that the dominant social norms and models in "successful" countries produce desirable results there and that they will do the same when extrapolated to less successful countries, in spite of differences in circumstances, contexts, conditions and times. This reveals a lack of critical analysis of the real effects which social norms and models have, in their original context as well as in extrapolated versions. It also demonstrates a failure to keep up efforts to adhere to reality and unity.

Careful analysis of the conditions that determine certain behaviors, social norms or models, theories, methods or techniques is needed, as well as rigorous examination of the likely consequences of each. When such analysis and examination is not performed, people are likely to suffer confusion and contradiction as they encounter unexpected and undesirable results. Necessary adaptations are omitted, and all aspects and relations of reality are not considered in a balanced and systematic fashion.

g. Psychological ceilings

A lack of faith in themselves and in reality leads individuals to believe that they cannot influence reality and are unable to contribute to their own fulfillment, let alone that of others and reality. Such a lack of faith breeds passivity and fatalism. It is stimulated by previous experiences with objective difficulties, obstacles or failures which led to frustrations. Such experiences predispose individuals to think that the efforts they made to achieve a particular outcome were destined to fail and therefore that it is futile to try to achieve that outcome.

They thereby impose psychological ceilings on their activities, ruling out certain areas as beyond their control. People succumb to irrational fears, worry and pessimism, elaborating mechanisms which deny their role and mission within reality in order to avoid new frustrations. People fail to look at hardships as opportunities for correction and lack the necessary faith in integrative unity which would allow them to overcome problems by inserting them into the wider framework to which they belong.

Psychological ceilings cause people to lose their sense of responsibility for contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. This negligence is stimulated by social norms which convey the impression that things that happen in the world are beyond human control and that human beings are powerless to significantly alter the course of events. Instead of encouraging people to search for consistent ways of solving and preventing problems, such social norms encourage simplistic, rigid and passive behavior as a means to avoid new frustrations. Individuals are taught to eschew certain actions which are preemptively dismissed as impossible.

Psychological ceilings derive from low self-esteem and a negative self-image (and low esteem and image of unity, reality and its principles) and reinforce negative, improvised orientations (such as unilateralism, pendularism, hypocrisy, etc.) which come to be viewed as natural and immutable responses to reality.

When individuals adopt a consistent attitude and approach toward integrative unity, adhering to it in harmony with reality, they come to have faith in themselves and in the system of reality. This, in turn, leads individuals to respect the dignity and capacity of each person, including themselves.

At the same time, it also leads to a humble recognition of individuals' subordination to unity and the superior order of reality and to the necessity of compensating for their limitations and weaknesses by integrating themselves into this higher order based on unity.

h. Egocentrism and impulses, and the voice of conscience

When people submit to impulses and attempt to escape consistency and the “voice of conscience,” they inflate the importance of their own ego, placing it above unity and reality in a futile attempt to replace them. The willingness to submit to arbitrary caprices and impulses reflects a lack of adherence to reality and unity; instead of freeing individuals, however, it enslaves them, enclosing them in a petty, egocentric perspective, which also leaves them vulnerable to improvisation, unilateralism, declarativism, psychological ceilings, and all deviations from reason.

Yet deviant individuals are constantly reminded by their “voice of conscience,” that is, their capacity for consistency, that their actions contradict reality (of which they are part) and unity (which forms the basis of reality). They cannot escape their conscience, which presents them with continuous suffering and frustration until they come back to the path of truth and fulfillment. Individuals who allow themselves to be dominated by impulses and ego close their eyes to reality and unity, but their conscience always keeps a vision of reality and unity and continually tries to get people to see it. By opening their eyes and exercising consistency, people can free themselves from bondage to ego and impulses and devote themselves to being, truth and goodness, working on behalf of the fulfillment of individuals and reality, which is the only existing system; this is made of interrelated parts which need each other’s support for fulfillment, and have the responsibility of providing such support. They must listen to their voice of conscience, or consistency, in order to listen to reality and unity.

i. Improvisation in ends and means, in the First and Third World

Consistency and human fulfillment require people to serve ultimate ends with effective means, without improvisation in either. In advanced industrial societies, this requirement is met mainly with respect to effective means –such as the sound use of information, professionalism, organization and method– but not with respect to dominant goals, since economic, political, scientific and technological advance is mistakenly treated as an ultimate solution or panacea. In these countries, improvisation tends to affect the ends people choose, since people fail to submit all means and resources to spiritual, family and interpersonal values. This prevents citizens’ advancement and security in these realms, inhibiting the fulfillment of individuals and reality, neglecting fundamental aspects and failing to consider reality in a balanced manner.

Less developed societies tend to improvise with respect to the management of economic, political, technological and scientific means. This prevents these countries from achieving progress in these realms and encourages them to depend on external factors, such as luck, time, charismatic leaders or panaceas. At the same time, however, these societies tend to improvise less with respect to spiritual, family and interpersonal goals, adhering to these with greater firmness and thus achieving greater advancement and security in spiritual, interpersonal and emotional realms.

The failures of both types of societies should stimulate them to humbly correct their deviations and advance toward integrating consistent approaches toward both ends and means. In this way, people can achieve fulfillment and improve their quality of life, without trying to replace reality and unity by unilaterally privileging either (sacred) goals or (expedient) means. Vain attempts to do so ignore the demands of unity in variety, challenging instead of adhering to it. Such inconsistency reflects spurious traits and a unilateral emphasis, whether toward expediency or sacredness, which ignores the fact that both orientations derive from and gain meaning within the all-encompassing system of reality integrated by unity.

Consistency and reality are abandoned when people declare allegiance to spiritual ends and love for others without committing themselves to finding effective means to attain these goals. Similarly, people forsake unity and reality when they seek and apply effective means for achieving economic, political, technological and scientific advances but fail to use these to serve transcendent, sacred ends (spiritual, ethical, family and interpersonal). Only unrestricted consistency overcomes improvisation in ends and means.

3. Integrative framework

a. All-encompassing framework, human and social development

By integrating knowledge, efforts and policies from different disciplines, sectors and methods, people can build an all-encompassing framework capable of guiding decisions, social norms and behavior in a sound, consistent direction so they contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Every decision, behavior and social norm affects this contribution to fulfillment. Therefore, all decisions, behaviors and social norms must be

analyzed in terms of their social implications, that is, the effects they have on the welfare and fulfillment of individuals and other beings. Similar analysis should be undertaken in order to guide and advance policy making, ensuring that human and social development policies are guided by consistency, that is, that they respect and adhere to reality and unity, thus contributing to fulfillment.

Each person, group, society and culture should strive for fertile integration of knowledge and disciplines. In this way, empirical disciplines may be integrated with theories, including philosophy, epistemology, ethics, science, technology, decision making, planning, organization and administration, as well as all sources of knowledge and information and all interpretations, applying unity to the whole of existence. Every decision, action, social norm or policy and every end, target or means acquires full meaning only when incorporated into an integrated framework.

In this way, all realms, disciplines and sectors –including economic, political, scientific, technological, etc.– contribute to the fulfillment of reality and, as part of this, to the fulfillment of individuals. An integrated framework contributes to advancement across different realms, disciplines and sectors, since value and meaning derives solely from integration within the whole. In this sense, there are no decisions which are purely economic or purely political; all decisions have implications for all dimensions, and especially for the fulfillment (or lack of fulfillment) of individuals and reality.

Therefore, the short-, medium- and long-term consequences of policy making for the broad spectrum of social reality should be carefully evaluated. Policies designed for a particular place, time and context also need to be analyzed closely since these too have implications which go far beyond their immediate boundaries. Indeed, actions and policies have effects that continue for a long time and in some way or another, permanently affect the evolution of culture.

Solutions stored in social norms are better to the extent that they are produced and evaluated through a consistent, systemic approach which employs rigorous, systematic methods, including scientific research methods as well as rational methods of decision making, policy making, planning and strategy.

Sound social norms derive from an integrated framework which can take advantage of the cumulative efforts of all individuals, groups and societies throughout time. Each person, group and society should devote its greatest efforts to clarifying this framework and guiding decisions and

behavior in accordance with it; when this is done, decisions, actions and social norms can be improved by the free exercise of genuine consistency. In this way, people pay homage to reality of which they form part and to unity which constitutes its basis.

Beings and aspects of reality are what they are in terms of the system of reality, to which they belong, which provides the all-encompassing framework to consider through the integrative building task of the mind, which builds a conceptual framework reflecting the system of reality.

b. Critical analysis, material and spiritual implications

In order to fulfill their responsibility of contributing to fulfillment through consistency, individuals need to follow their conscience and increase their awareness and control of the consequences and implications of decisions and actions, both immediate and mediate. This is achieved by applying genuine consistency, which allows people to see beyond immediate concerns and approach the perspective of unity, respecting all reality, based on unity.

Genuine consistency thus allows them to escape the prison of fragments which claim to represent the whole of reality. It encourages people to adopt the fulfillment of individuals and reality as their goal and to search for the best means of attaining this, analyzing alternatives and predictable consequences.

By exercising genuine consistency, individuals of rich and poor nations alike can discover the dysfunctional aspects of their respective social norms and models. Left uncorrected, these dysfunctions reduce people's quality of life in both a spiritual and material sense. They lead to lack of effectiveness in spiritual, family and interpersonal realms, as well as in economic, political, scientific and technological fields.

This, in turn, leads to such problems as drug addiction, mental illness and violence in both rich and poor countries. Such dysfunctions cannot be corrected unless people become aware of internalized social norms and how to improve them.

To develop sound social norms and internalize them, people need to engage in deep, thorough analysis of implied aspects which remain hidden below the surface. They cannot settle for shallow approaches which tend to categorize people and ideas according to simplistic, cursory labels (black and white, good and bad, etc.). Oversimplification is harmful, whether it leads people to copy alternative models uncritically or to uncritically accept their own model.

c. Best methods and attitudes

Consistency requires people to use the best scientific and technological methods on behalf of the best spiritual and ethical goals. People must search for and apply effective means in order to attain desirable ends, giving themselves completely, with effort, sacrifice and self-mastery. This allows them to make optimal use of their potential, inserting themselves into the total framework of reality in an appropriate manner. In this way, they can enhance their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, thereby reinforcing the advance of humanity.

C. Means for Consistent Participation and Influence

1. Consistent use of one's own influence

a. Citizens' responsibility for social norms, leaders and authorities

The capacity for consistency allows citizens to evaluate decisions and social norms and to supervise leaders and authorities, taking advantage of their own information and experience. This creates a responsibility for each person to consistently use his or her quota of influence to contribute to fulfillment by evaluating and controlling themselves and also leaders, authorities and reference groups. In this way, individuals are able to perform a kind of collective functional analysis which promotes the continuous improvement of decisions and social norms, adjusting them to consistency and adapting them to changing contexts and circumstances.

b. Citizens' responsibility for decision-making quality

Individuals can improve the quality of their decision making by following the principle of consistency in order to choose efficient means and serve desirable ends. This approach may be shared with others by practicing and reinforcing social norms and decision-making styles which increase freedom and sound influences and encourage people to optimally employ their resources and energies in order to serve desirable ends. Citizens can exert sound influence on public decision making by practicing consistent decision making themselves and pressuring public authorities and social leaders to do likewise. In this way, wisdom and power may be integrated.¹⁶ Efficient and effective means can be chosen and used to serve transcendent goals, especially those related to the realm of spiritual, family and interpersonal relations.¹⁷

c. Critical evaluation of the legitimacy –genuine or spurious– of social norms and decisions

It is especially important to question the general assumption that behavior and underlying social norms are based on reason (consistency) and that they contribute to human fulfillment. Individuals are always guided by consistency, but this may be either genuine or spurious. Behaviors and social norms are adopted and shared based on the belief that they will produce desirable results. This leads people to conclude that

such behaviors and norms are proper and desirable and encourages them to accept and repeat them. For this reason, when people observe that certain behaviors are regularly repeated and copied (indicating that they have become social norms), they are assumed to be legitimate.

However, this conclusion is only valid to the extent that decisions, behaviors and social norms are inspired by genuine consistency, that is, that they consider and respect all aspects and relations of reality, supported in unity. Critical analysis allows people to evaluate the extent to which social norms are inspired by genuine or spurious consistency and to discover what corrections are needed to increase genuine consistency. In this way, people can improve the quality of decisions and social norms and systems, creating a sound process of reciprocal reinforcement in social norming so as to better contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

d. Decision-making quality of leaders and authorities; honesty, effectiveness, models

High quality decision making in government and social organizations is important for the fulfillment of individuals and reality due to the means social leaders and authorities mobilize and the influential role they play. High quality decision making by public authorities benefits citizens by using the social resources entrusted to them in a wise, consistent manner; in addition, high quality public decision making serves as a sound and influential model for citizens.

Indeed, one of the most influential models which citizens, groups and organizations consider when they make decisions is the model their government, lawmakers and judges follow and which is reflected in the behavior and decision-making style of elected leaders and government employees, lawmakers and judges. People bestow legitimacy on government officials, employees, lawmakers and judges, and tend to presume that the norms and behaviors public leaders practice reflect those of society itself; thus, if leaders and authorities do not practice honesty and efficiency, then ordinary citizens are likely to believe that they need not or cannot act honestly or efficiently either.

Citizens can help improve the quality of public decision making by demanding honesty and effectiveness from their public authorities and social leaders, striving to better choose and “educate” them. Leaders and officials should prepare and train themselves for their functions. They should also create mechanisms through which the public can easily obtain information about government procedures and decisions and can hold

public officials accountable for the decisions they make. Through mechanisms such as these, citizens can exert control over public officials and make their concerns known. In this way, governments and citizens can work together to obtain the best possible decisions and actions.

e. Need for research and education on quality of decision making and social norms

Education –formal and informal– and communication play a vital role in developing consistent social norms that encourage proper styles and habits of decision making. Through sound education and communication, individuals, groups and societies learn how to guide their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality in a consistent direction. The improvement of decision-making styles and habits should therefore be a central, explicit concern and underlying objective in each and every activity related to education and communication. People can learn to correct the serious deficiencies which characterize dominant decision-making styles among individuals, groups and societies by learning how to anticipate and avoid unfavorable consequences. Education should teach people what causes them to engage in such errors and how to avoid these and improve the situation. Despite its importance, study and research on decision making and social norms is generally neglected and underdeveloped but deserves to be the object of scientific study, clarification and education.

2. Crucial role of citizens and society

a. Citizens' role in determining the quality and progress of state and society

The state is an instrument built by society through social norms. It is not an autonomous entity capable of creating or legitimating itself. Its legitimacy derives from the application of genuine consistency by those who create and run it: citizens, leaders and authorities. In this way, public and private sectors are part of a whole and only artificially divided. People both inside and outside of government are called upon to contribute to the creation of consistent state and governmental bodies. Both public and private sector groups are responsible for acting constructively, without waiting for others to act for them.

Social participation is a right and a duty. All citizens are full members of the all-encompassing entities of state and society, with the right and duty of controlling them and cooperating with them. Citizens need to realize that the state is, in fact, an instrument of society and therefore of theirs; it is not the state that awards functions to society, but it is society which performs part of its functions through the state. Societies that fail to guide and control the state in order to ensure high quality decision making fall victim to passivity and decadence. If citizens are passive, they react to low quality decision making within the state by adopting cynical attitudes toward the state rather than engaging in constructive criticism and action; this encourages the state to defend itself through systemic inertia which preserves dysfunctional practices.

This often culminates in the collapse of the state, pressured by a society which demands professionalism, honesty and high quality decision making. If society fails to guide the state in this direction, the state swings from collapse to collapse, pendulary, between extremes, without balanced consideration of reality. If social norms and structures encourage citizens to believe that they are able to influence public affairs, and that they have responsibility to make this influence constructive (i.e. consistent), this greatly helps social advancement.

b. Primary role of social participation, source of the state

Social participation precedes and precipitates the state; actions taken by the state are the complementary result of the decisions taken (explicitly or implicitly) by society. If citizens fail to exercise their rights and wait passively for government to take the initiative, they cannot fulfill their obligation of conducting and controlling the state. Indeed, they lose their opportunity to do so and allow dishonest and incompetent individuals to become leaders and authorities. Often dominant social norms and practices punish honesty and competence, reward selfishness, and condone or even encourage ineffective performance. This leaves one of citizens' most important instruments—the state—as well as other organizations of society in the least qualified hands, with disastrous effects on quality of life and fulfillment.

To avoid such an outcome, citizens must closely supervise state and societal organizations. Every citizen is responsible for preparing him or herself for this task. At the same time, however, there are some individuals who have the potential to better guide the process of influencing social norms and decision-making practices in a positive direction. These potential or actual leaders have a special responsibility to help others

understand and interpret the messages of reality. Leaders and ordinary citizens alike need to remain vigilant that state and social institutions adequately serve the common good. They need to help ensure that elected officials, social leaders and bureaucrats do not privilege their own particular interests over the common good. Citizens need to be encouraged to devote themselves to constructive actions without being discouraged by obstacles, thereby injecting a fresh and revitalizing influence in public affairs.

c. Need to assume personal responsibility beyond psychological barriers

Certain social norms propagate the false notion that individuals are not responsible for solving their own problems and that other people or institutions, especially the government, will. Such norms suggest that people cannot significantly influence their own lives, let alone broader societal outcomes. As a result, people lose confidence that they are able to defend and protect their interests with any degree of consistency. This leads to the self-defeating, “self-fulfilling prophecy” which prevents people from engaging in actions and efforts they consider to be impossible.¹⁸

The resulting delay in finding and implementing effective solutions means the harm done to society and its members will be much greater.

d. Active citizens’ role in public affairs

Social participation is a vital force for controlling government and promoting societal interests. This is possible when people take an active interest in public affairs, demanding that government and society respect a system of wide information and open disclosure of how social resources and authority are being used. When members of society are able to observe and supervise the actions of public officials, individuals motivated by the selfish desire to obtain dishonest personal gains will be discouraged from running for high posts, because they know that their actions would be under strict control and that dishonest actions are likely to be detected and punished.

By actively requiring information and closely supervising public leaders and their activities, citizens can help promote reform of the state instead of futilely expecting incompetent and corrupt authorities and leaders to effect reforms themselves. Citizens may thus contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, making a significant difference in the health and well-being of the society. For instance, when citizens are

made aware of public health crises and participate in campaigns to spread knowledge about appropriate means of prevention, they can dramatically reduce the number of deaths and sicknesses which occur.¹⁹

In order to successfully supervise public officials and defend societal interests, society needs to become aware of the enormous potential it has when it organizes itself into sound social networks. Individuals need to better understand their own decisions and the implications thereof. This type of social participation would alleviate much of the suffering, injustice and evil afflicting individuals and societies and would contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

e. Society, corruption and inefficiency

Corrupt and inefficient state institutions need to be cured from the outside, by citizens and civil society. Public sector agencies, such as the support agencies of the Library of Congress in the United States, are useful for supervision and control, as are institutional provisions which help control excesses by one part of the state (such as the balance of powers between executive, legislative and judicial branches). However, these are not an adequate substitute for citizens' participation. The organization of citizens into intermediate associations capable of overseeing and controlling public officials is especially important in ensuring that the public sector is not exclusively the business of official functionaries. If the public sector is contaminated by corruption and inefficiency – as partially happens in Argentina – it is unrealistic to believe that officials will correct such problems, since they draw spurious benefits from them. Although efforts by sound government officials can greatly help, direct intervention by citizens is essential.

Society is responsible for educating its members, preparing some of them for public office and teaching them and the rest how to exercise a positive influence on society and the public sector. Citizens should put pressure on elected officials and government employees to improve the quality of their decisions and actions so that they contribute to human fulfillment and fulfillment of the order of reality.²⁰ Yet governmental leaders can only be as good as the best talents society has to offer. Social organizations are responsible for preparing talented individuals to become government leaders, and they must establish effective means to cultivate high quality decision making active citizens, social leaders and public officials. In societies in which public affairs are considered the business of government officials and bureaucrats rather than citizens, corruption and inefficiency find fertile soil.

f. Critical evaluation and demands for quality

Consistency and human fulfillment require people to critically analyze and evaluate the quality of social norms and models, leaders and authorities. People must take personal responsibility, committing themselves and adjusting themselves to changing conditions, contexts and circumstances.

Simplistic and overenthusiastic acceptance of models leads people to unrealistic expectations followed by deep frustrations, and this causes people's critical capacity, derived from consistency, to atrophy.

If leaders and authorities offer models of corruption and inefficiency, not only do they inflict damage upon themselves and their own society, their example can easily influence other individuals and societies to do the same.

This occurs because most people suffer under the illusion that their leaders offer positive role models, as if their success were a demonstration of this. This illusion prevents people from exerting necessary pressure on social leaders and public authorities to improve the quality of their decision and policy making. It prevents people from making a healthy input into the selection, control and guidance of leaders and authorities, and it fails to offer a system of rewards and punishments capable of motivating leaders in accordance with consistent criteria.

Blind trust in leaders ultimately leads to frustration and this, in turn, fosters an oversimplified, pendular and unrealistic attitude toward leadership whereby authority is either completely rejected or totally idealized as the source of magical solutions.

This tends to produce a pendular alternation between equally unrealistic attitudes as citizens fluctuate back and forth between idealizing their leaders and exaggerating their ability to produce miraculous solutions, on the one hand, and completely disparaging and rejecting these same leaders, on the other.

Even in cases where the models blindly copied by citizens are sound, the fact that they are adopted in an indiscriminating, passive and uncritical fashion is inherently harmful. This atrophies people's critical capacity and responsibility and leads them to adopt dysfunctional models. They will not really understand the models they adopt and will not be able to make necessary adaptations and improvements; similarly, they will not be able to identify, cultivate and renovate the positive aspects of these models.

Genuine consistency requires critical analysis of any social norm or model, distinguishing, adopting and combining sound components and identifying and counteracting unsound aspects.

3. Detecting and cultivating sound seeds

a. Sound social networks

Sound social networks, made up of individuals and social norms, channel the energy deriving from the exercise of the capacity for consistency and help to improve intermediate social organizations and the state. They do this by cultivating sound components in society and the state, enabling them to reinforce one another through consistent oversight and control. This requires a clear definition of means and ends and the corresponding adjustment of decisions and actions, under the guidance of genuine consistency.

This is indispensable if the state and society are to function properly. Thus society takes charge of activities which it can perform better than the state, and the state controls the rest. The state can help society cure its sick components and support its sound components, reinforcing virtuous circles and counteracting vicious ones by supporting sound seeds.

When sound networks are present and functioning, they allow people to overcome unsound social norms and reinforce sound ones, stimulating changes which favor efficiency and honesty in means and the choice of spiritual, family and interpersonal values as ends. Sound networks help people become aware of the widespread desire for such genuine consistency changes. These networks are created and maintained through communication and interaction, which permit people to overcome shared ignorance, and through collective team work, which allows them to overcome isolation. Sound networks build organizations which allow people to reinforce and consolidate their influence and to counteract unsound networks. A national movement, under the leadership of enlightened individuals, can activate such a process, combining consistency in effective means with ends that promote and serve goodness, truth and fulfillment.

b. Sound seeds counteract dominant inconsistency

The presence of sound seeds explains why unsound seeds do not completely destroy a society. By moderating ignorance and increasing good sense, sound seeds tip the balance of the ratio between constructive and destructive actions in favor of the former. For instance in Argentina, in spite of the negative forces of improvisation, unilateralism, lack of professionalism, declarativism, etc., there have been important advances thanks to sound seeds which have worked to counteract these trends. The behavior of millions of Argentines, acting as silent heroes in the midst of

obstacles, explains why Argentina did not fall further behind in spite of prevailing dysfunctional social norms.²¹ Even “swimming against the current” these sound seeds placed limits on the negative effects of sick seeds and in some cases caused these to retreat.

c. Sound seeds move the world

Sound social norms are sound seeds which, thanks to their basis in consistency, are capable of “moving the world” in the direction of the fulfillment of individuals and reality. By detecting, supporting and expanding sound seeds, society advances and psychological ceilings—which consider unsound social norms to be natural and unavoidable—are overcome.

4. Becoming aware and exercising one’s influence

a. Awareness of one’s own influence, example

By increasing their awareness of the influence they have over themselves, others and society through decisions, social norms, public opinion and social control of leaders and authorities, individuals can wield their influence more consciously and effectively on behalf of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. In this way, they can improve their control and influence over the decisions and actions of citizens, leaders and authorities. The public is the most powerful actor in society, and is responsible for supervising and controlling government actions.²² Individuals influence themselves, others and society as a whole, directly and through others and society. Society, in turn, combines the multiple effects of many individuals, groups, moments and stages and embodies these in social norms which perpetuate the influences converging in them.

Individuals draw inferences about other people’s attitudes and behaviors which reach them through the media, direct observation and other means of communication and interaction.²³ To encourage people to engage in behavior which is conducive to fulfillment, it is vital to offer people positive models. Personal examples offer means of communicating messages about behaviors and social norms, and they should be used to emphasize and reward sound social norms and behaviors and counteract those that are unsound. Sound elements in society should not be allowed to retreat, nor should unsound elements be permitted to take over.²⁴ Unsound elements can and should be counteracted not only by the use of

checks and balances within government, but by the active participation of all citizens in societal and public affairs.²⁵ In this way, examples and models can be used to promote the fulfillment of individuals and reality, as well as justice and general welfare, using the state as one of the instruments for promoting these values.²⁶

b. Citizens' responsibilities and silent heroism

All individuals –majorities and minorities, leaders and citizens– influence their own and other people's lives. All individuals are therefore responsible for acting in such a way as to contribute to fulfillment of beings, in truth and goodness by exercising their capacity for consistency. Some individuals, however, have greater responsibility by virtue of the fact that they have greater power, talent, training and influence.²⁷

Each person influences society to a certain extent, if not through his or her actions then by omission.²⁸ Such influence is crucial for human advancement and fulfillment. Given human beings' ability to influence reality, all individuals have the potential to be silent heroes, even though they all have various levels of conviction and talent and different opportunities and possibilities to participate.²⁹ If individuals fail to fulfill this responsibility in the best way they can and fail to adjust themselves to genuine consistency, they deprive themselves of the opportunity to exercise guidance and control over leaders and authorities, and deprive others and society of such a crucial contribution. As a consequence, they lower the quality of their decisions, social norms and life. The human capacity for consistency provides an opportunity for "greatness" to all individuals, even though their actions are rarely recorded by history.³⁰

c. Influence via social norms, awareness

Human beings' primary calling and responsibility is to shape consistent social norms (through social norming and free decisions) and thereby shape society, including laws, government, public authority, organizations, institutions and customs, to which they acknowledge legitimacy through social norms.³¹ All individuals exert their power through social norms, which in turn influence them. If they are not aware of this, they lose crucial opportunities for contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.³²

This is the case when social norms induce people to believe that only leaders and authorities have responsibilities. Through public opinion, all citizens may influence governments and public authorities.³³ If citizens' actions are not guided by genuine consistency, they may be used to favor some individuals at the cost of the rest.³⁴

d. Arousing people from their passivity

Passivity leads to contradictions, absurdities and self-destruction, making people feel as if they are caught in a paralyzing nightmare from which they cannot wake. However, worse than in a nightmare, the destructive actions individuals observe are not a dream.

Only by becoming aware of problems and actively working to solve them, with the support of sound social seeds (i.e. persons and social norms guided by genuine consistency), research, organization and communication, can people prevent such destruction.

Otherwise, if individuals resign themselves to helplessness, they are unable to do anything to prevent the proliferation of political instability, economic stagnation, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, corruption and inefficiency. Awareness, spread through national campaigns and debates, allows people to overcome such a paralyzing feeling of impotence. For example, starting in 1990, Argentine society and government launched efforts to effect deep changes to fight inefficiency and corruption and to lay the basis for sustained, integrated development.

As we will see in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, a series of steps were initiated which have been instrumental in fighting part of the Argentine corruption. Nonetheless, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done, as contemporary and future generations face the challenge of deepening and completing these efforts.

5. Social participation and decision-making quality

a. Sound social participation

Sound (i.e. consistent) social participation strengthens and reinforces human capacities by optimizing the quality of decisions and social norms, combining people's talents and efforts to exercise genuine consistency, and in so doing, contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Sound social participation encourages people to pool their talent, imagination, effort and motivation to advance toward an ever better understanding (and adhesion and service) of the system of reality governed by unity; by working together, people are better able to adjust their decisions and social norms to a variety of contexts, circumstances and situations.

b. Reciprocal reinforcement of social participation and decision making quality

Sound social participation reinforces high quality decision making and vice versa; they are both inspired by genuine consistency and contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. If either one is neglected, people will encounter failure and frustration, both in the present and in the future. This occurs, for instance, when parents fail to be concerned about the quality of decisions and social norms their children adopt and develop; and fail to participate in debates and actions for improving such quality. Such lack of concern and participation is detrimental to the quality of decision making, which in turn reinforces a low level of participation in children and in society. Social participation is an integral part of decision making, and this is a vital part of social participation since consistency must be socially and collectively exercised in order to better serve the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

c. Citizens' initiative for social participation; secondary role of state

The main initiative generated by social participation comes from citizens, rather than authorities. If citizens wait for authorities to take the first step, they may wait in vain or the initial impetus may be delayed or inappropriate. Though state authorities are also responsible for stimulating social participation, primary responsibility rests with citizens. Government policies are secondary forces for change compared to the initiatives and patient actions of citizens, which also include leaders and authorities. Society is actually the protagonist which both demands and supports certain action by the government; state policies are usually the result of patient, prolonged action by society and social groups.³⁵ Government policies are simply the tip of the iceberg; the foundation for these policies can only be seen by looking at the long and careful preparatory actions taken by private individuals and social groups. The state is therefore secondary to society.

The main hope for improving the quality of decision making and social life, as well as for developing and expanding social participation, lies in encouraging the sound seeds existing in society to pressure the state and the rest of society in a positive direction. These sound seeds should be reinforced and stimulated to expand their influence horizontally and vertically. Authorities and leaders help inasmuch as they are part of society and help direct society's influence; their contribution comes from interpreting and channeling the sound forces for change, stability and

progress which arise from society. Regardless of whether individuals are public leaders or private citizens, they must act as sound seeds and encourage and disseminate sound (i.e. consistent) messages. Because of this, it is critical to study society's institutions in order to better understand advances and reversals; in this way, institutions may be consolidated following the guidance of consistency, thereby reinforcing advances.

d. Conditions for consistent decisions and participation

Decisions are more consistent to the extent that individuals meet the following conditions:

- First, individuals must be aware of their capacity for influencing themselves, others and the order of reality; they need to learn how to use their influence properly (i.e. consistently, that is, systematically considering all aspects of reality and beings, adhering to them and contributing to their harmonious fulfillment) and recognize the serious harm that can occur if they do not.
- Second, individuals must overcome myths and illusions that solutions arise automatically from external factors, such as luck, state intervention, money, etc.
- Third, they must reject unbalanced, contradictory and destructive models which offer panaceas that privilege certain aspects and implications of reality while neglecting others.
- Fourth, they need to employ rational instruments, supported by research, to analyze issues and alternatives in depth, looking beyond immediate concerns to long-term and ultimate implications; results must be applied through the rational use of communication and organization.
- Fifth, individuals must strive to critically (i.e. consistently) analyze all available social norms and models, discriminating between positive and negative aspects (in terms of consistency) and choosing (and reinforcing) the former.
- Sixth, in order to follow consistency, individuals must learn to master themselves and their impulses (as well as other influences, especially social norms and fashions) for the sake of being, truth and goodness.
- Seventh, in order to promote consistent decisions, people need to work together in sound networks of communication, interaction and joint consistent building, developing links between sound social seeds and exercising consistency in a joint fashion; this optimizes the effects of human efforts on behalf of the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

- Eighth, consistent decision making requires transparency, honesty and efficiency from citizens, social leaders and public authorities.
- Ninth, desirable ends must be served with effective means; consistency must be applied with respect to both ends and means, placing economic, political, scientific and technological resources at the service of the fulfillment of individuals and reality, in accordance with spiritual, family and interpersonal values derived from being, truth and goodness.
- Tenth, people need to identify sound social norms and models and adhere to them, avoiding the risk of leaving vacant spaces to be filled in by misleading models.
- Eleventh, people must develop virtuous instead of vicious circles, thus guiding the systemic processes of reality in a sound direction.
- Twelfth, individuals need to stimulate healthy (i.e. consistent) social norming, which provides life to formal norms; they must be aware that formal norms and institutions are beneficial only if these are continually inspired and established by creative, healthy social norming, norms and participation (sometimes called informal social norms, systems and organizations).

These exert (thanks to the power of consistency) an enormous influence on the fulfillment of individuals and reality, with particular influence on oneself and one's immediate environment –family, primary groups, etc. Finally, individuals must exert a healthy influence on state and society, since these are human creations for channelling human resources and efforts to serve common good, i.e. harmonious fulfillment of all persons and reality.

6. Conditions and means for genuine participation

a. Giving, sharing, understanding, listening, respecting, loving

To respect and love others, people must listen to them with interest and devotion and be genuinely concerned for their welfare. They must strive to understand and empathize with others, giving and sharing with them instead of using them. Such a constructive attitude naturally gives rise to genuine participation and communication. It motivates people to invest their time, resources and efforts toward creating the necessary environment for constructive communication and interaction –for example, making time for family and social gatherings with devotion,

patience and interest, without haste or tensions, and ensuring that these go beyond formal exchanges. All parties benefit from such communication and interaction and gain even more by giving than by receiving.

Individuals who are absorbed by egoistic interests –such as money, power, prestige, pleasure, etc.– fail to pay attention to the value of others and do not share with them. They do not demonstrate flexibility or balance and do not display a genuine interest in others, nor do they love and respect others. Such a destructive attitude stifles opportunities for productive communication and constructive interaction. Communication and interaction become mere instruments for obtaining information to satisfy egoistic interests; they degenerate into competitive and manipulative encounters and no longer serve as the foundation for genuine sharing for the common benefit of all parties. Communication and interaction are genuine when they are not seen as opportunities for using others but for serving them.

b. Defining the framework and the point of support

Defining an all-encompassing framework of reality and their own role within it enables people to choose desirable goals and effective means for achieving them, thereby enhancing the quality of their decisions and social norms and helping ensure that they use their influence in a consistent manner that promotes human fulfillment. In order to do this, individuals need to understand and distinguish sound and unsound social norms; they need to identify which norms prevail in society and analyze what their causes and consequences are. Individuals must reinforce sound norms and cultivate sound social seeds. They must use their personal quota of influence to promote human fulfillment, without waiting for magical solutions from charismatic leaders or idealized models.

The solutions to people's problems lie in their own hands and even more particularly in their capacity for consistency. Just as Archimedes affirmed that with a lever, he could move the world, the lever needed to heal the sicknesses and deviations which plague societies today is provided by citizens and their active participation in the task of decision making and problem solving, on the basis of consistency.

c. Consistent decisions and social norms

Decisions represent opportunities for exercising consistency by developing sound social norms and networks and overcoming unsound ones, such as models which glorify violence and abuse. They open the door for people to exercise their capacity for consistency and to use their

personal quota of influence to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, instead of choosing deviation, failure and frustration. Decisions allow people to detect and cultivate sound social components and make them into dominant social norms; they also allow people to reject inconsistent and contradictory elements, demonstrating that these are neither natural nor unavoidable.

Society needs to take measures to counteract the tendency to regard dysfunctional and unhealthy attitudes and behaviors as natural and unavoidable. Images of violence and abuse (of others as well as oneself) tend to be idealized by the media, social leaders and public authorities. Sound social organizations must join together in order to pool their efforts and increase their effectiveness in protecting citizens and particularly children from such harmful messages. All these efforts are necessary to heal present society and prevent future generations from suffering the same destructive consequences as the present.

d. Educating with facts, beyond declarativism

For individuals and groups to successfully lead society in the direction of positive change, they themselves must provide examples of the behaviors to be promoted, including austerity, generosity and humility.

People must avoid the temptation of issuing empty or theoretical declarations and hiding contradictions. To the extent that they try to substitute expressions and declarations for actual reality, they not only deceive others but also cheat themselves.

e. Social norms and national projects

Since individuals do not exist in isolation from others, they need social norms and networks, including social structures, systems and organizations, to exercise consistency and effectively contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. In turn, people can use social norms and networks to build sound national projects which are open and flexible and are continuously enriched, adjusted and improved so they reinforce and diffuse sound seeds.

Members of a society always agree on certain conceptions and share basic assumptions about desirable goals and means. These shared conceptions and assumptions take the form of general social norms, which constitute rules of the game that establish what people should decide and do. These rules of the game allow people to predict how others will respond and allow them to form stable reciprocal expectations regarding

social interaction. These, in turn, may lead to national projects. Only if such projects are systematically identified and analyzed, and evaluated in terms of consistency, can they actually yield their potential fruits. Otherwise, contradictory perceptions and lack of dialogue will lead to confusion, chaos and anarchy.

Underlying conceptions, assumptions and implications of the national project must be systematically and carefully developed in order to find real, balanced, deep, joint solutions based on genuine consistency.

f. Sound national projects

Sound national projects are consistent frames of reference which optimize social interaction and maximize people's contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. By following the guidance of genuine consistency, they help people emerge from confusion, pessimism, impotence, paralysis and destruction. If they are not guided by genuine consistency, they leave a vacant space to be filled in by spurious consistency, which leads people to failure and frustration.

Sound national projects need to be respected and followed by the whole society. The most talented members of society are called upon to systematize, clarify, examine and readjust goals and alternative means, preventing spurious substitutes, confusion and paralysis. All members of society must engage in joint efforts to define, create, evaluate and modify (in terms of consistency) shared assumptions, values, goals and social norms. These are not fixed or static; they require continuous evaluation and adaptation to changing contexts. Shared assumptions, values, goals and norms must constantly be improved through personal, family and group efforts.

Sound national projects need to include deep and stable ends which are derived from consistency and are served by efficient, rational means that are continuously adjusted (also in terms of consistency) to ensure continuing effectiveness. The process of forming a national project should not be guided by the desire to create shapeless homogeneity but should strive instead for organic heterogeneity converging toward unity; homogeneity and heterogeneity should be made to complement each other, in accordance with consistency.

One or more groups initiate the process of building and modifying national projects, and all groups and individuals contribute to them. Individual and group projects are raw material that function as the basis for national projects. Societies should help to enhance these projects through national debates and movements aimed at spreading awareness,

encouraging social networking, controlling the state and promoting the articulation, organization and cooperation of society.

The crucial resource for building a sound national project is not money but individuals' capacity for consistency, as manifested in decisions, behaviors, social norms, social networks and communication.

7. Responsibility of social scientists and leaders

a. Clarifying decisions and social norms by citizens, leaders and scientists

Social scientists, public leaders and ordinary citizens should correct confusion about social norms and decisions and systematically clarify their causes and likely effects by genuinely exercising their capacity for consistency.³⁶ This, in turn, allows for successful predictions and decisions.³⁷ It also contributes to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.³⁸ Many people, however, are unaware of the invisible threads which influence them and are confused about which alternatives they can choose from and what the likely effects of each of these alternatives are. Because of this, public leaders and social scientists have a special responsibility to help clarify these vital issues.³⁹ If social scientists and leaders fail to give sound and solid guidance for policy and decision making, then others will take their place who will further confuse and exploit the public; this encourages low quality decisions and social norms and creates vicious circles of complacency and corruption.⁴⁰

Citizens and the media share responsibility with leaders and scientists for promoting high quality decision making. If they do not fulfill this responsibility, they leave the door open to others who are themselves confused or, even worse, who exploit confusion for selfish, spurious purposes.⁴¹ Given the powerful influence of the media over leaders and other influential individuals, citizens and social scientists should work together to improve the effect of the media.⁴² Citizens' need to become involved is even greater when they observe their influential and powerful leaders fail to concern themselves with these issues and excuse themselves by saying there is nothing they can do; if citizens accept this spurious rationalization, they create a vicious circle. Citizens need to pressure their leaders to ensure that the latter fulfill their responsibility of seeking and providing sound guidance. In this way, societies advance in consistency and better contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

b. Social research for better decisions

Research destined to educate leaders and citizens about making better, more consistent decisions (and social norming) needs to analyze decision-making processes and styles and their causes and consequences. People need to be taught how to evaluate alternatives, projects and experiences, and their consequences under various circumstances. These are the kinds of topics which social research should explore to better educate leaders and citizens.⁴³ Social scientists generally tend to place more emphasis on mathematical formulae for decision making than on processes and criteria; the latter are more important, however, given their relation to consistency (genuine or spurious) and hence their role in optimizing the effects of decisions in terms of the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

c. Responsibility of leaders and social scientists

Leaders, social scientists and individuals with the capacity for leadership who resist the temptation of complacency and welcome difficulties as opportunities to apply consistency are responsible for bringing enlightenment and sound guidance to others. Given the prevalence of sick social norms and structures, the need for guidance, clarification and enlightenment is particularly important. All individuals with the capacity and resources to provide consistent leadership should devote their energy, resources and time to this crucial task, breaking vicious circles of complacency and spurious consistency which confuse and limit many individuals.

d. New professional role for clarifying decisions, social norms and models

In order to improve people's contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, they must develop a new professional role designed to study decisions, social norms and models, analyze their causes and consequences, and identify ways of improving them, combining sound components under the guidance of consistency. Such a role will fight the prevailing confusion about these issues and especially about the paths – of decisions and social norms – which best contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality by combining consistent component of various social norms and models (in addition to one's own consistent creativity) and counteracting inconsistent myths and panaceas.

This new professional role will help to wake up those who are otherwise inclined to passively rely on the legacy of inherited social

norms.⁴⁴ It will help them cultivate positive, realistic images of themselves and of reality.⁴⁵ Through this new role, people will become more aware of the factors influencing their decisions and behavior, including above all the influence of social norms.⁴⁶ They can learn how to adjust their definition of their situation so as to improve the chances of fulfillment.⁴⁷ Such a role will help people clarify the valuable components and reciprocal influences of various social models and systems by teaching them that different systems of social norms each hold valuable assets and can be sources of cultural cross-fertilization and enrichment. It teaches people how to creatively combine and integrate sound endogenous and exogenous components.⁴⁸ This allows people to avoid believing in myths, including dangerous panaceas and myths such as those involving money and race, and teaches them to critically analyze the positive and negative components of alternative social norms and models.⁴⁹

People should be taught to question the assumption that material prosperity always has a sound civilizing effect; instead of blindly accepting this claim, people need to learn to assess its validity by specifying the conditions under which it holds true.⁵⁰ Through their new professional role, people can build frames of reference which relate all aspects of reality together, taking advantage of accumulated human knowledge and advances and relating numerous and complex perspectives together.⁵¹ A central function of this book is to contribute to the building of such frameworks. It strives to teach people to balance economic and social dimensions and to reconcile the rights of the powerful with those of the weak.⁵²

e. New professional and study area

It is necessary to concentrate experts, theorists, scientists and researchers in this new area of specialization relating to human decision making and social norms. So long as the necessary expertise is not developed, individuals will be less able to foresee the implications and future effects their choices and social norms will have on human fulfillment; they will be unable to draw upon adequate guidelines and criteria to make the best choices and reach the best results in terms of human fulfillment and order of reality. They will not learn to view failures as opportunities for reading messages from reality; they will not engage in rigorous and systematic interdisciplinary integration, clarifying ends and means, causes and effects; they will not develop criteria for finding creative and fruitful answers to problems. Many failures, frustrations and sufferings of contemporary humanity could have been avoided or

attenuated if social science had been able to offer this type of professional expertise.⁵³

Such benefits will be increased through communication and through formal and informal education, the media, and general debate. They will also be increased through the rational application of theoretical and methodological tools for solving problems, diagnosis, evaluation, planning and decision. Talented individuals and leaders bear special responsibility in these matters.

8. Attracting and cultivating the human resource

a. Creating social environment attracting talented and honest individuals, in United States and Argentina

Creating an environment which stimulates individuals to apply genuine consistency toward ends and means is essential to develop groups and societies which advance in terms of ethical goals (spiritual, family and interpersonal development) and effective means. Such groups serve as guides and models for others, helping them advance and thus contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

In the United States, people have achieved progress in terms of economic, political, scientific and technological efficacy, while Argentines have achieved some significant advances in spiritual, family and interpersonal terms, even though this has been limited by ethical and technical deficiencies in social, political and economic norms and systems.

The United States has been able to attract talented foreign immigrants throughout its history, especially in this century; this talent has played a major role in promoting scientific research as well as advancing and systematically organizing theories, methods, technologies in education and the social and natural sciences.⁵⁴

In Argentina, prevailing political and economic conditions during the last several decades did not generally prove attractive, prompting talented individuals to emigrate rather than immigrate. Promising Argentines migrated abroad in search of better jobs and working conditions as well as opportunities in universities and other institutions and enterprises. The Argentine context did not stimulate the talents and capabilities of citizens or foreign residents but actually discouraged –to some extent– honesty and effectiveness.

Important advances in Argentina are due to individuals, groups, leaders, social norms and structures which have begun to swim against the current of inconsistent, destructive approaches in the realms of economics, politics, science and education. This has allowed Argentina to once again cultivate and attract productive human resources. It is important to encourage and channel people's talents through a conducive environment oriented toward genuine consistency. In this way, people are able to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, combining spiritual, family and interpersonal values with economic, political, scientific and technological effectiveness.

b. Incorporating the talents of all members

Societies need to incorporate the talents of all their members – including opponents – so that they can all be added together and optimize their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. They need to realistically and continuously assess the strengths and weaknesses of each group or member, taking care not to presume that those in power have a monopoly on wisdom or that their opponents are completely mistaken. Dominant groups need to acknowledge their own limitations as well as the strengths and talents of minority groups. Sometimes those who are in power believe they have all the answers and ignore the opinions of those who are not in power. This can set up a pendular dynamic, whereby current power-holders exclude the opposition from participating in public decision making and, after the opposition comes to power, the former power-holders find themselves completely excluded. Parallel to this, leading social groups and political candidates are alternately exalted as saviors and condemned as fools. This wastes human resources, instead of adding and integrating talents; it reduces the quality of decision making by discouraging people from critically evaluating the contributions of all in terms of consistency, rather than money, power or prestige.

This is an application of the need for creating labor, social, economic and political conditions so all persons (in all geographic or social locations) can fully develop themselves and exercise their capacities, talents and vocations.

D. Some Tools and Obstacles

1. The media

a. Impact on quality of decisions and social norms

It is necessary to evaluate the impact of the media on social norms and public opinion. The media often pollutes social, cultural and moral environments by glorifying violence, force, abuse, domination, exploitation, money, hedonism, vanity, arrogance, consumerism and perversions. The “heroes” portrayed in the media strive to get ahead by competing with and exploiting others; their success is measured in terms of physical violence, money and power. The role models with whom the audience is encouraged to identify do not demonstrate genuine respect for others and for reality, nor are they committed to spiritual and family values. The media therefore send misleading messages to their audiences, especially to those who are most impressionable, such as children and young people, migrants and inhabitants of great urban concentrations who have lost their roots and lack sufficient critical judgment and selectivity. Careful evaluation of the impact of the media would allow people to correct and improve this situation, encouraging the participation of the public and stimulating its progressive maturity.

b. Persuasive effect of actions and words and the media; corruption and correction

Behaviors are more persuasive than words. Indeed, if individuals say one thing but do another, their actions—which are taken as the true test of what they really believe—are more readily believed than their words. Modern individuals observe behaviors in the media and tend to look there for models to guide their own behavior rather than directly observing behaviors in personal interaction with primary groups. By looking to the media for guidance, individuals come away with the impression that the behaviors depicted there are real, natural, inevitable and desirable; individuals gain the false sense that these behaviors deserve to be imitated rather than the demanding norms of consistency.⁵⁵ Individuals may be duped into believing that the images and messages conveyed in the media are based on real, factual experiences. The media also conveys the impression that the images it depicts show the true way to pleasure, happiness and fulfillment when in fact the implicit models contain

significant weaknesses and cause misery, failure and frustration. Although the media's images and models are built on illusions and panaceas, they work as a siren's song, convincing people that the behavior they portray is natural, frequent and desirable.

In the popular media, deviations from consistency and perversions are often exaggerated, producing confusion and harm and serving corrupt, selfish interests. This may be corrected by society, if citizens support sound tendencies in the media and condemn and counteract others. Citizens need to denounce inconsistent messages, showing that these present a distorted images of reality which go against reality and nature and against individuals' deep aspirations for fulfillment. Corrupt, destructive interests which aim to satisfy their own impulses and appetites at the expense of others (and ultimately themselves, who are part of the system cheated and harmed by deviation) try to gain the complicity of their victims; those who would corrupt others try to get their victims to submit to exploitation by weakening ties to their parents, families and society, who are responsible for protecting and supporting them. It is therefore extremely important for society to cultivate awareness of the power of the media, especially its power to deceive and corrupt people (especially the young, who are particularly gullible). The power and prestige of the media make its anti-educative action especially harmful.

2. Adjustment of realms and organizations

a. Evaluation of adjustment of means to ends

To adjust means to better serve the ends of the fulfillment of individuals and reality, it is necessary to evaluate social norms and decision-making practices in each realm or sector of human activity and in each public or private organization, e.g. in schools, hospitals, businesses, government agencies and ministries. Such a regular process of analysis and self-inspection allows for the continuous readjustment and improvement of decisions, behaviors, social norms, methods, procedures and allocation of resources in each organization. People must engage in constant and flexible efforts to observe and evaluate how resources are allocated, which methods are employed, what the role of employees, officials, experts and the public is, and more generally, what type of social norms, structures and roles prevail. Such analysis allows people to correct deviations and continually adjust and improve the fit between means and goals.

b. Failure to adjust to change and bureaucratic paralysis

If organizations are not open to new circumstances and fail to adjust social norms, structures, strategies, politics and behaviors accordingly, then their lack of adaptability means that the goals they are intended to serve will be replaced by other, deviant ones. The various persons, groups and forces who work in these organizations will begin using them to satisfy their own particular interests. In addition, individuals will rigidly cling to established norms, attitudes, routines and procedures by force of inertia; this leads to bureaucratic paralysis, both in public and private organizations, and prevents them from effectively serving the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Organizations, just like any living organism, must adapt themselves to changing contexts. Adjustment to changing conditions needs to be done in terms of desirable goals (desirable in terms of consistency and fulfillment). It is therefore crucial that such goals are kept in mind while deciding, acting and making adjustments.

c. Failure to adjust ends of public organizations to common good

In the case of public organizations, if insufficient care is given to continually adjusting organizational practices and routines so they serve the common good, then these organizations become a powerful obstacle to the proper functioning of society. If public organizations lose sight of their real goals and begin serving other, dysfunctional interests, they reinforce injustices, imbalances, inequalities and social problems. Officials use public resources to serve their own selfish interests, impulses and appetites even at the cost of harming general interests.

d. Avoiding a unilateral approach: political, technical and administrative roles

Restricting one's attention to a single aspect or dimension –whether it is economic, political, social, cultural, scientific, etc.– has far-reaching negative consequences for the effective operation of organizations and their ability to achieve desirable ends. Such a unilateral focus tends to reinforce (and to be reinforced by) a similarly unilateral approach toward other aspects or dimensions.

A specific example may illustrate how vested interests and narrow-minded individuals and groups can achieve a position of prominence within bureaucratic organizations and cause these organizations to deviate from their intended functions. In a 1969 study of the Economics Ministry of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the author found that

antagonistic factions had formed within the bureaucracy and were working at cross purposes. Political appointees were despised and disregarded by the technical staff and career administrators; the latter two types of bureaucrats considered the politicians to be ignorant opportunists. Career administrators, in turn, were looked down upon by the political appointees and the technical staff, both of whom believed that the administrators' excessive devotion to fixed routine and established procedure posed an obstacle to effective action. Finally, the technical staff was scorned by the other two types of bureaucrats who considered them to be unrealistic and uninvolved, prone to fanciful theories rather than realistic analysis. This mutual animosity meant that the three key roles within the Economics Ministry interfered with each other rather than worked together. This, not surprisingly, impeded the ministry from achieving its overall objectives.⁵⁶

3. Social surgery

a. Selective change rather than indiscriminate destruction

In order to improve social norms and behaviors, sometimes social surgery is necessary. This entails careful, selective surgery to remove the sick parts of the societal body while protecting and strengthening the sound parts. This must be done carefully and precisely, without haste, in order to avoid destroying sound elements or preserving sick ones, as happens with certain social surgeries which reinforce corruption and inefficiency. A dramatic illustration of the damages which may derive from indiscriminate, blind and destructive social surgery may be found in violent revolutions which attempt to create a utopian paradise by destroying current social institutions and "maximizing contradictions." The simplistic proposals of such revolutionary doctrines and leaders assume that the indiscriminate destruction of existing society will automatically bring improvement. This reasoning is akin to a surgeon assuming that the more damage he or she can cause a patient, the better the patient's recovery will be. In both cases, undue faith is placed in the presumed magical, regenerative powers of destruction. Such an unrealistic faith in the panacea of revolution leads to great failures and frustrations, as shown throughout history (most recently with the two twentieth-century examples of Nazism and Marxism).

Such excesses lead to extreme, pendular reactions which are also bound to end in failure since they fail to respect all aspects of reality. This

causes individuals to become increasingly discontented and frustrated. If this negative experience continues for a long period, the temptation grows stronger and stronger to resort to desperate measures and indiscriminate destruction in order to attain satisfaction. This sets a vicious circle in motion as renewed failures bring more desperate, extreme attempts at a solution and the more desperate and extreme the attempts, the more certain they are to fail. If the social changes individuals attempt are not selective and gradual and if they fail to consider the complex nature and implications of reality, they are doomed to failure.

b. Tackling causes; example of Argentine inflation

Sometimes social surgery attacks symptoms rather than underlying causes. This seems to have been the case, for example, in Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s when the government attempted to fight inflation by attacking production. In order to solve the economic difficulties of the state, the government unwisely chose to impose a high tax burden; not only did this fail to cure Argentina of its economic stagnation and inefficiency, it also discouraged sound investment and stifled private economic activity, thereby worsening the fiscal imbalance.

It is ineffective and counterproductive to repeatedly subject a society or nation to drastic surgical measures such as structural adjustment programs and recessionary policies, shifting back and forth from one extreme to the other. Drastic surgical measures fail to treat the deep, underlying causes of such problems as inflation, economic stagnation and fiscal imbalance because they do not address the profound, invisible influence of social norms which encourage improvisation, mistrust, disobedience of the law, lack of respect for institutions, corruption, protectionism, etc. When social surgery is not based upon a realistic, thorough diagnosis of underlying causes, it leads to anarchy, disorder, confusion, contradiction, inefficiency and destruction.

c. Social planning and participation, avoiding harm

For social surgery to be beneficial instead of harmful, careful social planning and participation are necessary. Care must be taken to avoid punishing productive activities and promoting destructive behaviors, such as speculation and corruption. People must rid themselves of the common misperception that even random or extreme actions are bound to have a positive effect because the mere fact of trying to do something will automatically trigger larger forces to work to solve the underlying

problems. In fact, society cannot rely on some unspecified force of nature to intervene and solve its problems. People must analyze alternatives and their foreseeable consequences, considering as many aspects, relations and implications as possible. They must accept their responsibility for planning and implementing corrective actions; these actions must be designed intelligently, diligently and systematically and must take all available information into consideration. Instead of shirking their responsibility, people must humbly recognize their limitations and take the necessary steps to improve their ability to lead change in a more enlightened fashion.

4. Detecting and overcoming structural obstacles

a. Structural obstacles and social norms; vicious and virtuous circles

Because systems of social norms tend to acquire a considerable degree of stability, they can easily fortify structures that are in fact dysfunctional for the fulfillment of individuals and reality, including dependency, uncontrolled urbanization, disorderly growth of the state, excessive bureaucratization, low levels of initiative, activism and awareness, poor communication and organization, psychological ceilings and inconsistent decision-making styles. These dysfunctional structures, which mutually reinforce each other through systems of causal-functional relations, are stronger and more stable when people are unaware of the mechanisms that support them, including first and foremost social norms. People must therefore strive to discover the social norms that strengthen dysfunctional structures in various realms of human activity, including health, education, culture, ethics, etc.

Dysfunctional social structures can only be dismantled through the exercise of genuine consistency; this allows people to find and support sound social seeds including social norms which contain accumulated products of consistency, derived from their own and other people's previous actions. In this way, people help build functional, constructive structures which jointly influence human activities in a consistent direction. Often human constructions tend to be considered ends in themselves and are preserved despite their growing dysfunctionality. These structures tend to beget other dysfunctional structures, creating vicious, self-perpetuating circles.

The mechanisms of positive feedback prompt individuals to prefer stability, since this ensures them predictable gratifications and allows them to preserve their achievements. However, people can become too attached to stability, striving for absolute possession of fragments chosen on the basis of impulses and appetites. In doing so, people unwittingly sacrifice their own freedom, foresaking their opportunity to exercise genuine consistency and preventing them from devoting themselves to the global system of reality and to integrative unity, which is the basis for this system.

The latter involves giving oneself completely, with effort, risk and sacrifice, and implies respect and love for human beings and reality, as well as the desire to contribute to the welfare and fulfillment of all.

b. Unbalanced distribution of wealth and resources

The unbalanced distribution of wealth and resources is a structural obstacle to individuals' mission of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. It harms both those who are privileged and those who are deprived. The former are harmed by the stress of competition and are vulnerable to such maladies as mental illness, drug addiction and anorexia (which is a particularly extreme example of the danger of submitting to the tyranny of dysfunctional social norms). They also tend to suffer losses in terms of spiritual, family and interpersonal values, since they do not know how to use their resources properly.

People and societies who receive less than their fair share of wealth and resources are threatened by poverty, marginality, hunger, sickness and misery. In addition, and perhaps even worse, they are contaminated by the diseases of the rich. Thousands of millions of individuals in the world suffer from hunger, while those who have extra food to contribute fail to do so because it does not seem financially lucrative. The destruction caused by human beings' selfish desire to accumulate more than they need not only hurts the needy but also poisons the greedy. Greedy individuals devote themselves to increasing their own wealth, power, prestige or pleasure, acting as if they could possess these things in absolute fashion and forever. Some may claim that their efforts are meant for their children or grandchildren or even more distant descendants, but later generations will not really profit from the excess of money, power or prestige accumulated by their ancestors.

Later generations will in fact be harmed by the unbalanced, unilateral, excessive accumulation of material possessions and by the hedonistic social habits and self-interested social, cultural and spiritual legacy their ancestors leave them.

Thus, those who deprive others by striving to monopolize wealth, power or prestige do not actually benefit themselves or their heirs, but rather engage in self-destructive behavior; their rewards are as short-sighted and illusory as Midas's gold or the thirty coins of silver for Judas. Their actions reflect the worst possible decision from the angle of any sound investment criterion. They not only harm others, but harm themselves as well. And the poor are not even educated to make better use of the little they have. Such disorders lead to tensions and conflicts which damage society as a whole, preventing the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

c. Short-sightedness, superfluous and perverse needs

When individuals preoccupy themselves with worries about immediate concerns, they fail to engage in the necessary effort and sacrifice of considering the long-term impact of their choices. In so doing, they fail to adhere to unity, as required by genuine consistency, and their choices and behavior tend to satisfy the superfluous and perverse needs of a few. This harms everyone, since all individuals involved suffer a loss in terms of their quality of life and human fulfillment.⁵⁷ Given the dangers stemming from a narrow focus on immediate consequences, it is important for people to consider the long-term consequences of their behavior and the impact of their actions on the wider realm. For example, people need to consider whether excessive use of modern technology –such as the automobile and television– will cause a dangerous decline in physical and intellectual exercise; whether extensive use of chemical and pharmaceutical products will lead to ecological disasters and imbalances in the human body; whether the rigid application of educational methods or medical treatments will be counterproductive and inefficient if applied in the wrong regions, contexts and times; whether housing programs which are not adapted to different climates will be inadequate or unhealthy; etc. It is therefore essential to consider the long-term implications and complex networks of interdependent relations as well as the value and desirability of ends and means, decisions, needs and habits.

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURE, SOCIAL NORMS, VALUES AND CHANGE

A. Cultural Argument; Stability and Change in Values and Cultural Systems

1. Addressing criticisms of the cultural argument

a. Criticisms of the cultural argument as static, inflexible, unilateral, simplistic

Cultural arguments refer to the influence of values and culture on the economy, politics and other areas of social development. This kind of argument has been criticized as inflexible and static, unilateral and simplistic, insofar as cultural arguments are presumed to argue that cultural factors unilaterally determine the rest of human and social life.

Based on such a characterization, cultural explanations are criticized for their inability to account for changes or reversals in economic and political development. For example, critics contend that cultural

explanations of Argentina's political and economic development cannot explain the fact that Argentina enjoyed economic prosperity and stability until 1930, but economic decline and instability thereafter. Although Argentine values presumably remained stable, the nation's history has not been a constant.

Moreover, critics of a cultural explanation point out that many individual Argentines behave in a rational manner—an attribute typically associated with American rather than Argentine dominant values. Similarly, economic success among Catholics belies expectations, since traditional cultural explanations have associated economic success with the cultural values of Protestantism, not Catholicism.

Critics have also asked how one might understand the different trajectories of Spain and Argentina during the last thirty years. Given their shared cultural inheritance, it would appear that Spain should have been incapable of economic growth and stable democratic politics, yet Spain demonstrated notable differences from Argentina in these respects, in spite of common cultural roots. In addition, other Catholic countries such as Italy and Brazil also achieved excellent economic growth records from the 1960s to the 1980s, as opposed to Argentina.

Based on the logic that similarity cannot explain divergence, critics argue that the differences in national development cannot be explained in terms of cultural orientation.

b. Continuously changing interaction among values, culture and other dimensions of reality

This book recognizes the important role and influence of culture and values on other sectors of human and social life, such as economic and political activity. It argues that this influence is reciprocal and therefore that human activities also shape culture and values (and the social norms which underlie them) as part of the balanced relations within the system of reality.

This book also contends that all societies contain a wide range of common social elements and that differences among societies arise due to the particular way in which each society emphasizes and combines these components. Therefore, cultural factors can produce different and often contradictory outcomes and simplistic predictions (for example, that Catholicism impedes economic growth and political stability) are prone to error. Cultural factors produce different consequences, depending on the way in which they are combined with other factors—economic,

political, social, etc. and especially depending on the way persons and groups exercise consistency (genuinely or spuriously).

Culture is only one of the dimensions of reality and it comprises countless, constantly changing sub-dimensions, all of which help explain history and reality. All individuals, groups and societies have dominant cultural traits and values, as well as alternative characteristics and values which vary with differences in time, person and context, in continuous, dynamic interaction with other dimensions.

Values continually change. While values have a highly stable core which only changes at a slow pace, they also contain more peripheral components which can and do change more rapidly.

c. Culture as channel for free decisions, consistency and social norms

The total system of interaction among factors is influenced by individuals' power of free choice, which is derived from their capacity for consistency. This constitutes the main force for stability and change in values, culture and human and social life, which are means through which consistency is exercised (genuinely or spuriously) and influences human and social life. Free decisions (that is, decisions involving exercise of consistency, genuine or spurious) influence dimensions through other dimensions, within the systemic process of interaction among different parts and dimensions of reality.

Cultural and non-cultural (physical, biological, psychological, etc.) dimensions are thus influenced directly and indirectly by free decisions and are vehicles for influencing other dimensions. Such influences favor change and stability in certain aspects and to certain degrees, thus favoring regularities and irregularities, similarities and differences, depending on how people exercise the capacity for consistency.

It is as mistaken to focus exclusively on the influence of values and other cultural traits as it is to exclude them from analytical explanations. In a wide definition of culture, all products of human behavior are cultural, including the way in which people exercise their capacity for consistency (e.g. whether in a genuine or spurious manner) and the ensuing free decisions which influence human activity through social norms. In this way, culture –the product of social norms– is the point of access for human consistency and freedom, enabling people to influence human and non-human reality through their decisions and actions, both internal and external, genuinely or spuriously exercising consistency.

d. Cultural influences, free choice, social norms

There is no clear, direct, one-to-one relationship between specific cultural traits and specific types of behavior due to people's ability to freely (i.e. exercising consistency) shape social norms, institutions, organizations and scenarios. Behavior has no single, unique cause but is instead influenced by all aspects of the system of reality in which persons are immersed, including economic, political, cultural, social, scientific, technological, physical, biological, psychological and spiritual factors, which are in turn influenced by free (i.e. consistent) decisions and actions.¹

Human behavior is also determined by individuals' free decisions, which incorporate and use all these influences as raw material, building upon the countless, cumulative advances and experiences of people throughout time.

Social scientists are responsible for showing the relative influence each factor and combination of factors has for explaining human and social behavior; these scholars should analyze and explain the circle of reciprocal influences, both internal and external, which largely derive from free human decisions, which are in turn influenced by social norms, which derive from free decisions (i.e. decisions exercising consistency).

This work emphasizes the cultural factor because it is less obvious, less visible, and therefore more often overlooked.² It also stresses the role of culture because it is the one factor which is most deeply influenced by human choices, and free choice is the means through which individuals influence the rest of reality and contribute to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality through the exercise of consistency. Culture, society and social norms are human beings' distinctive contribution to reality, the result of their free decision making through the genuine or spurious exercise of their capacity for consistency. As people become more aware of their influence, they can increase and improve their opportunities for shaping decisions and cultural values so they more effectively serve the goals of fulfillment, by more genuinely exercising consistency.

2. Complementary nature of stability and change**a. Complementary nature of stability and change; consistency, values, culture, social norms**

Like any living system, cultures need both stability and change. New elements gradually become "established" and stable, until they are

modified or replaced by other innovations. Stable elements must constantly be renewed in order to remain functional and therefore to deserve to be maintained and preserved. It is always the system and the whole to which the parts belong, which commands, integrating variety by unity (genuinely or spuriously).

In this way, change supports stability, and stability supports change, each one complementing the other. At any particular moment in time, diverse cultural elements coexist with each other; in addition to “established” elements, new elements are continuously added and older elements are gradually replaced, following the lead of the integrating whole or system. The exercise of consistency leads people to choose behaviors and social norms which serve as the basis for social life, as people constantly search for new and better solutions and preserve those which are functional. In addition to this ongoing process of cultural change and renewal, each society and each group demonstrate a particular distribution of dominant and alternative values and world views.³

Cultures are continually changing. Change occurs rapidly with respect to more peripheral and less central elements and more gradually with respect to fundamental values, as in the case of sacred and expedient value orientations.⁴ The term “values” is used to refer to the deepest and most stable components of the cultural system, including beliefs and preferences, yet even values are constantly subject to modification through the exercise of genuine or spurious consistency. In addition, as the most stable dimension of culture, values influence the type of changes which occur within a cultural system. Values are thus factors of change as much as factors of stability. Broad cultural changes take decades, centuries or even millenia. Social norms not only preserve society’s achievements, they are also the most influential and powerful instrument of change.⁵

No change occurs if it is not pushed, channelled and accomplished through shared behaviors called social norms, which involve exercise (genuine or spurious) of consistency.

b. How systems combine stability and change within a global system

Stable systems are active rather than passive. Stability is a dynamic situation achieved through an optimal arrangement of strains and forces, and stable systems continually interact with their environment, emitting and receiving influences, as a highly active star in a galaxy does.

At the same time, stable systems also interact with their internal components and integrate themselves into wider systems. Stability is the

result of an energetic process that responds to changing external and internal circumstances, all of which are part of variety. Stability is therefore supported by change, and change by stability.

Social, political and economic changes are influenced by stable values. Stability is a powerful factor supported by an active system of changes. The stability of certain core elements is related to the transcendent stability of the all-encompassing system of reality which is integrated by unity. Actually, unity not only includes stability and change but transcends them and constitutes their ultimate source (similarly, unity includes time but also transcends it).

Human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality are given within this total system of reality, which requires both stability and change. Changes need to be a combination of gradual, smooth processes and rapid, sudden transformations.⁶ In either case, changes need to be guided by genuine consistency so that they are “appropriate changes” which contribute to the goal of fulfillment, without privileging fragments or favoring dysfunctional and partial systems.⁷

c. Stability, change and time; transcending time and existence

Stability and change are necessary for existence because they link beings to unity within time. Unity enriches beings by giving them a specific time and place to occupy within existence but also circumscribes them by placing finite limits on their existence. Through their insertion into the order of reality at a particular moment in time and in a particular role, living beings are connected to the wider processes of change and stability which govern variety. Stability and change govern the relations of beings within the realm of time in which they develop their existence, making possible their fulfillment.

The fulfillment of reality, however, is not affected by the usual concepts of stability and change since it transcends time. Reality is fulfilled through a sort of “super-change” which occurs in a single “moment” beyond time (in other words, in the dimension usually called eternity); moreover, the fulfillment of reality is subject to a kind of “super-stability” which preserves the culmination of all achievements in a realm wider than the whole of time, that is, for eternity. The fulfillment of the order of reality therefore involves time but also transcends it through its connection with eternity; it includes all the achievements that derive from change and stability, but goes beyond and transcends them. Reality reveals both stability and change, much as a river does (since it is constantly changing but still retains its basic identity); reality ultimately fulfills itself surpassing

all possible achievements deriving from movement, energy and change, in the all-encompassing realm of eternity.⁸

Unity allows beings to relate with and through time, governed by chains of systemic, causal-functional relations. Once people leave their finite, earthly existence, they transcend time; here, in the realm of eternity, there is no more movement or change, nor is there stability, since these concepts do not have meaning any more. Within the realm of time, however, people need to face the delicate interaction between stability and change, both of which are crucial aspects of variety, in order to bring them into accordance with the integration of unity, preparing them for insertion into the global system of reality, without limits of time or space. As an integral part of social existence, values correspond to the realm of time and therefore are influenced by the dynamic processes of stability and change.

3. Using change to adjust to consistency

a. Overcoming incompatibility in nature (survival of the fittest) and cultural systems

Cultural systems always display a continual succession of incongruous elements or internal dissonances, since they cannot achieve perfect consistency. Such incongruences create pressures for change, which are alleviated through the exercise of consistency; when consistency is exercised in genuine fashion, it solves problems, but when spurious, it does not, providing only illusory and ephemeral relief. Efforts to increase compatibility are similar to natural laws, including the survival of the fittest, which lead to the triumph of compatible elements through the inexorable law of causality; problems of maladjustment and dysfunctionality are solved through the emergence and survival of compatible combinations or systems, resulting from causal-functional relations. When people attempt to solve incompatibilities by privileging fragments and impulses, without respecting all aspects of reality or considering long-term, ultimate implications, their solutions will be spurious.

Because cultural systems inevitably contain various and incongruous elements, they are subject to continuous change as part of the perpetual search for a more consistent system. While certain values, attitudes and preferences will prevail for a period of time, they will eventually be

succeeded by other values, attitudes and preferences; these newer values, attitudes and preferences will dominate for a while but ultimately they too will be displaced by yet newer values, attitudes and preferences. Compatible elements have the strength of self-fulfillment and are destined to survive, due to their adjustment to integration of variety by unity. Because all beings are linked to each other and to reality through causal relations created by unity, unity dictates that the road to their fulfillment –and the fulfillment of reality– lies in detecting and supporting compatible relations.⁹

Since human beings are endowed with the capacity for consistency, they may consciously contribute to the emergence, growth, strengthening and survival of compatible relations by respecting unity, reality and all living beings, thereby serving truth and goodness. Such genuine exercise of the capacity for consistency rewards people with growth, fulfillment, survival and happiness. In this way, free, consistent human choices complement the causal laws of reality and help transform the raw material of reality into harmony and order, through the creative and constructive contribution of consistency.

Contradictions and obstacles are an inevitable, unavoidable part of reality, but they also provide an opportunity for individuals to work for consistent solutions, exercising their capacity for consistency so as to grow and advance. Just as nature moves to fulfill itself by increasing integration (in consistency and compatibility) among beings and aspects of reality, the consistent exercise of human choice and behavior leads to fulfillment by helping promote the integration of variety by unity. By detecting and overcoming small contradictions and maladjustments which are an inevitable, intrinsic part of the vital process of reality, greater maladjustments and more serious problems are prevented and integration is furthered; through steady, preventive action, people are able to build chains of safety valves which promote the healthy growth and increased stability of the system.¹⁰

b. Genuinely or spuriously overcoming contradiction

Contradictions provide fertile soil for nurturing consistency; all the problems and challenges contained in reality, including contradictions, maladjustments and tensions, offer raw material for integrating variety and relating it to the all-encompassing, systemic framework integrated by unity. Contradictions can therefore be made to contribute to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. In this way it is possible to take advantage and overcome “incompatibilities in belief systems”.¹¹

Through their capacity for consistency, people can become aware of the need to overcome contradictions, which is the constructive and creative mission of human beings. Contradictions cannot be overcome if fragments and impulses are spuriously privileged. They can only be overcome if people devote themselves to the harmonious system of reality, supporting and contributing to it in all its aspects. This allows people to integrate all beings into the all-encompassing system of reality, where all beings converge, coexist and complement each other, building and creating that which contributes to advancement and fulfillment.

4. Similar values and different outcomes

In various contexts and moments, the same value may be compatible with different outcomes, because values do not act in a vacuum. Values are one element, albeit a critical one, in a systematic causal process, and their consequences depend on their interaction with the configuration of other factors which prevail at any specific moment and context. For instance, similar values were compatible with economic growth in Argentina at the beginning of the twentieth century but produced economic stagnation after 1930; a similar set of values helped produce economic growth in Spain, Italy and Brazil starting in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

It is important to remember that economic success may be transitory if underlying values are not made explicit, and so long as arrangements are not made for managing their implications in a way which consistently leads to the fulfillment of people and reality. Gains may be impermanent unless societies come to appreciate the importance of a rational and effective organization of the economy and polity; societies must also learn to insert these means into a wider realm, serving transcendent, “sacred” goals, as required by unrestricted consistency.

5. Correct application of the sacred-expedient axis

a. Identifying and evaluating values and causes

Value orientations are deep and stable, and since they are unconsciously acquired from others (and even from oneself) through social norms, it is important to make them explicit and to critically evaluate them.

In this way, people can establish how to handle them better so they contribute to the fulfillment of people and reality, guiding people's thoughts, desires and behaviors in accordance with genuine consistency and respecting the natural balance and harmony among all aspects of reality. Critical assessment of value orientations entails an evaluation of both sacred and expedient orientations in order to determine to which aspects each of them should be applied, and under which conditions. To this end, it is necessary to understand how people silently build and internalize values beginning in infancy, under the influence of primary groups, as well as the influences of past generations, of wider society and of the media, in order to evaluate and preserve what is sound, and change what is not.

b. Misapplying the sacred-expedient axis, the worst of First and Third Worlds

If spiritual, family and interpersonal values are not considered as ultimate, "sacred" ends, and if means and resources -including economic and political ones -are not effectively mobilized on behalf of these goals, societies wind up with the worst of First and Third World models. This happens in societies which neglect spiritual, family and interpersonal values as a result of their infatuation with the economic and material success of societies with expediency-dominant value orientations (which is undesirable when applied to the realms of spiritual and family life or to interpersonal values). By copying the superficial, materialistic aspect and giving it a magical value, these societies wind up with the worst of both worlds; they adopt the unhealthy traits of wealthy societies -like consumerism and materialism- yet reject their sound and functional aspects -including rigor, austerity and systemic methods, which make material advances possible.

6. Avoid waiting for value changes

a. Cultural pyramids, raw material for consistency

Cultural systems are pyramids in which values are the apex. Such systems synthesize the life-long experiences and efforts of individuals, groups and societies, including all past and present generations. Each person and group should use its inherited system as raw material to be

enhanced and better adjusted to consistency; this allows them to make the best use of cultural systems, by applying genuine consistency to them, rather than passively waiting for value changes to occur. Since values and value orientations can be used in several different ways and can produce either advantageous or detrimental behaviors, individuals can control the future by working to ensure that their values work in ways that improve society and enhance human fulfillment, by developing genuinely consistent decisions and social norms within the realm of any cultural system, dominated by any value system. They are not obliged to keep waiting for underlying fundamental values and social norms to change—and they may not have to change them at all; they only have to consistently apply the values which derive from their underlying orientation.

Values are assets which synthesize an immense amount of experience, research, analysis, inference and systematic thought. When analyzed from the perspective of genuine consistency, it is possible to find positive aspects in all values, and it is the responsibility of every person and every generation to do this. Values are not complete interpretations of reality but rather organizational tools which may, when guided by consistency, stimulate interpretations of the balanced relations of reality. Each person can evaluate values and modify them, using his or her capacity for consistency. At the same time, people need to critically evaluate the results of patient efforts of countless generations, preserving the sound, consistent elements and recognizing that without such contributions they would be reduced to “*homo feralis*” due to human beings’ incapacity to build cultural systems by themselves. Such patient and humble evaluation takes all of people’s lives, as well as the lives of previous and future generations. Each person has the power and responsibility of freely contributing to this task, modifying, recombining and enriching values and social norms, detecting and reinforcing advances in genuine consistency, and counteracting reversals both in their formulation and application. No cultural system is perfect and none is worthless.

b. Consistency: only necessary criterion for building any culture or value

Genuine consistency always allows people to choose and combine sound values and other sound cultural elements, as well as their components and applications, in order to contribute to the fulfillment of human beings and reality. The only value necessary for this end is consistency itself, which constitutes the basic criterion that is the source of being, truth, goodness and other positive values. More than a value,

consistency is the basis of any sound value, social norm, decision, behavior or culture. It is the basic criterion for distinguishing what is sound, good, true and real. Consistency stimulates people to use their highest human capacities so they may relate properly to reality and unity, in the same way as unity. Once people orient their thoughts, will, feelings and action toward genuine consistency, they can freely contribute to their own and other people's fulfillment, yielding the best fruits. Inconsistency or spurious consistency leads to the opposite.

The sound axis of genuine consistency may act –and in fact always does act, to some extent– in every person, family, society and group. The consistency criterion can be cultivated and developed without destroying human beings' legitimate cultural creations; in fact, it actually improves and promotes them. Consistency does this by selecting sound aspects to be reinforced and combined, and sick aspects to be counteracted.

What makes each culture, group or person unique is the way in which common components are combined, and the new elements that are added as a result of free human decisions. Such components are derived from the exercise of genuine or spurious consistency, which determines the spectrum of human beings' limited possibilities for exploring explanations and deciding on solutions to their problems.¹²

The human capacity for consistency allows people to choose, critically evaluate and combine components of social norms, values and cultures, rebuild them, and add new creations. If their choice is conscious, explicit and guided by genuine consistency, its fruits and freedom will be greater and will promote human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

B. Proper Application of Value Orientations

1. Application of sacred-expedient axis

a. Both poles properly or improperly applied in the United States, Argentina and elsewhere

If sacred and expedient value orientations are not applied in a genuinely consistent manner, that is, if they are applied unilaterally and uncritically rather than in their appropriate spheres, they cannot consider all aspects of reality in a balanced fashion. For instance, the mistaken application of the sacredness orientation to economic and political spheres causes people to undervalue the importance of efficiency, professionalism and rationality, which in turn leads to economic and political failure, stagnation, frustration and insecurity. In another example, the misapplication of an expedient orientation to spiritual, family and interpersonal dimensions causes people to treat these as superfluous, as means to serve lower interests and appetites, instead of considering them as ends to be served. This leads to failures and frustrations in spiritual, family and interpersonal realms.

Such failures serve as alarm signals which encourage people to learn how to prevent further failures through rational prediction and by taking into account the whole of reality, thus addressing the underlying causes of problems rather than simply treating their symptoms. Successful solutions also entail a determination not to simply escape problems or to halt corrective actions as soon as suffering diminishes or ends.

When consistently applied, sacred and expedient value orientations are both beneficial and both contribute to the fulfillment of persons and reality. An expedient orientation must be employed to ensure efficiency in production and in the use of economic, political and other means, so as to optimize results. A sacred orientation must be employed to ensure that means are made to serve desirable spiritual, family and interpersonal ends, that is, that results become valuable in terms of the fulfillment of human beings and reality. This means individuals must not only ensure their goals are compatible with unity and the order of reality, but also that they cultivate and develop effective means to serve these goals.¹³ If individuals inappropriately focus their efforts around fragments that are treated as absolute ends, then the “supreme” goals they pursue will not adhere to or respect reality and will not be compatible with the principle of consistency;

this is the danger inherent not only in destructive movements such as Nazism, fascism and communism but also in individualism, anthropocentrism and materialism.¹⁴ Both orientations –sacred and expedient– are present in all societies, groups and individuals and are beneficial if guided by genuine consistency.

b. Responsibility of the social sciences

The social sciences have the mission of helping clarify the underlying causes of people's problems and identifying effective means for solving them that go beyond simplistic solutions. It is the special responsibility of social scientists, leaders, and educators to make an exceptional effort to discover the underlying causes of society's difficulties, to help society become aware of the sources of its perpetual frustration, and to help devise rational and effective solutions for eradicating these difficulties.

The Argentine case provides one example of the need to explain how improper application of sacred and expedient values led to political instability and economic stagnation, especially after 1930. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Argentina began to experience rapid economic growth, limited democracy and intense European immigration which transformed the country into one of the most economically successful nations in the world at the time. However, even in the midst of such abundance, earlier vices continued, including myriad types of inefficiency, waste, corruption and social apathy, together with a lack of discipline, rational planning and organization. The continuation of such imprudent and unsound internal practices reflected the enduring influence of underlying cultural and social norms which had not been adequately identified and rearranged so as to conform to more fundamental needs and goals in terms of consistency. Without a conscious reorientation of these values and norms toward more productive behaviors and attitudes, the period of steady economic expansion and stable politics was destined to be transitory. Faced with pressures stemming from the Great Depression, the economic and political systems collapsed in 1930. The misapplication of a unilaterally sacred orientation prevented Argentines from acquiring the attitudes and behaviors necessary for lasting growth.

A similar type of dysfunctional outcome is produced any time people apply efficient means to pursue self-interested goals. This leads to failure in countries with more efficient economic and political systems, whose voluntary subordination to impulses and unilateral fixation with fragments (such as money, power, prestige, pleasure and material advancement) are incompatible with a consistent approach.

2. Orientations toward ego and toward reality

a. Both orientations in every society, manifest or not; critical analysis

Self-centered value orientations which focus on the ego, and open or considerate value orientations, which focus on all of reality, exist in all societies and individuals. These function as raw material for the exercise of individuals' capacity for consistency. The orientation toward ego derives from spurious consistency; the orientation toward reality derives from genuine consistency. The latter type of orientation enables people to build solutions, overcome obstacles and take advantage of their own and other people's experiences, detecting and cultivating the seed of consistency in every society and person. The orientation toward reality also permits people to detect and counteract the strength of impulses and pathological social norms which tempt people to give in to them and to seek immediate gratification instead of adhering to reality (which involves truth and goodness, loving all persons as they deserve, and behaving accordingly).

Both orientations –toward ego and toward reality– are present in Argentina and in the United States, either as dominant or as alternative value orientations, both in terms of the values people proclaim and the values they practice. Dominant social norms in the United States tend to legitimize an egoistic orientation, whereas dominant social norms in Argentina encourage an outward focus on family, friends and spiritual values. However, both orientations are present in both societies and in the social norms of both societies. All individuals –as in all societies– adopt a combination of social norms and values from different orientations rather than an absolute orientation toward either ego or reality.

In the United States, in spite of the theoretical acceptance of egoism as a universal motivation, people derive their deeper satisfactions and an enhanced quality of life from an orientation toward reality (including loving others as themselves, unconditionally, giving without expecting return). In Argentina, while many people purport to be following an orientation toward reality which aims for the benefit of others, their actual actions are frequently based on self-interest. In addition, there is a tendency to consider that the orientation toward reality need only apply to oneself and one's family and friends (one's "in" group); outside this circle, on the other hand, Argentines often feel it is legitimate to behave without a regard for others and therefore feel free to pursue their own self-interest and egoism even prevails in relations with the in-group. Furthermore, there

is a trend toward a certain inconsistency, insofar as there is no recognition of the moral obligation to use rational tools (information, professionalism, organization, discipline, method) in order to efficiently serve the principles and higher values they proclaim. This tends to lead to declarativism.¹⁵

In the United States, an attempt is made to legitimize egoism through philosophical and scientific theories which claim that concern for reality and for other persons is only a facade for egoism. At the same time, egoism is legitimized on the basis of its purported effectiveness in obtaining success, especially material success. Even though this “passion for gain” is idealized as a panacea, it is in fact accompanied by social problems such as drug abuse, violence, emotional insecurity and mental illness.¹⁶ These problems occur because such efforts to achieve material success neglect to serve human fulfillment by failing to teach people to devote themselves to spiritual, family and human values. People fail to insert their material achievements, impulses and egoism into the wider realm of reality.

Both societies would gain in significant ways from a critical analysis of their values and social norms, including their advantages and disadvantages as well as their application, viz. whether they are being applied properly. In this way, people can learn to reinforce the sound elements and counteract the dysfunctional components of both value orientations, respecting each aspect of reality and its relations to the rest in order to optimize support for reality and contributions to the fulfillment of all human beings and reality.

b. Emphasis on self-interest, legitimized by social norms vs. “conscience”

In the United States, dominant social norms tend to legitimize egoism, egocentrism, relativism and attachment to fragments –money, power, pleasure, prestige– rather than reality as a whole, supported by integrative unity. In short, dominant social norms condone and encourage the exercise of spurious consistency. General social tendencies such as this derive from the fact that people share certain general social norms, with variations in terms of their particular applications. In the United States, as in all societies, love is an appreciated behavior. However, love may either be appreciated because it makes individuals feel better or allows them to obtain something in exchange or because it works for the genuine benefit of others, due to support for them and for reality. Only the latter is real, genuine love.

In a study of the social norms shared by Americans, Robert N. Bellah et. al. presented four different types of individuals.¹⁷ Self-interested

orientations were evident in each. For one, “the goal of a good life is to achieve the priorities you have set for yourself.” Another advocated that “what you yourself decide is best for you.” A third asserted that people should have power to do “whatever they individually choose to do” as long as they do not hurt anybody. The fourth felt that following inherited conventions was appropriate, at least for the individual him or herself. Each of the groups placed a high priority on setting its own arbitrary goals and satisfying them, thus giving preference to ego and relativism and legitimizing impulses or caprices above reality and integrative unity. The groups did not care about the transcendental and deep meaning that reality provides, satisfying themselves according to the motto “to live and let live.”

These individuals tend to be uncomfortable around others who seek to base their behavior on a deeper understanding of reality and a consideration of the whole order of existence. They nervously rejected an approach of such unrestricted scope and consistency, accusing it of impossible certainty and rigid intolerance, and prefer to base their own ideas on short-term, non-rational factors (such as libido, self-interest, ideology, etc.) instead. Yet at the same time, individuals who focus on satisfying their ego are reminded by their ‘conscience’ (or ‘voice of conscience’, derived from their capacity for consistency) of the need to go beyond self-complacency; they are reminded of the confusion and contradictions stemming from inconsistency and from the lack of insertion into a wider realm of existence.¹⁸ In response, theories which strive to legitimize dysfunctional social norms try to convince people that devotion to egoistic interest will somehow magically satisfy other people’s interests as well. In this way, people try to attenuate the feeling of guilt surrounding their attachment to and dependency on fragments and impulses.

Individuals who do not strictly abide by the social norms accepted by society at large are to some extent excluded, rejected and subjected to ridicule. In this way, individuals are pressured to assimilate into the mainstream and adopt dominant social norms. This explains the obstacles which face people who work for human fulfillment through genuine consistency.

c. Responsibility of social scientists, leaders and influential members of society

Social scientists, leaders and influential members of society are responsible for making underlying social norms explicit and critically evaluating their causes and consequences. They also are called upon to

demonstrate how the capacity for consistency allows people to love others as a consequence of adhering to being, goodness and truth (albeit never completely) and how deviation from consistency leads to the opposite. People with special knowledge and influence need to show other members of society how to take advantage of the sound components of social norms and counteract unsound ones, through consistent social norming; this is particularly important in societies or groups which are dominated by inconsistent social norms that deny the possibility of non- egoistic motivation.

Social scientists and leaders need to warn people about the risk entailed by choosing egoism and improperly exercising their capacity for consistency, even in societies with a strong prevalence of sound social norms.

Finally, they need to identify and explain the social and cultural pressures that act upon people and show people how to channel them in the direction of consistency and fulfillment, with appropriate strategies.

d. Social norms and values as raw material

Social norms and values offer themselves as raw material for building consistency, like the block of marble a sculptor gives shape to; if people engage in consistent, critical social norming, they are able to freely complement the system of reality. In this way, they make optimal use of their capacity and resources to enhance their contribution to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

People are free to choose from an enormous variety of social norms and values; these may be creatively and constructively combined in various ways, as different sculptors can derive different but equally beautiful creations from a block of marble. The key is to combine and integrate fragments under the guidance of integrative unity, which underlies reality and variety and which we refer to here as consistency, making possible an immense variety of beautiful creations. People who accept this challenge must work hard and make sacrifices, but they enjoy the deep satisfaction of serving reality and unity by inserting every fragment or part of reality –whether human creations, such as social norms, or not– into the overarching framework of reality which integrates everything, leading to fulfillment.

e. Replacing reality by fragments; “give-up-itis”

When people attach themselves to fragments and vainly strive to replace reality as a whole, they are distracted from the true meaning and

purpose of life. Although this may temporarily offer a false and ephemeral sense of relief, it ultimately leaves people feeling confused, empty, lonely and desperate. For example, individuals who adopt egoistic social norms which discourage genuine love for others may find some temporary comfort by frequently finding new people to “love.”¹⁹

However, this does not compensate for the deep emotional insecurity which such an orientation brings and which causes people to lose a sense of the rich and deep meaning of life. Although individuals may find ways to cope with their world, their failure to insert values and behavior into the system of reality where they belong prevents them from developing deep, rich interpersonal relationships and they therefore lose out on the richest aspects of life.

Some of the disadvantages of Americans’ individualistic, egoistic orientation are demonstrated in a report comparing the fate of American and Turkish prisoners of war during the Korean war. About half of the American prisoners of war died from “give-up-itis” (i.e. they left themselves die, unless someone found them and shook them out of their stupor) while those who survived were, for the most part, brainwashed. Turkish prisoners, on the other hand, who were used to a less protected yet more solidarity-oriented society, stuck together and were not as vulnerable to “give-up-itis” (only one Turkish POW died –of peritonitis).

By contenting oneself with alternative meanings to life which center around self-interest and the satisfaction of personal preferences, an individual may win a certain amount of relief.

The panoply of moving, short-term targets that the system of social norms sets in front of people can distract them for a while, but as soon as this artificial world is shattered, the failure to search for real consistency will come back to haunt them. They will be unable to fall back on firm, transcendent values and unable to humbly, contentedly submit themselves to the whole order of reality governed by unity.

The shock received by the American prisoners of war in Korea is also felt by many children or adolescents in societies whose value orientations stress selfish, short-term perspectives; in the face of difficulties, they feel empty and lonely and desperately seek for relief through deviations (including drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, violence, and other escapes).²⁰

People who try to find meaning in fragments are unable to support themselves in the framework of reality; since it is this all-encompassing framework and its firm basis in unity which are the only real point of support, people are bound to encounter deep dissatisfaction and frustration.

3. Efficient means for desirable ends

a. Submitting means and ends to consistency in the United States and Argentina

The tendency to neglect one aspect of reality –whether the need for methodical and rational means, or family, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual ends– impedes human fulfillment (in Argentina and the United States, respectively). The Argentine tendency to neglect effectiveness in economic and political affairs is just as inconsistent as the American tendency to overestimate their importance, underestimating higher values. In the latter case, people readily deceive themselves into believing that education, culture, health, happiness, etc., can be bought with money.²¹ They fail to notice the pernicious effect of money when it is taken as an ultimate goal rather than as a means to more important ends. The tendency among societies and individuals to be dazzled by material achievements promotes the desire to accumulate large amounts of money and wealth; this, in turn, fosters an unhealthy sense of omnipotence, as individuals come to believe they are able to buy anything and everything they want. Material wealth leads people to abandon the austerity and self-discipline which actually lead to constructive, positive results. They become soft and weak, slaves to their own superfluous needs and increasingly vulnerable to the temptations of hedonism and undisciplined impulses.²²

In Argentina, although most people aim to serve desirable ends (spiritual goals, close family and interpersonal relations, etc.), they fail to use effective means –including the rational, organized, methodical use of resources (information, professionalism, discipline, organization, etc.)– to achieve the desired results. This leads to economic and political stagnation and insecurity and also prevents people from fulfilling their spiritual, family and interpersonal goals. Material success, on the one hand, and formal declarations of noble goals, on the other, cannot achieve human fulfillment if they are not part of a larger, consistent approach that respects all aspects of reality. People must not let themselves be led astray by the temptation to make material goals into final ends or to assume that declarations of spirituality are sufficient without effective action to back them up. Human fulfillment cannot be achieved unless people combine a focus on ultimate ends with the use of effective means. Both Americans and Argentines need to reevaluate prevailing social norms in order to achieve a balanced consideration of all aspects of reality. Attempts to replace and defeat the order of reality, including revolutionary programs that recklessly strive to impose their vision of utopia as quickly as possible,

prevent people from seeing all aspects of reality and are bound to fail due to the inexorable, self-fulfilling strength of this order.²³

b. Economic panacea, invisible hand, limited needs, absolute power over possessions, frustration

The panacea of material success represents a desperate and futile attempt to find a substitute for reality and unity.²⁴ Efforts to find meaning and legitimacy in material success rather than in the firm basis of unity and the order of reality reveal a misguided attempt to escape from reality. Other people (who share the same social norms) serve as accomplices in this fantasy, reinforcing mutual delusions and creating an ephemeral and false sense of security. The idea that material goods, money and success are the essential goals in life and the means to achieve lasting fulfillment is contradicted by the widespread evidence of unhappiness, frustration and self-destructive tendencies amidst wealth and abundance.

Similarly, the idea that an “invisible hand” will ensure that actions motivated by greed, selfishness and the desire for self-gratification will produce results which are in the general interest of society is mistaken.²⁵ Personal and social welfare derive from free decisions and actions oriented toward serving human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. Happiness requires people to use economic growth in a diligent, consistent manner, dedicating it to the service of people and reality. The “invisible hand” is only a limit which reality imposes on people who indulge excessive, egoistic desires, reminding them that wealth and possessions exist to solve limited personal needs and to share with others, thus providing them an educational reminder.

Attempts to accumulate beyond one’s needs and to engage in excessive consumption violate the laws of reality, which inexorably fulfill themselves and restore things to their proper balance. Moreover, the material possessions people accumulate never suffice and never last long enough; there is never adequate time or opportunity to enjoy these riches and the satisfaction derived from these possessions and consumer goods is always illusory. The illusion that such possessions provide absolute satisfaction is misleading. Money only has meaning if it is considered from a balanced perspective, that is, within the framework of reality integrated by unity, which leads people to dedicate themselves and their resources to serving reality and people within it.²⁶ It is highly unrealistic to believe that we can invest all our energies, time, affections, and resources in materialistic and economic pursuits and still be able to adequately contribute to our personal, family and spiritual development and happiness (and that of our

loved ones)—especially since these latter goals are what constitute human beings' central needs, values and source of happiness. Although people may try to hide the failures and frustrations resulting from unrealistic, egotistic goals—such as accumulating material possessions to attain absolute satisfaction—this only increase frustrations and merely postpones individuals' confrontation with reality.

c. Leaving home, facing economic challenges, not sharing, defenselessness

In the United States, young adults are pressured by social norms to move away from home at an early age. This has the function of confronting them with various kinds of challenges and forcing them to deal with them on their own, thereby developing autonomy and independence. This, in turn, is presumed to increase their competitive skills in achieving economic success and in other areas, since people learn from difficulties. However, such forced self-reliance reduces young adults' opportunities to confront a different type of challenge: namely, the challenge of sharing with others, exhibiting solidarity, loving others unconditionally and devoting themselves to others. These skills are promoted in shared family life, which also allows people to develop other dimensions and constitutes the source of deep fulfillment as individuals derive true satisfaction from the process of giving and receiving.

Furthermore, young adults are especially vulnerable to the dangers of drugs, violence and sexual promiscuity. Too often they are encouraged to fend for themselves before they are fully "immunized" against such aggressions and they do not have sufficient opportunity to develop a strong set of spiritual, interpersonal, family and moral values which can help them resist such self-destructive tendencies. Whereas the home environment teaches individuals to attach a high value to giving and sharing with others and encourages people to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of others, the environment into which young adults are launched teaches that material and economic success is paramount, whereas spiritual, family, emotional, interpersonal, and moral goals are secondary. This external environment fails to make people aware that giving is more essential to fulfillment and satisfaction than receiving, and that the most important gift of all is respect and love.

By remaining in their parents' home, young people learn to share, give and receive unconditionally and to trust in others. They thus face the challenge of mastering themselves and subordinating their egoistic interests for the benefit of others, abiding by the moral norms cultivated

in the family. Living away from home, on the other hand, may contribute to maturity and help young adults sharpen their ability to compete in an aggressive society, but it also stimulates exaggerated independence, egoism and egocentrism. It deprives young adults and their parents of spiritual and emotional richness, security and fulfillment, all of which stem from sharing and from strong, stable family ties. The tendency to encourage self-reliance and independence in young adults is part of a larger syndrome of isolating individuals from others.²⁷ This tendency, though often well-intended, deprives young people of the richness and fulfillment derived from sharing with others in a reciprocal process of giving and receiving. It tends to treat people as if they were either superior or inferior beings (“gods” or “beasts” in Aristotle’s terminology).²⁸

Although keeping young people at home may not teach them how to defend themselves on their own, it does teach them how to master themselves in order to share, give, exercise solidarity, support others and be supported by them. People learn to sacrifice themselves for others, thus fulfilling moral law; they also learn to cooperate and engage in teamwork.

People who are forced to fend for themselves at an early age are simultaneously encouraged to reduce their ties to the family. Yet it is the natural setting of the family, and the natural inclination to share love and affection unconditionally, which provides people with a feeling of emotional security.

The family setting also helps young people to defend themselves against deviant influences by providing them with a firm reference point and emotional support and guidance.

d. Trend toward giving in spite of social norms

Even in societies such as the United States, in which prevailing social norms legitimize and idealize egoism and deny a moral obligation to give unconditional love or share with others, these altruistic behaviors occur, thanks to the continuous presence and pressure of consistency (the power of “conscience”). This pressure is particularly strong in young people, who are relatively uncontaminated by deviant social norms. Young people and adults alike feel an attraction to freely support reality and other people, contributing to their fulfillment; similarly, everyone experiences at least a certain inclination to master impulses and subordinate partial concerns to consideration of the whole. People tend to feel an especially strong sense of duty toward those who are closest to them and who most depend on them – i.e. family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, students, followers, etc. (in addition to themselves). In fact, the capacity, disposition and inclination

toward consistency which prompts people to give themselves selflessly to others are so strong that societies that promote egoism need to enforce such promotion through social norms which require detachment and impersonality; and teach people to treat personal relations as exchange relationships in order to overcome their natural tendency to give unconditional love to their family, friends and others.

4. Danger of uncritically copying models

a. Hasty adoption of seemingly successful models

The hasty adoption of social norms and styles associated with models that appear to be successful can cause people to copy inconsistent, superficial and unbalanced elements. In their haste, people neglect to analyze the underlying causes and implications of the social norms they adopt, failing to distinguish between sound and unsound components. In such cases, people fail to realize that many models privilege fragments instead of systematically considering the overall framework of reality, therefore offering panaceas based on spurious consistency, which are contrary to truth and goodness. Haste can also cause people to copy certain shallow aspects of models that actually play no role in producing desired success.

When applied to individuals in less developed countries who look at the success of the United States and other advanced industrial societies in economic and political terms, there is a real danger that these individuals will enthusiastically embrace the assets that derive from economic and technological success, especially the abundance of consumer goods, but ignore the necessary traits which make such advances possible –i.e., austerity, discipline, self mastery, etc. As a result, people copy aspects of the model that are actually associated with its weakening and decay rather than the traits which originally produced its material success. At the same time, there is a significant danger that people in less developed nations will discard the assets of their own model, including traditional family, moral, and spiritual values. In this way, people not only fail to distinguish and adopt the sound aspects of the model they strive to emulate, they also reject sound elements from their own model. They wind up with the worst of both worlds because of their blind, simplistic and unbalanced adoption or imitation of foreign models.

b. Adoption of First World models; combining sound aspects of endogenous and endogenous models; risks

Societies and individuals who choose to embrace modernization and adopt a “modern” model of development (based on the experience of advanced industrial nations) often do so in an uncritical and simplistic manner, believing that all of the components of this model are part of a single, inseparable package which is uniformly desirable. Although this causes a profound disruption in people’s lives, provoking a serious deterioration in their traditional quality of life, leaders have the illusion that this is a transitional stage and that the country will achieve an even higher quality of life once modernization and wealth are attained. However, it is not clear that their efforts to modernize as rapidly as possible will lead to improvements in the underlying quality of life. Examples from the advanced industrial countries themselves should serve as a warning that modernity and wealth do not necessarily lead to happiness and fulfillment. Indeed, the possessions, consumer goods, comforts, and material advances cannot buy true satisfaction. People who have more, tend to want more, as new needs and wants are always being created. In their insatiable quest to have more than others, they are doomed to ever deeper frustration and unhappiness. Moreover, the loss of family, spiritual, and interpersonal values compounds their frustration, leaving a feeling of emptiness and of life’s meaninglessness (which in the extreme, can lead to suicide).²⁹

The critical issue raised here is how to identify, isolate, separate and discriminate the positive from the negative aspects of the alternative models being offered so as to combine the sound aspects of traditional models with those of various contemporary models. An equally critical issue is the need to analyze one’s own model so as to identify sound components and integrate them with the sound components of other models while counteracting the unsound components and aspects of one’s own model (and making sure not to combine these with unsound components in alternative models).³⁰ Because the “modern” model of development has been transmitted around the world and generally depicted as a magical panacea, counter-efforts should be launched to correct this impression. Modern means of communication such as the media broadly disseminate and commercialize consumer habits and products; this tends to spread confusion since the goals and techniques promoted stress very narrow, partial aspects. The media seek to influence the buying intentions and behaviors of the public without considering or clarifying the immediate and long-term implications and consequences certain products

and social norms have for various individuals, groups and societies. Such a lack of clarification represents a way of misleading or cheating people by hiding important characteristics or implications.

Intellectuals in many Third World countries are concerned about preserving traditional values while developing social norms that promote individualistic competitiveness. They must fight against the tendency to oversimplify and idealize materialistic models (especially in the business world and the media). To achieve compatible combinations that serve unity in variety, individuals need to follow the sound guidance of consistency, respecting the global compatibility and harmony of the order of reality as a whole, in all its aspects and with all its implications. In fact, all parts of a culture are connected and therefore at least partially compatible due to the fact that they are all governed by unity. It is important to consider partial compatibilities, exploring how existing contexts and structures affect them, but the job does not end there. It is even more important to submit partial systems to global compatibility.³¹ This is the only way to achieve constructive social development and human advancement; it is also the only way individuals can attain fulfillment.

To uncritically adopt a single model (and even worse, to blindly apply one's imagined version of this model) is an irrational behavior, equivalent to swallowing a fish whole instead of separating out the bones. As rational, free beings, individuals can and must cooperate in building discriminating, integrated models which will optimally serve human fulfillment. Individuals fail to discriminate when they adopt alternative models in a shallow, simplistic manner; they lose their ability to discern between those components (such as consumerism) which lead to decay and others (such as austerity) which led to progress.^{32~}

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPLOYING EXISTING VALUES AND SOCIAL NORMS TO PRODUCE DESIRABLE CHANGE

A. Permanent Dilemma: Consistency Vs. Corruption

1. The problem of corruption

a. Existing social norms and values: raw material for consistency and corruption

In any society, corruption requires citizens' tolerance and collaboration. It is a misconception that corruption derives from certain values, and that it cannot be effectively fought, or that it is necessary to wait for many decades until values change. It is not necessary to go through long, slow processes of education and socialization to become able to fight

corruption. Every individual in every society is always able to use his or her capacity for consistency – otherwise known as their "voice of conscience," which allows each person to recreate, modify and readjust social norms and values as well as to use existing values and social norms to make constructive contributions and effectively fight corruption. Furthermore, changes in values do not provide a guarantee against corruption, which appears in all societies, in different forms, regardless of their dominant values.

Human beings' power of free decision making and their capacity for consistency in fact determine whether corruption will flourish or not. The extent of corruption does not depend on underlying values per se but on how people choose to use existing social norms and values, that is, on the way in which they employ and modify them, through social norming, combining and applying them according to genuine or spurious consistency. Since all systems of social norms and values have both consistent or inconsistent components, people can choose to support and reinforce either. No person or society is ever perfectly consistent or inconsistent, as each of these poles constantly competes for people's allegiance. Within any existing set of values and social norms, individuals have to choose between those elements which support corruption and those which oppose it; following this basic choice, they have to continue to work to follow the path they have chosen. In Argentina, many people have partly tended to choose the path of inconsistency, which has allowed corruption to flourish and has impeded social, economic and political progress.

b. Fighting corruption without changing values

A society's values may be suitable for fighting corruption despite the fact that corruption might have grown and remained under such values. People may find sound components that may be used in the fight against corruption in any system of social norms and values. In Argentina, most people opposed corruption but tolerated it because they feel helpless to combat it. The challenge for citizens, leaders, government officials and society as a whole is to work to reinforce sound components, using the majority's opposition to corruption to gradually reduce the scope and extent of corruption in society. If corruption were simply a question of values, then it would not be possible for corruption to either increase or decrease without a change in underlying values.¹

In Argentina, there is a process of self-selection whereby those who are tempted to become corrupt work hard to gain entry into the power structure (eg. the top layers of government) where it is relatively easy to

become rich through dishonest means. Honest and capable people who are not tempted to become corrupt, on the other hand, generally are not interested in acceding to positions where they could more easily exploit their position for dishonest ends and therefore rarely become part of the power structure. Access to positions that breed corruption is often gained by those who work hard to get there, using all types of means not limited by scruples or moral considerations.²

2. Changing values or changing the social environment

a. Consistent use of social norms and values by citizens and leaders

Many social norms and values are like drugs or weapons which can be used for sound or unsound purposes, depending on the way they are used, that is, whether they are used consistently or inconsistently. Social norms and structures, including ideas and "world images," may stimulate either corruption or honesty.³ Citizens, leaders, authorities and social scientists are responsible for developing social norms and structures which reward honesty and punish corruption. Normative social arrangements should be promoted which favor honest, functional, efficient, positive social behaviors through a system of rewards and punishments which expresses the deep convictions of society and its members. Yet even where dysfunctional social norms are prominent, there are also sound values that enable people to choose and apply the path of genuine consistency.

Indeed, most social norms and values cannot be considered intrinsically sound or unsound, since their soundness depends in many cases and to a great extent on the way individuals adopt, adapt, combine and apply them (i.e., whether they do so in a consistent or inconsistent fashion). In Argentina, most people want to eliminate corruption, but prevailing social norms and structures make this difficult since those who do fight against corruption are frustrated and even punished. Most people know that such a system favoring corruption is not in their best interests, but in the interest of a minority of corrupt individuals; this corrupt "elite" profits at the expense of the majority of the population. Yet they also know that in order to avoid further penalty, they have to come to terms with corruption to some degree. Their value systems are perfectly open to a system in which corruption would not be accepted as a means for gaining

advantage, and they would actually prefer a system in which they were not forced to accommodate corruption in order to avoid punishment by the vested interests of the corrupt structure. This may be shown by considering what happens when people from a society where corrupt institutions and practices are rewarded migrate to an environment where fairness and impartiality replace corruption and favoritism. In such cases, most people adjust quite rapidly to the new rules of the game and obey them conscientiously; they adhere enthusiastically to the new environment of public morals and express high satisfaction with it.

Despite this general predisposition to follow sound values and fight corruption, most Argentines have not known sufficiently well how to do so. More recently, however, as the relations between corruption and power have become better known, Argentine citizens have become more active in organizing themselves into sound networks that have helped to create propitious conditions for fighting corruption.

b. Consistency, first and last model, freely chosen, counteracting inconsistent influences

People may resist the influence of environments dominated by inconsistent social norms and values by relying upon consistent models. These may be found by discovering consistency in oneself and in others. People always have the freedom to choose to follow consistent models, given the existence of sound social norms and values in themselves and others. Therefore, even if dominant influences are inconsistent, they may be heroically counteracted by relying on such consistent models.

Unity serves as the most important source of reference for individuals, prompting them to engage in an internal dialogue and encouraging them to use their capacity for consistency in order to analyze and explicate their own behavior and choices. This internal guide may be thought of as the voice of conscience, which shows people how to use their capacity for consistency in order to support a sound application of values. In this case, individuals introspectively look within themselves to discover their own capacity for consistency (or conscience) which allows them to see beyond impulses and beyond the pressures of fashions and prevailing social norms and values. People also use others as an external source of reference.

To one extent or another, all human beings engage in such direct reliance on unity as a model; all individuals exercise their capacity for consistency at least to some extent, taking themselves and others as consistent models. It is this capacity, derived from unity, which is the basis for critical judgment, free decision making and constructive, creative

thought; genuine consistency functions as the criterion for evaluating ideas, decisions, behaviors, social norms and influences, considering the total system of reality and its implications. Consistency is thus the ultimate model or reference group, upon which all others must be based. Even though people may choose to reject genuine consistency and embrace spurious consistency, following their own or other people's inconsistent model, their capacity for consistency always gives them the possibility of returning to genuine consistency and following consistent models. In fact, inconsistency or spurious consistency is only the distortion and deviation by persons from the consistent inspirations (of mind, will, feelings and actions) which consistency dictates to people. People have the consistent inspiration and distort it by submitting it to ego, caprices, impulses and other fragments.

c. Freedom to resist or change environments, supported by consistency

Habits may be changed by changing one's environment, without necessarily changing one's values. Similarly, one can use one's power of free choice to select from the broad repertoire of social norms and values those which conform to consistency (or not). This allows people to resist the influence of their environment, should they so choose, and to counteract dominant tendencies. In both cases, people are free to adopt social norms and values that they choose, without having to passively wait for society to do so. In addition, through the processes of social norming, individuals can influence and possibly change prevailing social norms and environments.

The following example may help illustrate the influence which the social environment has on personal habits and social norms. Imagine that a high school student moves to a new school in the middle of the year and finds that his fellow students are helpful, respectful and fair toward each other. After a short while, the newcomer will tend to adopt these prevailing social norms and attempt to become a champion of cooperation and solidarity since he will win the approval and appreciation of his fellow students for doing so. If, on the other hand, the high school student moves to a school in which a competitive atmosphere dominates, cheating is widespread and students are not helpful or respectful toward one another, then the newcomer will learn not to help others or give them information; instead of cooperating with them, he will compete with them, perhaps using unfair and dishonest means to do so. In order not to be taken advantage of, the newcomer will learn to take advantage of others.

However, students can freely choose to counteract such prevailing tendencies and cultivate opposite norms and values; they can resist pressures to conform and work to modify their environment according to their support for either genuine or spurious consistency. Changes in habits are therefore the result of individuals' free use of their capacity for consistency, which allows them to choose from the alternative sets of social norms and values which are offered by their environment and by their own social norming (that is, which individuals observe in other people and which they create themselves). The influence of the environment will be greater if it reinforces elements from people's existing repertoire of norms and values. To the extent that values and social norms derive from genuine or spurious consistency, they will influence people in the same direction. However, individuals are always free to use their capacity for consistency to change their social norms and values in the direction of genuine or spurious consistency. To do so, they choose norms and values from their environment and insert them into their own frame of reference (inspired by either genuine or spurious consistency). If this framework strives to reflect reality, integrated by unity, it will contribute to the fulfillment of people and reality; if it focuses on a fragment or follows impulses, it will subordinate human freedom to caprice and ego.

d. Social norms and values move between the ideal types of consistency and inconsistency

Social norms and values are influenced by other social norms and values and by the free decisions surrounding the processes of social norming, which continually change social norms and values, combining, modifying, reorganizing and reinforcing their components and creating new combinations. These changes may be sound or unsound, depending on whether they follow the direction of genuine or spurious consistency. Values are general social norms which define the people's relations to the main dimensions of reality and to themselves. Values are incorporated into general orientations (such as sacred or expedient value orientations) which contain social norms which either adhere to unity and the order of reality or reject them. The values people hold influence their orientation toward time (past, present and future) and toward authority; they shape people's ideas about what gives value and meaning to human beings and their actions. Values, inspired by genuine or spurious consistency, influence people's attitudes toward the principles derived from unity, including being, truth and goodness; they also shape people's attitudes toward themselves and others.

People can always improve social norms and values by exercising their capacity for consistency, thus contributing to the fulfillment of people and reality. If people choose genuine consistency, they follow the path of goodness, balance, order, depth and truth; if they choose spurious consistency, they worsen their situation and that of others. People's orientation is never perfectly consistent or inconsistent, but rather moves between these two poles. People's orientation improves when it moves closer toward consistency, according to the central mission of every person and society.

e. Reciprocal influence: free decisions-social norms. Discovering common ends and means through social life

Free decisions, social norms, values, the environment, education and communication reinforce each other, reconciling the ends and means of various people in order to contribute to the development of people and reality by overcoming pluralistic ignorance and building social norms and systems. Social norms and values are cultivated through communication and education, and these, in turn, are conditioned by social norms and values. People are influenced by social norms and values, and these are continually reinforced or modified by people's free choice (including the accumulated effect of past decisions as well as new ones). For instance, social norms can predispose people toward either aggression or cooperation, and their choice in favor of one or the other further reinforces underlying social norms.⁴ People may choose to either contribute to or impede their own fulfillment and that of others and reality, and their choice will be reinforced by social norms, values and the social environment which point in the same direction.

Free choice is an exercise of consistency, which fulfills itself as a joint or social action, in team work. As a result, communication is fundamental to overcome the kind of pluralistic ignorance that prevents people from seeing what they share with others and prevents them from working together on behalf of common aspirations and goals out of a misplaced fear that others will disagree.⁵ Communication involves recognizing shared social norms, as well as how and why they are shared.

B. Some Basic Conditions for Desirable Change

1. Increasing transparency and social responsibility through participation and networking

a. Uncovering corruption and inefficiency

Transparency places the corrupt behavior of officials and citizens under a spotlight which deters dishonest individuals from seeking public office and leaves room for honest officials. With transparency, social environments will tend to punish instead of reward dishonest behavior, following the inclination of the majority of society which is genuinely consistent. Public officials will no longer be able to engage in corruption undetected and will be more likely to resist the temptation of corruption for fear of suffering loss of status, public condemnation, or even physical, economic, and criminal sanctions. Both the law and public opinion should expect and require public officials to work honestly and efficiently on behalf of society's interests rather than personally benefitting from the power derived from public positions.

The light of transparency should not only be directed on public authorities, but also on private citizens. In this manner, citizens will find that collaborating with corrupt officials and participating in crooked deals is a rather risky, dangerous business. People will not be pressured to come to terms with a corrupt power structure so as to avoid severe penalties.

Therefore, the social environment will punish rather than reward corruption, and will stimulate the majority of citizens to follow their natural inclination to work in an honest, ethical manner on behalf of their own and other people's interests. Such an environment will force those who previously benefitted from corruption to put an end to such practices and search for safer and more productive ways of making profits or gains.⁶ In this way sound communication and reciprocal reinforcement through genuinely consistent models will grow.

b. Participation in networks

In order to obtain transparency and use it to create a fair and impartial society which favors the legitimate interests of all its members, citizens must actively participate in public and social life.⁷ Unless people build

sound networks of social and political organizations and consistent systems of social control and public checks, they will be unable to rid society of dysfunctional practices.⁸

To advance toward a more functional social environment, it is important for citizens to work together so that their efforts to improve social life do not remain isolated, individual struggles. They should learn to identify other individuals who support reality and consistency, join forces with them and create sound networks; by thus pooling their energies, they can work with greater efficiency and efficacy, optimizing their positive impact on social life.

Since every individual possesses the capacity for consistency, everyone has a social responsibility to positively influence his or her environment. This requires people to believe in their own ability and responsibility to exercise social control, overcoming inertia, psychological ceilings and feelings of impotence.

2. Learning from difficulties ⁹

a. Learning from suffering; interpreting reality's messages

When people adopt and apply inconsistent social norms, such as those which foster corruption, they encounter increasing failures and frustrations. Yet this suffering may have a beneficial effect insofar as it helps people to become aware of the error of their ways, showing them the need for changes and for new, consistent approaches.¹⁰ Failures and suffering may therefore act as "alarm signals" from reality, showing people they are on the wrong path and making them realize that the damage caused by their dysfunctional ways is so severe as to warrant a drastic response. Surgery may even be required to remove the malignant growth, and while such a major operation entails high costs in terms of suffering and discomfort, it is necessary to forestall an even worse outcome.

People must not limit themselves to treating symptoms and must not abandon treatment as soon as some improvement is achieved. In this way, people learn from reality's "school of hard knocks."

All people, but especially societal leaders and social scientists, have the responsibility of facing up to reality, carefully interpreting and translating reality's messages in order to ensure that the correct lessons are being learned. They need to elaborate appropriate responses and share them with others. Various groups may then provide interpretations which

favor their own interests and place blame on scapegoats. In such an event, people may turn to short-term, ad hoc remedies to buy time or find an easy cure. Yet if people do not become aware of the dangers of such spurious consistency, then the result will be escalating failures and frustrations.

Also difficulties arising from nature and reality lead to suffering. If people insert them in the system of reality and work to derive from them positive fruits, mastering them and themselves, thus contributing to fulfillment of persons and reality, difficulties become functional assets.

While if people let themselves be irritated, depressed, discouraged and frustrated, they fail to take advantage of the opportunities provided by difficulties, and postpone solutions.

b. Overcoming contradictions of impulses and fragments

In order to overcome the internal contradictions in values and social norms, people must submit them to consistency, critically (consistently) analyzing impulses and influences, mastering them and submitting them to consistency (unity, reality, truth and goodness).

Consistency shows people how to ensure that values and social norms address individuals' genuine needs and deeply held aspirations. Leaders and social scientists are responsible for clarifying this, helping people to see that only consistency leads to deep fulfillment and satisfaction, making obstacles and assets serve these ends, overcoming contradictions through consistency; scholars should help people become aware that only consistency leads to the fulfillment of people and reality. In this way, people may overcome the widespread misconception that inconsistent norms and practices reflect their interests and values, when precisely the opposite is true. Indeed, all people, in the depth of their conscience, adhere to consistency (this is why contradiction is painful, and people try to hide it); thanks to their capacity for consistency, all individuals may overcome contradictions in values, social norms and preferences by adjusting them to consistency.

Contradictions derive from impulses and fragments which –if not mastered by consistency– try to replace reality and integrative unity; these impulses and fragments challenge reality by nurturing pride, hatred, egocentrism, hedonism and violence.

Reality responds to such challenges with hardships and punishments which are intended to show people the contradictions into which they have fallen, and how vain and spurious their attempts to replace reality and unity with impulses and fragments are.

3. Reading, diagnosing and applying surgery: the case of Argentina

a. Escalating economic and political failures and the need for corrective surgery; support for anti-corruption crusade

In Argentina, escalating economic and political failures led citizens and leaders to acknowledge the need for deep change. Hyperinflation, low productivity, falling real incomes, chronic inflation, widespread and open corruption, a bloated public payroll, large-scale capital flight, crippling deficits and endemic tax evasion threatened the country with collapse. In addition, the country had suffered significant political misfortunes, including the loss of international power and prestige (especially dramatic in the Malvinas/Falklands war) and the collapse of the state (which led to the unexpectedly early resignation of President Raúl Alfonsín in June 1989). This led to popular support for some government officials' crusade against corruption and inefficiency. The program also received important support from influential public figures and from the media, and many social leaders (politicians, business people, union officials, intellectuals, etc.) jumped on the anti-corruption bandwagon, denouncing all types of corrupt activities. This contributed greatly to transparency and social control.

The specific measures taken by the government, including privatization of state enterprises, reduction of protectionism, and deregulation were aimed at undermining corruption by depriving vested interests of the protection and indemnity they had enjoyed for so long.¹¹ The new economic and political arrangements aimed at dispossessing corrupt officials of the power to award favors and mete out punishments at their discretion, and at taking away the authority and leverage they had previously used to coerce business people and other citizens into collaborating in their corrupt schemes (or, at the least, which they used to put pressure on them to look the other way).

Corrupt interests resisted these reforms with great vigor and skill. Public opinion and the media gradually focused unwanted attention on corruption and dishonesty, and this transparency has to some extent decreased the areas in which corruption can flourish. At first the public was cynical and hesitated to put much faith in renewed promises of honesty, efficiency, and economic recovery. However, the consistent, coherent efforts of some government officials (particularly former Economics Minister Domingo Cavallo) and ordinary citizens helped overcome pluralistic ignorance and spread awareness that most people

supported the newly initiated reforms. Society focused unwelcome attention on tax evaders and other violators, increasing transparency and raising the likelihood of being caught. Criminal sanctions were enacted for tax evaders and those who were caught were treated as criminals by the media and public opinion. At the same time, however, the lingering influence of corrupt structures and practices means that the process of "social cleansing" is sure to be slow and limited. Moreover, corruption dressed itself as anti-corruption, and advanced in poisoning government, justice, society, law, the media, etc., confusing public opinion by pretending to be serving honesty, common good and principles. In this way a pendular swing partly erased progress achieved and even strengthened corruption.

b. Achievements of sound efforts and need for further reforms

The efforts, talent and honesty of a part of Argentine society and government not only produced economic fruits (including an increased rate of growth and budget surplus) but also to some extent created an environment conducive to honesty and effectiveness.¹² Tax collection has increased to the extent that many citizens felt that since tax revenues are no longer used to feed a corrupt and inefficient system and honest taxpayers are no longer forced to foot the bill for free riders; paying taxes to some extent was seen as a legitimate sacrifice in which all citizens pay their fair share. However, such an impression soon disappeared as a consequence of the behavior of government, leadership and power holders. This example suggests that, just as unhealthy social norms can lead to a vicious circle of negative outcomes and damaging attitudes and behaviors, healthy social norms, rules of the game, scenarios and interactive contexts may lead to a virtuous spiral of positive results and productive attitudes and behaviors. However the shift from vicious to virtuous is not easy or simple since the corrupt system keeps pushing forcibly. The effort to build Argentina's new social environment encouraging citizens to increasingly feel they are part of a larger community—a community in which honesty, fairness, efficiency, and paying one's fair share are highly esteemed virtues, and contrary behaviors are strongly condemned—was successful only to a highly limited degree.

Much more needs to be done. The corrective measures yet to be adopted reflect the need to relate changes to the wider system of reality supported in integrative unity or consistency. Argentines have not considered all dimensions in a balanced fashion. If this is not done, there is a considerable risk that they may feel satisfied with the economic

stability and their material achievements; such complacency may easily prevent them from ensuring the changes adopted are made to serve valuable and meaningful ends, namely human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. They may be tempted to copy only the shallow, superficial aspects of the strategies of rich countries, thereby exaggerating the importance of the economic factor and treating it as a panacea. They may consequently lose their advantages in terms of spiritual, interpersonal and family dimensions, thereby provoking a deterioration in their quality of life and human fulfillment. To the extent that Argentines abandon their efforts to carry out necessary reforms and fail to insert these into a consistent framework, they will substitute new biases and a new unilateralism in place of the weaknesses associated with their old model. Furthermore, corrupt people, groups, social norms, organizations and structures are actively and successfully working to cheat some of the best efforts of Argentine sound seeds.

4. Teaching with facts

a. Learning by doing and by observing one's own and other people's actions; predictability and reliability; reality and unity, as main teachers

The most important way to learn is by observing one's own and other people's behaviors and watching whether reality rewards or punishes them. Reality, and unity, its source, are the main teachers who speak through facts and behaviors, which are always consistent, since even if people may behave inconsistently, they are brought to consistency by their 'voice of conscience', and by reality's system of rewards and punishments. Those behaviors that seem to produce favorable results in terms of reality, truth and goodness tend to be copied and others tend to be rejected. When people learn by doing, they pay close attention to the results of their own and other people's behavior and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction it produces. All people therefore act as models for themselves and for others.

Behavior (which is part of reality) is more convincing than words (which speak about reality). Formal statements about what is true or good are not particularly convincing unless they are backed up by corresponding behavior. People learn from experience, increasing their information and ability to predict results. Indeed, people advance in free and consistent decision making to the extent that they are able to reliably predict what

the consequences of their own social norms and those they learn from others will be. These consequences need to be carefully analyzed to understand the implications of various decision making alternatives for human fulfillment. Predicting how behavior will impact on the environment –and especially the human and social environment– contributes to free, consistent and fulfilling decisions.

b. Strict conditions promote stability, predictability and trust; overcoming psychological ceilings

To get people to act in a particular way (or to prevent them from acting this way), it is important to build very strict conditions which are unavoidably enforced so that people can be as certain as possible about the responses to their actions. By establishing strict conditions, people are better able to predict what the outcome of alternative behaviors will be. In this way, a stable, predictable social environment is created which allows people to rationally plan in advance.

Such was the case with the monetary stabilization plan launched in Argentina in March 1991. Legislation passed by Congress pegged the peso to the dollar and prohibited the Central Bank from printing money that was not backed by gold and foreign currency reserves; by this act, the government voluntarily but irrevocably relinquished the power to play with the value of the currency in order to achieve policy goals. By submitting itself to this "iron corset," the government pledged itself to a stable, predictable currency. This led people to trust in government and in its capacity for rationally controlling economy and politics, which induced positive and constructive behaviors on the part of citizens and, especially during a short period of euphoria, the gradual abandonment of dysfunctional behaviors such as speculation.

If people are able to predict which responses their actions will elicit, they will choose with confidence and rationality among various alternatives. Psychological ceilings –such as the belief that citizens are powerless to influence economic and political outcomes or that these depend on external factors, such as luck, charisma and other magical factors– may be partially overcome. Anti-social attitudes toward others (as revealed in the belief that "most people are not reliable") may also be overcome; according to a comparative survey conducted by the author, this type of distrust was more prevalent among Argentine and Spanish university students than their American peers, at least with respect to "out-groups" rather than "in-groups" (above all toward the primary group but also toward members of the same political, racial or other groups).¹³ Such

distrust blocks reciprocal expectations which are the basis for effective cooperation. Certainty and predictability are necessary foundations for any system of social cooperation and for joint action on behalf of human advancement and fulfillment. They are part of consistency, leading to light of truth and to the benefit of people and reality through realistically and effectively adhering to them and serving them.

C. Applying Consistency in any Culture

1. Consistency and corruption possible in any culture

a. Consistent or contradictory answers to the questions of reality

Value systems provide frameworks for explaining the meaning of reality and its parts. They aim at providing a systemic, all-encompassing foundation capable of answering basic questions about what is real, what exists and what is valuable, worthy, good and desirable, according to the requirements of consistency.

Although value systems try to achieve explanations which, like the principle of consistency, are free from contradiction and contain all elements of information, they in fact provide incomplete and contradictory answers; they are never completely consistent or inconsistent.

It is only by constantly redoubling efforts to discover and support reality and unity that explanatory frameworks can gradually become more consistent.

Explanatory frameworks and the answers they provide may be improved through the continuous, consistent, combined efforts of all people to exercise genuine consistency, considering all aspects, relations, consequences and implications within a broad frame of reference modeled after the system of reality integrated by unity.

Limitations on such efforts are the source of doubts, contradictions and suffering. If efforts are guided by spurious consistency, they will privilege fragments, impulses and caprices.

Social norms are adopted based on the assumption that they provide effective solutions to problems and needs. But depending whether this assumption is guided by genuine or spurious consistency, the solutions adopted will either contribute to the fulfillment of people and reality –or not. Consistent analysis of values and social norms, which continually receive new life from human decisions through social norming, is fundamental. These values and norms have a critical influence on learning, decision making and behavior and their effects in terms of the fulfillment of people and reality.

It is therefore the responsibility of social scientists, leaders and citizens to study these issues and act consistently in relation to them.

b. Genuine or spurious "second nature" depends on free social norming

The profound, enduring influence of social norms and values on behavior does not mean the former determine the latter. Social norms and values are continually created, accepted and modified by free decisions, and the degree of genuine or spurious consistency which characterizes these decisions determines the degree of genuine or spurious consistency of social norms and values. In this way, social norms and values are instruments through which people freely exercise their capacity for consistency –whether correctly or incorrectly; in this way social norms are instruments through which persons influence themselves and others in the direction of genuine or spurious consistency; social norms come to be regarded as "second nature" and therefore wield a powerful influence on individuals and others which extends through centuries and millenia. It is therefore extremely important to identify and study social norms and values so they can continually be readjusted (to serve genuine consistency) through free decisions, as individuals exercise their capacity for consistency in a genuine or spurious fashion.

Although values have a powerful and enduring influence on attitudes and behaviors, they do not have a specific, direct link to behavior. People and children brought up in the same family, neighborhood or school, who are taught the same values, may embrace diametrically opposed behaviors and social norms (virtue or vice).¹⁴ At the same time, certain types of attitudes and forms of behavior are to some extent global; corruption, for example, is present everywhere.

All societies, groups and individuals choose their own path, building, adopting and modifying complex combinations of social norms and values according to the processes of social norming. They are always free to decide to follow paths that are closer to genuine consistency or closer to spurious consistency. They choose among the consistent and inconsistent seeds existing in all systems of social norms and values and use them as raw material to be applied in the direction of either genuine or spurious consistency.

c. Influence of social norms derives from free choice; using this influence to improve decisions

Experience and psychological frames of reference are integrated systems created by free decisions, and conditioned by social norms, values and the environment which, to a significant extent, derive from free decisions. Though social norms and values are influenced by the

environment, they are ultimately human products and people are therefore responsible for creating, combining, modifying and applying them in accordance with genuine consistency. The influence of social norms and values thus depends on how people exercise their capacity for consistency in free decision making. People's ability to freely choose and create social norms and values, as well as their ability to recreate norms and values by interpreting, modifying and combining them (social norming), enables individuals to freely influence their behavior and apply chosen social norms and values to action. Internal and external circumstances—physical, psychological, social, cultural—offer themselves as raw material for the exercise of such freedom.

Social norms and to an even greater extent values (given their greater scope) are wide frameworks which leave considerable room for applying a great variety of free decisions and behaviors, in addition to the decision of accepting, modifying or rejecting various social norms and values. The same value or social norm may be used for benefit or harm, consistently or inconsistently, depending on how it is combined with other values, social norms and circumstances. In this way, each particular act represents the culmination of a complex chain of influences, all of which are conditioned by free decisions.

Values and social norms are continually changed in this process. Values and social norms therefore have certain components that are stable and shared, as well as other components that are continually created, changed and modified through free choice and the social norming process.

Each person and each group adopts, adapts, modifies and combines values (or components of values) according to experience and free choice; these values are then integrated into people's psychological and social frames of reference, which are used to orient people in various and changing situations and to guide their decision making, social norming and behavior. These frames of reference are composed of systems of social norms people share with others. In this way, the set of values within the mind of each person is shared with the "collective mind" of a group or society.

Education and communication are important influences since they try to adjust people's systems of values and social norms in accordance with either genuine or spurious consistency. To favor genuine consistency, it is necessary to analyze how parents, primary groups and others—including television and other media—influence the formation of social norms and values in children as well as in adults and leaders.

It is also important to analyze how interpretations and responses differ among various individuals and what consequences these differences have

for fulfillment. Through such an analysis, people can gain a better understanding of how to improve individuals' responses and the influences which bear upon them.

2. Both sacred and expedient value orientations required by consistency

a. Sacredness and expediency in ends and means

Consistency requires people to embrace the ends of fulfillment as their ultimate goal, ensuring that these ends are compatible with the overall system of reality and integrative unity. This entails an emphasis on sacred or ultimate ends which lead people to desire and work for the fulfillment of people and reality. It also entails an emphasis on spiritual and human values (including family and interpersonal relations). Consistency also requires people to serve these ends effectively. This, in turn, requires people to take into account the systemic relations among all aspects of reality; it also leads people to take responsibility for their own lives and to efficiently use rational tools (professionalism, organization, information, initiative, self-discipline, scientific methods, etc.). A sacred value orientation is misplaced when it causes people to treat fragments or impulses as ultimate ends, hoping that these can somehow magically replace reality and eliminate the need to adjust to its laws and relations. An expedient value orientation is misplaced when it reduces transcendent ends—spiritual, human, family—to means, choosing to serve fragments and impulses instead.

b. Preventing punishments from reality, properly applying social raw material

There is an important gain if people do not wait for the hardships and difficulties which act as alarm signals from reality. People should anticipate such messages and avert them by exercising their capacity for consistency, or at least heed reality's messages in a timely manner, before contradiction and destruction becomes unbearable. Citizens and leaders must recognize the shortcomings of their model before these become intolerable; they must push for modifications, demanding greater honesty and efficiency from themselves and others. Under the right conditions, this movement can have a steamroller effect, overcoming opposition and uprooting vested interests,

and convincing society at large to join the campaign. At this point, the vicious circle may be converted into a virtuous one. In order to do this, people may use prevailing values and social norms as raw material, even if these could also be applied in a dysfunctional manner. Such values and social norms can be redirected and used to serve desirable, functional ends, much like a weapon may be used for crime or for defending a just cause. The key is the manner in which norms and values are applied, viz., whether they respect or defy the laws of reality derived from integrative unity.

D. Cautionary Note

1. Incipient, reversible nature of success

Argentina's recent success in the fight against corruption has just begun. Only the tip of the iceberg has been tackled and much remains to be done. Indeed, the people and authorities who have led the change have responded more out of necessity than out of conviction and have learned through a rather rough process of trial and error. Argentines must still undergo a long and difficult process in order to learn to analyze their problems and solutions from the perspective of reality, following genuine consistency. If they adopt a unilateral focus on immediate success, they will fail to orient everything toward unity, which is the proper basis and end of everything. Argentines must still identify and clarify intervening factors. Otherwise, they will be unable to understand the nature of the changes already enacted and those still required; confusion, disorder and uncertainty will continue. Today, in 1998, the seeds of corruption are still visible, despite the sound reforms which have been initiated.

2. Dangers

Among the potential dangers which may jeopardize successful reforms such as those initiated in Argentina in 1989 is the tendency toward pendular mood swings between euphoria and depression. So long as the new program of economic stabilization and social reform seems to be producing positive results, a sense of well-being prevails, but should the program suffer a momentary downturn, support may suddenly evaporate and people may become more disillusioned than ever. Argentine society needs to learn not look at alternative models unilaterally as panaceas or failure; they must not become complacent with temporary advances nor excessively negative about inevitable setbacks which accompany the program of reform. Otherwise, they will vainly look for magical, absolute and permanent solutions instead of adopting a balanced approach which considers the underlying structure of reality, including all its relations and implications.

Argentine society must also be on guard against treating material success as a panacea. Argentines must not allow themselves to be dazzled by economic and material advances to such an extent that they neglect

spiritual, family and interpersonal values. Such an unbalanced, superficial approach causes people to abandon efforts as soon as the momentary pain of failure is erased, like a patient who abandons the treatment prescribed by the doctor as soon as he or she begins to feel better and winds up in worse shape than before. If the total system of reality is not seriously considered in all its depth and with all its causal connections, problems will not be truly solved and contradictions and confusion will prevail.

Argentine society must be careful not to copy the defects rather than the virtues of materially successful societies, since this would impede its ability to contribute to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

Furthermore, Argentines must recognize that even economic growth and advances in the fight against corruption will not last unless people followed through with the continued application of a serious, systematic, consistent approach.~

CHAPTER FIVE

SACRED - EXPEDIENT: DOMINANT VALUE ORIENTATIONS IN UNITED STATES AND ARGENTINA

A. Value differences between Americans and Argentines: the sacred-expedient axis

1. Explanation of succes and failure

a. Economic, political, spiritual, interpersonal realms

This chapter examines contrasting value orientations by analyzing the results of a study of the values of American, Argentine and Spanish university students which I conducted in 1962-1963.¹ The study found

that the application of an expedient value orientation in economic and political realms favored success in these realms in the United States; a non-expedient orientation led to failure in these realms in Argentina, especially in the last few decades.

At the same time, however, Argentine students revealed a sacred value orientation toward spiritual matters and family and interpersonal relations; such an orientation was associated with strong spiritual, family and interpersonal ties in Argentina. The lesser emphasis on sacred values in the United States was associated with a general decline in these realms.

In both cases, failure is due to the improper application of value orientations: the sacred value orientation fails to apply expediency to economic and political affairs and the expedient value orientation fails to place economic, political and other resources at the service of higher spiritual, family, social and human values.

The expedient value orientation refers to the manner in which people control their environment and resources so as to achieve desired results; the sacred value orientation refers to the predisposition to acknowledge higher principles and submit oneself to them. Taken together, these two value orientations refer to two essential dimensions of the exercise of consistency and the road to human fulfillment: optimizing the use of one's own capacities and submitting achievements to higher values and ends. Expediency refers to a certain way of approaching means, while sacredness refers to the ultimate goals or ends people pursue.

Both orientations—sacred and expedient—are present in all societies and individuals. For these orientations to be applied properly, that is, in a consistent manner, people must not only make systematic and effective use of means but also ensure that these means are used to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality in a balanced and harmonious fashion. In this way, people respect the system of reality, integrated by unity, in all its aspects and relations.

Lack of expediency in the use of means reveals an inconsistent approach. This occurs when information, professionalism, organization, method and discipline are incorrectly or inadequately used. Similarly, the failure to dedicate oneself to making optimal use of means in order to serve sacred, worthy ends—reality, integrative unity, human fulfillment, spiritual, family and interpersonal values, being, truth and goodness—also reveals an inconsistent approach.

Both types of inconsistency, whether with respect to means or ends, prevent people from contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, which requires balanced respect for all aspects and relations of reality and contribution to its fulfillment.

b. Dangers in copying materialistic models

Third World societies may benefit by applying an expedient orientation and effective means in the realms of economics and politics, but they will suffer if they apply such an orientation to spiritual, family and interpersonal relations. If an expedient orientation is applied to the choice of ultimate ends, people will tend to focus on impulses and fragments as their goals, making means into ends. It is therefore important for less developed nations to avoid copying economically successful models (such as the United States) in a simplistic manner.

In countries like Argentina, there is a danger that material achievements may come to be treated as a panacea instead of being properly seen as valuable means to serve spiritual, family and interpersonal values. Argentines and people in other Third World societies must not abandon their sacred orientation, which leads to spiritual and emotional strength, satisfaction and security.

At the same time, sacred value orientations may be harmful if they prevent people from taking responsibility for seeking effective means to deal with practical problems. People with a sacred orientation often concentrate excessively on ends and rely on magical means to achieve them, such as the intervention of charismatic leaders, panaceas, luck or time; this produces negative results, dissatisfaction and insecurity in political and economic realms. Both sacred and expedient value orientations are limited due to the fact that they reflect only part of reality and part of the truth. Both orientations, when unilaterally applied, tend to exaggerate certain aspects of reality and neglect others; as a result, they fail to adopt means and goals which are appropriate for different realms.

c. Results of the comparative study: strength of nationality, need for differentiated, consistent approach

There is a tendency in both Argentina and the United States to apply the prevailing value orientation (expedient in the United States, sacred in Argentina) in an undifferentiated, unilateral manner which is generalized to all realms. In both cases, this led to inconsistency.

In Argentina, people tended to disregard the importance of expedient tools—professionalism, information, organization, discipline, systematic methods, etc.—and preferred to trust in external, magical means instead; as a result, Argentines failed to rationally develop economic and political life, leading to failures in these realms. In the United States, on the other hand, general disdain for spiritual, family and interpersonal values led to failures in these realms.

Such inferences are consistent with the results of a survey of American, Spanish and Argentine university students, which I conducted in 1962. This survey showed a distinct trend toward generalized sacred-oriented responses in Argentine and Spanish students, in contrast to a dominant tendency toward generalized expedient-oriented responses among American university students. The self-administered questionnaire contained questions designed to reveal a sacred or expedient orientation toward family, interpersonal relations and ideas. The sacred-oriented responses were associated with high religiosity, Catholicism, being female, being twenty years old or younger, coming from a rural area and having an especially cohesive circle of friends. However, the strongest association was observed between value orientation and nationality—Americans with an expedient orientation and Spaniards and Argentines with a sacred orientation. This suggests the particularly strong influence of nationality on social norms, values and experiences which, in turn, influence decisions and behaviors (see *Appendix*).

None of the national groups tended to adopt a differentiated approach and therefore did not apply each orientation where it belonged (applying expediency to economic and political affairs and sacredness to spiritual, family and interpersonal matters). In all of the groups studied, the students displayed a tendency toward unilaterally applying a particular value orientation rather than concerning themselves with a balanced application of complementary approaches. This indicates the importance of teaching individuals in all societies to serve consistent, final goals as well as to adopt efficient means in order to serve these goals.

d. Learning from blows of reality; correcting excesses in American and Argentine models

Argentines have generally shunned an expedient orientation toward politics and economics, unlike Americans whose expedient approach has helped produce political and economic success. At the same time, many Argentines have been dazzled by the seductive prospect of material success and have abandoned the cornerstone of their traditional orientation—a focus on sacred values which strengthened spiritual, family and interpersonal aspects. As a result these Argentines have failed to apply each orientation in its appropriate realm and wound up with the worst of both. Argentines developed a dangerous tendency toward overconfidence due to their natural resources and historical advantages, as well as their faith in charismatic leaders, panaceas and luck.² This led to an unrealistic relation to their environment which impeded development and damaged

the quality of life. Yet at the same time, these blows from reality offer an opportunity for Argentines to learn from past errors and from national and foreign examples. In fact, over the past few years, hyperinflation, political violence, declining growth, war and foreign debt have forced many Argentines to become aware that their expectation that solutions will come from outside or above is unrealistic. They have begun to recognize the importance of using information, organization, professionalism, discipline and systematic methods.

Similarly, the blows Americans have suffered may help them awake from their unfounded optimism in an expedient value orientation. Americans have suffered from their own brand of overconfidence stemming from their material success. This has caused an inconsistent, unbalanced approach which has meant that, despite material prosperity, individuals and groups in the United States are suffering from a deteriorating quality of life, troubled family and interpersonal relationships, a loss of emotional security and confusion about the meaning of life (as shown by drug abuse, mental illness, alienation, etc.). These hardships may serve as stimuli to encourage people to correct their unilateral emphasis on the material advances deriving from an expedient approach and open their eyes to the importance of serving transcendent, sacred goals.

Citizens, leaders and social scientists are responsible for using hardships to become aware and acknowledge the error of their ways. They need to learn to adopt consistent components of national and foreign models and social norms, combining an expedient focus on effectiveness toward economic, political, scientific, technological, social and cultural means with a broad focus on the ultimate goal of serving the fulfillment of individuals and reality, with an emphasis on spiritual, family and interpersonal dimensions and the related values of being, truth and goodness.

2. The sacred-expedient axis

a. Differences between Americans and Latin Americans

According to the literature, differences in the values of Americans and Latin Americans may be classified in a number of different ways. First, differences between the United States and Latin America have been described by various scholars in terms of the distinction between "modern"

and "traditional" societies. Related to this, American society has been characterized as having an "attitude which seeks profit rationally and systematically."³ Latin American societies, on the other hand, have been depicted as traditional.⁴ American middle-class society has been described in terms of the following dominant orientations: individualism, future time, mastery over nature, action and belief in a fixed, good-or-evil human nature. Latin American society, on the other hand, is characterized by linearity, present time, subjugation to nature, being, and belief in the mutability of human nature. Whereas Americans stress freedom through efficacy in the use of means, Latin Americans emphasize freedom through choice over final ends.⁵

The "enlightened self-interest" which Alexis de Tocqueville describes as typical of American democracy may be taken as yet another point of contrast with Latin American culture, which is generally seen as more conducive to unconditional sharing.⁶

The Ponian dichotomization of traditional and modern value patterns—ascriptive vs. achievement, diffuseness vs. specificity, particularism vs. universalism, and affectivity vs. neutrality—may also be applied to the American vs. Latin American distinction.⁷ Other elements of the Latin American culture which have been included in scholarly descriptions include a distinctive Latin American ideological orientation⁸, the lack of a sense of guilt over failure in performance, the importance given to spiritual or transcendental values, and the restriction of interpersonal trust to members of the family.⁹

b. Main premises of cultural systems: consistency and sacred-expedient axis

The sacred-expedient axis gives value and meaning to individuals and their behaviors, depending on whether they dedicate themselves to serving transcendent values and ultimate ends (sacred values orientation) or to achieving effective results (expedient value orientation). Although these value orientations occupy opposite positions along the sacred-expedient axis, they are not inherently contradictory; to the extent they are guided by genuine consistency, they are complementary. Genuine consistency shows people how to embrace transcendent values and ultimate ends, as well as effective means for serving them. Values and ends should be oriented toward contributing to reality and integrative unity, thereby promoting being, goodness and truth and enhancing the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Effective means are derived from the capacity for consistency and recognize the superior role of spiritual, family and

interpersonal realms. Through their capacity for consistency, individuals build patterns of thought, desires, feelings and actions which, together with their results, form cultures and social systems. All these are based on certain fundamental premises, which we call values. Consistency makes such values and their implications explicit, enriching and confronting them within the wider system of reality integrated by unity. This prevents people from becoming trapped in partial visions of reality. By making underlying premises and their implications explicit, it is possible to increase their meaning and enrich their content.

Consistency (which may also be called reason) is the great premise which forms the basis of all human thoughts, desires, actions and creations. Unity in variety (to which consistency refers) allows individuals to relate to everything that exists –including themselves and other living beings– as parts of a great system. Sacred and expedient value orientations are fundamental premises of human thought and behavior, derived from consistency, leading people to submit themselves to higher values and principles in the case of the former and encouraging people to use their capacities and means to effectively promote their chosen goals in the case of the latter.

c. Spurious application of each value orientation: the Argentine and U.S. cases

If consistency is exercised in a spurious manner, then people fail to consider the whole of reality as created by unity, which integrates everything. Spurious consistency arbitrarily privileges fragments, leading people to succumb to the temptation of impulses instead of subordinating themselves to reality and unity. Furthermore, spurious deviations are carried over to values, social norms, decisions, actions and human creations, starting with the sacred-expedient dimension.

When spurious consistency is applied to the sacred-expedient dimension, that is, to the value orientation which provides the higher level premises of cultural systems, it distorts the meaning of "sacredness." Sometimes this means people treat fragments, impulses, caprices and ego –including money, power, pleasure, prestige, success, material progress, etc.– as if they are sacred, ultimate ends. In doing so, they reject the balance and harmony of reality and integrative unity. This type of deviation tends to prevail in the United States.

Alternatively, people may distort and spoil "sacredness" by thinking it is sufficient to adhere to spiritual, ethical and human principles and values in their thoughts and words without working for the fulfillment of

such principles and values through efficacious action guided by consistency. This deviation, which I refer to as declarativism, tends to prevail in Argentina.

In a similar fashion, spurious consistency distorts and spoils the meaning of "expediency." First, if expedient means are used to achieve economic, political, scientific and technological progress but are not submitted to the service of spiritual, family and interpersonal ends, then effectiveness only contributes to success in narrow, partial realms and not in terms of global and final dimensions. This deviation tends to prevail in the United States. Second, if people eschew effective action altogether, whether on behalf of material means or spiritual ends, they come to rely on external factors, such as luck, time, charismatic leaders, and other magical elements. This fosters passivity—a deviation which tends to prevail in Argentina.

Really both deviations are linked; both are inadequate when it comes to what really counts. Both fail to stimulate effective action on behalf of human beings' true mission in life. Both fail to acknowledge reality and integrative unity as the only true sources of sacredness; instead, they cling to partial fragments, whether material success or trust in magical fantasies, and treat these as if they were sacred. Although the specific type of deviation differs between the United States and Argentina, all these are part of the same syndrome of spurious consistency which appears in different combinations in both societies.

Although the typical deviations deriving from spurious consistency reflect prevailing social norms, in each society there is also a significant tendency toward genuine consistency and genuine application of the sacred and expedient value orientations. This is reflected in respective social norms and explains advances in terms of quality of life and human fulfillment as well as advances in culture, science, technology, the economy and politics.

d. Sacred-expedient: crucial aspects of individuals' relation to reality, questions, consistent answers

Sacred and expedient premises both derive from genuine consistency and form part of the harmonious system of reality, integrated by unity. As such, they do not contradict but complement each other, so long as they are consistently applied. They refer to two crucial aspects of human individuals: their subordination and dependence, on the one hand, and their capacity and responsibility for effectively using their received talents, on the other. In other words, sacredness and expediency refer to human beings' limitations as well as their dignity. Reality and unity relate to

individuals in a genuinely consistent manner, and they invite individuals to relate to them, and to others and to themselves, in the same way. The capacity of consistency, which allows people to relate to each other and their environment in a genuine manner, is an integrated process involving knowledge, will, feeling and action. Individuals achieve an optimal relation with reality when they acknowledge and adhere to reality and integrative unity as the basis, origin and end of their existence. Individuals must work to effectively contribute to the fulfillment of reality and individuals, thus fulfilling their responsibility.

The basis of existence is not centered on fragments or on individuals, but on integrative unity. The mission of individuals is to submit to unity by focusing on ultimate and sacred ends and serving them with effective means; this provides people's lives with value and meaning. Individuals advance in this direction by completely dedicating themselves to the service of consistency –guiding their choices of ends and means and adjusting their decisions, social norms and values according to consistency.

By doing so, individuals can avoid both expedient and sacred unilateralism. Instead of privileging ego, impulses and fragments (as does a unilateral focus on expediency), individuals are able to realize that the origin of reality and its parts, i.e., that which gives them existence, value and meaning, is found in integrative unity and the transcendent, suprahuman principles and values deriving from it. Similarly, individuals can avoid the tendency to unilaterally emphasize sacredness by recognizing that their lives acquire meaning and value to the extent they actively and effectively exercise their influence on reality to serve fulfillment in goodness and truth. Instead of reacting with passivity and impotence, they must analyze causal relations and freely intervene in them, fulfilling their mission and responsibility to affect society, culture, science, language, organization, arts, economy, politics, technology, etc. in a consistent direction.

People need to recognize their potential as well as the limits on their influence. People may overcome both sacred and expedient unilateralisms by subordinating themselves to reality and unity and by fulfilling their responsibility to serve these ends as effectively as possible, thus harmoniously balancing the sacred and the expedient.

Spurious consistency does not completely erase the "voice of conscience," (i.e. genuine consistency) which reminds people that everything derives from higher principles (of unity and integration of reality, in truth and goodness), even when people attempt to disguise this fact by building "golden calves" to worship (vanity, power, money, prestige, pleasure, domination, violence, etc.).

The voice of conscience also reminds individuals that they have the capacity and resources to effectively serve higher ends, even if they try to pretend that they are impotent and dependent on external solutions. The voice of conscience warns individuals trapped in both deviations to acknowledge that there are superior principles which transcend the capricious will of individuals and that all their abilities, energy, decisions, actions, possessions, achievements, etc. are meant to be offered to reality and integrative unity with a view to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Sacred and expedient value orientations thus need to be submitted to the central axis of consistency.

e. Frames of reference and contradictions

Different value orientations and different frames of reference give rise to different social norms and values, thoughts, desires and actions. To the extent that these abide by genuine consistency, they are consistent with each other; if, on the other hand, they follow spurious consistency, contradictions emerge. Contradictions limit people's ability to fulfill their mission of contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. In actual practice, there is both concordance and contradiction among the partial links that integrate various values and social norms within the frame of reference of each person and of each group and between frames of reference.

This requires people to identify contradictions and establish which aspects need to be modified in order to increase the consistency and harmony of the frameworks and value orientations they use, emulating the system of systems of reality (and adjusting to it) which places each aspect where it belongs and respects its relations with everything else, according to the laws of reality deriving from integrative unity. In this way, contradictions can be genuinely solved. Spurious solutions privilege some aspects of reality and neglect others.

f. Genuine vs. spurious application of sacred and expedient orientations

Thanks to their capacity for consistency, individuals are able to detect which aspects of cultures and social norms are sound and should be cultivated as well as which aspects are unsound and need to be corrected. Such discrimination requires critical analysis in order to see how everything fits into the system of reality and how to properly apply sacred,

expedient and other values. All aspects of culture, society, values and social norms are shaped by the basic decision to adhere to either genuine or spurious consistency; indeed, all human actions and experiences are part of an indivisible process which includes knowledge, will, feeling and action and which either moves toward truth, goodness, happiness and efficacy or the opposite.

A consistent or appropriate relation to reality entails properly locating sacred and expedient value orientations, adhering to reality and unity (as well as derived principles of being, truth, goodness and fulfillment), and dedicating oneself to these ends with all one's means, energies, time and resources so as to effectively contribute to their realization.

A spurious, inappropriate relation to reality misplaces the sacred and the expedient. First of all, the misapplication of a sacred orientation may manifest itself in the tendency to give undue importance to impulses, fragments, caprices, ego and possessions, treating money, power, prestige, success, etc. as if they were sacred ends.

Alternatively, people may engage in empty declarations of intentions, without insisting on effective action to follow these through. In both cases, people fail to acknowledge that the only sacred object truly worth pursuing is integrative unity and the laws and principles deriving from it, including goodness, truth and fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Second, an expedient orientation is misplaced when people strive to make their efforts serve impulses, fragments, caprice, ego and possessions as effective as possible, without concern for contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Expediency is also misapplied when people rely upon the efficacy of magic factors –luck, time, charismatic leaders, panaceas, etc. In both cases, they fail to acknowledge that the only effectiveness that counts is that which is used to serve reality and the laws deriving from unity as well as from the free decision of individuals to conform to these laws. If people replace ultimate ends with means or fragments, or if they do not use means to serve ultimate ends, they misapply sacred and expedient orientations.

g. Limited possibilities and partial advances

The majority of cultural and value systems and processes have "a limited range of possibilities in their variation, in the creation of new fundamental forms."¹⁰ Talcott Parsons, for example, states that there are four types of social value orientations which emerge from the combination of universalism-particularism and ascription-achievement; he contends that these are "all the types which tend to emerge when major types of

cultural development in the literate cultures have occurred."¹¹ In the same vein, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck state that the strain toward consistency is a "prevailing influence of one type of rank ordering upon variant orderings which have the same component parts," although components may vary independently from each other.¹² The dominance of one or the other pole is a matter of degree rather than a black-and-white difference: "All alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times, but are differentially preferred."¹³

Human beings' capacity for consistency allows them to imagine all possibilities, but it also places limits in accordance with the structure of reality deriving from integrative unity, which assigns each possibility its particular place within its structure of dimensions, relations and systems. Despite this ability, people often fail to place possibilities where they belong, according to the proper role corresponding to each one; they often judge something to be possible when it is not, thus contradicting reality and succumbing to fiction and fantasy. Proper detection and construction of dimensions, relations and systems help to gradually overcome such errors. People often tend to overemphasize certain aspects while underestimating others. For example, people tend to give undue importance to immediate considerations and to neglect more long-term aspects; they fail to look at the whole and therefore cannot see the forest for the trees.

Ideally, social norms and values would reproduce the structure of reality deriving from unity by assigning each being and aspect its proper place. In practice, however, people have only scant information about small parts of reality, although their capacity for consistency enables them to perceive the total structure.

People therefore need to work arduously and continually in order to build a bridge between the framework of consistency created by integrative unity and the fragments they discover through partial information and inferences, and the conceptual and methodological tools which persons gradually build. This can bring real advances to the extent that they are adjusted to the requirements of consistency, integrating partial consistencies into higher levels of consistency and reducing spurious elements.

A sonata by Mozart, a work of art by Michelangelo, an architectural masterpiece by Leonardo, a brilliant philosophical insight by Aristotle and a scientific theory by Copernicus all represent a partial approximation to consistency. They did not result from the random, disorderly accumulation of possibilities but from progressive efforts to discover, adhere and contribute to unity underlying variety, which determines what

is possible and desirable (due to truth, beauty, goodness, effectiveness) and also what actually is or happens. The requirement for this is that people continually seek to insert their accomplishments into the overall system of reality, systemically connecting them with others, striving for gradual advances and humbly acknowledging their own limitations. Social norms and values help people advance in this direction to the extent that they guide individuals along the path of unity, considering all aspects, relations and implications in the most balanced and exhaustive fashion possible, without privileging any over the rest. Given the fact that social norms and values highlight certain possibilities, aspects and relations, it is important for people to constantly work to improve their fit with the integrated system of the order of reality governed by unity.

h. Integrating ethic of ultimate ends and ethic of responsibility

Max Weber argued that human behavior can be oriented toward an "ethic of ultimate ends" or an "ethic of responsibility."¹⁴ These two ethics represent basic solutions for explaining the value of individuals and correspond to the sacred and expedient value orientations. Although Weber describes them as alternative solutions, they are not necessarily irreconcilable since, when properly applied, they both derive from consistency and therefore become compatible and complementary. In order to genuinely serve ultimate ends, individuals need to assume responsibility for the results of their actions; this means that they depend on the exercise of their capacity for consistency, using all means, resources and energies. Responsibility is spurious if it does not take into account the full effects of one's behavior, including ultimate implications.

The different emphases of Weber's contrasting ethics as well as the sacred and expedient value orientations assign value to individuals and their acts according to their achievements or their adherence to ultimate ends. The respective strength of these alternative approaches varies between the United States and Argentina, but each is equally valid and may be considered an asset to the extent that it adheres to genuine consistency.

Both approaches provide the logical premises for various systems of values and social norms in different countries, and each may be used to complement the other in order to increase the fulfillment of individuals and reality. While the ethic of ultimate ends focuses on the internal action of acceptance and adherence, the ethic of responsibility places emphasis on demonstrating such adherence and acceptance by fulfilling the necessary requirements in order to effectively serve such ends.

Genuine adhesion to ultimate ends involves corresponding devotion to serve them with effective means. Genuine effectiveness involves serving not only immediate but mediate and ultimate ends. This is the consistent exercise of both ethics.

If people focus on reality and integrative unity, aiming at the fulfillment of individuals and reality through the exercise of genuine consistency, and if they combine both the ethic of ultimate ends and the ethic of responsibility in order to serve these goals, their consistent orientation will serve the common good. Otherwise, if they apply spurious consistency, they will do the opposite. Both ethics are strongly connected to each other, because external behavior and its efficacy depend on internal traits. If both ethics are not integrated for the sake of the common good, people will apply spurious consistency. Therefore emphasis on one and neglect of the other does not favor but harms individuals and society. Results achieved through such a unilateral approach are short-lived and lack meaning. To achieve genuine results, people need to follow the road which goes from the most intimate intentions up to ultimate consequences, dedicating their best possible efforts.

Central to such a consistent and balanced approach is the tendency to consider virtue as a matter of moral obligation. This is incompatible with an overemphasis on expedient results, as in the United States where, according to Tocqueville's description, "hardly anybody talks of the beauty of virtue, but they maintain that virtue is useful and prove it every day," not because it is "noble."¹⁵ This is a misuse of expediency since it attempts to bestow upon expediency the justification and legitimacy of virtue, even though virtue can only be derived from adjustment to unity. A proper approach needs to adhere to the firm unique, ultimate basis of reality: integrative unity (from which derive truth, goodness and all ethical values) which provides meaning and value to effectiveness.

i. Need to integrate sacredness and expediency

Reality and consistency are violated and their absolute superiority is denied when sacred or expedient orientations are misapplied. Sacred orientations are misapplied when they fail to consider the need for effectiveness and when individuals consequently do not devote their full talents and energies toward realizing the high values and principles to which they declare allegiance. Expedient orientations are misapplied when they fail to consider the wider effects in terms of ultimate ends, and when people do not subordinate themselves to such ends, thereby failing to find the only true reference point capable of genuinely evaluating results,

meaning and value. It is not enough to adhere to ultimate ends with words and intentions, while failing to serve them effectively with all one's strength; similarly, it is not enough to achieve results which are not subordinated to ultimate ends.

Pitirim Sorokin proposes two alternative solutions to the problem of justifying the value of human beings and identifying the extent of their responsibility for their own actions: the absolute character of "Ideational" ethics and the relativistic perspective of the "Sensate" ethical system.¹⁶ Integrative unity and the laws and principles derived from it require absolute superiority and are not replaceable by fragments and impulses. The ultimate ends of fulfillment of individuals and reality derive from this absolute source of reference. Unless the absolute superiority of unity governing all variety is acknowledged, an absolute status and value will be inappropriately and arbitrarily ascribed to fragments and impulses. Concerns about effectiveness, on the other hand, should be treated as relative rather than absolute; all aspects and relations of reality should be systematically considered in order to increase efficacy and make it serve ultimate ends. Thus, by applying consistency to Ideational and Sensate ethics, human beings can optimize their potential.

j. Overcoming the seeming contradiction of all-or-nothing characterizations

Ideas which appear to contradict each other may in fact be compatible on a deeper level which takes into account the complexity of reality and individuals. Simplistic, hasty, capricious and inconsistent characterizations fail to discriminate between consistent and inconsistent aspects in internal and external realms. This leads to oversimplified descriptions of individuals and ideas which do not do justice to their true meaning and value. This occurs, for instance, when individuals and ideas are classified as sacred or profane, useful or worthless. Such descriptions reflect a failure to apply genuine consistency insofar as they apply sacred and expedient values unilaterally and rigidly, ignoring their practical consequences and deeper meaning. When classifications do not admit shades or degrees but jump to simplistic conclusions and absolute, all-or-nothing characterizations, they ignore both the dignity and the limitations of individuals and ideas.

All individuals possess the capacity for consistency, which they exercise to one degree or another without ever achieving complete consistency or inconsistency. This capacity bestows a special dignity on human beings; it gives them value and earns them the right to respect and

love. In order to characterize any particular person, it is necessary to try to systematically analyze all dimensions, relations and contexts and to try to insert the analysis into the systems of systems of reality integrated by unity. In this way it is possible to better understand and predict individuals' virtues and weaknesses; this, in turn, increases the likelihood of reinforcing the former and counteracting the latter. Consistent characterizations of individuals (and ideas) must therefore include the following elements:

- Their complex relations with the rest of reality –including other people and themselves– and with unity, which is the source of their value and dignity;
- Their internal lives and relations, that is, their thoughts, desires, feelings, motives, decisions and internalized social norms;
- Their interpersonal relations and their joint action with others;
- The deep value and meaning of all individuals –reflected in their capacity for consistency– and in all living beings, all of whom deserve love and respect and whose fulfillment should be sought;
- The deep value of ideas, ends, values and virtues which relate people to the reality to which they belong and to unity, on which reality is based;
- The place of individuals and others within the network of relations of reality;
- The convergence of sacredness and expediency in consistency;
- The need to adhere to reality and all persons within it, working effectively to contribute to their fulfillment in truth and goodness.

k. Moral obligation of genuine sacredness and expediency

A sacred orientation, when inspired by genuine consistency, emphasizes the moral obligation to consider all implications, maximizing efficacy on behalf of reality, unity, human beings, truth and goodness. This prevents people from submitting to the prison of impulses and fragments which attempt to replace unity and reality. A genuinely sacred orientation therefore entails a moral obligation to dedicate oneself to others and extend unconditional love; charitable actions must not be performed with the expectation or demand of getting something in return (approval, love, prestige, power, money, etc.) or in order to satisfy egoistic interests. It requires people to break free from impulses and interests which cause them to privilege certain fragments which prevent people from devoting themselves to reality and others, in truth and goodness. People must avoid the tendency toward extremism on behalf of partialities, fragments,

interests and caprices; they must learn to care more about giving than receiving. Finally, a genuinely sacred orientation implies the moral obligation to evaluate ideas and social norms according to their adjustment to reality and unity, truth and goodness, rather than judging them according to their ability to satisfy impulses and interests.

An expedient orientation, when inspired by genuine consistency, aims at using all means and resources at one's disposal as effectively as possible in order to meet these moral obligations. In this way, sacredness and expediency are optimally combined so as to serve desirable ends with effective means.

3. Consistency and the sacred-expedient axis

a. Losses in spiritual ends and material means

The tendency to ascribing absolute, sacred value to impulses and fragments rather than unity and reality reveals an inconsistent application of the sacred-expedient axis. This occurs when people strive to accumulate money, power, prestige and pleasure and treat these as absolute ends, ignoring reality, unity and the harmonious laws which derive from these. By making such values and premises explicit, it is easier for people to recognize that they lack legitimacy in terms of consistency; this allows people to correct such spurious applications of consistency. By making underlying values and assumptions explicit, people may overcome the inertia which leads them to accept these unthinkingly, as 'second nature'. Moreover, people can learn to consistently influence values and social norms through causal-functional networks so they contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Prediction is possible because individuals are strongly influenced by social norms and values, and also because they can be expected to engage in a certain amount of free, consistent, creative social norming. It is known that the capacity of consistency is continually pushing ahead (through the 'voice of conscience') and impulses and influences are often pulling backwards and both forces are visible through regular shared behaviors (social norms).

Freedom and critical judgment allow people to ascertain how best to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, maximizing their adherence to reality and unity. They can predict results and guide decisions

to the extent that they are inspired by genuine consistency, and social norms and free decisions are adjusted accordingly; and to the extent that deviations from consistency are identified through critical analysis.

In Argentines, the general failure to recognize the importance of expedient means is aggravated to the extent that people abandon their traditional devotion to ultimate ends. In addition to maintaining their adherence to ultimate –spiritual, family, and interpersonal– ends, they need to work effectively to help fulfill these ends, without letting themselves be dazzled by the prospect of money, power, prestige and pleasure. Economically successful countries such as the United States need to follow this same prescription in order to stem their losses in terms of spiritual, family and interpersonal values, as well as to prevent their economic, political and material advantages from being eroded and weakened by a decline in the moral factors –austerity, discipline, self-mastery, etc.– which led to them.

b. Soundly combining sacred and expedient approaches

If people attempt to change values and social norms without having a clear idea of what these are, what their implications for the fulfillment of individuals and reality are, or how to improve them, the chances are that the changes they make will lead to regression rather than progress. To advance, it is necessary to selectively adopt and combine the consistent components of one's own and other people's social norms and values, rather than replacing one dysfunctionality with another, more serious one. For instance, Argentines should not replace their traditional emphasis on spiritual, family and interpersonal values with materialistic panaceas but rather should learn to serve the former more effectively by embracing expedient means; in this way, they can combine the advantages of both sacred and expedient approaches. Human beings must make it a high priority to clarify how to make sound changes in social norms and values and how to combine them so as to better contribute to fulfillment.

It runs counter to reality to rely on external assistance and magical means instead of making sound use of information, professionalism, organization and systematic methods to advance in economics, politics, science and technology. This is the danger of overemphasizing sacredness, as many Argentines tend to do. It is also inconsistent when people treat what should properly be means as ends instead, disregarding the more important ends of spiritual, family and interpersonal fulfillment; a related inconsistency stems from the tendency to treat fragments and impulses, such as economic or material success, as sacred. This type of unilateral

and unbalanced approach is typical of many Americans. Both Americans and Argentines need to critically evaluate their own and other people's social norms and values so they may combine sound components and contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Americans should preserve their high esteem for professionalism and effectiveness but use these to serve spiritual, family and interpersonal values, creating a synthetic approach which fulfills the consistent aspirations of children, young people and adults, now and in the future, avoiding the spurious substitutes of hedonism, materialism and pseudo-spiritualism. Argentines should adopt the American model's emphasis on professionalism and efficacy but should be careful not to treat these as a panacea, placing them at the service of traditional spiritual, family and interpersonal values instead.

c. Combining sound components of various models

Consistency requires the deliberate and balanced combination of the sound components of various models—one's own as well as those of other people. By combining sound social norms and values and synthesizing the best aspects of both sacred and expedient approaches (pursuing sacred ends through expedient means), people can contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. It is not a matter of adopting or rejecting a sacred or expedient model in toto, nor is it a matter of judging each model's inferiority or superiority. Within the same model, social norm or value, there are sound components which should be adopted and unsound ones which should be rejected. Results depend on individuals' free decisions regarding the use of genuine or spurious consistency when choosing among values and social norms. In addition to free choice, results depend on the influence of social norms and values which are so thoroughly accepted as to be "second nature" (also derived from human free choices, as an instrument thereof); knowledge about these norms and values helps people learn how to choose, modify and combine them more soundly, always building new models and systems.

B. National Differences in Sacredness and Expediency

1. Value orientations and nationality

a. Environmental and personal factors

The factors that go into determining whether a given society will emphasize sacredness or expediency are determined by cultural, social, economic, political, physical and geographical environments as well as by the free decisions of individuals who comprise society and who create, modify, and combine social norms and values according to either genuine or spurious consistency. All individuals occupy particular statuses and roles within these environments and both influence and are influenced by them. These roles are shaped by the particular characteristics of individuals and groups (age, gender, religious affiliation and involvement, urban-rural background, career background and vocational preferences).

b. Reciprocal influences of micro- and macro-level factors

The different processes, conditions and factors which result in variations among societies, nations and cultures occur at both the macro- and micro-level. Indeed, the processes at work at the individual and group levels are influenced and conditioned by larger, societal processes –and vice versa, with human free decision as the crucial independent variable or causal factor. The factors that operate at the macro-level represent the accumulation of countless micro-level processes which are influenced by characteristics such as age, gender, religiosity, type of career, rural vs. urban, etc. Therefore, the nationality variable, which reflects the influence of all these variables, has greater strength than some of them separately.

2. The empirical study in United States, Spain and Argentina

a. Aims of the study

The study consisted of an exploratory survey of the differences in value orientations among American, Spanish and Argentine university students, both with respect to their attitudes toward other individuals –family, friends, fellow human beings– and toward ideas.

By comparing answers, it was possible to observe the extent to which differences were associated with nationality and other social characteristics as well as to determine the tendency toward consistency along the sacred-expedient axis. The respondents were presented with typical situations designed to test how they viewed their relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and others in general. A similar procedure was followed to test respondents' attitudes toward certain ideas and norms.

Based on their answers, the study aimed to establish the following:

- the degree to which the answers corresponded to the described American and Latin profiles, viz. a unilateral, simplistic and indiscriminate emphasis on expedient and sacred values, respectively;
- the extent to which the responses reflected a trend toward internal consistency (toward sacredness or expediency) among individuals of similar social characteristics or nationalities;
- the relative strength of national and intra-national variables;
- the tendency of Argentines and Spaniards to combine universalism and particularism by following sacred ends in a simplistic manner;
- the association between certain social characteristics and the sacred-expedient axis, reflecting their influence in predisposing people in one direction or another;
- the differences in behaviors and in economic, political, spiritual and family attitudes.

By clarifying these issues, the study aimed at helping people to understand values and social norms and showing them how to make values and social norms better serve consistency and fulfillment. It endeavored to show people how values influence and are influenced by social norms, interaction and communication.

b. Empirical indicators of value orientations

Clyde Kluckhohn stated that:

*"some of the deepest and most pervasive of personal and cultural values are only partially or occasionally verbalized and in some instances must be inferential constructs on the part of the observer to explain consistencies in behavior."*¹⁷

Our study, aware of this difficulty, specifically designed questions capable of eliciting responses from which underlying social norms and values could be inferred. As Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck note:

"since the value orientations are in large part implicit, hence seldom consciously verbalized, no systematic direct testing of them can be

made... But if the barriers of language differences are to be hurdled in order that a uniform method for cross-cultural testing can be achieved, neither the situations which are described nor the alternatives of solving the problems they pose can be highly specific and particularized... our attempt to solve this complex problem was to seek out situations which were universal in type even though somewhat variable in actual content, and then hold constant the alternatives of solution of the problem."¹⁸

With these considerations in mind, the respondents in our survey research were asked about specific situations relating to universal problems of personal, family and friendship relations and about their relation to ideas and principles. Their choices among alternative answers were used to draw inferences about their value orientations.

c. Designing indicators of the sacred-expedient axis

The design included questions and alternative answers which offered a choice between unconditional love and commitment toward individuals and ideas, linked to a feeling of moral obligation and a sense of the importance of intentions, on the one hand, or an instrumental, conditional and uncommitted approach to interpersonal relationships and ideas, based on pragmatic considerations, expectations of return and emphasis on the importance of results, on the other. Situations were logically derived from sacred and expedient premises, including, for example, topics which addressed the respondents' feelings of obligation toward their colleagues, country, spouse, and fellow human beings. The questions relating to each hypothetical situation were designed in such a way as to allow respondents' underlying value orientation to be identified as clearly as possible.¹⁹ If a respondent held a sacred world view and therefore believed that human behavior should be guided by obedience to supra-empirical absolute principles, then this orientation would determine his/her choice from among the options presented. If, on the other hand, a respondent held an expedient world view and emphasized the importance of obtaining practical results, then he/she would be inclined to select a different option.

In order to explore how respondents' (sacred vs. expedient) world views affected their attitudes toward family relations, the questionnaire presented situations designed to test whether respondents emphasized the value of unconditional commitment to one's family as a matter of principle (sacredness) or whether they emphasized the instrumental importance of one's family for the sake of self-interested goals such as social or economic gratification (expediency).

This stance resembles Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's description of the situation in Atrisco:

*"Almost never did a man leave the village primarily to better himself economically or to take a job which appealed to him more than the one he had at home," but only left in the case of "family dissension, chiefly that between eldest and younger brothers."*²⁰

In order to test respondents' attitudes toward their friends, the questionnaire presented situations designed to confront the respondent with the choice between emphasizing moral obligation, deep attachment and unconditional loyalty to one's friends (without expecting anything in return), on the one hand, and the detachment necessary to better pursue self-interested, materialistic, economic targets and goals, on the other.

To assess respondents' attitudes toward their peers, situations were presented which offered respondents a choice between expressing a sense of moral obligation toward their colleagues (whether friends or not) and indicating that relations with colleagues should be determined by more rational considerations as well.

The latter, instrumental approach led respondents to seek out those associates (including friends) from whom one may expect something in return. A similar method was used for assessing respondents' attitudes toward fellow human beings.

To obtain indicators of unconditional vs. conditional commitment in interpersonal relations, respondents were asked to comment on hypothetical situations in which one person (described as a male student) offers another his love (to a female friend) or friendship (to a male colleague) but is rebuffed. If the respondent considered the offer of love or friendship to be a worthwhile act regardless of its outcome, then a sacred value orientation could be inferred; if the respondent considered the offer of love or friendship to be a worthwhile act only if it was reciprocated, then an expedient value orientation could be inferred.

Questionnaire items designed to elicit respondents' views on ideas and principles were constructed in such a fashion as to distinguish those who characterized ideas in an absolute way as "right" or "wrong" (sacred orientation) from those who felt that the value of ideas is relative to their usefulness and practical application (expedient orientation).

Related questions asked respondents to describe their attitudes toward their country (whereby those who indicated an unconditional patriotism were identified as sacred value types), human nature (whether people may be classified as either good and bad; whether people in general may be trusted) and on the value of intentions vs. results.

d. Spurious sacredness, boomerang items, voice of conscience

The majority of items on the questionnaire were direct, allowing inferences directly linked to the underlying value orientations of respondents.

However, some items produced somewhat ambiguous responses; for example, an improperly applied sacred orientation led certain respondents (including many Argentines) to rationalize an attitude toward others which was unexpected, prompting sacred-oriented individuals to refuse to offer support and solidarity to people they considered to be untrustworthy.

This reflects the guidance of spurious consistency, which caused people to apply a sacred orientation in expedient fashion in a disguised application of self-interest. This phenomenon tended to be observed among Argentines, while American respondents revealed self-interested responses more openly and directly.

A consistent sacred orientation recognizes the sacred character of unity; it does not privilege certain individuals and discriminate against others, nor does it indulge impulses and fragments, treating these as absolutes. Thus it avoids contradictions, hatred, prejudices, vicious circles of conflict, violence, "holy wars" and destruction.

A spuriously consistent sacred orientation, though leading to corrupt practices, still reflects the need to justify actions in the face of a sacred commitment to treat all others well. This prompts people to arbitrarily characterize others as evil and themselves (and the groups they belong to) as good, instead of using critical judgment.

People with an expedient orientation often display a similar need to justify their goals in terms of sacredness.

Whereas a single-minded emphasis on expediency leads people to focus on satisfying self-interested impulses and interests and reject altruism, in practice, many individuals listen to "the voice of conscience" or consistency.

Although these individuals may openly weigh instrumental considerations in their relations with others, they also, to one degree or another, unselfishly consider the interests of others; in doing so, they apply consistent sacredness, even without proclaiming it, since in the depth of their souls they need to justify their behavior in terms of what is genuinely sacred. Often instead of genuinely listening and respecting the 'voice of conscience' there is an attempt to cover up inconsistent practices with smoke screens, for example, by ascribing sacred character to money, power, prestige, change or pleasure.

e. Rationalizations, spurious sacredness and expediency

Individuals who emphasize sacredness often rationalize pathological adaptations which contradict declared values. For example, they use scapegoats or ascribe deficiencies to individuals whom they wish to exclude. Individuals who emphasize expediency are reminded by their "voice of conscience" about the need to establish an absolute, sacred basis for their actions. Since they do not acknowledge that unity and reality are the only true basis of legitimacy, they turn to spurious substitutes, making panaceas of success, money, power, science and technology. Deviations from consistency and misapplications of sacred and expedient orientations therefore lead people to privilege egotistic concerns, caprices, impulses, material achievements and fragments, replacing unity and reality by a capricious artificial drawing intended to legitimize their giving themselves to lower impulses, preferring these to live up to their mission and responsibility in life, which is of subordinating all means and resources to unity (source and owner) and to the system of reality through which unity acts and relates to human beings.

The explanation for such discrepancies may lie in Talcott Parsons' explanation that individuals tend to "[maintain] the ideology intact, including the utopian elements, and yet [make] the indispensable concessions to the exigencies of operating as a society."²¹ In practical life, as described above, people may advance beyond "indispensable concessions" toward obvious contradictions disguised with spurious consistency. Parsons also speaks of the "cognitive distortion" which accompanies rationalization "devices" such as "the appeal to extenuating circumstances, the imputation of exaggerated deviance to others and the like."²² This leads individuals to invent strategies to hide and excuse their actions, rationalizing contradictions between principles and behavior and acting as if these were not part of the same interrelated system.²³

Even among expedient individuals and groups who proclaim the superiority of relativism, there is an attempt to find an absolute foundation for their actions; these people tend to invent spurious justifications for giving in to impulses and fragments. Among individuals who affirm the existence of transcendent, sacred principles, there is a corresponding tendency to invent arguments to rationalize behavior which is inconsistent with stated principles. In the first case, people seek spurious legitimation for undesirable goals; in the second case, they turn to spurious legitimation for departing in practice from declared principles.

When individuals want to support something, they label it efficient, and they reject things they do not want as inefficient. Impulses and interests

are rationalized as sacred. All these rationalizations replace reality and integrative unity with fragments which are capriciously chosen by the ego and its impulses, through spurious consistency. They are usually accompanied by a false feeling of superiority, as the ego strives to replace reality and unity. All societies demonstrate such deviant tendencies toward spurious misapplications of sacred and expedient values as well as efforts to rationalize inconsistency by disguising it in sacred clothes. In this way people strive to replace unity and reality by fictions which they create for hiding their 'voice of conscience' and pseudolegitimizing them and letting themselves be pushed and carried and enslaved by impulses, gratifications and choices of substitutes of unity and reality.

f. Reciprocal complacency and complicity reinforces rationalizations; product of culture and nationality

Mutual complacency –within a group or society– reinforces rationalizations of deviant behavior and spurious stigmas. These are only tolerated when mutually reinforced, i.e., when the legitimacy of similar deviations from genuine consistency or from declared norms and habits is widely accepted. When this occurs, prevailing social norms and the cultural system discourage people from facing reality and solving problems.

However, the "voice of conscience" or capacity for consistency is always available to point out contradictions and provide individuals with opportunities to correct them. People may discover and unmask spurious consistencies by looking into themselves from the perspective of other cultures or, even more, from the perspective of genuine consistency, which is available in all cultures, albeit never completely or perfectly practiced.

This book aims to stimulate such awareness without requiring individuals to physically travel to other societies and cultures; through such awareness, people can prevent rationalizations from covering other rationalizations, in endless chains, departing from unity and reality.

The complicity and mutual reinforcement which operate within cultures allow people to maintain the confusion of inconsistent attitudes and behavior and enable them to postpone facing reality.

Such reciprocal complacency among members of the same culture caused the "boomerang" questions included in the questionnaire to operate as a function of nationality and not in comparisons across other variables (age, gender, career orientation, etc.). To give an idea of the strength of culture in supporting this rationalization mechanism, it should be noticed

that both Argentine and Spanish respondents tend to agree much more often than American respondents with the statement that most people cannot be trusted. This appears to be due to the greater emphasis among Argentines and Spaniards on out-group stigmatization and lesser emphasis on effectively cooperating with individuals and groups even outside of their immediate sphere.

g. Complicity in spurious legitimacy, cheating in tests

When asked whether they approved of cheating in an examination and whether they would help or denounce cheaters, many of the respondents revealed a discrepancy between declared norms and actual behavior. Indeed, sacred-oriented students tended to exaggerate compliance with the stated value of helping their peers, thereby violating the spirit of a genuine sacred orientation and condoning dishonest activity which harms those who cheat as well as their classmates. By exaggerating solidarity, they actually adopted an approach which hinders fulfillment by stimulating people to go against truth and goodness and to try to advance through deceit and inefficiency. In so doing, these students allowed themselves to be guided by spurious consistency and the pressure of the peer group, attaching spurious legitimacy to fragments, such as loyalty to one's peers, without considering the requirements of reality and consistency. A sacred halo is attached to spurious solidarity, even when this means condoning those who cheat and condemning those who denounce cheaters.

Such behavior corresponds to Robert K. Merton's analysis of ritualism, i.e., the mechanism which makes a person behave as an insecure convert who, in Merton's terms, "becomes overly zealous in his conformity to the norms of the group because he considers himself to be on trial and wishes to ensure his acceptance."²⁴ In this example, as in the case of students who ascribed sacred value to companionship (attaching more importance to it than to justice, honesty, truth and ethics), there is a failure to respect reality, unity, truth and goodness as they deserve and to follow the requirements of one's voice of conscience.

As in the case of "boomerang" items, the tendency to attribute absolute, sacred value to objects which do not deserve such a status (e.g. solidarity with cheating and dishonest behavior) was associated strongly with nationality but not with the other variables (religiosity, career orientation, gender, etc.). Thus, a sacred orientation can be applied in a manner which deviates from consistency, resulting in a spurious orientation toward sacredness.

3. Differences according to nationality

a. Differences between Americans and Argentines; identification of causes

Meaningful differences along the sacred-expedient dimension, observed between Americans and Argentines, seem to derive from the combination and accumulation of differences in value orientations associated with other variables –also linked to the sacred-expedient axis– in the social, religious and political realms. In this way, the sacred-expedient dimension is linked to nationality and both dimensions are linked to yet a third dimension encompassing religious, cultural, socioeconomic and political differences. This makes it difficult to distinguish cause and effect; for instance, it is possible that high levels of religiosity lead to value orientations more inclined toward sacredness, but it is also possible that sacred value orientations explain high levels of religiosity. The sacred orientation reinforces –and is in turn reinforced by– not only high religiosity but also by Roman Catholic religious affiliation, due to the emphasis that this places on justifying individuals and their actions according to transcendent, "supra-human" principles and values. The sacred value orientation also reinforces and is reinforced by membership of a group with particular social characteristics, associated with giving priority to principles and ultimate ends, due to the influence such groups exert on their members.

Expedient value orientations reinforce –and are reinforced by– low religiosity, Protestant religious affiliation (especially Ascetic Protestantism, in Weberian terms) and by membership of groups with these characteristics, particularly through processes of urbanization and industrialization. In this way, reciprocal reinforcement of sacred and expedient value orientations, with the social characteristics described above and others yet to be discussed, may help to explain the differences in value orientations, as well as the differences among dominant social norms and structures in the United States and Argentina.

The results of the study, synthesized in the tables included in the Appendix indicate the following results with regard to the differences between American and Argentine respondents: First, Argentines demonstrated value orientations associated with the sacred pole in 47 of 52 items. Second, the association between the sacred-expedient dimension and nationality appeared stronger than the association with any of the other variables tested; the association between the sacred-expedient dimension and nationality was especially strong in terms of orientation toward one's

family and ideas. Third, Argentines displayed a much greater tendency to agree that "it is the intention and not the results that make an action good" (item 70) while Americans felt much more strongly than Argentines that "a capable person motivated for his own gain is more useful to society than an altruistic but less capable one" (item 65). Fourth, with respect to one's moral obligation to help others (items 14, 16, and 26), Argentines tended to believe that success and fulfillment derive from obeying moral obligations coming from a higher, invisible level, whereas Americans attached greater importance to convenience and efficacy in achieving partial, tangible goals for the sake of success and self-interest. These different responses made it clear that Argentines emphasized adherence to higher values and noble intentions whereas Americans emphasized competition and efficacy of results. In short, Americans demonstrated an expedient orientation while Argentines revealed a more sacred orientation.

b. Differences between Americans and Spaniards

The study included a sample of Spanish university students, whose responses proved, as expected, to be considerably more sacred-oriented than that of Americans but less so than that of Argentines. Like Argentine respondents, Spanish students agreed with the statement that "it is the intention and not the results that make an action good" (item 70) much more frequently than American students; the Spaniards also displayed a stronger sense of moral obligation to help their peers, close friends, and the underprivileged. Also like their Argentine counterparts, the Spanish students were less likely to feel guilty than American students if their efforts to help were ineffective. The latter response may be explained by the fact that "feelings of guilt, conscience or inadequacy ... play a large part in the psychological after-effects of failure in North American culture" whereas if the Latin American "fails, after having made a 'good try,' he is not torn by feelings of guilt, conscience or inadequacy."²⁵

For 49 of the 52 items tested in the cross-cultural comparison, the Spanish group's responses were more sacred-oriented than the American group. Interestingly, two of the three items in which American responses were more sacred-oriented than those of the Spanish sample corresponded to items in which Americans appeared more sacred-oriented than Argentines. The Spanish group's responses were more sacred-oriented not only on these direct items but also on the "boomerang" items which showed contradictions in the sacred orientation –e.g. cheating on exams. This profile was similar to that of the Argentine students and in contrast with the American profile. These results suggest that the similarities

between Spaniards and Argentines stem from the cultural heritage which links them, including religious tradition, and social, cultural, political, economic and migration processes.

4. Correlations and consistency

a. The sacred-expedient dimension, nationality and other variables

The responses to our survey revealed a strong association between sacred value orientations and Spanish and Argentine nationality, on the one hand, and expedient value orientations and American nationality, on the other. The association with nationality was stronger than with other variables, although the combined and accumulative influence of these latter variables probably gave rise to differences between the societies.

The sacred value orientation tended to be associated with certain social characteristics, including high religious involvement, having friends of the same religion, being Catholic or Jewish, attending a Catholic university, female gender, youth (20 years or younger), rural origin, professional interest in social work or in teaching, lack of exposure to academic psychology and membership in a cohesive group of friends.²⁶ Yet even Americans with social characteristics associated with the sacred pole tended to display a more expedient orientation than Argentines with social characteristics associated with the expedient pole.

At the same time, however, the social characteristics associated with sacred and expedient orientations may help explain the historical differences between societies in terms of their adherence to sacredness or expediency. For example, the fact that the distinction between sacred and expedient value orientations appeared to be closely related to religious variables suggests that the religious factor may play a significant role in the origin of national differences, viz. that the strong influence of Protestantism in America played a strong role in shaping expedient value orientations just as the prominent role of Catholicism in Spain and Argentina influenced the spread of sacred value orientations.²⁷

Differences between nations, groups and individuals are influenced by religious practices, although these practices do not conform exactly to theoretical doctrines or orthodox beliefs since they include adaptations and deviations. As a result, Argentines with a high level of religious involvement may display greater tolerance for cheating on exams, thus revealing an incorrect or inconsistent application of the sacred orientation

which legitimizes behaviors contrary to religious principles. This shows how a sacred approach may be arbitrarily applied and thus contradict stated principles, falling into declarativism, rationalizations and spurious adaptations. These adaptations occur with the secularization of religious traditions which govern social norms, decisions and actions. As societies increasingly move away from orthodoxy, the differences between Americans and Argentines with high religious involvement—who are less affected by the general trend toward secularization—become greater.

As with the religious dimension, other factors influence value differences among nations. The expedient orientation is associated with urbanization, industrialization and with less attachment to one's primary group, factors which were historically less typical among Argentines and Spaniards than among Americans. Thus, differences between cultures and social systems result from the combined and accumulative action of multiple variables.

b. Tendency toward internal and status consistency along the sacred-expedient axis

Sacred and expedient premises are reflected in social norms and attitudes and are consistent with them; these are applied to various realms of life, suggesting connections with common underlying premises. This tendency toward consistency, whether genuine or spurious, not only guides individuals' outward behavior but their internal behavior—thoughts, desires, feelings and decisions—as well. Individuals' psychological frames of reference are therefore characterized by various degrees of consistency, and the statuses they hold and the roles they exercise tend to be consistent with each other. When people suffer contradictory pressures, whether in the different statuses they hold, the different roles they play, or in their systems of thoughts, desires, feelings and decisions, they tend to resolve these by applying either genuine or spurious consistency.

In the survey, attitudes toward the family served as a good predictor of attitudes toward the absolute or relative truth of ideas; in a similar way, strong correlations were found between attitudes toward peers and toward friends, as well as between attitudes toward one's fellow man and attitudes regarding the importance of reciprocity. All these correlations seem to derive from the common relation that these attitudes have with the sacred-expedient axis, also suggested by the fact that 95 percent of the survey items were positively correlated. The few ambiguous items were positively correlated with direct items in only 56 percent of cases. Individuals showing greater internal consistency for a group of indicators also showed

such consistency for others. This suggests that some respondents adhered more than others to internal consistency.

An index of status consistency was elaborated, to reflect the degree to which respondents had characteristics associated with either the sacred or expedient orientation. Individuals who held some statuses associated with the sacred orientation and others associated with the expedient orientation displayed status inconsistency. Such individuals tended to abandon some statuses and acquire others to overcome contradictions and move toward greater status consistency. Those respondents who submitted to cross-pressures, due to their status incongruence, also showed less internal consistency.

This suggests that both inconsistencies –internal and external– influence each other. In this way high status consistency was found to be associated with high consistency in values and psychological frames of reference. Internal inconsistency leads to less consistency in choosing and keeping consistent statuses, and status incongruence leads to less internal consistency and to greater conflicts in thoughts, desires, feelings and decisions.

The capacity for consistency tends to produce internal and status consistency and leads people to overcome contradictions, with genuine or spurious consistency. (See *Appendix*).

c. Reciprocal reinforcement of sacred-expediency and social dimensions

Differentiation along the sacred-expedient dimension is influenced by social characteristics such as secularization, urbanization, industrialization, administrative complexity and growing anonymity, all of which stimulate and are stimulated by an expedient orientation. There is a reciprocal influence between religious involvement and sacred orientations, on the one hand, and between urbanization and expedient orientations, on the other.

Differences along the sacred-expedient dimension between Americans and Argentines derive from such processes as religious involvement, urbanization, industrialization and secularization, which vary between the two countries; these processes, in turn, are influenced by differences in the sacred-expedient axis.

This axis is a crucial bipolar option affecting the fulfillment of individuals and deriving from the free choice between consistency and inconsistency –that is, between genuine or spurious consistency– in processes of systemic internal and external reinforcement.

High religious involvement reinforces the tendency to ascribe high value to transcendent and sacred concerns, and vice versa; these two tendencies form part of a common syndrome and are connected as a result of external and internal processes guided by either genuine or spurious consistency. Something similar occurs with low religious involvement and the tendency to ascribe low value to transcendence and sacredness.

At the same time individuals with similar value tendencies –whether sacred or expedient– tend to associate with each other and to build cultural, social, political and economic structures. In turn, these external structures are internalized and come to be accepted as "second nature"; the resulting social norms and habits reinforce internal processes in the same direction, in a self-perpetuating, mutually reinforcing process.

All these internal and external processes, as well as the systems of reciprocal reinforcement they create, may be known, understood and influenced by individuals who consciously exercise their capacity for consistency. Such awareness may allow to more fully, freely and fruitfully guide processes, exercising consistency and serving fulfillment.

Individuals' free choices, both active and passive, determine the direction of their value orientations. Following the guidance of genuine and spurious consistency, individuals choose to lean toward one or the other; the values, social norms and styles which they practice and adopt are profoundly influenced by the way the sacred and the expedient are combined.

Systemic human processes thus include internal and external components; these are guided by internal and interpersonal consistency, especially in the case of free decisions, which create an opportunity for the exercise of individuals' capacity for consistency. Other factors contribute raw material and limits as challenges to free decision-making and action.

In this way, the decisions and actions individuals take in the present have ramifications for future decisions and actions, for themselves and for others. As people create and adopt social norms (which underlie social groups, institutions, organizations, structures and systems), present decisions are accepted and ingrained as "second nature." However, individuals are always free to revoke prior decisions, and to one extent or another, they do so all the time. This ability stems from their capacity for consistency and freedom, that is, from the always present "voice of conscience."

People must continually strive to improve never perfect achievements and they must continually guard against the danger of falling slaves to impulses and immediate fragments.

d. Logical pyramids of internal and interpersonal consistency

Their capacity for consistency enables people to build logical pyramids of internal and interpersonal consistency; these pyramids may be based on genuine or spurious consistency, depending on whether they reflect adherence to reality and unity or complacent complicity with impulses and fragments.

Such a choice is made by channeling people's energies in an appropriate or inappropriate manner through sacred or expedient value orientations and combining their own contributions with those of others.

The internal dimension of the pyramid includes thoughts, desires, feelings, decisions, values and attitudes, all of which include premises and consequences. Consistency –whether genuinely or spuriously applied– forms the apex of the pyramid, with the sacred-expedient value axis immediately below it.

The genuine application of consistency requires people to locate sacredness in reality and integrative unity and to contribute to fulfillment with effectiveness, following internal and interpersonal consistency to its ultimate implications.

The interpersonal dimension of systemic integration is fulfilled through the joint exercise of consistency in groups and as a society, building social norms, systems, structures, networks and organizations.

These pyramids are based on individuals' free decisions and actions, which continually maintain and modify them in a free but joint and cooperative task, receiving and giving contributions from and to others.

e. Misplacing sacredness and expediency, replacing unity and reality

Consistency requires the balanced application of sacred and expedient values so that each fulfills its role according to its relations with the rest of reality, inserting them where they belong. Individuals must focus on the sacred goals deriving from reality, integrative unity, truth, goodness and the fulfillment of individuals and reality; they must also expediently use all means to effectively serve such sacred values and goals. If expediency and effectiveness are taken as ultimate ends in themselves, individuals remain slaves to impulses and fragments.

Although every human behavior is grounded in consistency, in the latter case (when expediency is treated as an end in itself), consistency is

used against consistency and becomes spurious; it interferes with genuine, unrestricted consistency instead of contributing to it, thereby interfering with reality and with unity which integrates it. In such a case, the importance of expediency is exaggerated and its proper role within a balanced, consistent approach is neglected; similarly, a misapplied sacred orientation fails to respect reality and unity which integrates it, as happens with declarativism.

People must assume responsibility for exercising their capacity for consistency in a genuine manner, effectively employing their talents and resources in order to serve sacred, transcendent goals. They must avoid idealizing the ego and relying upon external forces –luck, magic, time, panaceas, charisma –which they seek to manipulate (much as the sorcerer's apprentice), creating artificial worlds that do not provide the satisfaction and fulfillment people hope for and expect.

This happens, for instance, when money, power, prestige and pleasure are treated as sacred, ultimate ends or when people believe that magic, pseudo-sacred factors, such as luck, time, charismatic leaders or panaceas, will solve all their problems. In addition, people must avoid treating truly sacred, ultimate ends and higher values, such as truth, goodness, love and giving, as mere means for serving impulses, pleasures or egoistic interests. In such situations individuals place their caprices and impulses above everything else, including themselves, ignoring the fact that everyone and everything that exists does so as part of reality, supported in unity, truth and goodness.

Unity –on which all existing things are based– acts on behalf of truth, goodness and fulfillment, with maximum effectiveness, as a model of the correct balance between sacredness and expediency (to be followed by human beings).

Individuals can follow unity thanks to their capacity for consistency, contributing with effectiveness to the fulfillment of reality, individuals and beings, according to the role and place of each and its relations with the rest of reality. In order to do this, the systemic relationships connecting all beings must be considered, up to their ultimate implications. This makes it possible for people to contribute to the fulfillment of all beings and of all individuals, giving to them according to what they deserve and need, overcoming contradictions and obstacles, thus joining unity and following its model.

This is the highest mission and dignity of individuals, taking sides with reality, unity, truth and goodness, and using them as positive reference groups.

5. Implications for decisions and policies in the United States and Argentina

a. Combining sound aspects of American and Argentine models

The different ways in which Americans and Argentines adopt and apply values and social norms connected with the sacred-expedient axis lead to two distinct sets of problems. In Argentina, misapplication of the sacred orientation leads to problems in terms of limits on political and economic growth, stability and security. In the United States, misapplication of the expedient orientation leads to problems in terms of the lack of spiritual, family, interpersonal and affective growth, stability and security.

The research reported in the comparative survey of values and social norms was motivated by the observation that Argentina's social, political and economic situation had become critical by the early 1960s, whereas in the United States there seemed to be critical problems with respect to the quality of life due to difficulties in family life, interpersonal relationships, emotional security and spiritual and integrated fulfillment. This inspired the author to search for ways of combining the sound aspects of both models and counteracting sick aspects. This appeared to require the modification of social norms and values –of which individuals are hardly conscious– and also modification of the exercise of free choice, improving the quality of decisionmaking by applying the consistency criterion.

b. Effects of spuriousness in applying sacred-expedient in both countries

In Argentina, a low level of trust in others and the resulting lack of efficient cooperation suggest that society's emphasis on unconditional love, loyalty and solidarity is to a great extent only declarative and that the dominant sacred orientation is spuriously rather than consistently applied. In the United States, the lack of goals which transcend impulses and egoistic interests as well as the lack of direction for economic and political efforts, successes and achievements suggest that the prevailing emphasis on effectiveness is misplaced, as individuals find only partial fulfillment and forego the initiative and independence they claim, thus, applying expediency in a spurious way. Spuriousness in both countries is an obstacle to a better quality of life and human fulfillment. Both countries suffer because they do not apply sacred and expedient orientations properly. In Argentina, effectiveness is missing in economic and political

growth, stability and security; in the United States, people fail to use such resources to promote human fulfillment with spiritual, family, interpersonal and emotional growth, stability and security.²⁸

To apply sacred and expedient orientations in a genuinely consistent manner, each must be combined with the other. Love, loyalty and solidarity must be practiced unconditionally, without limiting them to individuals of whom something is expected in return. Genuine consistency also requires people to work effectively not only to optimize all resources – including economic and political resources– but also to dedicate them to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, with an emphasis on truth and goodness and spiritual, family and interpersonal values. These requirements are not fulfilled when Argentines arbitrarily tend to define individuals or ideas they wish to reject as anti-sacred, evil or false. Similarly, genuine consistency is violated when Americans consider material success to be effective even when it fails to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

c. Overcoming short-sightedness and failure in United States and Argentina

In the United States, the failure to search for the deep meaning of life and, as part of this, the broader meaning and importance of economic and political success leads to spiritual and emotional insecurity and frustration. Such negative outcomes stem from the unwillingness to submit oneself to higher ends and values. As people refuse to extend unconditional love to others (and do not receive unconditional love from them, and from themselves), they are prompted to search desperately for substitutes and escapes (from giving oneself, the only proper relation with unity and reality, and the only source of fulfillment and happiness) in the form of drugs, crime, violence, consumerism, sexual perversions and suicide. This shows up in the spread of mental illness and the destruction of the family and the environment as well as in the lack of fulfillment of individuals and reality. It also leads, in the medium term, to economic and political failures due to the contradictions which are generated and which take the form of environmental deterioration, crime, wars, etc.

In Argentina, the inconsistency of not responsibly and effectively employing every action and resource on behalf of higher ends and values leads to economic and political failure. Contradictions emerge from the failure to consider the requirements and ultimate implications of adhering to reality and unity (and higher principles deriving from them). This leads to declarativism and rationalization, as people stigmatize others as enemies

or members of the out-group in order to pseudolegitimize egoism. Such an approach also leads to spiritual and emotional frustration.

Therefore countries such as Argentina should take from the United States only those aspects that derive from genuine expediency and not from their inconsistent misplacement. They should preserve from their own models those elements that conform to genuine sacredness and not from inconsistent and declarative misplacement of sacred values.

This would lead people to advance toward harmonious growth, achieving stability and security in spiritual, family, interpersonal, social, economic and political realms.

6. Limitations of the study

All the reported results of the empirical study are only tentative and exploratory. They may lead to distortions –which it is impossible to estimate precisely– due to deficiencies in sampling (which was not random), in the questionnaire, or in processing and analysis. It is also possible that the theoretical and conceptual basis of the analysis is flawed and that the choice of dimensions and variables is inadequate since all of these have only begun to be developed.

Results cannot be taken as definitive proof but as suggestive elements for advancing in the search and elaboration of dimensions, hypotheses, theories and systems. Future studies will widen, enrich, correct and confirm or refute our provisional conclusions.

C. The Argentine Choice

1. Models of development and of society

a. Critically evaluating models, questioning assumptions

Individuals learn in part by adopting solutions that are practiced and preached by others, that is, which serve as models. Observation of other people's behavior is even more powerful than listening to their words. Social norms are built, adopted and respected by embracing the models promulgated by others and adding personal modifications and adaptations in social norming processes.

When contradictory models are observed, or when models are seen to produce frustrating results, individuals are stimulated to use their capacity for consistency to critically evaluate these models and critically question the assumption that they have been adopted because they produce desirable results, satisfy genuine needs and effectively solve problems.

Observations of the dysfunctionality of certain models and the appearance of contradictions point to the fact that models are often adopted with only partial and unbalanced analysis, as people suspend critical judgment as soon as social norms appear to be satisfactory. Critical evaluation requires people to engage in painstaking and constant efforts to carefully and precisely distinguish between sound and harmful components of alternative models, combining and adopting the former and rejecting the latter.

Individuals are always free to engage in such critical evaluations, and their capacity for consistency allows them to consider increasingly broad frameworks and to get closer to the framework which is the total system of reality. Individuals mature and advance in this direction to the extent that they develop the habit of practicing genuine consistency, building a frame of reference which increasingly approximates reality. Such a frame of reference inserts everything with balance and depth, through a system of consistent social norms. Individuals move backwards when they allow themselves to be guided by prevailing theories on originality, rebellion and individualism, without inserting them into the framework of reality.

When confronted with contradictions and unexpected or undesired results of social norms, if individuals are not inspired by genuine consistency they may, instead of critically analyzing social norms and their foundations, search for short-cuts and simplistic shifts from one excess to another, without going through the effort and devotion of considering,

respecting, loving and serving unity and all beings, in the harmony of reality, with all its aspects, relations and systems.

b. Lasting influence of first models

The first models individuals learn –from their parents and primary groups (and also from themselves)— are accepted as natural, true, good and beneficial, and their premises and assumptions serve as the basis for accepting and building subsequent models. (The first of all models is unity integrating variety, first intuition of every human being; on the basis of this intuition persons search for models adjusted to it, adopt them and modify them). Future models incorporate new experiences (both one's own and other people's) as well as general lessons of reality, which are selected, read and related through the capacity for consistency.

This allows people to overcome internal and external inconsistencies within models and among them, which are found when these are confronted with various experiences, models and social norms. Although some components of the first models may be changed or corrected, their basic components and premises are retained, even if they are modified as a result of insertion in new frameworks with new ingredients.

The models first adopted in childhood have a basic component of consistency on which any posterior judgment finds support. However, the initial component of consistency is embodied in specific values and social norms with only limited application of genuine consistency. By exercising their capacity for consistency, people are always free to correct and improve such limitations and spurious aspects. To the extent that they follow genuine consistency, they can enrich social norms; if they allow themselves to be swayed by spurious consistency, these norms will be distorted. In this way, initial social norms and values influence the future and are combined with the contributions of new models and with reality's messages through success and failure. New models therefore combine preexisting and new components. Individuals are always free to make their own decisions, placing their personal seal on the models they choose, depending whether they choose to be guided by genuine or spurious consistency. This is the greatest challenge and mission of each person.

c. Social causality, awareness, voice of conscience, collective advance

People are better able to change and adjust the influence of original models when there is more awareness and clarity about what these models

are and what their causes and consequences are. Early models and social norms are usually internalized in a way that is difficult to notice, quickly becoming invisible social threads.

People are insufficiently aware of the content of such models and social norms, of the degree to which they derive from other people's influences, of their origin, of the beneficial or harmful effects of various components on fulfillment, and how to change dysfunctional patterns embodied in inconsistent social norms and models by listening to the "voice of conscience," that is, using genuine consistency to transform social norms and values. This may be necessary even when early models and social norms were partially functional at first and more so when they became increasingly dysfunctional.

The seed of consistency is thus sown, integrating the part of reality which blindly obeys consistency with that which freely chooses to adhere to consistency, and which freely uses causal and functional laws—which underlie the former—as raw material. Free choice complements the action of consistency in thought, will, feelings and action.

The "voice of conscience" speaks to people internally and also through other people (who exercise—it is rightly assumed—consistency, genuinely or spuriously), whose behavior serves as a model and source of reference and whose words and social norms are communicated and shared.

The voice of conscience is also reflected in the messages individuals send to themselves and therefore in their reflections, goals, beliefs, decisions and habits, which are deeply embedded in personal and social norms and tend to be regarded as "second nature."

People tend to rely on preexisting social norms and models, including those they adopt first, because this represents an economy of efforts allowing people to take advantage of previous advances (which they properly or improperly assume to be consistent) preventing them from taking unnecessary risks. It is part of the collective, gradual process of accumulating cultural and social achievements which human beings need in order to make significant progress with their spark of consistency, which requires such slow, collective advance.

Otherwise individuals would find themselves in the primitive level of "homo feralis". By relying on preexisting models and building upon them with their own and other people's contributions, exercising their power of free decision-making and exercising their capacity for consistency, they can improve the legacy of social norms.

Through constant efforts, they can improve the quality of their choices in terms of genuine consistency.

d. Social stability and change

Social norms and values strongly defend the status quo, which preserves presumed achievements. A continuous effort is necessary to evaluate and improve social norms and to adjust them to changing times and contexts, preserving what is worth preserving. People must always work to overcome partial inconsistencies and to preserve and introduce sound components. Consistent change and stability are both required. Human beings use change to try to get closer to the ideal of consistent perfection; they rely on stability to capture and permanently retain any advances in this direction, avoiding erosion by time. Since changes and achievements are inevitably limited and brief, they need to be inserted in increasingly wider and integrated realms and adjusted to changing circumstances and contexts. Stability and change are always necessary in order to capitalize on achievements and gradually accumulate additional advances.

Stability and change can only contribute to the harmonious integration of reality if they are treated as part of a much broader reality; accumulated achievements and new changes each have an important role to play, like the notes in a symphony which must be played at the proper moment and then must give way to others, guided by a constant underlying inspiration, and thus being preserved and replayed, always with new creative adaptations.

If stability and change are used consistently, that is, if they are incorporated into an approach which strives to consider all aspects and implications and to adhere to and serve reality and unity, they complement each other, and contribute to fulfillment of persons and reality. Otherwise they generate contradictions which lead to failures. Failures, however, may be used as educational messages from reality, inviting us to exercise consistency which leads to fulfillment, away from failure and frustration; by striving to understand failures, individuals can search for new changes that will enable them to overcome frustrations. Toward this end, alternative models –which appear to be free from worrying frustrations– are adopted.

The complementary use of stability and change is necessary for life and may be found in any living being.

e. Simplism and utopia; uncritical acceptance of one's own and other people's models

Simplistic judgments characterize individuals, ideas and models as entirely good or evil. They either idealize or condemn people and ideas instead of systematically considering all aspects –positive and negative–

and all implications, in their full complexity. This is the way many utopian models, including socialism and liberalism, have been promoted. This risk is particularly strong in societies with a sacred emphasis, which more easily become enthused about charismatic leaders and utopian models and which tend to copy other society's models. But all individuals in all societies are prone to adopt their own and other people's models uncritically, avoiding the effort and sacrifice of serious and systematic analysis. Many Argentines see dysfunctions in their own model and advantages in the American model, with which they aim to replace their own. Both models need to be studied and the social norms and values developed in both countries through the genuine and spurious exercise of consistency need to be identified, since these affect the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Consistency requires people to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of alternative models, combining and reinforcing the former and counteracting the latter.

2. Choosing the model

a. Evaluating dominant and alternative tendencies in the American and Argentine models

The Argentine model has the disadvantage of underestimating the importance of realism and effectiveness, thus impeding economic and political growth and security. On the other hand, it has the advantage of preserving spiritual and family values. The American model has the opposite strengths and weaknesses due to the fact that it subordinates higher principles to the effective satisfaction of egoistic interests. It preaches relativism and conditional love, a perspective which places interpersonal relations at constant risk of discontinuation since they are only deemed to be valuable to the extent that they help satisfy egoistic interests.²⁹ Interpersonal relationships are thus governed by a cost-benefit calculus based on caprice and impulses, without firm support in reality integrated by unity. Such failures limit spiritual and emotional growth, stability and security, thereby causing Americans to feel frustrated and to desperately search for substitutes in the form of money, prestige, pleasure, power, drugs, etc.³⁰ At the same time, important minorities in both countries show opposite tendencies to those just described, and other minorities in both countries reflect value orientations in which the sacred and the expedient balance and complement each other, under the

inspiration of genuine consistency, thus overcoming problems of quality of life in both countries.

b. Futile attempt of compensation for lack of spiritual values through material success

Some Americans engage in futile and counterproductive efforts to compensate for deficiencies in spiritual values through material success, money, power, prestige, consumerism, pleasure, drugs, etc. In fact, they increase their spiritual and emotional insecurity, lose a sense of meaning in their lives and increasingly feel dissatisfied, isolated and empty.³¹

To the extent that individuals succeed in acquiring material comforts as a result of their single-minded effort to find happiness through economic assets, frustration is likely to become particularly unbearable, since it becomes obvious that such achievements are unable to fill the gap left by the unfulfilled need for something absolute and infinite on which to base their lives.³² With this, the mistake of pinning one's hopes and expectations on the miraculous powers of material success becomes clear, and the fantasy that such success is the key to happiness, fulfillment and quality of life is shattered. The error of drawing inferences from the apparent, momentary success of others and replacing reality –and integrative unity, on which it is based– by fragments and impulses becomes painfully obvious. This demonstrates that expectations that accompany the illusion of immediate gratification are false. People discover that immediate, material success brings contradictions which frustrate human beings and cause them great pain; this serves as a call to reality and an opportunity to exercise one's capacity for consistency, or voice of conscience.

Material success often has the dysfunctional effect of increasing people's attachment to narrow fragments and reinforcing materialistic habits and wishes as a "second nature." These may become addictions which atrophy spiritual faculties, intensifying the alarm signals from reality which encourage people to place ends and desires into a wider framework instead of desperately avoiding this through spurious substitutes, such as drugs. As people become more emotionally attached to the material treasures they accumulate, clinging to these as their only means of salvation, the alarm signals from reality become more and more painful. It is very painful to realize that one's efforts and achievements lack meaning and value, and it is difficult to accept that one must work and sacrifice constantly, with patience and humility, in order to gradually increase self-mastery and mastery of the environment and thereby build what is really valuable.

The inability of material substitutes to provide true satisfaction can lead to a sense of insatiability, that is, they lead to the feeling that one's achievements are never enough. This, in turn, may produce frustration and desperation, as people strive to replace the spiritual emptiness they feel by turning to more and more spurious substitutes, increasing dose and speed. This may explain the desperate response of what Emile Durkheim called the "anomic suicide" of successful and wealthy people.³³ The inability of material possessions to replace spiritual and interpersonal sources of security and provide fulfillment may be reflected in the rebellious attempts of individuals, especially the young, to find satisfaction through drugs, alcohol, sexual obsession, violence and crime and in increasing rates of mental illness.³⁴

These negative outcomes are likely to occur when an expedient orientation is applied to spiritual, interpersonal and family realms, mistreating these as a means of satisfying egoistic interests rather than properly viewing them as an opportunity for giving to others and practicing unconditional love toward unity, reality, others and oneself. Such mismanagement of values deprives them of their meaning and central place in life, diminishing spiritual, emotional and affective fulfillment, stability and security. People deprive themselves of the deep satisfaction of giving and committing themselves to others and receiving equal treatment by recognizing that all individuals deserve love and fulfillment.

c. Prevailing and alternative social norms and spiritual, family and interpersonal values in the United States

In spite of the pressure of prevailing social norms which encourage Americans not to commit themselves to others and to devote all their energies to economic efficiency on behalf of egoistic interests, Americans do place a high value on family and interpersonal relationships and on spiritual values.³⁵ This is a consequence of their capacity for consistency, which inspires genuine sacred and expedient value orientations in every person. Social norms and values are never completely inconsistent and they never lead societies, groups and individuals to completely lose respect, appreciation and love for others, for their families and for spiritual values. As a result, Americans are dissatisfied with prevailing social norms which derive from a spurious application of expediency that requires detachment from those whom they love and from ideas to which they adhere. By exercising their capacity for consistency in a genuine manner, Americans can attenuate the loss of security which prevailing norms produce in the realm of family, interpersonal and spiritual relations.

No system of social norms is perfectly consistent or inconsistent, nor do people ever completely adhere to a particular set of social norms. Where inconsistent social norms prevail, consistent ones attenuate deviations; where consistent social norms prevail, inconsistent ones limit their advance. There is therefore a continuous tension between genuine and spurious consistency, and this is reflected in social norms and values. The pressure of contradictory social norms may produce a certain ambivalence.³⁶ Such ambivalence places a strain on individuals who find themselves pushed to pursue certain goals and not given appropriate social channels to achieve them.³⁷

d. Tension between conditional and unconditional love

Even when unconditional love is practiced, behaviors reflecting conditional and instrumental love continue, stimulating alternative social norms and contradictory messages. For example, when most Americans marry, they do so with the intention of remaining married for the rest of their lives, yet prevailing social norms force them to reconsider the wisdom of devoting themselves unconditionally to their spouses. If Americans are realistic, they have to be aware that many marriages do end after one or both partners come to the conclusion that the relationship is no longer gratifying or profitable. Thus, even though individuals may be inspired by genuine consistency and may wish to give themselves unconditionally to their spouses, they find themselves immersed in systems of prevailing social norms which treat egoistic, exchange-oriented behaviors as "second nature" and desirable behaviors, and which deviate people from their original intent. In such a context, individuals are strongly encouraged to conform to the prevailing, self-interested approach and to view this as something legitimate, natural and unavoidable –indeed, even desirable, since it presumably keeps people from suffering a competitive disadvantage. The strength of dominant social norms is reflected in high rates of divorce and in the social barriers to acting unselfishly, in a similar way as occurs in the case of pressures on those who honestly pay taxes when the majority avoids doing so.

e. Negative, counterproductive attempts to use others for personal gain

When individuals use others to serve their own egoistic interests, they frustrate others as well as themselves and devalue human relations, including those between spouses, parents and children, family members,

friends and other relations. As a result, these relations become unstable and destructive. When individuals use other people, they change people into objects in the vain hope of finding satisfaction by exerting power over them, even though true satisfaction can only come from submitting oneself to the laws of reality –including ethical laws– and from consequently giving and committing oneself to others, treating them with the genuine love and respect they deserve. The conditions for attaining true satisfaction are not met when people use others, since their proclamations of love are false and hypocritical. On the contrary, their lives lose meaning, richness and attractiveness as mutual distrust grows, frustrating human beings' need to find an absolute, firm foundation which will provide their lives with meaning and value.³⁸

People who are used by others are not only deprived of their legitimate material and social assets, but also are deprived of the unconditional love and affective support they need and which corresponds to genuine love (since this entails the earnest desire for the benefit of another). Individuals need to give and receive unconditional love, in a unique process of solidarity. Consequently, social norms which tolerate or stimulate conditional love lead to general frustration and destroy the true sources of human fulfillment. Such social norms undermine strong family and interpersonal relations, provoking their disintegration as individuals constantly look to new, self-interested relations to provide even greater satisfactions. This creates an endless spiral of instability.

If spouses look upon their marriage merely as a means for satisfying egoistic impulses and interests and if they do not believe marriage entails a life-long commitment, then they will not exercise genuine love and unconditional devotion to one another, nor will they sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the other. Marriage will degenerate into a transitional and conditional exchange of favors in which individuals are only interested in what they get, not in what they give. This leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy, as both partners fail to completely commit themselves to the relationship based on the assumption that it will only last so long as neither one of them finds a better opportunity. Similarly, family ties are strained because of the assumption that strong parent-child relations will only last so long as they need each other. In both cases, the parties involved refrain from loving others unconditionally and remain emotionally detached, holding back, in order to maximize personal gratification and minimize suffering from separations or broken relations.³⁹ This causes people to underestimate the importance and value of personal relations; they come to mistrust others and disdain their company.⁴⁰ In such situations, individuals tend to believe that others only relate to them to satisfy egoistic

interests, and not out of genuine love or solidarity.⁴¹ Yet even the most extreme proponents of self-interest value the possibility that people's attitudes may be inspired by genuine love and service. All people aspire in the depth of their souls to fully share unconditional love, truth and goodness, according to the requirements of consistency.

f. Self-mastery for resisting temptations derived from success

Riches, power, prestige and pleasure are powerful impulses which tempt people to try to replace reality and integrative unity by becoming complacent and engaging in complicity with others. Strong self-mastery and self-criticism are required, with realism, discipline, humility, patience, perseverance, effort, sacrifice and innovation.⁴² People must learn not to treat their own practices with religious reverence, but to master their impulses and, thereby, the environment. They cannot rest on their laurels, as Argentines did when they relied upon their natural and historical advantages; Americans also are in danger of doing this when they rest on their economic, political, scientific and technological achievements. People must avoid oversimplification, rationalization, rigidity and loss of vitality. In this way, they can avoid and prevent widespread destruction –such as wars and environmental catastrophes as well as physical, social and moral devastation.

g. Role of each person, complementing nature

Each person has a unique personality and role, which includes an original combination of countless factors and successive possibilities over time. Each person is only one of infinite possibilities. Although human beings are endowed with consistency, they have only a limited capacity to progressively absorb and process information and shape decisions and actions accordingly. People are limited to a process of gradual advance, which complements and does not replace the solutions created by reality and nature. People should humbly accept the solutions given by nature, using them as raw material for their advances and a basis upon which to advance and build, thereby contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

Nature has used causal laws of functional and systemic adaptation for millions of years in order to build the system of reality by integrating and balancing aspects and relations. Individuals cannot effectively contradict or surpass this system –not even with the most modern technologies; however, they can consciously and deliberately work within this system,

constructively intervening in its causal-functional relations and relating it to integrative unity. Individuals can do this through the partial influences which they have with their decisions and actions. This is the way in which culture, society, science, art and other human advances are built.

h. Consistency served by reality and by individuals

The capacity for consistency connects being, truth and goodness. By taking sides with these and adhering to them in thought, will, feeling and action, individuals contribute to the fulfillment of reality, including all individuals and all beings. What human beings do not freely contribute will be compensated for by the inexorable strength of integrative unity, which reestablishes balance by correcting omissions and counteracting the destruction derived from human beings' deficiencies. All other achievements and successes in terms of money, power, prestige, science, technology, etc. are only instruments for this highest human mission.

Consistency follows the model of unity which integrates reality, taking into account all aspects and relations which comprise reality. It implies humility, acknowledging (with realism) the infinite superiority of unity which integrates everything and on which everything is based. In order to better understand reality, individuals simplify reality into dimensions and categories as well as relations which form systems; using these devices, people look for and discover common aspects and regular connections, but they are only able to capture an infinitesimal portion of reality. Nonetheless, they are able to achieve marvelous advances by using their capacity for consistency to discover and adhere to the basic notion of unity integrating reality (and consequently to reality and all persons and beings), integrating spiritual and physical realms.

3. Combining consistent elements

a. Combining consistent components of American and Argentine models

Americans and Argentines will advance to the extent they adopt the consistent components—and reject the inconsistent components—of both their models, engaging in an ongoing process of adjustment and correction aimed at increasing genuine consistency. Consistent components in the American model include efficacy in the economy, politics, science,

technology and other realms through the sound use of organization, professionalism, discipline, information, efficiency and team work. In the Argentine model, consistent components include unconditional adherence to spiritual, family and interpersonal values which leads to growth, stability and security in these realms. Inconsistent components to be corrected in the American model center around the failure to situate goals and achievements in the wider system of reality so they serve the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Inconsistent components in the Argentine model stem from expecting solutions will come from external agents, such as luck, nature, time, charismatic leaders, panaceas, etc., all of which remove the need for effective, direct engagement.

The human capacity for discovering dimensions and causal relations and for controlling and influencing them is very limited due to cognitive, volitional, emotional and behavioral limitations as well as limitations in terms of time, space and energy. In spite of this, the capacity for consistency allows people to advance toward integrating and adopting consistent components from various models.

b. Rigorous evaluation of components of both models: a challenge for both societies

Determining which components of American and Argentine models (and other models as well) are consistent and how to combine them according to genuinely consistent sacred and expedient value orientations is a fundamental challenge for both societies. It requires people in both societies to continually analyze, combine and improve sound components from both models so as to increase their contribution to the fulfillment of individuals and reality. Such an analysis should be a high priority for both societies since it will allow them to combine economic, political, scientific and technological advances with spiritual, family and interpersonal enrichment.

Argentina is devoted to a process of change aimed at increasing expediency in economic, political and technological realms. It is essential that this be carried out appropriately—with discipline, hard work, austerity, systematic methods, professionalism, organization and information. But it is of utmost importance that this approach be inserted in reality with a clear focus on contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality; the sacred aspects of spiritual, family and interpersonal realms must not be neglected. If the American model is rigidly extrapolated to Argentina, it will bring failure and frustration, with a greater likelihood of copying inconsistent than consistent components of the American model.

Therefore, new models need to be built which combine consistent aspects of both; these must be inserted into the framework of the all-encompassing system of reality and continually enriched with new observations, information, inferences, analyses and evaluations of alternative decisions and actions and their foreseeable consequences.

Even if the characterizations of the American and Argentine models presented here were incorrect (and to some extent they always are), it would not eliminate the need for rigorous analysis, evaluation and elaboration of models so as to identify, select and combine consistent components.

Sacred and expedient orientations must be applied in a genuinely consistent fashion in order to use economic, political, scientific, technological and other resources with optimal effectiveness and do so on behalf of the fulfillment of individuals and reality, including spiritual, family and interpersonal values.

Institutions, organizations of society and public offices, and even individuals need to be analyzed and evaluated to detect and reinforce their consistent aspects, as well as to identify and correct inconsistent aspects. In this way, resources, means and social norms may serve goals related to the common good. This requires structures, services, institutions and social norms to be adjusted to the goal of the fulfillment of individuals and reality, considering all implications.

4. Implementation of choice

a. Evaluation of decisions and social norms; roles of intellectuals, scientists and leaders; "who's who"

Comparative studies are needed to clarify and evaluate the social norms, values and models of various societies and regions, groups and sectors, including their components and their consequences for the fulfillment of individuals and reality. By applying genuine consistency to the process of social norming, people can adjust social norms and values to changing contexts and optimize their consequences by building with discipline and capitalizing on intellectual and scientific resources. In this way, people can determine which social norms, values and models (or components of these) are obstacles to such advances. The processes of decision making and social norming, as well as the criteria and strategies for improving them, must be analyzed and evaluated, thus allowing people

to improve social norms, values and models and contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

For this scope, it is necessary to study how to combine social norms of various origins –plus our own creative contribution– so they better conform to the specific needs and goals of each society, group and person, taking advantage of particular resources, circumstances and conditions. It is also necessary to study how to help individuals and groups develop the awareness and adherence needed for optimizing such processes and combinations. It is necessary that intellectuals and scientists, who are currently dispersed and distracted by less significant tasks, work together in teams in order to meet this challenge.⁴³ Toward this end, it is necessary to identify, bring together and organize intellectuals, scientists and leaders who adhere to genuine consistency, as well as the institutions which support them, developing a "who's who" of ethical and technical competence in these issues. Individuals, groups and societies need orientation about which roads to follow through decisions and social norms so as to best contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

b. Communicating findings

Information about decisions, social norms, values and models as well as lessons on how to improve them may be imparted to citizens, leaders and authorities through the example of consistent behaviors –in both the sacred and expedient realms. These lessons and information can also be communicated by diffusing and integrating them in sound networks, which may lead to advances in the economic, political, scientific and technological fields that contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality, through spiritual, family and interpersonal values.

c. Sound networks, joint efforts, social control, transparency, adjusting society and state

To improve the quality of decisions and social norms and contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality through consistency, individuals should employ four central strategies –among others– for combining the sound aspects of social norms and models. First, sound networks should be organized in which citizens and leaders who apply genuine consistency join efforts and build systems of sound social norms which may serve as models for themselves and for others. These sound networks should be used to channel decisions, actions, energies and resources; they should also pressure authorities and leaders to adjust their decisions and actions

in accordance with genuine consistency, improving the quality of decisions and social norms through a strict system of social control. Second, transparency should be established in order to provide people with sufficient knowledge and information to act according to reality. People should demand equal and complete access to information about public affairs, the market and all aspects of society which would allow them to improve decisions and actions, avoiding unjust differences which lead to unjust advantages, domination and exploitation. Third, public institutions should be made to serve the common good and all their norms, programs and resources should be adjusted to this end. The state –as well as all organizations in society– should be converted into an instrument at the service of society and its actions should be controlled. Fourth, continual learning by society and the state should be promoted, as people should be encouraged to constantly improve their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of endogenous and exogenous models, combining the sound aspects of both to improve their own model in terms of consistency, thereby improving decisions and social norms and overcoming passivity. Society and state can be educated with facts and examples, and with critical analysis which makes the invisible influence of social norms explicit so they may be improved and contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

d. Partial responses to the lessons of reality in Argentina, sick networks

In Argentina, society and the state have been engaged for several years in a joint effort to overcome the inconsistencies which led to serious failures and frustrations. These negative outcomes served as warnings which led many Argentines to question the false assumption that problems could be solved through some external force –whether by luck, natural resources, charismatic leaders or ideological panaceas. However, the incipient advances achieved were not inserted into the wider framework of reality or incorporated into a balanced, total system. Therefore economic and political advances were not dedicated to the service of spiritual, family and interpersonal values; these values have been neglected as people became dazzled by material success. In addition, there is still a general lack of professionalism and systematic efforts to improve decision making through organized team work, austerity, discipline, and method within the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and within society as well. As a result, mafias and other organizations which are known to be corrupt and criminal are to some extent permitted and

tolerated rather than effectively investigated and fought. Within this picture, problems of social communication and development have not been seriously and systematically clarified.

e. Sound seeds and networks fighting the sick ones; punishments by reality

At the same time, however, many individuals and groups do aim at a sound integration of the positive aspects of different models. They can be considered as 'sound seeds' which must be supported and expanded through transparency, sound networks and education for the common good. In this way, inconsistent, corrupt and criminal networks –which aim at satisfying mean and egoistic interests even though this poisons society– need to be fought. Sound individuals and groups need to improve their access to information and pressures over leaders and authorities, without expecting problems to be solved by others or by luck. Only in this way can the general condoning of corruption and inefficiency by society and the state be reduced. In this context, Argentines count on reality as an important ally since it punishes corruption and inefficiency, leaving to these less margin of action and impunity. Impoverishment, economic recession, high external debt and collapse of the state served as powerful, increasingly dramatic warnings that lead people to open their eyes to the deep and invisible factors that condition behaviors and their consequences.

f. Strength of corruption and inefficiency in Argentina; integrating assets of First and Third Worlds

Although corruption and inefficiency constantly reappear, just as water makes its way through small fissures or cracks and finds ways to undermine the integrity of otherwise solid structures, Argentine entrepreneurs and citizens are increasingly aware that to some extent the state is not as strong a source of privileges any more and that privatization and deregulation have taken away state control over social and economic sectors where it was not producing effectively, with new rules of the game which tend to reward those who contribute to the common good, from both private and public realms. Argentine citizens and authorities have advanced thanks to their new awareness that economic and political success may only be achieved through systematic and sustained efforts, and that these do not come from outside or from above. Argentines have not advanced in the same way with respect to their failure to acknowledge that economic and political success are only valuable and meaningful if they serve spiritual,

family and interpersonal values and if they are integrated in the total system of reality, in a balanced and harmonious way; nor have they made the necessary effort to integrate the assets of First and Third World models, counteracting their dysfunctions and making economic and political growth contribute to spiritual, family and interpersonal growth, instead of interfering with these. As soon as some advance has been made, corruption and inefficiency have strengthened their strong-holds in Argentina. By waking up to the messages of reality, Argentines may produce a new leadership which helps society understand the lessons of reality, and on this basis to combine and adopt the sound components of all models so as to contribute to the fulfillment of individuals and reality; and counteract and reject the opposite.

Methodological Notes

1. Humble and valuable advances; limitations

I consider this analysis to be only exploratory, since it lacks most of the information and the multivariate and systemic analysis and inferences which would be necessary to provide a more complete and exhaustive explanation of social norms, values, decisions and achievements. However, the capacity for consistency allows us to develop conceptual tools and systemic inferences on the basis of information, observation and accumulated knowledge. This, in turn, allows us to build explanations and predictions which can increase human freedom, with an emphasis on making invisible, hidden and implicit factors explicit and distinguishing between components which adjust to genuine consistency and should therefore be reinforced, on the one hand, and those which demonstrate spurious consistency and need to be counteracted, on the other. In this way, it is possible to favor human contributions to the fulfillment of individuals and reality.

The relations presented in this book assume the logical reasoning of multivariate, qualitative and quantitative analysis, which, because of the boundless reach of possibility, ideally requires that countless and to some extent unimaginable variables be considered; it also requires that a wide array of alternatives, conjectures and hypotheses be tested, each with fairly large samples, and that sophisticated techniques of statistical inference be applied.

This would require an enormous amount of work, including the use of complex and sophisticated techniques of inferential statistics, and – more importantly– an enormous theoretical and conceptual task of elaboration, analysis and interpretation, which have yet to be done. Any advance in this field will always be tiny in comparison with what remains to be known.

However, any advance is enormously important in comparison with no advance at all, and there is no other way of advancing, in the face of uncertainty, than by humbly and patiently proceeding step by step. Individuals can rely on the safe guidance of the consistency criterion, which allows them to link dimensions, relations, cases and observations to the central axis integrating them into sub-systems, such as that founded in the sacred-expedient axis, within the all-encompassing system of reality integrated by unity.

2. Integrating accumulative contributions in a framework

The accumulative work of scientists, intellectuals, philosophers, writers, theoreticians and other individuals allows for a convergence of contributions in the form of applications of the consistency criterion by many individuals and societies to countless situations and experiences across time and space. This book is an effort to help spur an integration of such contributions according to the consistency criterion, in an effort to unveil the highly complex puzzle of how components of variety are integrated. It is aimed at relating, connecting and adjusting these contributions among themselves by relating them to unity which integrates them and which is their basis and source. To encourage this process, advances are ordered into dimensions such as consistent-inconsistent, genuine-spurious, sacred-expedient, stable-changeable, manifest-latent, deep-shallow, spiritual-material, unconditional-selfish, immediate-long-term, freedom-serfdom, mastery-dependence, etc. Trust in such a framework is increased when predictions based on it are fulfilled, explanations based in it appear consistent with old and new information, facts, experiences and interpretations (own's and others').

3. Unfolding dimensions and relations, for building better models

To relate unity to variety, dimensions and relations are disaggregated into their components and integrated into larger systems. From this perspective, American, Argentine and Spanish value systems are not monolithic, indivisible models but rather contain both consistent and inconsistent components. As a consequence of this, it is possible to build better models by combining consistent components. For instance, this is done by promoting economic and political efficacy and making it serve spiritual, family and interpersonal values, in the United States and Argentina, benefitting each nation with consistent aspects of endogenous and exogenous models. In order to detect the components existing in broad characterizations of development models or value systems, it is necessary to disaggregate the subdimensions that unite to form broad dichotomies (such as sacred-expedient, modern-traditional, etc.). Such dichotomies are

the product of a simplification process known as reduction; the inverse procedure of substruction attempts to recreate complexity, to delineate the subdimensions which were left implicit in the summary constructs of the broad dichotomy.⁴⁴ This allows people to develop useful recommendations on the basis of analyzing and evaluating the components and modalities of the various types, as well as their causes and effects. Consistent components are distributed differently in different societies, thus allowing analysts to identify, reinforce and diffuse sound seeds, while fighting against sick ones. Positive change requires people to systemically consider cultural, social, psychological, ethical and spiritual dimensions in addition to physical, economic, political, scientific and technological ones.

4. Increasing awareness of needs and means for satisfying them

To advance, it is necessary to integrate stability and innovation in a balanced manner, preserving functional solutions and trying to change those which are not. The changes required by consistency for contributing to human fulfillment are changes in social norms, attitudes, decisions and behaviors. This type of change does not require decades or centuries of radical changes in values, although consistency continually requires and produces changes in values. Many of these changes are being unconsciously produced, and by making them explicit, they can be enhanced, reinforced, optimized and better controlled with freedom and consistency.

This book aims at helping increase awareness about real needs and effective means for satisfying them, detecting sound components of social norms, values and models, and diffusing and reinforcing them. To advance in this direction, it is necessary to carefully and systematically analyze all dimensions of reality, including not only biological and psychological, but also ethical, spiritual, social, political and economic factors, including internal and contextual differentiation and avoiding simplism. Solid, deep advance does not require people to wait for the punishing, educational blows of reality to solve problems since these may be anticipated through preventive reflection, analysis and actions. People must learn how to advance through their own and other people's contributions; in doing so, they get closer and closer to solving the complex puzzle of the integration of variety by unity.

5. Pending work

It is necessary to continually improve the analysis of the American and Argentine models, as well as other models, in order to determine which aspects and which combinations will produce desirable results by contributing to the fulfillment of individuals and reality by adjusting to consistency. Further work is also needed to transmit awareness of needs, possibilities, and advances achieved, to citizens, leaders and authorities, encouraging them to advance along the road of consistency in their decisions, actions and social norms.~

CHAPTER SIX:

ARGENTINE EVOLUTION ALONG THE SACRED - EXPEDIENT AXIS

A. Persistent Problems In Argentine History

1. Economic Problems

After being among the richest countries in the world at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century, Argentina rapidly declined starting in the 1930s, falling back to around seventieth place in 1990. By this date, Argentina had come to be considered as a high risk country for investors, who were not confident about the country's prospects for stable economic growth. This situation also stimulated Argentine citizens to send their savings abroad. Thus Argentina accumulated one of the largest external debts in the world. Chronic inflation deteriorated the economy and diminished living standards and turned into hyperinflation in 1989.

2. Political problems

Argentine politics has been marked by pendular shifts from euphoria to depression and from fascination with panaceas to disillusionment and frustration. Charismatic leaders are first idealized, then stigmatized. In addition to these swings in attitudes, Argentine politics has alternated back and forth between military regimes and democratic governments. Politics has also swung back and forth between violence and peace; violence, moreover, has alternately come from right-wing military coups and leftist guerrillas. Argentine politics has thus been characterized by the frequent resort to opposite and exaggerated extremes instead of by a moderate approach grounded in reality and designed to produce stability.

The pendular movement of Argentine politics from one extreme to the other was produced by a number of factors, which, taken together, constituted an ominous Argentine pathology:

- inefficiency due to the lack of professionalism, discipline, information and organization;
- corruption;
- self-selection of ambitious and dishonest persons to the highest government and social posts, where they had the best opportunities for reaping the benefits of corruption while getting away with it;
- complicity between corrupt public officials and private entrepreneurs who attempted to benefit unfairly at the cost of people and honest entrepreneurs;
- rules of the game that made corruption a profitable, low-risk activity; lawsuits brought against the state, for example, allowed unscrupulous parties to win millions—even billions—of dollars from the courts and were tainted by conniving judges;
- lack of transparency, which prevented citizens from recognizing corruption and inefficiency;
- passivity and apathy on the part of citizens in the face of corruption and inefficiency;
- legal, judicial and administrative systems which treated dishonest, inefficient and wasteful procedures with impunity and allowed authorities and public officials to act at their own discretion rather than according to rational, efficient rules.

The traumatic experience of the Malvinas war demonstrated in acute form the tendency to swing back and forth from euphoria to depression; it also revealed a lack of transparency, professionalism, organization and information. The war also demonstrated citizens' tolerance for harmful, erroneous policies by their authorities and leaders.

B. Harmful Effects of Inconsistency in the Sacred Orientation

Argentine values and social norms do not emphasize the importance of effectiveness and results and of assuming personal responsibility for them. This has led to economic, political, scientific and technological inefficiency, limiting success in these areas.¹ It has also hampered the sound use of information, professionalism, organization, self-discipline, system, planning, social participation, and other traits relating to rational action, team work and division of work.²

1. Information

a. Argentine inconsistency in the use of information

Genuine consistency requires constant efforts to search for information systematically derived from empirical sources and to interpret this information by analyzing it through one's capacity for consistency, linking different pieces of information together and linking them to unity which integrates them all. In order to strive to consider all aspects and relations of reality, as required by genuine consistency, people must search for information which throws light on all of them, as well as information of the highest possible quality, that is, information which is as consistent as possible with all sources of empirical information and with the interpretative criteria derived from consistency. This allows people to advance in knowledge and truth and to increase their understanding of reality, of themselves, and of their meanings, in accordance with insertion in the whole of reality. Otherwise people become confused and fall into contradictions derived from spurious consistency. Good and sufficient information contributes to consistent decisions and social norms, and these, in turn, contribute to the fulfillment of people and reality by making the best use of people's influence, resources and energy.

In Argentina, people tended to underestimate the importance of information, as shown by their failure to adhere to consistency in the sense of not assuming responsibility for adjusting knowledge, will, action and influence to reality in all its aspects and relations, as integrated by unity, in order to effectively contribute to fulfillment of persons and reality. Examples of this may be seen in the failure of decision makers, whether

public authorities, societal leaders or citizens, to process and use data from censuses and registers, acting as if this type of information were not important for an understanding of reality. Instead, Argentines display a general tendency to act as if events and outcomes are controlled by external or magical factors –luck, charismatic leaders, mysterious or magical factors, government, authorities, etc.– or by other people, thus arbitrarily ascribing a sacred character to such fragments.

When information is not used, employees in charge of registering and processing it take this as an indicator that such information is not valuable, or at least that it is not appreciated and it will not be used. They therefore tend to work carelessly, with little concern for ensuring and preserving the quality of the information, and often data are lost or destroyed when offices are moved. Businesses in Argentina, especially small and medium ones, usually lack vital information for adjusting to changing economic conditions and rules of the game. As a result, bankruptcies are frequent. Argentine workers lack vital information for re-training and re-locating themselves, and this contributes to high unemployment.

b. Lack of demand for high quality information, resulting low quality of decisions

When society, leaders and authorities place little value on information, they reduce demand for it. If the natural “clientele” for information becomes indifferent, researchers have little stimulus to produce information. When this occurs, fewer resources, facilities and pay are designated for gathering, processing, evaluating and disseminating information. This, in turn, reduces the ability of citizens to control and supervise leaders and authorities; it hampers citizens’ power to demand high quality decisions, actions and social norms from their leaders. When people underestimate the importance of information, they cannot control the relevance and quality of information, nor can they ensure that high quality decision making by citizens, leaders and authorities contributes to the common good. Researchers are discouraged from looking at issues which are relevant to the crucial task of identifying the way toward greater consistency and fulfillment; society is discouraged from devoting the necessary talents, efforts and resources toward this task. This results in a scarcity of social, political, economic and cultural studies and information, and those which are published often tend to have little relevance and low quality, if they are finished at all.

Another clear indication of just how little value was placed upon information (and how little use was made of the collected information)

may be seen in the failure to submit the actions of government leaders to basic controls such as auditing, inspection or outside supervision. Argentina had no counterpart to the General Accounting Office of the U.S. Congress; national, provincial, and municipal governments were not held to account for how public resources were allocated or for the results achieved. The actions taken were not supervised by legislative or administrative inspectors, let alone by citizen representatives.

2. Professionalism

a. Consistency and professionalism

Professionalism organizes and applies resources effectively to achieve desired results. When guided by consistency, it involves formation and training to enable people to contribute as best they can to the fulfillment of humanity and reality by effective means, including high quality decisions and social norms. The consistent application of expediency is one of the determinants of high quality decision making, and it leads to professionalism. If the importance of professionalism is underestimated, professionalism is seldom cultivated and this leads to inconsistency in the application of the sacred-expedient axis. People tend to misplace the sacred by ascribing sacred functions to fragments and to pseudo-sacred means, such as charismatic leaders, utopian ideologies, restricted solidarity, luck, time, etc., sometimes camouflaging egoistic interests with declarations of principles. The only genuinely sacred object is integrative unity which governs reality and constitutes the source of natural laws. All people, beings, dimensions and relations are sacred in terms of the position they occupy within the system of reality. Therefore, proper justification of the sacred and the expedient is based on respect for the system of reality and for unity on which it is based, as well as for the beings that form part of it; professionalism, properly (i.e. consistently) applied is a basic instrument of such a respectful attitude.

b. Underestimation of professionalism in Argentina

In Argentina, public authorities, societal leaders and citizens generally seem to underestimate the importance of professionalism and of systematically training people to solve problems and make decisions. This state of affairs characterizes both public and private sectors, in spite of

relatively isolated and incipient efforts to cultivate professionalism. Indeed, little effort or resources are designated for the education and training of future leaders and authorities, and professional schools and curricula are missing. Political leaders and public officials are not required to have any particular certification related to their education or training, as opposed to physicians, for instance, who are persecuted as criminals if they practice medicine without a university degree. Politicians and leaders are not morally or socially punished for the damage resulting from deficiencies in their ability and effectiveness, which often are also in fact failures in honesty and ethics. When disasters arise due to their insufficient professional seriousness, external and uncontrollable factors are blamed, or scapegoats are invented. Argentine society does not require its leaders and authorities to be professional, nor does it provide them with opportunities or resources for professional training, for example in foundations and institutes where they may be trained or where they may work in research and teaching before, during and after holding office. Authorities and leaders commonly fail to consult the best experts on various aspects which affect the influence their decisions will have.

3. Organization

a. Organization and consistency

Sound organization requires consistent application of both sacred and expedient value orientations as people order—adjusting them to the system of reality, and to desirable ends—the means and resources they control and influence through their decisions and actions. People must consider all aspects, relations and implications of reality in a balanced fashion, identifying and implementing effective means for achieving worthy ends that are clearly defined and fully supported. Ends which genuinely deserve to be the object of people's efforts are human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality, both of which derive from adhering—through consistency—to reality and to integrative unity, which forms the basis of reality. Genuine organization thus follows the model of unity in terms of its formation and structuring of reality and nature; it complements such action, freely respecting and applying harmonious integration of the variety of components of reality. In this way, people freely advance in the direction of the model received from integrative unity and of the responsibility of adjusting to it and contributing to it by following it.

Dysfunctional, bureaucratic organization is typical of spurious consistency. It refuses to consider the whole of reality or to completely commit oneself to it; as a result, it fails to respect and adhere to each aspect and relation –this leading to contradictions– and cannot optimally contribute to the fulfillment of people and reality. Instead, dysfunctional organization privileges fragments such as egoistic interests, impulses and routine; it ignores relevant information and fails to consider the need for adjustments, self-criticism and changes. Dysfunctional organization does not balance stability and change by respecting all aspects of reality; instead, it passively waits for problems to solve themselves. All human beings, groups and societies have –to some extent– a tendency toward inconsistency which is reflected in dysfunctional organizations unable to produce systematic and sustained efforts, guided by consistency. Consequently, these organizations not only fail to achieve partial targets but above all fail to serve reality, unity on which it is based, and the people which form part of reality.

b. Underestimation of the importance of organization in Argentina

Argentines have tended to avoid working to achieve consistent organization; they have generally underestimated the importance of rigorous organization and planning and have preferred to rely on external and magical forces, instead of accepting personal responsibility for effectively serving the goals of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality, by systemically organizing their energies and resources tightly adjusting them to desired goals with strict focus, avoiding dispersion and confusion. This shows a third way in which Argentines have misapplied their sacred orientation. It can be observed, for instance, in the organization of the state, private businesses and the economy, as well as in their reform, which has not been subjected to sufficiently rigorous analysis. For example, privatization has not been accompanied by a clear definition and justification of the functions which should be transferred to the private sector and other functions which should remain in the hands of the state. There has also been no planning about who should assume these functions in the private sector, and with which controls and regulations. Up until recently, national budgets were approved *ex post facto*, and authorities, leaders and citizens lacked information about them. This was illustrated by the response of a leading government official who, asked whether funds were still being allocated to a committee established shortly after World War II to oversee the confiscation of enemy property, said the committee was still receiving funds, but added that the information would be

contained in the budget. Going to the Congress to see the budget, the official went on, would be useless, since the information would be contained in an addendum to the budget, which would not have been sent to Congress but would be kept at the Treasury Department. The Treasury Department, he predicted, would probably not allow access to such information.

Argentines have generally demonstrated an unfamiliarity with the consistent organizational objectives of clearly defining ends and the best means for serving them and implementing these means with discipline and efficiency. Contrary to the requirements specified by Max Weber, Argentines are often characterized by a diffuse rather than an instrumental orientation, which indicates that they allow means to prevail above ends and organizational resources are not dedicated to transcendent ends but to the personal goals of the personnel.

Although recent years have brought efforts to heal and rationalize the bureaucracy, the negative inertia is very strong and there is considerable resistance to change, as people—at all levels on the power ladder—and groups tend to defend their own private interests at the expense of general interests.

4. Self-discipline, system, planning

a. Self-discipline, consistency and liberation

People really liberate and fulfill themselves when they serve consistency by exercising self-mastery and master and use impulses and fragments as raw material for serving reality, unity and people rather than letting fragments and impulses control and imprison them. Strict discipline in the use of fragments and impulses is the basis for the exercise of human freedom. This allows people to advance through reasonable change which reinforces and advances stability; without discipline and self-mastery, people are prone to adopting extreme, pendular and destructive changes and indulging caprices, impulses and oversimplification instead of system, method and rigor. They thus do not center on unity and reality, beyond the waves which shake them with contradictory impulses and fashions. Advances are achieved by committing oneself entirely, with all one's energies and resources, without limits.

This requires strictness and discipline; it also requires systematic preparation and improvement, using the best information and reasoning

to optimize the quality of decision making. This entails mastery over oneself and one's impulses, resources and environment.

b. Underestimation of the importance of discipline, method and self-mastery in Argentina

Argentines have tended to underestimate the importance of systematic, rigorous and disciplined work in decision and action, underestimating the strict and complete control of unity over variety, which in a perfectly adjusted way fits all pieces to produce the marvellous harmony and system of reality for the benefit and fulfillment of all human and other beings. This is reflected, for instance, in the lack of methodical and systematic approaches for taking advantage of talent, intelligence and reason and for developing culture, arts, science and technology in centers of excellence, such as graduate university departments, with their areas of training, research and advisory. Graduate and professional studies at a high, systematic and demanding level have traditionally not been developed in Argentina.

Economic resources for university education are overwhelmingly devoted to undergraduate studies for hundreds of thousands of students, the great majority of whom never graduate. The books, methods and theories used in classes typically come from abroad and often the professors themselves have been trained overseas. Universities, and their students and teachers have traditionally protested against dependency on other countries, but in fact they fomented this by not developing graduate studies. While Argentine students were quick to protest against Third World economic dependency, they typically failed to recognize the arguably more harmful effects of scientific, educational, technological and cultural dependence; most students did not realize the serious consequences of Argentina's shortage of higher (graduate and post-graduate) institutions of teaching and research, especially university graduate programs. Argentina needs graduate university programs which emphasize increasing the effectiveness of means to contribute to serving ultimate ends, according to genuine consistency, thus developing the economy, politics, science and technology in such a way as to serve spiritual, ethical, family and interpersonal values. By failing to develop such high level excellence, research and training, Argentines failed to take advantage of their capacity to control and guide all resources and opportunities to serve fulfillment, and instead left outcomes to derive from disorderly influences and impulses. They failed to fully use their capacity for knowing, understanding and freely deciding and intervening in reality.

c. Improvisation by leaders, authorities and citizens

Improvisation on the part of decision makers prevents them from inserting decisions into the framework of the system of reality; this prevents them from predicting and controlling the future and thereby avoiding harm, and optimizing benefit and fulfillment. Decisions are taken without considering available alternatives and their likely consequences; decisions are made without assessing which alternatives are best suited for meeting underlying needs, problems and desired ends. The media rarely draw attention to decisions made by public authorities or law makers which are based on thoughtful analysis, considering the framework of reality and both the immediate and long-term probable effects of various alternatives; little attention is given to decisions that are made using the best information, with the best advice of experts and without political bias.

The lack of a clear framework of rules of the game makes it difficult to predict one's own and other people's actions. This leads to confusion and contributes to improvised, arbitrary, incompetent and even corrupt decisions. People fail to think about preventing problems and deal with crises as they occur, rather than trying to predict potential dangers and avoid them through a strict regime of self-discipline and control. They did not think of prevention until the situation became unbearable, similar to a sick person who refuses to see a doctor until the illness progresses so far as to practically lead her to collapse in bed. If people apply genuine consistency, they devote all their energies to clarifying ends and means according to the framework of reality, striving to consider all aspects and relations in a balanced and systematic fashion, thus contributing to the fulfillment of people and reality. Improvisation implies spurious consistency insofar as it implies a lack of complete adherence to reality, unity, truth and goodness.

5. Social participation

a. Dependence

Argentine citizens, leaders and authorities tended to wait for others – and for luck, time, or panaceas – to solve their problems, without recognizing their own capacity and responsibility to solve problems and work for fulfillment, as required by genuine consistency. In this way citizens tended not to put pressure on authorities and leaders, nor to control

them, forgetting that a mature and efficient democracy depends on initiative and organization from its citizens. Even when citizens organize themselves for political action or protest, they often pursue utopian ends with unrealistic means, moving from one unrealistic extreme to another.

b. Tolerance of aggression against common good

Tolerance of aggression against the common good and complacency toward the diffusion of harmful social norms may be observed in the acceptance of corruption, inefficiency and waste, as well as in the failure to fight against mafias which enjoy the complicity of executive, legislative and judiciary powers. This kind of dangerous tolerance exists in practically all institutional realms, public and private, due to the failure of leaders, authorities and citizens to exercise their responsibility. This brings moral harm and transmits the message that dishonesty is legitimate. Models of honest and efficient people, who demand honest and efficient behavior from their authorities and leaders, tend not to be supported, communicated and disseminated -by e.g. the media and other ways of communication and interaction-, whereas pathological social norms are widely disseminated and influential.

This passivity in the face of aggression derives from inconsistency in the application of the sacred-expedient axis, in which people attach themselves to fragments instead of seeing reality as a total system and as a harmonious, all-encompassing order in which they have an important role to fulfill in accordance with their capacity for consistency. Besides the loss of enormous amounts of money, and the sufferings and damage caused by such an approach, the decisions of authorities and leaders were not directed at benefitting the community. This leads to greater damage -moral, cultural, social, psychological and material. People are encouraged to see corruption and dishonesty as natural, unavoidable and legitimate. This not only affected effectiveness but also limited contributions to the ultimate ends of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

C. Effects of the Wrong Application of Sacred-Expedient Values

1. Examples of Argentine failures

In this section we will analyze the effects of social norms and values not guided by consistency, which, in the case of Argentina, underestimate the importance of expediency and fail to apply it consistently. This is manifested in a general disdain for the sound use of information, professionalism, organization, discipline and social participation. Such social norms hinder economic, political and social development. To a lesser degree, they hinder growth and fulfillment in spiritual, interpersonal and family realms, even though these values are more greatly appreciated and cultivated by Argentines. Contradiction and corruption, however, lower Argentines' quality of life in general and lead to failures, frustration and stagnation. The framework developed in this chapter leads one to predict certain general problems of development in Argentina relating to the conditions referred to above.³ Argentines are prone to walk blindly, without adequate information; they tend to fail to take advantage of expert advice by encouraging professional development and support. Argentines tend to fail to order and organize resources in a systematic way or to use them methodically; they tend not to use discipline, systematic preparation or rational planning to master their resources and themselves. Finally, they fail to stimulate the necessary initiative and sense of responsibility among citizens as a means of protecting and promoting society's and citizens' interests; as a result, Argentines tend to fail to actively fulfill their own responsibility for achieving their desired goals. What follows is a very brief summary of research findings gathered from studies conducted by the author over the last thirty five years which analyze the mechanisms through which non-expedient values and social norms have been inconsistently applied and describe their consequences.

2. Dam construction

a. Cases: Cruz del Eje and other dams

The lack of expediency in Argentine decision making and policy implementation is clearly demonstrated in an analysis of several large public works projects. The construction of dams revealed some common

problems, including the lack of complementary works (including proper drainage and irrigation systems as well as funds to cover the cost of improvements), the lack of measures to prevent salinization of the area affected, disregard for the needs of personnel and prevention of corruption. In a study of the Cruz del Eje dam in the Argentine province of Córdoba, I analyzed how the type of decision making illustrated in this case contributed to the political, economic and social stagnation of the region.⁴ Although the construction of the dam was finished in 1944, the system of complementary works (such as a system of channels for irrigation) was still not finished in 1977, when the study was published. Old, permeable channels were still used, even though they operated at a loss of up to 70 percent of the water. Instead of completing such works, the public utility company in charge—National Water and Energy (*Agua y Energía de la Nación*, AyE)—was busy constructing new dams. In a similar fashion, the Florentino Ameghino dam, which had been built decades before, not only had no beneficial effects but also spoiled the lands of surrounding areas because Agua y Energía failed to provide irrigation and drainage channels. This resulted in the salinization of the land within the dam's area of influence.

Complementary measures for the development of the area to be irrigated by the Cruz del Eje Dam were not forthcoming. The main crop cultivated in the area was the tomato, which happened to be afflicted by a disease (verticilosis) causing the loss of more than half of total production. Producers waited for government action, but all four branches of the Ministry of Agriculture which had jurisdiction in the area failed to assume responsibility for this particular problem, claiming the problem lay outside their specific functions. Officials at the regional branch of the National Institute for Agricultural Technology (*Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria*, INTA) refused to assume responsibility for the case, arguing that all technical support for tomato crops was to be given through another regional branch located in a geographical area where tomato cultivation was more frequent. Since the affected area fell within the jurisdiction of the INTA branch specializing in cereals (due to the proximity of cereal producing zones), nothing was done to address the problem of verticilosis which needed specific and intensive research to effectively fight the disease.

Other important complementary measures were also missing; the landowners whose lands multiplied in value as a consequence of the dam were not charged a compensatory tax due to the lack of a legal instrument authorizing such a charge. As a result, the construction of the dam proved to be an enormous benefit to large and small estate owners whose lands

were located in the immediate proximity of the dam and were irrigated by it. The construction of the dam reinforced their economic privileges and encouraged land speculation. It also allowed landowners to use an excessive amount of water for extensive crop irrigation; the lack of control and planning meant that water was wasted rather than sensibly used to irrigate intensive crops where irrigation is justified by the potential economic and social benefit.

The poor quality of decision making that went into regional development projects is further revealed in the case of the Chocón dam, the largest dam built in Argentina up through the 1960s. When I offered assistance to the project's top executive to help him analyze and plan how to deal with the social aspects involved in such a large-scale initiative, he responded that such efforts were not necessary since the construction of the dam was strictly a matter of engineering for the purpose of providing energy and that social scientists' and experts' time would be better spent on solving the problems of urban slums.⁵ However, the lack of planning and foresight predictably led to problems later on. Indeed, the workers building the dam engaged in long strikes due to the miserable housing conditions provided for them and construction was delayed. In the end, the economic and social losses proved to be far larger than the illusory savings provided by a lack of attention to the social welfare concerns of workers.

The largest dam in Argentina's history to date was recently constructed at Yaciretá as a joint project between Paraguay and Argentina. A few years ago, Argentine President Carlos Menem dubbed the project a "monument to corruption"—an admission which suggests that the extent of corruption reached vast proportions. The initial amount of funds allocated has proven to be grossly insufficient, and estimates of the final cost were three to four times larger than the original estimate, overrunning initial projections by billions of dollars. Significantly, Argentines did not react to this scandal with outrage or protests. Even though Argentines ultimately had to finance the soaring costs of the project through their hard-won savings, and even though corruption negatively affected their quality of services and standard of living, they continued to believe that it was not their responsibility to see that these problems were solved.

b. Underestimating the importance of information

When these case studies are analyzed in the light of the requirements for consistent, quality decision-making, a number of conclusions may be drawn. There was a lack of evaluative studies of possible alternatives and

little consideration of the impact of changing conditions on outcomes. Insufficient attention was paid to the effects of behavior on human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality; furthermore, there was a lack of information about causal links. Engineers from the National Water and Energy company showed no interest in collecting social information about the area where the dams were constructed and insisted on working with their own information. No claims for better information on these issues were admitted.

Citizens and leaders alike were highly uninformed about what was being done with national resources in the construction and operation of dams. Journalists occasionally dealt with the subject but did not systematically follow up on these stories. Furthermore, there was no call for better information or effort to overcome the situation on the part of citizens, social organizations, leaders or authorities.

Even President Menem's denunciation of corruption remained as an interesting and isolated anecdote, without instrumental consequences. It did not prompt calls for further information about the scandal, nor did it prompt an investigation into its causes, the parties responsible, and possible means for overcoming the situation.

No information relating to other dam and water projects in other countries was systematically analyzed. No rigorous study was conducted of the area or the type of land distribution, irrigation systems, etc., to be affected. Not even the legal foundations had been laid which would have permitted the partial financing of such works with contributions from landowners who profited from the project.

When the time for action arrived, there was no time for studies, and decisions and actions were based on urgent reports entrusted to an occasional adviser or staff member who was pressured to produce them as hastily as possible. After this was done, no further information was sought. Work was started or continued without gathering and producing the adequate information. Decisions were therefore made blindly, without information, based on an improvised response to a perceived need for action.

The general lack of concern for information which is demonstrated in the above cases may be attributed to the fact that authorities and leaders tend to ignore or deny their ability and responsibility for making significant contributions to the common good. Instead, they frequently choose to promote their own self-interest or the interests of a narrow group (based on economic class, political allegiance, friendship ties, etc.), rationalizing their behavior by attributing undesirable results to external factors and scapegoats.

Such rationalizations are supported by prevailing social norms which accept and condone deviant behaviors that are contrary to the common good.

Genuine consistency, on the other hand, requires a great effort to keep oneself informed and to consider all dimensions and relations of reality, including immediate, long-term and ultimate implications. This includes information about available alternatives and about their effects under various conditions, not just prevailing conditions.

To serve genuine consistency, it is not only necessary to observe and collect information but also to relate observations according to consistency. In so doing, people provide meaning and content to knowledge, and they build and improve a frame of reference with which they can better understand reality.

If reality and truth are considered valuable, and if decisions and actions are appropriately oriented toward contributing to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality –in short, if people adhere to reality and to integrative unity– then they necessarily attach a high value to the sound use of information.

c. Underestimating the value of professionalism

In the dam construction projects described above, the public officials and technicians who were responsible for building the dams were characterized by a distinct lack of professionalism. People without the necessary competence and skills were given posts with great responsibility. Talented individuals from related fields were not identified and brought in to give advice on how to handle various aspects of the projects with greater effectiveness. This worked against a harmonious division of labor and undermined team work; contributions from political, technical and administrative officials were not combined with the knowledge and experience of experts in various disciplines.

Moreover, there was a lack of communication and cooperation between political authorities, career bureaucrats and technical staff. Individuals in each of these three roles displayed contempt for those in the other two and tried to shape decisions and actions without taking into account the others' contributions and opinions.⁶

The professional contributions of each role were not respected, as individuals rigidly adhered to the spurious security of their own specialized knowledge instead of understanding, appreciating and respecting the relative strengths of others.

This prevented people involved in the project from cooperating with each other in a flexible, effective division of labor.

d. Underestimating the value of organization

In the case studies of dam construction projects, it was clear that consistent organization was missing. Organization inspired by genuine consistency uses and combines resources and means to serve desirable goals (such as promoting the common good) and favor the fulfillment of people and of reality. The officials involved in overseeing these projects pledged themselves to a rigid course of action and lost sight of the long-term, broadly based goals which actually legitimated the existence of the organization. Instead of searching for ways of making the best use of existing resources to serve the common good, they focused on narrow, short-sighted ends and personal interests (pay, position, prestige, comfort, etc.). The responsible parties did not care that the dams they built became a waste of public resources—or even harmed those who they were supposed to benefit—due to the lack of complementary infrastructure. At the same time, the possibility of squandering resources or doing an actual disservice to the community which was supposed to benefit did not enter into the calculations of those preoccupied with their narrow vision of constructing dams.

One of the reasons for such poor policy-making lay in the fact that there was no specific, conscious and deliberate effort to make administrative personnel aware of the organization's goals and the best strategies and means to achieve them. Channels of communication and social norms which could have fulfilled this function were missing; instead, prevailing social norms and messages tolerated and condoned the pursuit of narrow, self-interested goals which frustrated the broad goal of serving the common good. Without adequate communication, it was impossible to ensure that the whole project worked smoothly and converged on common ends.

Argentine management of complex projects resembled the actions of a "sorcerer's apprentice" who unleashes forces which are not understood or controlled. In large organizations, such as the National Water and Energy, means were often treated as ends; bureaucratic red tape was allowed to take over and nobody—especially the assumed beneficiaries—controlled it. Such organizations served spurious ends instead of fulfilling the objectives which justify their existence. Sound organization constantly strives to combine aspects and resources in such a way that they not only serve desirable goals, but so that there is also a harmonious adjustment

between means and goals. This requires people to rigorously observe and test information and causal-functional relationships before, during and after the project is completed, flexibly adjusting choices, strategies, policies and behaviors so as to progressively improve their ability to serve desirable goals. People must commit themselves, showing concern and engaging in effort and sacrifice to identify with the objectives and responsibilities inherent in the dams' functions.

e. Lack of active citizens' responsibility

Genuine consistency requires citizens to assume active responsibility not only for the results of their personal behavior but also for broader, societal results. Individuals are therefore expected to use their influence to pressure and demand that leaders and authorities contribute to the common good, that is, to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality, by adjusting their behaviors to consistency. In the case studies described above, neither citizens, nor social leaders, nor public authorities engaged in careful, rigorous and systemic analysis of the foreseeable consequences of the activities relating to dam construction; none of them committed themselves or did anything significant to improve these activities. They let themselves be guided by routine and succumbed to spurious interests. Responsible national officials shrugged their shoulders when I pointed these matters out to them, and said that suggested improvements (such as complementary services) were the responsibility of provincial offices.

Such an attitude resembles the one described by J. P. Gillin, who described Latin American policy-makers in the following way: "if he fails, after having made a 'good try,' he is not torn by feelings of guilt, conscience or inadequacy, which play a large part in the psychological after effects of failure in North American culture."⁷

Latin American policy makers may even feel justified in not trying at all; they may believe their efforts would be doomed to fail and are therefore not worth pursuing. This is how psychological ceilings and self-fulfilling prophecies are created, both of which diminish individuals' capacity for influencing and controlling the future.

Alternatively, policy makers may hesitate from taking action based on the self-serving excuse that it is not their business to do so, since others presumably bear responsibility –and therefore are to blame for possible failures.

The tendency to avoid taking responsibility also explains why public officials and decision-makers in general are surprised when failures come due to lack of preventive planning, as in the case of the engineer who failed

to provide adequate housing for the workers at the Chocón dam and had to face strikes and a long delay in construction.

Only by being aware of each person's capabilities, responsibility and resources, and using them fully and effectively, can people and societies advance and contribute to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. The main factor in human progress is people themselves and their commitment to exercise their capacity for consistency.

f. Decision making quality, moral and technical competence, rewarding or punishing violations, lawsuits against the state

Genuine consistency requires people to develop sound—i.e. consistent—social norms; people must not assume that simply because others accept or tolerate certain social norms, these norms are guaranteed to be sound and consistent. On the contrary, genuine consistency demands critical evaluation of various alternative social norms, choosing, combining and further enriching sound ones. In the cases analyzed, it was clear that Argentine society did not assume responsibility for identifying dysfunctional social norms, nor did it seek to identify and punish those who practice them. This allowed dysfunctional social norms to flourish, despite the fact that this led to waste, harm to the community, and other negative outcomes. Argentines did not sufficiently support sound social norms which reward people who contribute to the common good and punish those who do not. Most people were unaware of the impunity which they implicitly extended toward dysfunctional behavior, nor were they conscious of the fact that prevailing social norms wrongly characterized such deficiencies as inevitable and unavoidable, maintaining that they derive from human nature and therefore that there is no point fighting against them.

A lack of efficiency and honesty may be observed in almost all realms of activity in Argentina. Moreover, Argentines tend not to seek out and punish the people responsible for such deficiencies; on the contrary, they generally support dysfunctional social norms which tolerate inefficiency and dishonesty by rationalizing that these are unavoidable and that it is therefore impossible to rectify the situation. Indeed, Argentines go so far as to condone low quality, dishonest and inefficient decision making by social leaders and public authorities, looking upon this as natural and inescapable.

This attitude has prevailed even in matters involving enormous economic costs and serious consequences, as well as in cases which involved clear violations of society's interests, such as with lawsuits

brought against the state which made exorbitant claims on public resources (reaching into billions of dollars). The failure on the part of Argentine citizens to assume responsibility for monitoring societal and governmental actions has strengthened harmful networks of corruption and inefficiency, which sometimes turn into mafias and criminal organizations.

Argentines tend to assume that the workings of society and government are shrouded in mystery and therefore cannot be controlled; because of this self-limiting view, they do not even bother to try to understand or control governmental and societal decisions and behavior, even though actions in these areas affect assets, values and possibilities which are extremely important to them.

Therefore, even though Argentina's national constitution enshrines the principle of publicizing the acts of government, this has done little to encourage Argentine citizens to monitor and control governmental action. It is not only important for public officials and social leaders to exercise their influence constructively, it is also critical for citizens to fully exert their own quota of influence by consciously applying their consistency capacity and voluntarily engaging in efforts and sacrifices to follow genuine consistency.

All people need to improve their awareness and work to increase their moral and technical competence for evaluating social norms and policies, and the actions of societal organizations and government agencies.

g. Young people and the attraction of spurious models and violence; favored by lack of consistent alternative models

Argentine citizens have failed to demand ethical standards and technical competence in decision making from their leaders and authorities. Even the terrorist and guerrilla organizations which flourished until recently in Argentina failed to demand high quality decision making and neglected the need to identify and support sound social norms capable of elevating the quality of decision making and life.

Instead of arguing for the rational reinforcement of sound seeds and the neutralization of unsound seeds, supporters of terrorist and guerrilla groups adhered to irrationalities of their own; they adopted a simplistic view of the messianic superiority of their ideology and believed that their new utopia would automatically emerge out of the ashes of the old regime. These same tendencies were reflected in the behaviors of many Argentines who allowed themselves to succumb to pride, passion, violence and destruction.

Many young people who were still open to the guidance of sound values nonetheless came to support terrorist and guerrilla groups since they lacked reliable, consistent models to steer them in the right direction. Faced with the contradictions and deviations of their society and age, they were particularly vulnerable to the temptations offered by spurious models of consistency and by the attraction of impulses and false claims. In doing so, they failed to realize that these spurious models did not solve contradictions but actually aggravated them through their failure to consider—in a balanced and harmonious fashion—all aspects, relations and implications within the system of reality; and their resorting to irrational and destructive means.

Such models suffered from a lack of balance and perspective, ultimately proving themselves unable to anticipate future failures. Young people not only were tempted by the spurious models advanced by terrorist and guerrilla groups, but also sought to avoid contradictions through drugs and other forms of escapism. The contradictions which made guerrilla organizations and terrorism appear attractive to young people have not disappeared from Argentina. As a result, it is critical for leaders and citizens to offer consistent models showing sound ways of overcoming contradictions.

These models need to begin with the sound seeds—social norms, people, groups and institutions which are adjusted to genuine consistency—which already exist in Argentina; this is important to correct the false impression that contradictions may only be overcome through destructive violence, which in fact is not true.

The sound seeds already present in Argentina are much stronger than they seem to be, and they have the tacit support of a majority of citizens and leaders. This explains why Argentina has not fallen further behind in spite of dysfunctional social norms, contradictions and negative models.

At the same time, it is necessary to support such sound seeds, first of all by making them explicit and making it clear that they are overwhelmingly supported by Argentine citizens and leaders, and that they lead to genuine fulfillment and happiness. In addition, Argentines need to encourage the systematic work of training, research, and organization of sound networks, without waiting for luck, charismatic leaders or utopian ideologies to intervene and magically solve underlying problems.

Mechanisms should also be created for supervision and control—in the style of the General Accounting Office of the Library of Congress in the United States—but based on participation by citizens, who should use, control and pressure societal organizations and the state to consistently contribute to the common good in terms of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

3. Further examples of inconsistency in decisions, social norms and values

The case study of dam construction in Argentina was analyzed to show how inconsistency in decision making, social norms and values led to failure. Many similar analyses could have been discussed, based on the author's studies and observations.

For the sake of brevity, only a few further cases will be included and it will be left to the reader to infer both the underlying social norms and value orientations as well as the resulting disastrous developmental consequences.

4. Legal titles and land

a. Economic and social problems

Most of the land in the poorest region of the province of Córdoba has not been cultivated with modern methods and productivity has not been improved through the investment of capital and technology due to the fact that land owners' rights are not protected by law since hereditary transmission of land from one generation to the next has not been legally registered with the appropriate governmental office. Overcoming such difficulties entails substantial expense, requiring that land surveyors and lawyers, as well as others, be paid for their work.

A law addressing this problem was issued by the province of Córdoba (No. 5071) and revised in 1971 (No. 5260), but in both instances, the laws proved ineffective due to the fact that they were not based on a careful analysis of the underlying problem, including all its cultural, social and economic dimensions. As a result, the laws were not able to solve even one case, although an office was created for that end and functioned for several years.⁸ Experts were not consulted, nor were there careful studies about the laws' likely effects on the local population. No pilot cases were conducted to analyze the effectiveness of various alternatives.

The laws did not take into account the fact that the problem with titles was only a legal artifact of the real problem, viz. the economic, cultural and technical incapacity to cultivate the land profitably. Those who worked the land lacked the simple motivation to acquire legal titles, since they feared that when they did so, they would have to start paying unbearable

taxes. The problem could not be solved by tackling only one aspect without considering the rest of the regional problems of underdevelopment faced by the region (and especially the affected people). Therefore the problem remained as one link within the vicious circle of underdevelopment of the region, reinforcing its lagging behind.

b. Ineffective laws and corruption; inconsistent application of sacred-expedient orientation

Córdoba's experience is far from being exceptional, since it is quite common for the national Congress and provincial legislatures to issue laws which are not applied. The fact that the passing of laws often does not have any impact is not the worst of the problem, however. If these laws were consistently enforced, there would at least be some predictability and fairness. In fact, most laws are applied and enforced at the discretion of public officials who have the power to act in an arbitrary and corrupt fashion, often in complicity with those who seek undue privileges.

Such ineffective laws reflect the inconsistent application of sacred and expedient orientations, particularly the tendency to believe that formal laws possess a kind of magical power to achieve desired results. This assumption ignores the fact that formal laws degenerate into empty declarations unless they are built on internalized social laws –i.e. social norms. Instead of simply issuing formal declarations and relying on legal decrees, people need to carefully plan strategies for social norming and should structure communication and social participation and organization to efficiently and concretely shape human behavior, contributing to human fulfillment.

5. Feasibility studies and projects

a. Failure of development projects

In the northwest region of the province of Córdoba, local leaders have attempted for decades to promote local and regional development projects. All these projects shared several traits which prevented them from becoming successful. Although they were called “projects,” these initiatives were usually only statements of intent.

Descriptions of how the projects were to be implemented, organized, evaluated, integrated and balanced were never made explicit.

- There was a general tendency to expect and rely on favorable intervention from outside forces, including the central government, external enterprises or institutions.
- Development projects were not based on reasonable information and analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of various alternatives; on the contrary, they were usually based on fantasy.
- There was no community organization set up to study and prepare concrete projects or to carry them out in practice.
- The people responsible for the projects did not know where and whom to ask for support, what to ask, or how to ask.
- They did not attempt to integrate science, technology and evaluative studies with intuition and experience, nor did they follow a balanced consideration of all aspects and needs of the area. Instead, they plunged ahead unilaterally –despite the fact that they did not quite understand the information and advice which they received.
- The individuals involved with these projects did not even have the inclination or motivation to join efforts and cooperate in order to carry through the initiatives.⁹

b. Poorly conceived initiatives and stunted development

Poorly conceived initiatives instead of professionally formulated projects impede development in Argentina. They reflect an inadequate, unsystematic relation to reality and a failure to analyze initiatives from the perspective of the all-encompassing, systemic framework of reality.

These initiatives reflect an inconsistent approach toward the sacred-expedient axis by authorities, leaders and citizens, all of whom demonstrate unrealistic expectations and a general unwillingness to engage in strenuous, arduous efforts on behalf of desirable goals.

Development projects are handicapped by the lack of a rigorous and systematic approach and by the failure to serve valuable ends through effective means, making sound use of information, organization, professionalism and discipline. The problem is not limited to the northwestern region of the province of Córdoba, but applies to Argentina as a whole. Indeed, one of the problems which plague central government and international aid organizations is the difficulty of establishing full-fledged, well-organized projects in Argentina. Most often, local institutions haphazardly assemble information and launch ill-conceived initiatives.

6. Contextual uncertainty

a. Interventionistic state, lacking defined policies

Since state interventionism has marked Argentine political and economic life for decades, it has been essential to know what government plans are in order to assess the feasibility and likely profitability of any productive activity or enterprise.

Yet government plans were subject to frequent changes and were largely undefined and vague, influenced by improvisation and spurious ends, by inefficiency and dishonesty; the unpredictability of government policy, due to political, legal and judicial instability, created great uncertainty about the wisdom of undertaking major initiatives and inhibited sound investments, since it made it more difficult to predict profitability.

Instability and uncertainty encouraged speculation and protectionism, both of which unjustly favored a select few at the expense of the general welfare.

Sound investment and planning, on the other hand, were restricted. For example, in the northwest region of the province of Córdoba, plans to colonize 6,345-hectares in a potentially fertile and mineral-rich area known as Los Cerrillos were circulated for decades but the necessary preliminary assessment of the extent of underground waters—essential for knowing what can be done and at what cost—were never conducted.

In another example, the manganese mines in the department of Sobremonte remained closed and expectant for decades, waiting for the state—which was the main buyer of manganese—to provide a reliable picture of future policies.

Even if Argentine governments had established a clear, long-term frame of reference about future economic policies, the uncertainty caused by political instability and the lack of trust in government promises (due to so many broken commitments by past governments) would probably have impeded investment in the medium and long term.

Furthermore, uncertainty affected normal citizens' plans for the future. The young people in the northwest, for example, did not know whether they should prepare themselves to emigrate or to stay, since this depended on the availability of sources of employment which, in turn, depended on unpredictable government policies.

This made it difficult to make sound decisions about where to live and what type of employment to pursue and inhibited rational job preparation and training.¹⁰

b. Public and private uncertainty, magic, corruption

Unpredictable changes in government policies meant that activities could be profitable one day and ruinous the next, should there be a change in currency exchange rates or protectionistic policies, for example.

This not only applied to the northwest region of Córdoba province, but to the whole of Argentina. For example, government exchange rate policies overvalued the national currency, thereby making most export activities unprofitable.

Entrepreneurs who depended on exports bore their difficulties for quite a while, expecting changes in exchange rates, and often went bankrupt while waiting.

Moreover, the unpredictable quality of government policy also opened the door to discretionary treatment and thus favored corruption.

The lack of demand for clarity in government reinforced the unpredictability of government policies, which discouraged rationality in private activities and plans.

Such a vicious circle was fomented by inconsistency in the application of sacred and expedient values, since citizens, leaders and authorities were not stimulated to assume responsibility for actively working on behalf of the goals of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality, nor to define and implement means for effectively serving such goals, systematically considering reality –with all its aspects and relations– as an integrated framework.

Decisions, actions and their results were left to depend on external and magical factors, such as luck and state intervention, or on spurious factors, such as privileges and corruption. People assumed that they, as ordinary citizens, were unable to overcome these situations.

There was not only a lack of clarity and stability in government policies, there was also a failure on the part of citizens to exercise responsibility for organizing themselves into sound networks which could guarantee stable conditions even when governments changed.

Social norms which establish clear and stable rules of the game are means through which citizens create conditions for deciding and acting; predictable rules of the game encourage people to consider all aspects and relations of reality and therefore to act effectively –without deviations or waste– so as to contribute to human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality, with depth and balance, taking into account all dimensions, relations and implications (short-term, long-term and ultimate), beyond impulse and immediate gratifications.

7. Other examples

a. Inflation, speculation, bureaucracy, quality of decisions, legislation and services

Although many more examples could be cited, I shall stop here after sketching a few more problems I have studied closely. The failure of the Argentine state and society to meet the requirements for consistently expedient decision-making may be seen, for example, in the superficial approach taken toward the problem of inflation and the lack of transparency surrounding this issue; the fictions underlying the inflationary process sow confusion and divert economic activity toward illegitimate rather than legitimate behaviors (speculation rather than productive investment). In another example of the failure to properly apply expedient social norms and values, the state and other services, as well as public and private structures, have not been reoriented and restructured to overcome dysfunctional mechanisms. Political, administrative and technical roles have not been functionally integrated in public or private realms.¹¹

The misguided, improvised handling of the Malvinas war provides yet another example of Argentina's failure to apply genuinely consistent expediency when necessary.¹²

Because of the failure to appreciate and apply genuinely consistent expediency, social services in Argentina do not function efficiently and available funds and other resources are not well spent.

These deficiencies can be seen in the ineffective actions taken to fight infant mortality due to malnutrition and the ineffectual campaign to prevent the Chagas-Mazza disease.¹³ The lack of genuinely consistent expedient social norms and values has also hindered efficient communication and cooperation between health services and the population.¹⁴

The insufficient use of genuinely consistent expedient social norms and values has also interfered with efforts to adjust educational plans to the social, economic and occupational needs of the population.¹⁵ The programs and instruction offered to university students are not adapted to the actual tasks which graduates (especially engineers, architects and medical doctors) will have to perform once they begin professional work; no significant efforts are made to analyze and adjust university teaching not only to what current practice is but also to what it is likely to become in the future. Students are not taught how to communicate and work as a team, vertically and horizontally.

As a result of Argentina's failure to meet the requirements for genuinely consistent expedient decision-making, the integrated consequences of

large-scale public works (such as the Yaciretá dam), including their social and environmental impact, has not been adequately considered, and serious damage has consequently been done.¹⁶ Little attention has been paid to increasing and equalizing all individuals' access to available benefits and opportunities by enhancing the quality of information, orientation, guidance and decision making and by increasing social participation and organization.¹⁷

Finally, laws and legislative activity are not based on serious analysis of their implications for human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality. The legislative process continues to be hampered by an insufficient emphasis on improving decisions and laws through the efficient use of information, professionalism, discipline and systematic methods. Furthermore, public leaders and government authorities are not required to enhance their decision making quality.

b. Improvised solutions for important problems

All of the case studies of the problems just described are based on my own research. However, examples of the "boomerang" effects of actions which inconsistently apply the sacred-expedient axis are countless. Reports, articles, books, newspapers, and magazines present daily information about similar cases of improvised solutions to important and delicate problems, motivated either by dishonest endeavours to pursue lower interests at the expense of common good, or by lack of commitment and concern, and negligence. Improvised solutions have serious, negative consequences for the well-being of society and the economy as scarce resources are wasted or put to inefficient and misdirected uses. In Argentina, practical failures leading to improvisation are only partially attenuated by resorting to spiritual, family and interpersonal values. These values must be handled with unrestricted consistency, that is, people must optimally use all expedient resources (information, organization, professionalism, discipline, etc.) which are essential for improving individuals' quality of life, as favored by consistent social norms.¹⁸

In spite of recent efforts to remedy this state of affairs on the part of certain government officials and private citizens, much remains to be done. An important contribution to future solutions is given by the consistent orientation reflected in Argentine spiritual, family and interpersonal values. It is necessary to extend such a consistent approach to other areas, such as economic, political, scientific and technological development. Despite the non-expedient character of dominant social norms, there are also important sectors of Argentine society which embrace different,

consistent social norms which would encourage advance in these fields. These sound seeds are waiting to be supported, disseminated, cultivated and irrigated. In this way, Argentine achievements and failures derive to an important extent from consistency and inconsistency in the application of the sacred-expedient axis, viz. from a sacred approach toward ends but a non-expedient approach toward practical areas (such as the economy). Evils are partially compensated for by efforts of consistency; advances are partially obstructed by spurious consistency.

D. Resources for Advancing in Consistency in Sacredness-Expediency

1. Expedient people and models

a. Consistency and inconsistency apply to both sacredness and expediency

In all societies and people, there are elements of all value orientations –some dominant, others alternative– and this occurs as well with sacredness and expediency.¹⁹

Accordingly, Argentines do not completely reject expediency; most Argentines employ expediency, not only in order to attain short-sighted, self-interested goals but also in order to serve higher, spiritual, family and interpersonal values.

When there is inconsistency –spurious consistency– it contaminates both orientations; spuriousness in expediency accompanies spuriousness in sacredness, as capricious, partial, self-interested goals are pursued with counterproductive means, causing self-destruction and punishment.

For instance, if people choose to serve impulses, ego and fragments, treating them as if they were sacred, then even if they adopt a consistent approach toward expediency, their behavior will be self-destructive and will lead to failure and frustration.

To be truly consistent, an expedient approach needs to be employed in the service of human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality; it must not lose sight of the overall framework of the system of reality where all things relate to each other and which inexorably fulfills itself, mastering, punishing and overcoming obstacles.

Inconsistency causes people to neglect ultimate ends and to avoid serving them with expediency. Conversely, genuine consistency manifests itself in approaches toward both sacredness and expediency.

Many leaders, authorities and citizens apply expediency to serve egoistic interests and not the common good, but many, being inspired by genuine consistency, apply expediency to serve the common good, that is, human fulfillment and the fulfillment of reality.

b. The Argentine paradox: advance in spite of unsound networks; role of sound seeds

Many observers have asked themselves how it is that a country as rich in natural resources as Argentina did not advance more in economic and political terms. The present analysis offers a different angle and a perhaps more striking paradox: given that Argentine culture and social norms are influenced by an inconsistent orientation along the sacred-expedient axis, and given that these cultural and social norms encourage Argentine citizens to passively tolerate or even justify inefficiency and corruption in leaders and authorities (and in citizens and social organizations), how has Argentina been able to achieve and preserve a high quality of life and some limited economic advancement?

The explanation behind this lies in the fact that many Argentines –the silent majority– are working to serve the common good, with a respectful awareness of the need for honesty and efficiency. The spurious, inconsistent approach which many Argentines adopt toward the sacred-expedient axis and its derived social norms is only partial, and many Argentine individuals and groups display a high degree of genuine consistency toward this axis and related norms at certain times and in certain realms.

This sound influence could be greater were it not for general lack of awareness of the need to build sound networks to counteract the dangerous mechanisms of dysfunctional networks and organizations, of corruption and even mafias, which fight against sound seeds, using lies and fraud.

The efforts of the sound seeds guided by genuine consistency are even the more laudable due to the fact that they had to swim against the current of inefficiency and corruption which placed enormous pressure upon them. This allowed dishonest people to push their way into positions of power, concentrating at the top. In spite of such processes, Argentine citizens and groups guided by genuine consistency succeeded in maintaining reasonable levels of security and solidarity and thus avoided the collapse of the economy and society, in spite of hyperinflation. This allowed some leaders and authorities, who launched a sound campaign to increase order and transparency, efficiency and honesty, to receive strong support from the Argentine people.

This book hopes to make a similar contribution by encouraging and guiding people in their efforts to discover and support sound seeds and counteract unsound ones. It also aims to stimulate leaders and citizens to exercise their responsibility to actively participate in social, political and economic organizations and structures in order to optimize their influence and help promote fulfillment under the guide of consistency.

2. Lessons of reality

a. Alarm signals; risks

By 1990, hyperinflation, corruption and inefficiency had hit Argentina hard, forcing Argentines to wake up and open their eyes to the need for genuine consistency toward the sacred-expedient axis. Hardships caused Argentine leaders, authorities and citizens to recognize that they could not continue to rely on good luck, but that they needed to organize themselves to save their nation and themselves.

This prompted healthy changes in the economy, deriving from joint action by society and the state. Yet at the same time, the changes adopted were not fully inserted into the wider framework of reality; economic policies were still not properly inserted into a broader perspective including non-economic (ethical, spiritual, family and social) factors. As a result, Argentines continue to be at significant risk of idealizing materialism and copying the worst aspects of First-World models – indulging in pride, consumerism, hedonism, egoism, loneliness, drug addiction and perversions by following the panaceas of money, power, prestige and pleasure.

The improvements made to date could be the beginning of a deep and lasting change. However, most public leaders and government officials are not helping the population to properly read the underlying situation. Even people cooperating with government and society for the common good, have not learned to identify social, ethical, family and spiritual factors, and their influence is strongly counteracted by unsound organizations which thrive on inefficiency, dishonesty, corruption and crime.

b. Partial learning, relapses, tackling the roots

Argentine history shows that the nation has been able to learn the hard lessons of reality in the past and become more expedient. One such occurrence took place in the mid-nineteenth century, when the country finally pulled together after decades of civil war and suffering and began a period of sustained political and economic growth, symbolized by the proclamation of a national constitution in 1853.²⁰ Another example of such a national regrouping seemed to occur after the crisis of 1890, after which the country again resumed a path of political and economic progress which would continue virtually unbroken for four decades.²¹

Now it seems that a similar process is taking place, following the blows described in this book. The recurrence of hardships and alarm signals gives the impression that the lessons of reality have only been partially learned,

and that only small adjustments were performed to attenuate sufferings and symptoms, but without removing the deep, underlying, pathological roots of the problems. As a result, imbalances and inconsistencies along the sacred-expedient axis persisted through the end of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the inclination against expediency which is so typical of Argentines is partly due to the bounty which nature has given them. The country's rich natural resources and mild climate allowed them to turn their backs on reality and live in a fantasy world -and survive nonetheless. They could afford to disregard expediency, to downplay the need for rigorous planning against possible misfortunes and for systematic, rational use of the country's resources. Argentines were encouraged to take a shallow approach to treating problems, dealing with symptoms rather than underlying problems. This aggravated economic and political problems since Argentines failed to use unity as their unique, firm reference point. The Spanish cultural heritage reinforced some of these tendencies, whose influence may be inferred from similar profiles among the two national groups (Spanish and Argentines), as indicated in the discussion of the survey in Chapter Five. The northern Europeans who first colonized the United States, on the other hand -unlike the Argentines-, were prompted by the hardship of cold winters and self-imposed discipline to value expediency. This was reinforced by their cultural historical heritage which placed more emphasis on results than on principles.

Argentine leaders, authorities and citizens are responsible for engaging in a more profound analysis of reality and tackling the roots of problems, taking advantage of the salutary impact of hardships and blows, but deeply reading in them, not just playing at removing symptoms. They need to become actively involved in changing social norms, systems and decision making styles, adjusting them to genuine consistency, with strictness, discipline, method and system, leading to fulfillment, without abandoning treatment as soon as sufferings are alleviated.

The analysis presented in this book aims at encouraging leaders, authorities and citizens in Argentina (and elsewhere) to learn the lessons of reality deeply and fully and to consequently act consistently. The book calls for an integrated approach which systematically considers all of reality, without privileging any particular sectors, fragments and impulses. This will allow Argentines to prevent even harsher blows and to avoid relapses, as in 1890 and 1930, in the face of the inexorable corrections of reality. The way to do this, as argued in this book, is for people and societies to apply the consistency criterion to systems of values and social norms, decisions and behavior, through the sacredness-expediency axis.~

CHAPTER ONE NOTES:

SOCIAL NORMS AND CONSISTENCY

1. The concepts of genuine and spurious consistency are first presented and more thoroughly analyzed in the companion volume to the present work, A. Critto, Overcoming Modern Confusion: Consistency and Choice (Lanham, Ma: University Press of America, 1999).

2. See A. Critto, Overcoming Modern Confusion: Consistency and Choice, op. cit., Ch.1.A.1

3. Jean Jacques Rousseau said: "The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say 'this is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society." From: "Discourses on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men" [1755], in First and Second Discourses (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 141.

4. William James states, "The great thing ... in all education, is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague ... As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work. From: The Principles of Psychology [1890], Vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 122-144.

5. See A. Critto, Overcoming Modern Confusion: Consistency and Choice, op. cit., Ch. 1, note 130.

6. I refer to social norming as the process whereby individuals develop, acquire and simultaneously transform social norms by adding their own contributions.

7. Aristotle said: "It is ... not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary, it is of very great, or rather of supreme importance." From: Aristotle in Twenty-Three Volumes, Vol. 19: The Nichomachean Ethics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), Book 2, p. 75.

8. Robert K. Merton refers to anomie as "a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them." From: Social Theory and Social Structure, (New York: Free Press, 1968), p. 216.

Merton also says: "Simple anomie refers to the state of confusion in a group or society which is subject to conflict between value-systems, resulting in some degree of uneasiness and a sense of separation from the group; acute anomie, to the deterioration and, at the extreme, the disintegration of value systems, which results in marked anxieties." (p. 217)

9. Erving Goffman said: "Once individuals – for whatever reason – come into one another's immediate presence, a fundamental principle of social life becomes enormously pronounced, namely, its promissory, evidential character. It is not only that our appearance and manner provide evidence of our statuses and relationships. It is also that the line of our visual regard, the intensity of our involvement, and the shape of our initial actions, allow others to glean our immediate intent and purpose, and all this whether or not we are engaged in talk with them at the time." From: "The Interaction Order," in American Sociological Review, No. 48 (1983), p. 3.

Furthermore: "... critical feature of face-to-face gatherings is that in them and them alone we can fit a shape and dramatic form to matters that aren't otherwise palpable to the senses. Through costume, gesture, and bodily alignment we can depict and represent a heterogeneous list of immaterial things, sharing only the fact that they have a significance in our lives and yet do not cast a shadow: notable events in the past, beliefs about the cosmos and our place in it, ideals regarding our various categories of persons, and of course social relationships and larger social structures." (p. 9)

10. Robert E. Park says: "In human society every act of every individual tends to become a gesture, since what one does is always an indication of what one intends to do. The consequence is that the individual in society lives a more or less public existence, in which all his acts are anticipated, checked, inhibited, or modified by the gestures and the intentions of his fellows. It is in this social conflict, in which every individual lives more or less in the mind of every other individual, that human nature and the individual may acquire their most

characteristic and human traits.” From: “Human Nature and Collective Behavior” [1926], in American Journal of Sociology, No. 33 (1927), p. 738.

11. This is an important underlying message of Solon’s statement: “being asked if the laws he had given to the Athenians were the best, [Solon] replied, ‘I have given them the best they were able to bear’ - a fine expression that ought to be perfectly understood by all legislators!” From: Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws. (New York: Hafner, 1949), Vol. 1, book 19, p. 305.

12. Durkheim said: “There is a category of facts (social facts) with very distinctive characteristics: it consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him ... A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general through a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.” From: The Rules of the Sociological Method [1895] (New York, Free Press, 1958), pp. 3, 13.

Durkheim added: “We must ... seek the explanation of social life in the nature of society itself. It is quite evident that, since it infinitely surpasses the individual in time as well as in space, it is in a position to impose upon him ways of acting and thinking which it has consecrated with its prestige. The pressure, which is the distinctive property of social facts, is the pressure which the totality exerts on the individual.” (p. 102)

Durkheim also commented that: “Society is not a mere sum of individuals. Rather, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics ... The group thinks, feels and acts quite differently from the way in which its members would were they isolated. If, then, we begin with the individual, we shall be able to understand nothing of what takes place in the group.” (pp. 103-104)

13. Anthony F.C. Wallace said: “A world view is not merely a philosophical by-product of each culture, like a shadow, but the very skeleton of concrete cognitive assumptions on which the flesh of customary behavior is hung. A world view, accordingly, may be expressed, more or less systematically in cosmology, philosophy, ethics, religious ritual, scientific belief, and so on, but it is implicit in almost every act. In Parsonian terms, it constitutes the set of cognitive orientations of the members of a society.” From: Culture and Personality (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 101.

14. David Hume said: “Nothing appears more surprising to those who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers ... The governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded: and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular.” From: “Of the First Principles of Government” [1741], in Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 1985), p. 32.

15. Custom is also composed of social norms; social norms, in other words, are the structures which maintain the edifice of society, culture and civilization. On this point, Hume said: "Custom ... is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past. Without the influence of custom we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to ends or to employ our natural powers in the production of any effect. There would be an end at once of all action as well as of the chief part of speculation." From: An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding [1748] (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), pp. 58-59.

16. David Hume said: "The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures, and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club of knot of companions." From: (Hume, David (1748) 1985 "Of National Character" [1748], in Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary. op. cit., p. 202.

17. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown said that "most of the social relations which in their totality constitute the structure, such as relations of father and son, buyer and seller, ruler and subject, cannot be observed except in the social activities in which the relations are functioning." From: "On the Concept of Function in Social Science" [1935], in Structure and Function in Primitive Society (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 181.

18. The following statement by Oliver Wendell Holmes should be applied to social norms in general, and not only the law: "The law embodies the story of a nation's development through many centuries, and it cannot be dealt with as if it contained only the axioms and corollaries of a book of mathematics." From: The Common Law [1881] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 5.

19. George P. Murdock said: "But culture and social structure are actually mere epiphenomena – derivative products of the social interaction of pluralities of individuals." From: "Anthropology's Mythology" in Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (1972), p. 19.

20. See John Stuart Mill "Considerations on Representative Government" (1861) in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, vol. 19 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 381.

21. See Claude Levi-Strauss: The Raw and The Cooked (1964) (Chicago, Ill.: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983) Vol. 1, p. 12.

22. William James said: "Every thought you now have and every act and intention owes its completion to the acts of your dead and living brothers. Everything we know and are is through men. We have no revelation but through man. Every sentiment that warms your gizzard, every brave act that ever made your pulse bound and your nostril open to a confident breath was a man's act.

However mean a man may be, man is 'the best we know'; and your loathing as you turn from what you probably call the vulgarity of human life - your homesick yearning for a 'Better,' somewhere - is furnished by your manhood; your ideal is made up of traits suggested by most men's words and actions" From: "Letter to Thomas W. Ward [1868], in The Letters of William James, Vol. 1 (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), pp.131-132.

23. See this chapter, note #10.

24. See William Mc. Dougall: Psychology: The Study of Behavior (New York: Holt, 1912) p. 20; Erich Fromm "Individual and Social Origin of Neurosis", American Sociological Review, vol. 9 (1944), p. 381; Talcot Parsons, The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a group of Recent European Writers. (New York: Free Press, 1968) vol. 1, p. 19.

25. I disagree with Jon Elster's statement that "Rational action is concerned with outcomes ... By contrast, I define social norms by the feature that they are not outcome oriented ... the imperatives expressed in social norms either are unconditional, or if conditional, are not future oriented." From: The Cement of Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 98.

I also disagree with his statement that social norms "dispense with the need to consider consequences, since the proscribed action is laid down by an ambiguous 'don't do it'." (p.102). This work argues that adherence to social norms always has a degree of rationality, and people should work to enhance this component.

26. See Talcott Parsons, The Structure op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 395-396.

27. Pitirim A. Sorokin, says: "The fundamental social relationships regulated by official law change but slowly, providing the society with a necessary stability and order ... incessant change of such fundamental social relationships as property, the family, and forms of government would mean a continuous revolution - economic, social and political - which would make stable order in the society impossible. These facts explain why the norms of official law tend to 'harden' and in this 'hardened' form tend to stay unchanged for decades, even centuries, until profound change in the law-convictions of the members occurs. Official law, then, always lags somewhat behind unofficial laws." From: Society, Culture and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics. A System of General Sociology [1937] (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 82.

28. Even Heraclitus said: "You could not step twice into the same river, for other waters are ever flowing on to you." From: Heraclitus on the Universe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 483.

29. George Santayana said: "Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." From: The Life of Reason: Or the Phases of Human Progress [1905-1906] (New York: Scribner, 1953), p. 82.

30. Williams James said: "Habit is ... the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent. It alone is what keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance, and saves the children of fortune from the envious uprising of the poor. It alone prevents the hardest and the most repulsive walks of life from being deserted by those brought up to tread therein. It keeps the fishermen and the deck-hand at sea through the winter; it holds the miner in his darkness, and nails the countryman to his log-cabin and his lonely farm through all the months of snow; it protects us from invasion by the natives of the desert and the frozen zone. It dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees, because there is no other for which we are fitted, and it is too late to begin again. It keeps different social strata from mixing. Already at the age of twenty-five you see the professional mannerism settling down on the young commercial traveler, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counselor-at-law. You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the 'shop,' in a word, from which the man can by - and - by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. On the whole, it is best he should not escape. It is well for the world that in most of us, by the age of thirty, the character has set like plaster, and will never soften again." From: The Principles of Psychology [1890], Vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 121.

31. Lewis Henry Morgan said: "When we recognize the duration of man's existence upon earth, the wide vicissitudes through which he has passed in savagery and in barbarism, and the progress he was compelled to make, civilization might as naturally have been delayed for several thousand years in the future, as to have occurred when it did in the good providence of God. We are forced to the conclusion that it was the result, as to the time of its achievement, of a series of fortuitous circumstances. It may well serve to remind us that we owe our present condition, with its multiplied means of safety and of happiness, to the struggles, the sufferings, the ... exertions and the patient toil of our barbarous, and more remotely, of our savage ancestors. Their labors, their trials and their successes were a part of the plan of the Supreme Intelligence to develop a barbarian out of a savage, and a civilized man out of this barbarian." From: Ancient Society [1877] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), p. 468.

32. Charles H. Cooley said: "Public opinion is not a mere aggregate of separate individual judgments, but an organization, a cooperative product of communication and reciprocal influence. It may be as different from the sum of what the individuals could have thought out in separation as a ship built by a hundred men is from a hundred boats built by one man." From: Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind [1909] (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 121.

33. Herbert H. Hyman said: "In shaping their attitudes men may orient themselves to groups other than their own. If the groups to which individuals refer themselves, their 'reference groups,' are empirically determined, knowledge and predictions of attitude, self-evaluation, and conduct will be enhanced; the

cherished principles about group influences can be protected; and an understanding of the complex processes by which men relate themselves to groups can be enriched." From: "Reference Groups," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 13 (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), p. 354.

34. Chester I. Barnard said: "A person can and will accept a communication as authoritative only when four conditions simultaneously obtain: a) he can and does understand the communication; b) 'at the time of his decision' he believes that it is not inconsistent with the purposes of the organization; c) at the time of his decision, he believes it to be compatible with his personal interest as a whole; and d) he is able mentally and physically to comply with it." From: The Functions of the Executive [1938] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 165.

35. The acquisition of social norms referred to as knowledge is described by Socrates as similar to taking "birds to stand for pieces of knowledge. Whenever a person acquires any piece of knowledge and shuts it up in his enclosure, we must say he has learned or discovered the thing of which this is the knowledge, and that is what 'knowing' means." From: "Theatetus," in The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 904.

The act of "enclosing" knowledge is tantamount to the effort to incorporate certain behavioral habits by learning and repeating them.

36. Niccoló Machiavelli said: "Men almost always prefer to walk in paths marked out by others and pattern their actions through imitation." From: The Prince (New York; Norton, 1977), chap. 6, p. 16.

37. Bernard Barber said: "Against the background of this general and comprehensive definition of trust as expectation of the persistence of the moral social order, we can proceed to two more specific meanings, each of which is important for the understanding of social relationships and social systems ... The first ... is the meaning of trust as the expectation of technically competent role performance ... The second ... concerns expectations of fiduciary obligation and responsibility, that is, the expectation that some others in our social relationships have moral obligations and responsibility to demonstrate a special concern for other's interest above their own." From: The Logic and Limits of Trust (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1983), p. 14.

38. Franklin H. Giddings said: "The original and elementary subjective fact in society is 'the consciousness of kind.' By this term I mean a state of consciousness in which any being, whether low or high in the scale of life, recognizes another conscious being as of like kind with itself." From: The Principles of Sociology [1896] (New York: Johnson, 1970), p. 17.

39. This is probably implied in Jacques Lacan's statement: "If I have said that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other (with a capital O), it is in order to indicate the beyond in which the recognition of desire is bound up with the desire of recognition ... In other words this other is the Other that even my lie invokes as a guarantor of the truth in which it subsists ... By which we can also see that ... with the appearance of language the dimension of truth emerges." From: Ecrits: A Selection (New York: Norton: 1977) p. 172.

40. See this chapter, note #27.

41. Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "The first requirement of a sound body of law is, that it should correspond with the actual feelings and demands of the community, whether right or wrong." From: The Common Law [1881] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 36.

42. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann said: "Paradoxically, science itself has produced institutions, systems of thought and eventually social-political programs that bind people even more than the 'superstitions' they replaced." From: The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 102.

43. Noam Chomsky said: "Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. This seems to have been the position of the founders of modern general linguistics, and no cogent reason for modifying it has been offered. To study actual linguistic performance, we must consider the interaction of a variety of factors, of which the underlying competence of the speaker-hearer is only one. In this respect, study of language is no different from empirical investigation of other complex phenomena." From: Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp. 3-4.

44. See Robert Redfield, "Civilizations as Cultural Structures" (1958), in Human Nature and the Study of Society: The Papers of Robert Redfield, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 394.

45. James George Frazer said: "Of the benefactors whom we are bound thankfully to commemorate, many, perhaps most, were savages ... who slowly acquired by experience and transmitted to us by inheritance those seemingly fundamental ideas which we are apt to regard as original and intuitive." From: The Golden Bough, quoted in Abram Kardiner and Edward Preble, They Studied Man (1961), p. 307. I disagree with Frazer's statement that "The world cannot live at the level of its great men" (p. 420) as well as his contention that past contributions are destined to "wash away" (pp. 90-91); past ideas and experiences leave a permanent residue which goes on to adopt and incorporate new forms, up to the most distant future.

46. See this chapter, note #6.

47. Basil Bernstein said: "A number of fashions of speaking, frames of consistency, are possible in any given language and ... these fashions of speaking, linguistic forms, or codes, are themselves a function of the form social relations take. According to this view, the form of the social relation or, more generally, the social structure generates distinct linguistic forms or codes and 'these codes essentially transmit the culture and so constrain behavior'." From: "A Socio-linguistic Approach to Social Learning" [1965], in Class, Codes, and Control, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1974), p. 122.

48. See this chapter, note #4.

49. See this chapter, note #27.

50. Erich Fromm said: "Man is not only made by history - history is made by man. The solution of this seeming contradiction constitutes the field of social psychology. Its task is to show not only how passions, desires, anxieties change and develop as a 'result' of the social processes, but also how man's energies thus shaped into specific forms in their turn become productive forces, molding the social process." From: Escape from Freedom (New York: Holt, 1941), pp. 13-14.

51. William James said: "The whole feeling of reality, the whole sting and excitement of our voluntary life, depends on our sense that in it things are 'really being decided' from one moment to another, and that it is not the dull rattling off of a chain that was forged in innumerable ages ago." From: The Principles of Psychology. Vol. 1, (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 453.

52. Alexis de Tocqueville said: "Historians who write in aristocratic ages are inclined to refer all occurrences to the particular will and character of certain individuals; and they are apt to attribute the most important revolutions to slight accidents. They trace out the smallest causes with sagacity, and frequently leave the greatest unperceived ... Historians who live in democratic ages exhibit precisely opposite characteristics. Most of them attribute hardly any influence to the individual over the destiny of the race, or to citizens over the fate of people; but, on the other hand, they assign great general causes to all petty incidents." From: Democracy in America [1835-1840] (New York: Vintage, 1945), vol. 2, p. 90.

53. Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn said: "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups ... cultural systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements for further action." From: Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum, 1952), p. 181.

54. Johan Huizinga said: "Real civilization cannot exist in the absence of a certain play-element, for civilization presupposes limitation and mastery of the self, the ability not to confuse its own tendencies with the ultimate and highest goal, but to understand that it is enclosed within certain bounds freely accepted. Civilization will, in a sense, always be played according to certain rules, and true civilization will always demand fair play." From: Homoludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture [1938] (Boston: Beacon, 1955), p. 211.

55. Herbert Blumer said: "Symbolic Interactionism rests ... on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them ... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing

with the things he encounters.” From: Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 2.

Blumer also said: “The human individual confronts a world that he must interpret in order to act instead of an environment to which he responds because of his organization. He has to cope with the situations in which he is called on to act, ascertaining the meaning of actions of others and mapping out his own line of action in the light of such interpretation. He has to construct and guide his action instead of merely releasing it in response to factors playing on him or operating through him.” (p. 23)

56. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges said: “Fortunately the past never completely dies for man. Man may forget it, but he always preserves it within him. For, take him at any epoch, and he is the product, the epitome, of all the earlier epochs. Let him look into their own soul, and he can find and distinguish these different epochs by what each of them has left within him.” From: The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome [1864] (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1979), p. 14.

57. See Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Speech at Harvard Law School, 25 June 1895,” in Speeches (Boston: Little, Brown, 1913), pp. 67-68.

58. See Thomas Paine. The rights of Man (London: Dent, 1958) p.p. 12-13.

59. See this chapter, note #50.

60. See Anthony F.C. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements”, in American Anthropologist, N° 58 (1956), p. 268.

61. Charles H. Cooley said: “I conclude ... that the imaginations which people have of one another are the ‘solid facts’ of society, and that to observe and interpret these must be a chief aim of sociology.” From: Human Nature and the Social Order [1902] (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 121.

Cooley also said: “A social self of this sort might be called the reflected or looking-glass self: ‘Each to each a looking-glass/Reflects the other that doth pass.’ As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and are pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be; so in imagination we perceive in an other’s mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it.” (p. 184) Cooley also said: “Self and society are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion.” From: Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind [1909] (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 5.

62. For a discussion of the construction of the self, see George Herbert Mead, “The Genesis of the Self and Social Control”, Selected Writings (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p. 284; Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (1934) (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 69, 135, 137 n, 138 and 154.

63. See this chapter, note #6.

64. Kurt Lewin said: "In general terms, behavior (B) is a function (F) of the person (P) and of his environment (E), $B = F(P, E)$. This statement is correct for emotional outbreaks as well as for 'purposive' directed activities: for dreaming, wishing, and thinking, as well as for talking and acting." From: "Behavior and Development as a Function of the Total Situation" [1946], in Field Theory in Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 239.

65. See this chapter, part B, section 1.

66. F.H. Hahn said: "I have for much of the time been arguing that the emperor's clothes are not quite as fine as is often supposed. Although I have not been as precise and detailed as a more leisurely account would have permitted, I nonetheless hope to have shown that, both on purely logical considerations as well as on the basis of quite simple observations, the invisible hand is like to be unsure in its operation and occasionally downright arthritic. However, as I have already warned, it is an unwarranted inference from this that there is some social device which performs more satisfactorily or that we should cut off the hand together." From: "Reflections on the Invisible Hand," in Lloyd's Bank Review, No. 144 (1982), p. 16.

67. Ludwik Fleck said: "If we define 'thought collective' as a community of persons mutually exchanging ideas or maintaining intellectual interaction, we will find by implication that it also provides the special 'carrier' for the historical development of any field of thought as well as for the given stock of knowledge and level of culture. This we have designated thought style ... The individual within the collective is never, or hardly ever, conscious of the prevailing thought style which almost always exerts an absolutely compulsive force upon his thinking and with which it is not possible to be at variance." From: Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact [1935] (1979), p. 39. In the preface to his work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962), Thomas S. Kuhn notes that Fleck's "almost unknown monograph ... anticipates many of my own ideas." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

68. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote: "No one can take from us the joy of the first becoming aware of something, the so-called discovery. But if we also demand the honor, it can be utterly spoiled for us, for we are usually not the first ... What does discovery mean, and who can say that he has discovered this or that? After all, it's pure idiocy to brag about priority for it's simply unconscious conceit not to admit frankly that one is a plagiarist." From: "Epigraph to Lancelot Law Whyte" in The Unconscious Before Freud (1960), (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 80.

69. See this chapter, note #52.

70. Lewis Mumford said: "Even historians forget too easily that the largest part of every culture is transmitted, not through a few institutions and a handful of texts, but by a million daily acts and observances and imitations. Remove even a third of the population, and with it will go a multitude of skills, a vast heritage of living knowledge, an abundance of sensitive discriminations, passed from

parent to child, from master to apprentice, from neighbor to neighbor. There is no mechanical substitute for a living tradition." From: The Condition of Man (San Diego, California: Harcourt Press, 1944), pp. 154-155.

71. Robert H. Lowie comments: "One fact ... encountered at every stage and in every phase of society, by itself lays the axe to the root of any theory of historical laws - the extensive occurrence of diffusion. Creating nothing, this factor nevertheless makes all other agencies taper almost into nothingness beside it in its effect on the total growth in human civilization." From: Primitive Society [1920] (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 434.

72. See Adolfo Critto, "Factores Socio-económicos de la Enfermedad de Chagas," Revista de Política Social (Córdoba, Argentina), Vol. I, No. 1 (1982).

73. See this chapter, note #4.

74. The adjustment of education to consistency is also analyzed in Chapter 4, part B and Chapter 6.

75. Kurt Lewin said: "Times of political change show very impressively the high degree to which education, in nearly all of its aspects, depends upon the social structure of the group. 'It seems to be easier for society to change education than for education to change society'." From: "Some Social-Psychological Differences between the United States and Germany" [1936], in Resolving Social Conflicts: Selected Papers on Group Dynamics (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 4.

76. See this chapter, note #25.

77. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel said: "Commonplace thinking often has the impression that force holds the state together, but in fact its only bond is the fundamental sense of order which everybody possesses." From: Philosophy of Right [1821] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 282.

78. Johann Gottfried von Herder described man as "a multitudinous harmony, a living self, on whom the harmony of all the powers that surround him operates." From: Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind [1784-1791] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 4.

79. See John Stuart Mill, Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, vol. 19 (Toronto, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 381.

80. See this chapter, notes #14, #15, #16 and #41.

81. Walter Bagehot said: "You may talk of the tyranny of Nero and Tiberius; but the real tyranny is the tyranny of your next-door neighbor ... Public opinion is a permeating influence, and it exacts obedience to itself; it requires us to think other men's thoughts, to speak other men's words, to follow other men's habits." From: The Character of Sir Robert Peel [1856], in The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot, Vol. 3 (London: The Economist, 1968), p. 243.

82. See this chapter, note #14.

83. John Stuart Mill said: "Society ... practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself. Protection

therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough: there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and, if possible, prevent the formation, of any individual not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own." From: "On Liberty" [1859], in Vol. 18 of Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vol. 18 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 220. Mill describes a case in point in his discussion of the task of changing social norms so as to end women's subjection: "The subjection of women to men being a universal custom, any departure from it quite naturally appears unnatural." From: "The Subjection of Women" [1869], in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vol. 21 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 270.

84. Robert M. MacIver said: "Custom is always at work turning example into precedent and precedent into institution ... In the community develops the law behind the law, the multi-sanctioned law that existed before governments began and that the law of government can never supersede. Without the prior laws of the community all the laws of the state would be empty formulas. Custom, the first 'king of men,' still rules. The 'mores' still prescribe. Manners and modes still flourish. The laws made by government cannot rescind them, cannot long defy them or deeply invade them." From: The Web of Government [1947] (New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 26, 145.

85. An application of this is the self-fulfilling prophecy. For an explanation of this, see Merton, Social Theory op. cit., pp. 182 and 477.

86. Kurt Lewin said: "Experience in leadership training, in changing of food habits, work production, criminality, alcoholism, prejudices, all indicate that it is usually easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change any one of them separately." From: "Group Decision and Social Change," in T.M. Newcomb and E.L. Hartley, eds., Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Holt, 1947), p. 472.

87. John Maynard Keynes observed that "practical men, who believe themselves quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." From: The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes, Vol. 7: The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money [1936] (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 383-384. Also see this chapter, note #22.

88. Paul F. Lazarsfeld provides one explanation for the way in which social norms push and pull individuals in different directions, even if they are not aware of it: "The organization man is a special case of a well-known sociological notion of the marginal man who is part of two different cultures. He lives under cross pressures that move him in a number of directions. According to his given and external circumstances he may become a revolutionary, a surrealist, a criminal." From: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, No. 4 (1976), pp. 794-802. Quoted in Michael Pollak, "Paul F. Lazarsfeld: A Sociointellectual Biography," in Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization Vol. 2, No. 2 (1980), p. 164.

89. See this chapter, note #30.

90. See this chapter, note #12.

91. Emile Durkheim said: "The proof that the reality of collective tendencies is not less than that of cosmic forces is that this reality is demonstrated in the same way, by the uniformity of effects ... Since, therefore, moral acts such as suicide are reproduced not merely with an equal but with a greater uniformity (than number of deaths), we must likewise admit that they depend on forces external to individuals. Only, since these forces must be of a moral order and since, except for individual men, there is no other moral order of existence in the world but society, they must be social." From: Suicide: A Study in Sociology [1897] (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 309. In this work, the "moral order" of which Durkheim speaks is referred to as a system of social norms.

92. Edward Burnett Taylor said: "Rudimentary as the science of culture still is, the symptoms are becoming very strong that even what seem its most spontaneous and motiveless phenomena will, nevertheless, be shown to come within the range of distinct cause and effect as certainly as the facts of mechanics." From: The Origins of Culture [1871] (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 18.

93. William Graham Sumner said: "From recurrent needs arise habits for the individual and customs for the group, but these results are consequences which were never conscious, and never foreseen or intended. They are not noticed until they have long existed, and it is still longer before they are appreciated." From: Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usage, Manners, Customs, Mores and Morals [1906] (Boston: Ginn, 1940), pp. 3-4. Sumner goes on to say: "The mores come down to us from the past. Each individual is born into them as he is born into the atmosphere, and he does not reflect on them or criticize them any more than a baby analyzes the atmosphere before he begins to breathe it ... The men, women and children who compose a society at any time are the unconscious depositaries and transmitters of the mores. They inherited them without knowing it; they are molding them unconsciously; they will transmit them involuntarily. The people cannot make the mores. They are made by them." (pp. 76, 477)

94. W.I. Thomas said: "Preliminary to any self-determined act of behavior there is always a stage of examination and deliberation which we may call the definition of the situation. And actually not only concrete acts are dependent on the definition of the situation, but gradually a whole life-policy and the personality of the individual himself follow from a series of such definitions." From: The Unadjusted Girl: With Cases and Standpoint for Behavior Analysis [1923] (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969), p. 42. On a similar note, Thomas explains: "An adjustive effort of any kind is preceded by a decision to act or not act along a given line, and the decision is itself preceded by a 'definition of the situation,' that is to say, an 'interpretation,' or 'point of view,' and eventually a policy and a behavior pattern. In this way quick judgments and decisions are made at every point in everyday life." From: Primitive Behavior: An Introduction to the Social Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), p. 8.

95. See this chapter, note #13.

96. See Bertrand de Jouvenel, The Art of Conjecture (New York: Basic Books, 1967), p. 21.

97. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown said: "Every custom and belief of a primitive society plays some determinate part in the social life of the community, just as every organ of a living body plays some part in the general life of the organism. The mass of institutions, customs and beliefs forms a single whole or system that determines the life of the society, and the life of the society is not less real, or less subject to natural laws, than the life of an organism." From: The Andaman Islanders [1922] (New York: Free Press, 1948), pp 229-230.

98. For this reason, I do not agree with the extreme statements forwarded by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who said: "Civil man is born, lives and dies in slavery. At his birth he is sewed in swaddling clothes; at his death he is nailed in a coffin. So long as he keeps his human shape, he is enchained by our institutions." From: Emile: Or On Education [1762] (New York: Basic Books, 1979), pp. 42-43.

Rousseau also said: "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer." From: "Social Contract" [1762], in The Social Contract and Discourses (London: Dent, 1973), Chap. 1, p. 165.

99. See this chapter, note #77.

100. Charles E. Merriam said: "Power does not lie in the guns, or the ships, or the walls of stone, or the lines of steel. Important as these are, the real political power lies in a definite common pattern of impulse. If the soldiers choose to disobey or even shoot their officers, if the guns are turned against the government, if the citizenry connives at disobedience of the law, and makes of it even a virtue, then authority is impotent and may drag its bearer down to doom." From: Political Power [1934] (New York: Collier Books, 1964), p. 21.

Margaret Mead said: "Simple peoples and civilized peoples, mild peoples and violent, assertive peoples, will all go to war if they have the invention, just as those peoples who have the custom of dueling will have duels and peoples who have the pattern of vendetta will indulge in vendetta ... Warfare ... is just an invention, older and more widespread than the jury system, but none the less an invention." From: "Warfare is Only an Invention -Not a Biological Necessity," in Asia, No. 40 (1940), pp. 403-404.

101. Michel Foucault said: "Let us not ... ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors, etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc.

We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. This would be the exact opposite of Hobbes' project in 'Leviathan'." From: "Two Lectures" [1976], in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977 (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 97.

102. See John Stuart Mill, "Considerations..." in Collected..., op. cit., p.381.

103. See this chapter, note #83.

104. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel argue that: "Every utopia, rooted as it is in time and place, is bound to reproduce the stage scenery of its particular world as well as its preoccupation with contemporary social problems ... Often a utopian foresees the later evolution and consequences of technological developments already present in an embryonic state; he may have antennae sensitive to the future. His gadgets, however, rarely go beyond the mechanical potentialities of his age. Try as he may to invent something new, he cannot make a world out of nothing." From: Utopian Thought in the Western World (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 23.

105. Arthur Cecil Pigou said: "The environment of one generation can produce a lasting result, because it can affect the environment of future generations. Environments... as well as people, have children." From: The Economics of Welfare [1920] (New York: AMS Press, 1978), p. 113.

106. See this Chapter note 56.

107. Voltaire said: "Ideas have changed the world." From: "Introduction a l'Abregé de l'histoire universelle" [1785-1789], in Oeuvres, Vol. 24. Quoted in J. B. Black, The Art of History (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 51.

108. August Comte said: "It cannot be necessary to prove to anybody who reads this work that ideas govern the world or throw it into chaos - in other words, that all social mechanism rests upon opinions." From: "The Positive Philosophy," in Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 83.

109. Frederick W. Taylor said: "And without this complete mental revolution on both sides (working man and management) scientific management does not exist." From: "Testimony before the Special House Committee" [1911-1912], in Scientific Management (New York: Harper, 1947), pp. 26-27.

110. See Lewis Henry Morgan, League of the Iroquois (Secaucus, N. J., Citadel Press, 1972), p. 60.

111. Etienne Bonnot de Condillac said: "I have distinguished three sorts of signs: accidental, natural and instituted. A child nursed by bears has only the former ... If he lived in human society, he would so often hear them utter sounds like those which he makes himself, that some time or another he would connect those sounds with the sensations which they are designed to express." From: An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge: Being a Supplement to Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding [1746], trans. by Thomas Nugent (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles Reprints, 1971), p. 133.

112. Erving Goffman said: "The individual is linked to society through two principal social bonds: to collectivities through membership and to other individuals through social relationships. He in turns helps make a network of society by linking through himself the social units linked to him." From: Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 188.

113. C. Wright Mills said: "To be celebrated, to be wealthy, to have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and to hold these valued experiences." From: The Power Elite [1956] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 10-11.

114. Ralph Linton said: "A status, as distinct from the individual who may occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties ... A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role. Role and status are quite inseparable, and the distinction between them is only academic interest. There are no roles without statuses or statuses without roles." From: The Study of Man: An Introduction [1936] (New York: Appleton, 1964), pp. 113-114. Linton also commented how "our solid American citizen behaves according to social norms originated in various cultures, nations and races." From: "One Hundred Per Cent American" [1937], in Adelin and Charles Wagley, Ralph Linton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 35-36.

115. Robert K. Merton describes role-sequence as the "succession of roles or role-configurations through which appreciable proportions of people move in the course of their lives." From: The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations [1942] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 523.

116. Charles H. Cooley said: "By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face associations and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual." From: Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind. (New York: Schocken Books, 1962) p. 23.

117. See this chapter, note #7.

118. Ralf Dahrendorf said: "Some speak of hegemony, others simply of power. In the grammar which is used here, the old distinction between a 'contract of association' and a 'contract of domination' is at best of analytical usefulness. In practice it is difficult to think of human association without an element of domination. Where there is society there is power." From: The Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1988), p. 26.

119. Michel Foucault said: "Power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted 'above' society as a supplementary structure whose

radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. In any case, to live in society is to live in such a way that action upon other actions is possible - and in fact ongoing. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction.” From: “The Subject of Power” [1982], in Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 222-223.

120. See this chapter, notes 4 and 7.

121. See this chapter, note #3.

122. See Arnold J. Toynbee, Civilization on Trial (Oxford Univ. Press, 1948), p. 56.

123. Without entering into the analysis, as in this work, of the contribution of stability and change to fulfillment through consistency, William Fielding Ogburn said: “The thesis is that the various parts of modern culture are not changing at the same rate, some parts are changing much more rapidly than others; and that since there is a correlation and interdependence of parts, a rapid change in one part of our culture requires readjustments through other changes in the various correlated parts of culture”. From: Social Change, with Respect to Culture and Original Nature (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1922), pp. 200-201.

Ogburn also said: “There is in our social organizations an institutional inertia, and in our social philosophies a tradition of rigidity. Unless there is a speeding up of social invention or a slowing down of mechanical invention, grave maladjustment are certain to result.” From: Recent Social Trends in the United States: Report of the President’s Research Committee on Social Trends (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933).

124. Allan Nevins said: “It is the law of history that whenever peaceful evolution fails to effect a needed set of changes, some revolutionary agency steps in and does so. Change and growth are so indispensable in human affairs that whenever an effort is made to erect an immovable dam, the force of the piling waters finally becomes absolutely irresistible.” From: Ordeal of the Union [1947] (New York: Scribner, 1975), Vol. 1, p. 532.

125. See this chapter, note #112.

126. Betty Friedan said: “I think the energy locked up in ... obsolete masculine and feminine roles is the social equivalent of the physical energy locked up in the realm of $E = MC^2$ - the force that unleashed the holocaust of Hiroshima ... the sex role revolution will liberate these energies from the service of death and will make it really possible for men and women to ‘make love, not war’.” From: The Feminine Mystique [1963] (New York: Norton, 1983), p. 395.

127. As a result, it is important not to exaggerate statements such as the following by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter: “The history of liberty has largely been the history of the observance of procedural safeguards.” From: *McNabb v. United States*, 318 U.S. 347, 1943.

128. This implies going beyond the notion of “homo sociologicus,” described by Ralf Dahrendorf: “The proposition that implicitly or explicitly underlies all

research and theoretical work in modern society [is]: Man behaves in accordance with his roles. Thus man figures in sociological analyses only to the extent that he complies with all the expectations associated with his social positions. This abstraction, the scientific unity of sociology, may be called 'homo sociologicus'." From: "Sociology and Human Nature" [1958], in Homo Sociologicus (London: Routledge, 1973), pp. 72-73.

129. Anne Robert Jacques Turgot said: "The primitive dispositions are equally active among barbarians and civilized peoples. They are probably the same in every place and time. Genius is spread through humankind somewhat like gold in a mine. The more ore you mine, the more metal you extract. The more men you have, the more great ones or ones fitting to become great. The chances of education and circumstances develop them or let them be buried in obscurity." From: "Plan de deux discours sur l'histoire universelle" [1750] (Paris: Guillaumin, 1844). Quoted in Marvin Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory [1968] (New York: Crowell, 1970), p. 645.

130. See this chapter, note #81.

131. Gustave Le Bon brings a clear illustration of how certain social contexts can affect social and personal behavior in a dysfunctional manner: "Under certain given circumstances, and only under these circumstances, an agglomeration of individuals presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideals of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organized crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. It forms a single being and is subject to the 'law of the mental unity of crowds'." From: "The Crowd" [1895], in Gustave Le Bon: The Man and His Works (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Fund: 1979), pp. 58-59.

132. Robert K. Merton states that "The distinctive intellectual contributions of the sociologist are found primarily in the study of unintended consequences (among which are latent functions) of social practices as well as in the study of anticipated consequences (among which are manifest functions)." From: "Manifest and Latent Functions" [1949], in Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: Free Press, 1968), p. 120.

133. See David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford University Press, 1975), book 3, p. 484.

134. Elisabeth Noelle-Newmann said: "Restraint (on the part of opponents) made the view that was receiving vocal support appear to be stronger than it really was and the other view weaker. Observations made in one context spread to another and encouraged people either to proclaim their views or to swallow them and keep quiet until, in a spiraling process, the one view dominated the public scene and the other disappeared from public awareness as its adherents became mute. This is the process that can be called a 'spiral of silence'." From: Elisabeth

Noelle-Neumann, The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion - Our Social Skin [1980] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 5.

Noelle-Newmann also said: "In attempting to avoid those who think differently from themselves, people lose their quasi statistical ability to assess correctly the views of their environment. The term 'pluralistic ignorance,' introduced by American sociology, could be applied to this ignorance of how 'people' think. It is the condition known as polarization. Society splits; one can speak of divided public opinion. The distinguishing feature is that each camp greatly overestimates itself [in] what is called a 'looking glass perception'." (p. 124)

135. See this chapter, note #131.

136. See Ashley Montagu, Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race (New York: World, 1964), p. 23.

137. See E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as it People Mattered (London: Blond & Briggs, 1973), p. 148.

138. Edward R. Hawkins and Willard W. Waller said: "The prostitute, the pimp, the peddler of dope, the operator of the gambling hall, the vendor of obscene pictures, the bootlegger, the abortionist, all are productive, all produce goods or services which people desire and for which they are willing to pay. It happens that society has put these goods and services under the ban, but people go on producing them and people go on consuming them, and an act of the legislature does not make them any less a part of the economic system." From: "Critical Notes on the Cost of Crime," in Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. Vol. 26 (1936), pp. 684-685.

139. See this chapter, note #123.

140. See this chapter, note #124.

141. See Lewis A. Coser. The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1956), p. 80.

142. See this chapter, note #4.

143. See this Chapter, section D.

144. See this Chapter, note #52.

145. Gyorgy Lukás said: "Nature is a societal category. This is to say, whatever is held to be natural at any given stage of social development, however this nature is related to man and whatever form his involvement with it takes, i.e., nature's form, its content, its range and its objectivity are socially conditioned." From: History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics [1923] (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1971), p. 234.

146. W. E. B. Du Bois said: "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and fitted with second sight in this self-consciousness, that only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in

amused contempt and pity.” From: The Souls of Black Folk [1903] (New York: Blue Heron Press, 1953), p. 3.

147. Mary Douglas said: “If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries. Like sex, the taking of food has a social component, as well as a biological one. Food categories therefore encode social events.” From: “Deciphering a Meal,” in Clifford Geertz, ed., Myth, Symbol, and Culture (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 61.

148. Also see part C, section 1(j) of this chapter.

149. Bronislaw Malinowsky said: “There can be no doubt that we have here a new type of linguistic use – ‘phatic communion’ I am tempted to call it, actuated by the demon of terminological invention – a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words. Let us look at it from the special point of view with which we are here concerned; let us ask what light it throws on the function or nature of language. Are words in Phatic Communion used primarily to convey meaning, the meaning which is symbolically theirs? Certainly not! They fulfill a social function and that is their principal aim, but they are neither the result of intellectual reflection, nor do they necessarily arouse reflection in the listener. Once again we may say that language does not function here as a means of transmission of thought.” From: “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages” [1923], in C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning. A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, 1953), p. 315.

150. In a diary entry dated March 1927, the scientist Clark L. Hull wrote: “The moral of the whole thing is that innumerable attempts to derive a satisfactory (i.e., scientific) theory of knowledge and of thought and reason from conscious experience as such have failed. In the place of this I propose to develop a system which starts from exactly the opposite end. I shall invert the whole historical system. I shall start with action - habit - and proceed to deduce all the rest, including conscious experience, from action, i.e., habit.” From: “Psychology of the Scientist: IV. Passages from the ‘Idea Books’ of Clark L. Hull,” in Perceptual and Motor Skills, Vol. 15 (1962), p. 837.

Also see, notes #52 and #53 in this chapter.

151. See Otto Neurath, Empiricism and Sociology (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1973), pp. 198-199.

152. Lack of awareness and failure to identify social norms leads to the situation described by C. Wright Mills: “Fate has to do with events in history that are the summary and unintended results of innumerable decisions of innumerable men. Each of their decisions is minute in consequence and subject to cancellation or reinforcement by other such decisions. There is no link between any one man’s intention and the summary result of the innumerable decisions. Events are beyond human decisions: history is made behind men’s backs.” From:

“Culture and Politics” [1959], in Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 243.

153. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel wrote: “The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it.” From: Philosophy of Right [1821] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 295.

154. See this chapter, note #131.

155. See this chapter, note #22.

156. See this chapter, note #30.

157. See this chapter, note #91.

158. See this chapter, note #92.

159. See this chapter, notes #93 and #94.

160. See this chapter, note #13.

161. See this chapter, note #17.

162. See this chapter, note #98.

163. See this Chapter, note #87,

164. John Maynard Keynes said: “The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back ... In the field of economic and political philosophy there are not many who are influenced by those theories after they are twenty-five or thirty years of age, so that the ideas which civil servants and politicians and even agitators apply to current events are not likely to be the newest. But, soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.” From: The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes, Vol. 7: The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money [1936] (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp 183-184.

165. See this chapter, note #70.

166. Bronislaw Malinowski said: “What appears to us an extensive, complicated, and yet well ordered institution is the outcome of ever so many doings and pursuits, carried on by savages, who have no laws or aims or charters definitely laid down. They have no knowledge of the ‘total outline’ of any of their social structures. They know their own motives, know the purpose of individual actions and the rules which apply to them, but how, out of these, the whole collective institution shapes, this is beyond their mental range.” From: Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea [1922] (New York: Dutton, 1961), p. 83.

167. Charles H. Cooley said: "A man may be regarded as the point of intersection of an indefinite number of circles representing social groups, having as many arches passing through him as there are groups. This diversity is connected with the growth of communication, and is another phase of the general enlargement and variegation of life." From: Human Nature and the Social Order [1902] (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 148.

168. Charles H. Cooley said: "The group to which we give allegiance, and to whose standards we try to conform, is determined by our own selective affinity, choosing among all the personal influences accessible to us; and so far as we select with any independence of our palpable companions, we have the appearance of non-conformity." From: Human Nature and the Social Order. (New York: Shocken books, 1964), p. 301.

169. See this Chapter, note #94.

170. See this chapter, note #25.

171. Robert K. Merton said: "Manifest functions are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system; latent functions, correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognized." From: Social Theory, op. cit., p. 117.

172. See Chapter 1, note #166.

173. Sigmund Neumann said: "Mob psychology, when it seizes a whole nation, destroys the web of its complex social structure. Like the individual differentiation of its members, so the innumerable associations of the living community are melted into one gray mass. This process of 'massification' - the dissolution of free organizations, the flattening of the social pyramid - in a way preceded the rise of modern dictators. They were the product of this disintegration of society which in turn became the basis of their established rule." From: Permanent Revolution: The Total State in a World at War (New York: Harper, 1942), p. 115.

174. See Carl Gustav Jung, The Basic Postulates of Analytical Psychology in Modern Man Search for a Soul (San Diego, Calif: Harcourt, 1956), p. 185.

175. Sigmund Freud said: "Biologically dream-life seems to me to proceed directly from the residue of the prehistoric stage of life (one to three years), which is the source of the unconscious and alone contains the etiology of all the psycho neuroses; the stage which is normally obscured by an amnesia similar to hysteria." From: "Letter to Wilhelm Fliess, 10 March 1898," in The Origins of Psycho-Analysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes [1902] (New York: Basic Books, 1954), p. 246.

176. John Dewey said: "Grammar expresses the unconscious logic of the popular mind. 'The chief intellectual classifications that constitute the working capital of thought have been built up for us by our mother tongue.' Our very lack of explicit consciousness, when using language, that we are then employing

the intellectual systematization of the race shows how thoroughly accustomed we have become to its logical distinctions and groupings.” From: How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process [1910] (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1933), p. 235.

177. Sigmund Freud said: “The unconscious is the true psychical reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs.” From The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 4-5: The Interpretation of Dreams [1900] (London: Hogarth, 1958), p. 15.

178. Robert Darnton said: “The reconstruction of the world is one of the historian’s most important tasks. He undertakes it, not from some strange urge to dig up archives and sift through old papers, but because he wants to talk with the dead. By putting questions to documents and listening for replies, he can sound out dead souls and take the measure of the societies they inhabited.” From: The Literary Underground of the Old Regime (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. v.

179. Carl Menger said: “How can it be that institutions which serve the common welfare and are extremely significant for its development come into being without a common will (*Gemeinwillen*) directed toward establishing them?” From: Problems of Economics and Sociology [1883] (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 146.

180. Clifford Geertz said: “A pattern of behavior shaped by a certain set of forces turns out, by a plausible but nevertheless mysterious coincidence, to serve ends but tenuously related to those forces. A group of primitives sets out, in all honesty, to pray for rain and ends up by strengthening its social solidarity; a ward politician sets out to get or remain near the trough and ends up mediating between unassimilated immigrant groups and an impersonal government bureaucracy.” From: “Ideology as a Cultural System,” in David E. Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 56.

181. See this chapter, note #105.

182. See this chapter, note #83.

183. See this chapter, note #119.

184. Erik H. Erikson said: “Ideological leaders ... are subject to excessive fears which they can master only by reshaping the thoughts of their contemporaries; while those contemporaries are always glad to have their thoughts shaped by those who so desperately care to do so. Born leaders seem to fear only more consciously what in some form everybody fears in the depths of his inner life; and they convincingly claim to have an answer.” From: Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History [1958] (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 110.

185. See this chapter, note #22.

186. Lewis Henry Morgan said: "When we recognize the duration of man's existence upon earth, the wide vicissitudes through which he has passed in savagery and in barbarism, and the progress he was compelled to make, civilization might as naturally have been delayed for several thousand years in the future, as to have occurred when it did in the good providence of God. We are forced to the conclusion that it was the result, as to the time of its achievement, of a series of fortuitous circumstances. It may well serve to remind us that we owe our present condition, with its multiplied means of safety and of happiness, to the struggles, the sufferings, the hard exertions and the patient toil of our barbarous, and more remotely, of our savage ancestors. Their labors, their trials and their successes were a part of the plan of the Supreme Intelligence to develop a barbarian out of a savage, and a civilized man out of this barbarian." From: Ancient Society [1877] (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 468.

187. See this chapter, note #51.

188. Jon Elster said: "[By the term counterfinality, I] understand 'unintended consequences that arise when each individual in a group acts upon an assumption about his relations to others that, when generalized, yields the contradiction in the consequent of the fallacy of composition, the antecedent of the fallacy being true.' It is clear that counterfinality thus defined is a species of real contradictions ... The collective irrationality arises only from the incompatibility of the belief systems." From: Logic and Society: Contradictions and Possible Worlds (New York: Wiley, 1978), p. 106.

A strain is thus generated which produces the necessary force for correcting the contradiction. As Elster added: "Given certain structural conditions, such as spatial proximity between group members or low turnover rates in the group, contradictions tend to generate collective action for the purpose of overcoming the contradictions." (p. 134)

189. Robert K. Merton refers to unintended consequences in a specific case, propaganda: "Under certain conditions, then, people respond to propaganda in a fashion opposite to that intended by the author." From: Social Theory and Social Structure, op. cit., p. 573.

190. Jurgen Habermas said: "What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: 'language.' Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus." From: Knowledge and Human Interests [1968] (Boston: Beacon, 1971), p. 314.

191. Franz Boas said: "The occurrence of the most fundamental grammatical concepts in all languages must be considered as proof of the unity of fundamental psychological processes." From: Introduction to Handbook of American Indian Languages [1911] (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 67. Boas also said: "There is no fundamental difference in the ways of thinking of primitive and civilized man. A close connection between race and personality has never been established." From: The Mind of Primitive Man [1911] (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 17.

192. See this chapter, note #10.

193. See this chapter, note #147.

194. Thomas Hobbes said: "The most noble and profitable invention of all other was that of SPEECH, consisting of 'names' or 'appellations,' and their connection; whereby men register their thoughts; recall them when they are past; and also declare them one to another for mutual utility and conversation; without which, there had been amongst men, neither commonwealth, nor society, nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions, bears, and wolves." From: Leviathan: Or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil [1651] (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), Part I, Chap. 4, p. 18.

195. Bertrand Russell said: "The essence of language lies, not in the use of this or that special means of communication, but in the employment of fixed associations (however these may have originated) in order that something now sensible - a spoken word, a picture, a gesture, or what not - may call up the 'idea' of something else. Whenever this is done, what is now sensible may be called a 'sign' or 'symbol' and that of which it is intended to call up the 'idea' may be called its 'meaning.' This is a rough outline of what constitutes meaning." From: The Analysis of the Mind (London: Allen & Unwin, 1921), p. 191.

196. Claude Levi-Strauss said: "Language is the most perfect of all those cultural manifestations which, in one respect or another, constitute systems, and if we want to understand art, religion or law, and perhaps even cooking or the rules of politeness, we must imagine them as being codes formed by articulated signs, following the pattern of linguistic communication." From: "Culture and Language" [1959], in G. Charbonnier, Conversations with Claude Levi-Strauss (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), p. 150-151.

197. Noam Chomsky said: "The fact that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with remarkable rapidity suggests that human beings are somehow specially designed to do this, with data-handling or 'hypothesis-formulating' ability of unknown character and complexity." From: "A Review of B.F. Skinner, Verbal Behavior" [1959], in Jerry A. Dodor and Jerrold J. Katz, eds., The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language (Englewood Cliffs, N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 577.

198. John B. Carroll said: "Psycho linguistics, as we propose to define the term, is concerned with the processes of encoding and decoding, i.e. the relations which the message bears to intensive behavior, on the one hand, and to interpretive behavior, on the other." From: "The Interdisciplinary Summer Seminar on Linguistics and Psychology," in Items (1951), p. 41.

199. Ernst Cassirer said: "Man has ... discovered a new method of adapting himself to his environment. Between the receptor system and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link which we may describe as the 'symbolic system'." From: An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture [1944] (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 24.

200. See Allen H. Barton, "The concept of Property-Space in Social Research", in P.F. Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg, The Language of Social Research (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1972).

201. See Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, "Reflexions sur les Langues", in Oeuvres de Turgot et Documents le concernant", vol. 1, Paris: Librairie Feliz Alcan. Quoted in Frank E. Manuel, The Prophets of Paris: Turgot, Condorcet, Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Comte (New York: Harper, 1965), p. 30.

202. Wilhelm Wundt said: "Since language consists always in a 'communication' of ideas, the original word-creation cannot have been the work of any individual inventor; it must have proceeded from a community of individuals, endowed with similar mental capacities and living under the same external conditions. So is it with custom, which, like language, is a mode of 'common' conduct arising from community of ideas." From: Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life [1886] (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922), Vol. 1, p. 161.

203. See this chapter, note #47.

204. Social norms are transmitted through the language of behavior and its products, which serve as a model. The power of language is also identified with the power of thought.

205. Edward Sapir commented: "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, not alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression of their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group." From: Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture, and Personality [1929] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), p. 162.

206. Edward Sapir adds: "Language is the communicative process par excellence in every known society, and it is exceedingly important to observe that whatever may be the shortcomings of a primitive society judged from the vantage point of civilization, its language inevitably forms as sure, complete and potentially creative an apparatus of referential symbolism as the most sophisticated language that we know of." From: "Communication" [1931] in Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan), p. 78.

207. Edward Sapir notes that, "If a man who has never seen more than a single elephant in the course of his life nevertheless speaks without the slightest hesitation of ten elephants or a million elephants ... it is obvious that language has the power to analyze experience into theoretically dissociable elements and to create the world of the potential intergrading with the actual which enables human beings to transcend the immediately given in their individual experiences and join in a larger common understanding. The common understanding

constitutes culture.” From: “Language” [1933] in Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 9 (New York: Macmillan), pp. 156-157.

208. Ernest Gellner asked: “How many things would we do altogether, if the concepts of those things were not built into the language of our culture?” From: Thought and Change [1964] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 195.

209. See Benjamin Lee Whorf, “Language, Mind and Reality”, in Language, Thought and Reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Press of M.I.T., 1956), p. 252.

210. See this chapter, note #147.

211. Franz Boas, after illustrating how special terms in certain languages depend upon their chief interests, said: “Thus it happens that each language, from the point of view of another language, may be arbitrary in its classifications; that what appears as a single simple idea in one language may be characterized by a series of distinct phonetic groups in another.” From: Introduction to Handbook of American Indian Languages, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

212. See B.C. Bartlett, Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967) p. 213.

213. We read in Plato: “(Socrates): If men learn (writing), it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks.” From: “Phaedrus,” in The Collected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 520.

214. For an explanation of empirical and conceptual indicators, see Adolfo Critto, El Método Científico, op. cit.

215. George C. Homans said: “It is really intolerable that we can say only one thing at a time; for social behavior displays many features at the same time, and so in taking them up one by one we necessarily do outrage to its rich, dark, organic unity.” From: Human Behavior: Its Elementary Forms (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, 1961), p. 114.

216. Friedrich Wilhelm von Humboldt said: “Regardless of communication between man and man, speech is a necessary condition for the thinking of the individual in solitary seclusion. In appearance, however, language develops only socially, and man understands himself only once he has tested the intelligibility of his words by trial upon others.” From: On Language: The Diversity of Human Language Structure and Its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind [1836] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 56.

217. Oliver Wendell Holmes said: “A word is not a crystal transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used.” From: *Towne v. Eisner*, 245 U.S. 425, 1918.

218. Ferdinand de Saussure said: “Language can ... be compared with a sheet of paper: thought is the front and the sound the back; one cannot cut the front without cutting the back at the same time; likewise in language.” From: Course in General Linguistics [1916] (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 113.

219. See this chapter, note #216.

220. See this chapter, note #47.

221. See this chapter, note #10.

222. See this chapter, note #147.

223. See this chapter, note #9.

224. See Ernest A. Hooton, “Plain Statements about Race” in Apes, Men and Morons (New York: Putnam, 1937), p. 150.

225. See Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) p. 111.

226. Michel Foucault said: “In its raw, historical sixteenth-century being, language is not an arbitrary system; it has been set down in the world and forms a part of it, both because things themselves hide and manifest their own enigma like a language and because words offer themselves to men as things to be deciphered. The great metaphor of the book that one opens, that one pores over and reads in order to know nature, is merely the reverse and visible side of another transference, and a much deeper one, which forces language to reside in the world, among the plants, the herbs, the stones, and the animals.” From: The Order of Things (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 35.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES:

GUIDE TO CHANGE AND DECISION-MAKING QUALITY

1. This study was conducted by the author in 1963-64 and was aided by some of the author's university students (education and psychology majors). The results were reported in A. Critto, "Investigación Integral de Comunidad: Barrio Maldonado," in Cuadernos Argentinos de Sociología (Universidad Católica Argentina, Buenos Aires), Nº 1, 1964, and in A. Critto, "Presiones Sociales y la Conducta Antisocial del Menor," in La Conducta Antisocial del Menor en Nuestro País (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1963).

2. See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory..., op. cit., pp. 182 and 477.

3. See A. Critto, "Factores Sociales en la Enfermedad de Chagas," Revista de Política Social (Córdoba), 1982, and A. Critto, "Factores Socioculturales en la Desnutrición del Lactante," Cuadernos de los Institutos (Instituto R. Orgaz, National University of Córdoba), No. 85 (1965).

4. Well known case in The United States and around the world, with great mansions in New Port and New York.

5. See A. Critto, "El Campo y la Ciudad después de la Migración Campocidad en Córdoba", in The Urbanization Process in America, From its Origins to the Present Day (Buenos Aires: Editorial del Instituto, 1969).

6. Some of the social and environmental implications of economic decisions and policies are reported in A. Critto, Análisis de influencias socioculturales en el área del Provento Salto Grande (Buenos Aires: Comisión Técnica Mixta de Salto Grande, 1978), and in A. Critto, "Las Relaciones de la Pequeña y Mediana

Empresa con su Medio en la Argentina,” Estudios (IEERAL, Fundación Mediterránea, Córdoba), Vol. IV, No. 17 (1981).

7. See A. Critto, “El Campo y la Ciudad después de la Migración Campocidad en Córdoba,” op. cit.

8. This is based on a discussion with the head of the Soviet Delegation at the World Sociological Meeting in Washington, D.C., in 1962.

9. For an interesting explanation of various techniques for correlational analysis, see D. Mac Granaham, Measurement and Analysis of Socio-Economic Development. (Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1985).

10. Thomas Babington Macaulay said: “How ... are [individuals] to arrive at just conclusions on a subject so important to the happiness of mankind? Surely by that method which, in every experimental science to which it has been applied, has signally increased the power and knowledge of our species, - by that method for which our new philosophers would substitute quibbles scarcely worthy of barbarous respondents and opponents of the Middle Ages - by the method of induction, - by observing the present state of the world, by assiduously studying the history of past ages, - by shifting the evidence of facts, - by carefully combining and contrasting those which are authentic, - by generalizing with judgment and diffidence, - by perpetually bringing the theory which we have constructed to the test of new facts, - by correcting, or altogether abandoning it, according as those new facts prove it to be partially or fundamentally unsound ... This is that noble science of politics.” From: “Mill’s Essay of Government” [1829], in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. Vol. 5 (Philadelphia, PA: Carey and Hart, 1844), pp. 366-367.

11. Natalie Zemon Davis said: “Even in the extreme case of religious violence, crowds do not act in a mindless way. They will to some degree have a sense that what they are doing is legitimate, the occasions will relate somehow to the defense of their cause, and their violent behavior will have some structure to it ... But the rites of violence are not the rights of violence in an ‘absolute’ sense. They simply remind us that if we try to increase safety and trust within a community, try to guarantee that the violence it generates will take less destructive and cruel forms, then we must think less about pacifying ‘deviants’ and more about changing the central values.” From: “The Rites of Violence” [1973], in Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 1870.

12. James Madison said: “If it is true that all governments rest on opinion, it is no less true that the strength of opinion in each individual, and its practical influence on his conduct, depend much on the number which he supposes to have entertained the same opinion.” From: The Federalist Papers [1788] (New York: New American Library, 1961), No. 49, pp. 314-315.

13. See G. Bevione, L’Argentina (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, Editori, Milano-Roma, 1911).

14. Some of the ideas included in this section were first developed by the author in the following works: Decisión, Razón y Desarrollo (Buenos Aires: Universidad Católica Argentina, 1969); Observaciones sobre el Factor Social y las Decisiones en el Desarrollo Argentino. (Córdoba, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, CEUPS, 1973); "Ideas Introdutorias a la Política Social," op. cit. An application of the conditions for decision making quality was made in a research project reported in A. Critto, "Factores Sociales y Culturales en la Enfermedad de Chagas," op. cit., as well as in A. Critto, La Comunidad Frenada (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1977).

Many publications assume the need for increasing rationality in decision making in order to promote development in low income countries such as those in Latin America; for example, see Marshall Wolfe, El Desarrollo Esquivo (Mexico City: CEPAL, Fondo de Cultura Economía, 1976), pp. 25-27.

15. See Arnold Toynbee, Civilizations on Trial (Oxford University Press, 1948) p. 56.

16. Socrates said: "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils - no, nor the human race, as I believe - and then only will this our state have a possibility of life and behold the light of day." From: Plato, The Republic (New York: Modern Library, 1982), Book 4, 473, 203.

17. See this chapter, part A and B.

18. See Chapter 3, part A, on the importance of a positive self-image; also see Chapter 4, part B, section 4.

19. This was recently demonstrated in Argentina where a public campaign was initiated after an outbreak of cholera in 1992. Citizens spread the word about appropriate, hygienic means of handling food and water, and as a result, infant mortality and morbidity (not linked to cholera) fell dramatically.

20. Some social scientists believe a parliamentary system of government is most conducive to this type of leadership training since it tends to keep officials involved in the process of policy making even after they lose elected office; former presidents, for example, tend to keep working in commissions after they leave office.

21. In 1989, Argentina initiated a series of economic reforms that contributed to a strong reduction in the rate of inflation and an increase in the rate of growth. The principal components of this successful governmental program included privatization of public-sector companies, monetary stabilization (by establishing parity between the Argentine peso and the U.S. dollar through fixed, 1:1 convertibility), reduction of customs duties and deregulation of the economy.

22. James Madison said: "What is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be

necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed: and in the next place, oblige it to control itself." From: The Federalist Papers, op. cit., No. 51, p. 322.

In addition to the need for government to control itself, it is also extremely important that society controls both government and itself. Madison also said: "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny." (No. 47, p. 301)

23. See Chapter 4 (B.4).

24. Saint-Simon describes an extreme case of this: "To sum up, in every sphere men of greater ability are subject to the control of men who are incapable. From the point of view of morality, the most immoral men have the responsibility of leading citizens towards virtue; from the point of view of distributive justice, the most guilty men are appointed to punish minor delinquents." From: "The Organizer" [1819], in Social Organization, the Science of Man and Other Writings (New York: Harper, 1964), pp. 74-75.

25. In relation to the need for social participation and for checks and balances, Thomas Jefferson said: "The concentrating these (legislative, executive and judiciary powers) in the same hands is precisely the definition of despotic government." From: "Notes on the State of Virginia" [1785], in Thomas Jefferson: Writings (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 245.

26. See Chapter 6, section D. 1.

27. However, I do not share the extreme view of Michael Young, who said: "Today we frankly recognize that democracy can be no more than aspiration, and have rule not so much by the people as by the cleverest people; not an aristocracy of birth, not a plutocracy of wealth, but a true meritocracy of talent." From: The Rise of Meritocracy [1958] (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 21.

28. See Chapter 1, section B. 1; C. 1 and 2.

29. Robert A. Dahl said: "The classic assumptions about the need for total citizen participation in a democracy were at the very least inadequate. If one regards political equality in the making of decisions as a kind of limit to be achieved, then it is axiomatic that this limit could only be arrived at with the complete participation of every adult citizen. Nevertheless, what we call 'democracy' - that is, a system of decision-making in which leaders are more or less responsive to the preferences of non-leaders - does seem to operate with a relatively low level of citizen participation. Hence it is inaccurate to say that one of the necessary conditions for 'democracy' is extensive citizen participation." From: "Hierarchy, Democracy, and Bargaining in Politics and Economics," in Heinz Eulau, et. al., eds., Political Behavior: A Reader in Theory and Research [1955] (New York: Free Press, 1956), p. 87. However intensive and consistent citizen participation is necessary for sound and genuine democracy.

Dahl also said: "If there is anything to be said for the processes that actually distinguish democracy (or polyarchy) from dictatorship, it is not discoverable in the clear-cut distinction between government by a majority and government by a minority. The distinction comes much closer to being one between government by a minority and government by minorities. As compared with the political processes of a dictatorship, the characteristics of polyarchy greatly extend the number, size and diversity of the minorities, whose preferences will influence the outcome of governmental decisions." From: A Preface to Democratic Theory [1956] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 133.

30. The present work contends that the history of the world is the creation of all individuals, a position which is distinct from that of Thomas Carlyle, who said: "In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch; - the lightning without which the fuel never would have burnt. The History of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men." From: "On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Hero in History" [1841], in The Works of Thomas Carlyle in Thirty Volumes, Vol. 5 (New York: Scribner, 1903), p. 13. The great man works as one more human being; together with all others, most of whom are great persons to some extent.

31. See Chapter 1 and note #83

32. Thomas Babington Macaulay said: "Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait forever." From: "Milton" [1825], in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1843), p. 51.

33. Thomas Babington Macaulay restricts the power of opinion to especially influential individuals: "Formerly, according to [Robert Southey], the laws governed; now public opinion governs. What are laws but expressions of the opinion of some class which has power over the rest of the community? By what was the world ever governed, but by the opinion of some person or persons? By what else can it ever be governed?" From: "Southey's Colloquies on Society" [1830], in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 308.

34. See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory..., op. cit., pp. 182, 477.

35. This is the case, for example, with some of the constructive changes presently occurring in Argentina. Although the current administration of President Carlos Menem - and, more particularly, the Minister of Economy, Domingo Cavallo - have been credited with initiating structural reforms which have helped put the economy on a more sound footing, these policies were prompted by public demand for an effective anti-inflationary program and by specific proposals forwarded by the private think-tank known as the Mediterranean Foundation (Fundación Mediterránea) which was founded by Mr. Cavallo before he became Minister of Economy.

36. See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory... op. cit., p. 573.

37. See George F. Kennan, The Cloud of Danger: Current Realities of American Foreign Policy (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), pp. 201-202.

38. See Carl Menger, Problems of Economics and Sociology (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 146.

39. Arthur Cecil Pigou said: "If it were not for the hope that a scientific study of men's social actions may lead, not necessarily directly or immediately, but at some time and in some way, to practical results in social improvement, not a few students of these actions would regard the time devoted to their study as time misspent." From: The Economics of Welfare (New York: AMS Press, 1978), p. 4.

40. See Chapter 1, section C. 3.

41. Alice M. Rivlin said: "Like the medical profession, which also deals with an incredibly complex system, we economists just have to keep applying our imperfect knowledge as carefully as possible and learning from the results. Both doctors and economists need humility, but neither should abandon their patients to the quacks." From: "Taming the Economic Policy Monster," The New York Times, January 18, 1987, p. 2.

42. Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld wrote: "Who or what influences the influentials? Here is where the mass media re-entered the picture. For the leaders (in this survey) reported much more than the non-opinion leaders that for them, the mass media were influential. Pieced together this way, a new idea emerged - the suggestion basically was this: the ideas, often, seem to flow 'from' radio and print 'to' opinion leaders and 'from' them to the less active sections of the population." From: Personal Influence (New York: Free Press, 1955), p. 32.

43. An application of such schemes of conditions for decision making quality was made in a research project reported in A. Critto entitled "Factores Sociales y Culturales en la Enfermedad de Chagas," Politica Social, I. 1., as well as in A. Critto, La Comunidad Frenada, (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1977).

44. See Chapter 4, Section A.

45. Bernard Berelson said that "The behavioral Sciences ... have already affected man's image of himself and permanently so." From: "Introduction to the Behavioral Sciences," in The Behavioral Sciences Today (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 11.

46. See Chapter 1, note #91.

47. See Chapter 1, notes #92 and #93.

48. John Stuart Mill said: "It is hardly possible to overrate the value, in the present low state of human improvement, of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thoughts and action unlike those with which they are familiar... Such communication has always been, and is peculiarly in the present age, one of the primary sources of progress." From: "Principles of Political Economy, with Some of Their Applications to Social

Philosophy" [1848], in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 594.

This same type of innovation can be fruitfully applied to the world of business, as per the recommendation of Michael E. Porter, who encourages companies to welcome outsiders "with fewer blinders to color their perception" From: The Competitive Advantage of Nations (New York: The Free Press, 1990), pp. 578-584.

Margaret Mead said: "As the traveller who has been once away from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of another culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinise more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own." From: "Coming of Age in Samoa," In From the South Seas: Studies of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies (New York: Morrow, 1939), p. 13.

49. See Claude Levi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, (Chicago, Ill.: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983) vol. 1, p. 12.

50. See Lewis Henry Morgan, League of The Iroquois, op. cit., p. 60.

51. C. Wright Mills said: "(The sociological) imagination is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another - from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry. It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self - and to see the relations between the two." From: The Sociological Imagination (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 7.

52. See E. F. Schumacher, Small is..., op. cit., p. 148.

53. For a commentary on the existing state of confusion in the field, see Marshall Wolfe in El Desarrollo Esquivo (CEPAL, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1976) pp. 15-16.

54. This may also be seen through a survey of Volume 19 of the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan, 1991) which gives an idea of the important role played by foreign-born academics in the development of social science theory in American universities.

55. See chapter I, section B. 2.

56. Adolfo Critto, Innovación y Burocracia (Buenos Aires: Consejo Federal de Inversiones, 1969).

57. Marshall Wolfe, pointed out that "There is no foreseeable opportunity for extending the market for the most expensive consumer durable goods to include most of the population" and "The societies including the overwhelming majority of the world's population will never be able to achieve per capita levels of use of resources even remotely similar to those already achieved by a few high income communities in the United States and Europe. For most of the world a

viable style of development has to expect relatively modest levels of consumption of non-renewable resources whenever possible....” El Desarrollo Esquivo. op. cit., pp. 34, 59.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES:

CULTURE, SOCIAL NORMS, VALUE AND CHANGE

1. Ronald Inglehart argues, that it is meaningless to ask which factor really explains what is happening since “each factor is part of an interdependent systems of causes” and “it seems pointless to assert that any one of them is the ultimate causal factor that drives the others.” From: Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 14.

This does not prevent people from analyzing systematic relations and thus discovering which factors and combinations are most central and strategic given their predominant influence within the web of systemic relations.

2. Ronald Inglehart seems to share this perspective, asserting that “culture is an essential causal element that helps shape society – and a factor that today tends to be underestimated. Its importance is underrated, in part, because it is difficult to measure.” See Inglehart, op. cit., p. 14.

3. Ronald Inglehart states that “as young generations gradually replace older ones in the adult population, the prevailing world view in these societies is being transformed.” See Inglehart, op. cit., p. 3.

4. Ronald Inglehart describes one such shift related to the change from materialistic to post-materialistic values: “The fact that all these [orientations] are closely related to whether one has materialist or post-materialist values and that the outlook of younger birth cohorts differs greatly from that of older cohorts suggests that we may be witnessing a broad cultural shift with one world view replacing another.” Inglehart, op. cit., pp. 423-424.

5. See William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 121 and George Santayana, The life of Reason: or The Phases of Human Progress (New York: Scribner, 1953), p. 82.

6. Ferdinando Galiani said: "In the immense machinery of society, everything hangs together, is connected, and linked. Nothing must disturb the equilibrium lest the whole mechanism overturn. That is why I recommend nothing more strongly than the avoidance of shocks and sudden moves. The shocks break the contacts and springs, and the mechanism is destroyed." From: "Dialogues sur le commerce des blés" [1770], quoted in Henry William Spiegel, The Development of Economic Thought: Great Economists in Perspective (New York: Wiley, 1952), p. 279.

7. Alphonse Karr coined the famous dictum, "plus ça change, plus ç'est la meme chose" [the more things change, the more they stay the same]. From: Les Guepes [1849] (Paris: Victor Lecou, 1853), p. 428.

8. See Heracleitus in the Universe (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 483.

9. See Kenneth Galbraith, American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1980) p. 111.

10. Erik H. Erikson said: "We do not consider all development a series of crises: we claim only that psychosocial development proceeds by critical steps - 'critical' being a characteristic of turning points, of moments of decision between progress and regression, integration and retardation." From: Childhood and Society [1950] (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 270-271.

11. See John Elster, Logic and Society: Contradictions and Possible Worlds (New York: Wiley, 1978), p. 106.

12. See Alexander A. Goldenweiser, "The Principle of Limited Possibilities in the Development of Culture," Journal of American Folklore Volume 26 (1913), pp. 259-290.

13. See Jurgen Habermas, Towards a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics (London: Heinemann, 1971), p. 254.

14. Friedrich A. von Hayek said that "collectivism, communism, fascism, etc. .. differ from liberalism and individualism in wanting to organize the whole of society and all its resources for this unitary end and in refusing to recognize autonomous spheres in which the ends of the individuals are supreme." From: The Road to Serfdom [1944] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 56.

15. This type of phenomenon is similar to that described by Bronislaw Malinowsky: "When the native is asked what he would do in such and such case he answers what he should do; he lays down the pattern of best possible conduct." From: Bronislaw Malinowski, Crime and Custom in Savage Society [1926] (London: Routledge, 1951), p. 120.

16. See Lewis Henry Morgan, League..., op. cit., p. 60.

17. All four types “share a common moral vocabulary” and “represent the ways in which Americans use private and public life to make sense of their lives .. whether chiefly concerned with private or public life, all four are involved in caring for others.” Yet at the same time, they all “have difficulty articulating the richness of their commitments” and “assume that there is something arbitrary about the goals of a good life.” From: Habits of the Heart (Chicago: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 20-21.

18. Bellah, et. al., Habits of the Heart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 21.

19. This is the case of “Margaret” who embodies one variant of a social norm which is present in the American cultural system. When she says “what I want to do and what I feel like doing is what I should do,” she identifies legitimacy with self-gratification and self-interest in an anthropocentric outlook in which the person him or herself is the final judge of good and bad. This outlook is further reflected in other comments Margaret made: “you must work hard for the satisfactions you expect in life .. Human relationships require give-and-take .. in the end, you are alone .. even in the closest, most committed relationships, marriage and parenthood .. the only way to run a relationship is to strive for fairness .. a relative balance between what’s the giving end and getting your own way.” See Bellah, et. al., op. cit., pp. 15-16.

20. A similarly pseudo-consistent perspective is expressed by “Wayne” who says, “During the sixties [when, as a 17-year-old, he marched at New York University and burned his draft card to protest the Vietnam war, let his hair grow longer, and wore an earring] all of a sudden my view of who I was and my environment was shattered .. it left me without values and it also left me in a position where I had this terrible feeling of loneliness that there was no one I could go to for help. All the people that I had trusted, I feel, essentially, they had lied to me .. What we had seen in the sixties was an emptiness that we saw in our families, that this was not what we wanted for ourselves.” The authors of this study go on to describe Wayne as “strangely inarticulate” and unclear about what constitutes a “better society.” See Bellah, et. al., op. cit., pp. 17-18.

21. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America. (New York, Vintage Press, 1945), p. 39.

22. See Giovanni Battista Vico, The New Science of Giambattista Vico (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), Book 1, par. 241-242, pp. 78-79.

23. Haste and impatience lead to failure and frustration in revolutionary proposals which, instead of pushing for gradual changes, try to indiscriminately destroy existing institutions in order to build a new utopia on the ruins of present society. In this light, the following statement by Rosa Luxemburg is suitable: “He who pronounces himself in favor of the method of legal reforms in place of and as opposed to the conquest of political power and social revolution does not really choose a more tranquil, surer and slower roads to the same goal. He chooses a different goal.” From: “Social Reform or Revolution” [1899], in Selected

Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 115-116.

24. See Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology (New York: Free Press, 1966) pp. 253, 258.

25. See Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments. (Indianapolis, Ind.: The Liberty Fund., 1982) pp. 184-185.

26. John Maynard Keynes warned: "Do not let us overestimate the importance of the economic problem, or sacrifice to its supposed necessities other matters of greater and more permanent significance. It should be a matter for specialists – like dentistry. If economists could manage to get themselves thought of as humble, competent people, on a level with dentists, that would be splendid!" From: "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren" [1930], in The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes. Vol. 9 (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 332.

27. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Vintage, 1945), vol. 2, p. 106.

28. See Aristotle's Politics. (New York: Modern Library, 1943), Book I, Chapter 3, p. 55.

29. Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology [1897] (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 253.

30. The importance of learning from alternative models is stressed by Margaret Mead: "As the traveller who has been once away from home is wiser than he who has never left his own door step, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinise more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own." From: "Coming of Age in Samoa" [1928], in From the South Seas: Studies of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies (New York: Morrow, 1939), p. 13.

31. Combinations have to be built carefully so they achieve harmony and compatibility, as well as functional convergence. Margaret Mead said: "The way people behave is all of a piece, their virtues and their sins, the way the slap the baby, handle their court cases, and bury their dead. It would be as impossible suddenly to introduce 'democracy,' which is a word for a type of behavior and an attitude of mind which runs through our whole culture, through our selection of candidates for office, our behavior in street cars, our schools and our newspapers, into an undemocratic society – as it would be suddenly to introduce feudalism into a modern American city." From: And Keep Your Powder Dry: An Anthropologist Looks at America [1942] (New York: Morrow, 1949), p. 20.

32. See John Rae, The Sociological Theory of Capital (New York: Macmillan, 1905), p.247.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES:

EMPLOYING EXISTING VALUES AND SOCIAL NORMS TO PRODUCE DESIRABLE CHANGE

1. In addition, there would be a set of common values shared by quite different societies and cultures around the world who share the problem of corruption.

2. See Saint-Simon, Social Organization. The Science of Man and Other Writings (New York: Harper, 1964) pp. 74-75.

3. See Max Weber: From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (Edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford Univ. Press, 1946), p. 280.

4. See Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence", in Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 1870.

5. See Elizabeth Noelle-Newmann, The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion-Our Social Skin (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 5.

6. The reasons for external control are similar to the reasons expounded by Montesquieu for a division of powers so as to avoid "tyrannical laws" executed in "a tyrannical manner" as well as "arbitrary control ... violence and oppression." From: The Spirit of the Laws [1748] (New York: Hafner, 1949), Vol. 1, Book 11, pp. 151-152.

7. For Robert N. Bellah, it is critical to the survival of free institutions that citizens participate in the public sphere and are actively engaged in public life. See Bellah, et. al., Habits of the Heart (Chicago: University of California Press, 1985), p. vii.

8. See thomas Jefferson: Writings (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 245.

9. See Giovanni Battista Vico, The New Science...., op. cit., Book 1, par 241-242, pp. 78-79.

10. See Arnold J. Toynbee, Civilization on Trial (Oxford Univ. Press, 1948), p. 56.

11. Upon coming to power in July 1989, the government launched an economic plan aimed at combatting hyperinflation which included privatization, a stabilization plan which prohibited the Central Bank from printing money that was not backed by gold and foreign currency reserves, reduction of protectionism and bureaucratic rules and regulations that had increased the cost of everything and “asphyxiated” productive activities, reduction in import duties, and limitations on the power of entrenched business groups and unions and diverse lobbies.

12. The rate of inflation was reduced from 3,700% in 1989 to 26% in 1991 and 4% in 1994 and annual investment reached approximately 70,000 million dollars.

13. These results are from the study cited in the chapter five.

14. Different social norms are adopted, combined and modified in a different manner by different people depending on their free choice of consistency or inconsistency.

CHAPTER FIVE NOTES:

SACRED-EXPEDIENT: DOMINANT VALUE ORIENTATIONS IN UNITED STATES AND ARGENTINA

1. This study was reported and analyzed in A. Critto, The Sacred and the Expedient, Ph.D. Thesis, (Columbia University, 1963).

2. Max Weber said: "The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" From: Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology. Vol. I [1922] (New York: Bedminster, 1968), p. 241.

3. Edward Shils said: "Modern society is no lonely crowd, no horde of refugees fleeing from freedom. It is no Gesellschaft, soulless, egotistical, loveless, faithless, utterly impersonal and lacking any integrative forces other than interest or coercion. It is held together by an infinity of personal attachments, moral obligations in concrete contexts, professional and creative pride, individual ambition, primordial affinities, and a civil sense which is low in many, high in some, and moderate in most persons." From: "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties" [1957], in Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 112.

4. See Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society (East Lansing, Mic.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1957) pp. 33, 35.

5. See Florence Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodbeck, in Variations in Value Orientations. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Co., 1961), p. 93.

6. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York, Vintage Boos, 1961), vol. II, pp. 129-131.

7. See Talcott Parsons, The Social System, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

8. See Albert O. Hirschman, ed., "Ideologies of Development in Latin America," in Latin American Issues. (New York, The Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), p. 36.

9. See J.P. Gillin, "Some Signposts for Policy," in Social Change in Latin America Today (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

10. Pitrim Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, Vol. IV (New York: Bedminster Press, 1962), p. 710. Sorokin mentions the "principle of limited possibilities" which any given culture may assume, quoting Goldenweiser and Thurnwald (pp. 706-707).

11. Talcott Parsons, in The Social System (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press; 1951), pp. 50-51, 58-59, 101-104, 181-182.

12. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, op. cit., p. 342.

13. Ibid., pp. 16, 31.

14. Max Weber wrote, "We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an 'ethic of ultimate ends' or to an 'ethic of responsibility' ... There is an abysmal contrast between conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of ultimate ends -that is, in religious terms, 'The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord'- and conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of responsibility, in which case one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one's action."

"You may demonstrate to a convinced syndicalist, believing in an ethic of ultimate ends, that his action will result in increasing the opportunities of reaction, in increasing the oppression of his class, and obstructing its ascent - and you will not make the slightest impression upon him. If an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor's eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God's will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil. However, a man who believes in an ethic of responsibility takes account of precisely the average deficiencies of people; as Fichte has correctly said, he does not even have the right to presuppose their goodness and perfection. He does not feel in a position to burden others with the results of his own actions so far as he was able to foresee them; he will say: these results are ascribed to my action. The believer in an ethic of ultimate ends feels 'responsible' only for seeing it that the flame of pure intentions is not quenched." From Max Weber, "Politics as Vocation," in Gerth and Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Galaxy Books, 1958), pp. 120-121.

15. Tocqueville, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

16. Pitirim Sorokin said, "The Ideational system of ethics must be and usually is absolute ... [R]elativism, expediency, and anything that limits them is

heterogeneous to such ethics ... The aim of the Sensate ethical system can be only an increase of the total sum of a man's (or a group's) sensate happiness, comfort, utility, and pleasure... [R]ules ...should be replaced by rules that fit the new situation. Hence, relativism, expediency, and changeability of the rules [result].” See Sorokin, op. cit., p. 483.

17. Quoted in T. Parsons and F. Shils, ed., Toward a General Theory of Action (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 397.

18. Florence Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck, in Variations in Value Orientations (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Co., 1961), p. 93.

19. Respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement with statements by ranking them on a scale of 1 to 5 (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Averages ranging from 1 to 5 were then computed for each respondent and for groups of respondents. The value 1 was given to the answers representative of the most sacred value orientation, and the value 5 to answers representative of the most expedient value orientation. In this manner, general indices of (sacred vs. expedient) value orientation could be computed for individuals and for groups of respondents (based on nationality, age, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.).

20. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

21. Parsons, Talcott, Toward a General Theory of Action (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 397, 529, 530.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

23. Talcott Parsons describes this type of rationalization as follows: “the Jew is by the main value-pattern entitled to the same [universally] tolerant behavior as any fellow Gentile. Here there is a strong pressure to ‘rationalize’ his special [unfair] treatment [of Jews] by such allegations as [the Jew] ‘does not compete fairly’ and ... cannot be counted upon to be honest and loyal. Discrimination against him is thereby subsumed under the universalistic value system ... without any individual having to accept the normal price of deviance in the form of an overt break with his institutionalized role and the risk of negative sanctions.” See *ibid.*, pp. 289-290.

24. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), p. 352.

25. J. P. Gillin, “Some Signposts for Policy”, in Social Change in Latin America Today (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), pp. 30-47.

26. In May 1962, I presented a paper with the expected results to my Ph.D. adviser. The expectations were subsequently confirmed, except for nine ambiguous items, which I had predicted would be less sensitive items, and these items in fact did not correlate consistently with the bulk of the items. Socioeconomic status was also found not to correlate consistently with the sacred-expedient value orientations and the tendency of Catholic respondents to exhibit a stronger sacred orientation than Protestants did not emerge as clearly or consistently as I had expected.

27. The important role of the religious factor in modernity and development has been noted by various authors. Talcott Parsons observes that the branches of Protestantism which have been important for modern industrial society (such as in America) have led to a secularization where the responsibility of man for the empirical results of his actions is emphasized more than his dependence on receiving God's grace, while Catholic tradition places greater emphasis on the latter than the former. See Talcott Parsons, "Christianity and Modern Industrial Society," in Studies in Sociology, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: OMEBA, 1961). Max Weber also observes that "the Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, himself creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it." Max Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

28. See William H. White in The Organization Man. David Riesman described the lack of individual independence (the "other directed" type) in The Lonely Crowd (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1950).

29. See Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy..., *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 106.

30. Erich Fromm said: "Modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities. Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, there by, anxious and powerless." From: Escape from Freedom (New York: Holt, 1941), p. viii. Also see note #29.

31. See Plato, The Republic (New York, Modern Library, 1982), Book 8, Section 564, pp. 320-321.

32. See Frank Knight, Intelligence and Democratic Action (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 107.

33. See Emile Durkheim, Suicide..., *op. cit.*, pp. 253, 258.

34. See Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of our Time (New York, Norton, 1937), p. 289.

35. See note #3 earlier in this chapter.

36. Karen Horney reports the tendency toward such ambivalence among individuals in modern societies: "[The] contradictions embedded in our culture are precisely the conflicts which the neurotic struggles to reconcile: his tendencies toward aggressiveness and his tendencies toward yielding; his excessive demands and his fear of never getting anything; his striving toward self-aggrandizement and his feeling of personal helplessness. The difference from the normal is merely quantitative. While the normal person is able to cope with the difficulties without damage to his personality, in the neurotic all the conflicts are intensified to a degree that makes any satisfactory solution impossible." From: The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (New York: Norton, 1937), p. 289.

37. Robert K. Merton described similar problems in "Social Structure and Anomie", in Social Theory..., *op. cit.*

38. See note 33 in this chapter.
39. See R. N. Bellah, et al, Habits..., op. cit., pp. 228, 286, 288.
40. See Jon Elster, Ulyses and the Syrens: Studies in Rationality and Irrationality (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 152-153.
41. See Section B in this chapter.
42. See Michael Porter, The Competitive Advantage of Nations (New York: The Free Press, 1990).
43. Some efforts in this direction have already been undertaken in Argentina. Among these is the Fundación para la Calidad de Decisiones y de Vida, which is overseen by the author.
44. See Allen Barton, "The Concept of Property-Space in Social Research," in P.F. Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg, The Language of Social Research (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957).

CHAPTER SIX NOTES:

ARGENTINE EVOLUTION ALONG THE SACRED-EXPEDIENT AXIS

1. Fritz Stern said: "A culture must also recognize, recruit, and, in a sense, form talent; it must know how to coax talent into achievement. This too is a test of its virtue and of its instinct for survival." From: "Einstein's Germany," in Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History (New York: Knopf, 1987), p. 50.

2. Adam Smith says: "Each person, therefore, making a tenth part of forty-eight thousand pins, might be considered as making four thousand eight hundred pins in a day. But if they had all wrought separately and independently, and without any of them having been educated to this peculiar business, they certainly could not each of them have made twenty, perhaps not one pin in a day." From: An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations [1776] (New York: Modern Library, 1937), Book 1, chap. 1, pp. 4-5.8

3. See section B in this chapter.

4. Adolfo Critto, La Comunidad Frenada (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1977), pp. 113-118.

5. This response stems from a personal interview I conducted with the top executive for the project; at the time I conducted the interview, I was serving as a government official responsible for social affairs.

6. The author studied this point extensively in the Ministry of Economics of the Province of Buenos Aires in 1969. For the more detailed findings, see Adolfo Critto, Innovación y Burocracia (Buenos Aires: Consejo Federal de Inversiones y Gobierno de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1969).

7. J.P. Gillin, "Some Signposts for Policy," in Social Change in Latin America Today (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 47.

8. Adolfo Critto, La Comunidad Frenada. op. cit., pp. 118-122.

9. Ibid., pp. 123-125.

10. Ibid., pp. 125-128.

11. See Adolfo Critto, Innovación y Burocracia. op. cit.

12. See Section A in this chapter

13. On efforts to fight infant mortality, see Adolfo Critto, "Factores Socio-Culturales en la Desnutrición del Lactante," in Cuadernos Médico-Sociales (Colegio Médico de Chile, 1965), No. 4-33, and in Cuadernos de los Institutos (Instituto R. Orgaz, National University of Córdoba, 1965). On the campaign against the Chagas disease, see Adolfo Critto, "Factores Sociales en la Enfermedad de Chagas," in Revista de Política Social (Córdoba: CEUPS, National University of Córdoba, 1982).

14. Adolfo Critto, "Communication between Health Services and Population," in Water for Human Consumption (Dublin: Tycooly International Publishers, 1982) and in Factores Sociales. Psicosociales y Culturales en la Salud (Buenos Aires: University of Buenos Aires, 1971).

15. Adolfo Critto, La Función Formativa de la Universidad (Córdoba: Inst. Soc. R. Orgaz, National University of Córdoba, 1965); Adolfo Critto, Recursos Humanos en la Marina Mercante (Buenos Aires: Fundación Argentina de Estudios Marítimos, 1971); Adolfo Critto, "Labour Relations in the Shipping Industry, Argentine Case Study," Labour and Society (Geneva, 1976).

16. Adolfo Critto, et. al., Calidad de Vida y Medio Ambiente de Trabajo en las Grandes Obras de Infraestructura. El proyecto Salto Grande (Argentina and Uruguay: CIAT/ILO, 1979).

17. Adolfo Critto, Decisión. Razón y Desarrollo (Buenos Aires: Centro de Investigación Social Aplicada, Catholic University of Argentina, 1970).

18. Ibid. and La Comunidad Frenada. op. cit.

19. On dominant and alternative value orientations, see Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Variations in Value Orientations. op. cit., p. 31.

20. After independence in 1816, Argentina experienced decades of chaos and internal struggles between centralizing and federalist caudillos. This continued until a new government was established under an American-style constitution in 1853. Argentina was governed for the next few decades by a succession of leaders who promoted economic growth and maintained overall political stability.

21. In 1890, Argentina suffered a financial and commercial collapse, with unemployment and discontent, fraud and corruption. Order was restored under the leadership of president Carlos Pellegrini.

APPENDIX

The empirical study on value orientations of American, Spanish and Argentine university students was conducted by the author in 1962 (and is reported in his Ph.D. Thesis –The Sacred and the Expedient-, Columbia University, Department of Sociology, 1965), with non random samples of 441, 149 and 289 American, Spanish and Argentine university students using a self-administered questionnaire to be filled in the university class room, thanks to the cooperation of teachers in various American, Spanish and Argentine universities.

To illustrate the way the students' responses were taken as indicators of value orientations a few sample questions will be transcribed.

1. Unconditional love vs. self-Interest

To illustrate the orientation towards love as unconditional vs. as self-interested or exchange orientation, giving only to obtain something in exchange, the following situation was presented to the respondents:

Situation F

John is a student. He cares for Mary but Mary does not care for him. With only this information, two other students were trying to describe John's situation.

Here is what each of them said:

Student 1

- 1 –*John's basic concern is to have Mary care for him in return.*
- 2 –*John will become dependent on Mary.*
- 3 –*As a result John is liable to exploitation by Mary.*
- 4 –*John will resent his dependence.*
- 5 –*John's pride will be hurt.*
- 6 –*John will try to hold back his feelings or withdraw from the relationship.*
- 7 –*If he does not withdraw, he will become a nuisance.*
- 8 –*Mary will try to discourage his persistence.*

Student 2

- 1 –*John's basic concern is for Mary's problems and needs.*
- 2 –*John will not become dependent on Mary's caprices.*
- 3 –*John will not be liable to exploitation by Mary.*
- 4 –*John will be dependent only in the sense that he will do things that he considers good for Mary.*
- 5 –*If Mary does not care for him in return John will not consider his pride hurt.*
- 6 –*John will not withhold his feelings.*
- 7 –*Mary will not consider John a nuisance.*
- 8 –*On the contrary, Mary may feel obliged to care for John in return.*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

- 1 Strongly Agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Uncertain
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly Disagree

37 - 1 2 3 4 5 a- Student 1 describes better than Student 2 what usually happens in such cases.

38 - 1 2 3 4 5 b- If a girl was the one who cared and the boy -did not care for her, the situation would be -closer to that described by Student 1 than to that -described by Student 2

39 - 1 2 3 4 5 c- Usually when someone has cared for you without your caring for her, the situation was closer to that described by Student 1 than to that described by Student 2. (If this has never happened to you, base your answer upon what you would expect to happen.)

40 - 1 2 3 4 5 d- Usually when you have cared for someone without her caring for you, the situation was closer to that described by Student 1 than to that described by Student 2. (If this has never happened to you, base your answer upon what you would expect to happen.)

The mean scores for sacredness (as opposed to expedient) orientation (which I called then "theocentrism" scores) were calculated, going from 1 (the most sacredness oriented) to 5 (the most expedient oriented).

The results obtained were the following:

Table 1. Sacredness in value orientations for American and Argentine respondents.

Unconditional love vs. self-interest.

Mean sacredness scores going from 1 (most sacred) to 5 (most expedient)

<i>item number</i>	<i>American mean scores</i>	<i>Argentine mean scores</i>	<i>Difference</i>
37	3.71	2.92	.79
38	3.17	2.74	.43
39	3.39	2.59	.80
40	3.40	2.54	.86

2. Orientations towards peers and friends

To illustrate the orientation towards peers and friends the following situation was presented to the respondents:

Situation B

A student has great difficulties in a course only because he lacks understanding of certain basic concepts. A classmate who is doing very well notices his difficulties. He also sees that if he devotes a few hours to helping the student who is in difficulty he may keep him from failing. Everyone in the class badly needs time to study for the examinations that will take place in a few days. The student in difficulty does not ask for help. He is only an acquaintance of the student who is doing very well.

In this situation, in which the student having trouble and the successful student are acquaintances, indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

14 - 1 2 3 4 5 a - The successful student is morally obliged to offer help to his classmate who is in difficulty.

15 - 1 2 3 4 5 b - You would feel guilty if you did not offer such help and he failed the course.

Situation C

Keeping in mind Situation B, assume that the student having difficulty and the successful student are close friends. They are both male (or both female). Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

16 - 1 2 3 4 5 a - The successful student is morally obliged to offer help to his close friend.

17 - 1 2 3 4 5 b - You would feel guilty if you did not offer help and your close friend failed the course.

18 - 1 2 3 4 5 c - A close friend should be concerned about the personal problems and future of his friend almost to the same extent as he is concerned about his own.

19 - 1 2 3 4 5 d - A man's obligations towards his friends are at least as important as his obligations towards such things as his studies, career, or job.

Table 2. Sacredness in value orientations for American and Argentine respondents.

Orientation towards peers and friends

Mean sacredness scores going from 1 (most sacred) to 5 (most expedient).

<i>Item number</i>	<i>American mean scores</i>	<i>Argentine mean scores</i>	<i>Difference</i>
• Orientation towards peers			
14 - Obligation to help a fellow student	3.54	1.61	+1.93
15 - Guilt at not helping a fellow student	2.86	1.94	+ .92
• Orientation towards friends			
16 - Obligation to help a friend	2.72	1.13	+1.59
17 - Guilt at not helping a friend	1.97	1.28	+ .69
18 - Obligation to be concerned for a friend	2.70	1.75	+ .95
19 - Obligations to friends vs. obligations to studies, career and job	2.55	1.89	+ .66

3. Results vs. intentions.

To illustrate the unilateral importance given to results or to intentions - typical misplaced expedient or sacred orientations - the students were asked to express their level of agreement with the statement: "It is the intention and not the results that makes an action good". The mean sacredness score for Argentines was 1.68; and for Americans was 2.69, this giving a difference of 1.01 more sacred for the Argentine sample.

4. Average differences in sacredness-expediency orientations, considering all realms

The average differences in sacredness scores (mean sacredness scores of Argentines respondents minus mean sacredness scores of American respondents) were as follows, for the application of value orientations to various realms of life:

Table 3. Sacredness in value orientations for American and Argentine respondents. Combined average differences for each realm.

Average differences in sacredness scores

(Mean sacredness scores of Argentine respondents minus the mean sacredness scores of American respondents).

<i>Value orientations</i>	
Relation of people to their families	+ .38
Relation of people to their friends	+ .75
Relation of people to their peers	+ 1.86
Relation of people to their fellow men	+ .81
Unilateral involvement and reciprocity	+ .57
Relation of people to ideas	+ .61
<i>Total no. of cases: American respondents 441</i>	
<i>Argentine respondents 289</i>	

Comparing Americans with Spanish respondents the profile of the differences was similar, as follows

Table 4. Sacredness in value orientations for American and Spanish respondents. Combined average differences for each value realm.

Average differences in sacredness scores (Mean sacredness scores of Spanish respondents minus the mean sacredness scores of American respondents)

<i>Value orientations</i>	
Relation of people to their families	+ .47
Relation of people to their friends	+ .52
Relation of people to their peers	+ .93
Relation of people to their fellow men	+ .71
Unilateral involvement and reciprocity	+ .57
Relation of people to ideas	+ .61
<i>Total no. of cases: American respondents 441</i>	
<i>Spanish respondents 149</i>	

5. Internal consistency

The internal consistency among applications of value orientations in various realms; among statuses associated with value orientations, and between indexes of status-consistency and indexes of value-consistency may be seen in the following Matrix and table.

Matrix 1. Correlations of the respondents' sacredness-expediency in each value orientation with their sacredness-expediency in each other value orientation.

Combined sample (American and Argentine respondents).

<i>Value orientation towards:</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Peers</i>	<i>Fellow men</i>	<i>Reciprocity</i>	<i>Idea</i>
Family		+ .32	+ .20	+ .28	+ .19	+ .32
Friends			+ .60	+ .50	+ .25	+ .31
Peers				+ .45	+ .30	+ .25
Fellowmen					+ .19	+ .32
Reciprocity						+ .20
Ideas						

Total no. of respondents: 730

Table 5. Correlations of the respondent's index of status-consistency with the indexes of value-consistency corresponding to each value orientation.

<i>Value orientation towards:</i>	<i>Group considered:</i>		
	<i>American sample</i>	<i>Argentine sample</i>	<i>Combined sample</i>
Family	+ .16	+ .11	+ .15
Friends	+ .01	+ .13	+ .04
Peers	+ .04	+ .04	+ .04
Fellow men	+ .06	+ .23	+ .15
Reciprocity	+ .11	+ .09	+ .12
Ideas	- .03	+ .17	+ .0
<i>Total no. of cases:</i>	<i>441</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>730</i>

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