SOCIAL STRUCTURE
AND RESISTANCE TO CHANGE*

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In order to maximize the time span in which the consequences of social change can be observed, two social systems are to be discussed, both of which have historical beginnings which can be traced back at least for several centuries. The Navajo has been dated as early as the sixteenth century (Kluckhon and Leighton, 1962). The Trappist monks trace their origins to St. Benedict in the sixth century.

These two cultures were selected for several other reasons. First, they are both rural and essentially communal, and thus both are directly pertinent to the concerns of this Congress. Second, they are both cultures with which the author himself has had extended personal contact. Third, within these similarities, the two cultures are radically different, a fact which can be put to important use.

The method of science includes induction as a basic if not a cardinal procedure. My personal contact with both of these people has extended over more than two years for each. I began visits to the Navajo Indian Reservation in 1963 and spent three months living with Navajos (in Many Farms, Arizona) in 1965. My visits to Trappist monasteries began in 1966, and I have now lived in one particular monastery for a total time of approximately three months. All of the monasteries to be studied are located in the United States.

The essential methodological strategy in preparing the following observations has been to choose two rural peoples that are as widely divergent as possible, given the other limitations that have been discussed. These two divergent situations are thus used in a manner approximating that of limiting cases: whatever a comparison reveals to be common to both must necessarily pertain to many other systems,

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precisely because they stand at extreme and opposite points on such a range of behavior.

Two major perspectives are used in the discussion: cultural and communal. By a cultural perspective I mean simply symbolic human behavior that can be analyzed without necessarily referring to any specific social system. In the present analysis, religion can be seen to most clearly fit this description. Though one must admit that the separation between culture and society is never complete, the separation is nevertheless a common analytic practice (See also Hillery, 1968, p. 96).

By a communal perspective I mean one that must take note of specific collections of people that can be identified in time and space, that have a recognizable set of institutions, and (for our purposes) that emphasize norms relating to familial and cooperative behavior (cf. Hillery, 1963, 1968, 1971).

A word concerning value orientation also appears to be in order. The concept of 'resistance to change' may carry with it something of a negative connotation, as something to be avoided or overcome. No such implication is intended here. Indeed, as the author has studied these peoples, he sees some indication that selective resistance preserved not only a measure of integrity but their very being.

Resistance to change among the Navajo. The Navajo Indians show an interesting combination of openness to change and apparent stubborn resistance. As one lives among these people, he becomes amazed at the extent to which modern American culture has penetrated the area.

But one also knows that this is not Main Street, U.S.A. The language is markedly different. It has been said that the only way in which one can learn to speak the Navajo language (Athapascan) effectively is to be born among the Navajos. The clothing is different, if no more than in the full skirts and velveteen blouses of the women and in the abundance of silver jewelry. Religion is as much a part of a Navajo as his food – perhaps more so. Although the obvious manifestation of his religion is in the various curing ceremonies, his religion is practiced in an almost endless series of ritual observances, such as in refusing to point to anyone with his hands (the lips are preferred), in not eating bear meat, in not touching a tree or animal struck by lightning, and on and on through so much of his life that the Navajo himself is often unaware of the extent of his religious observances (Hill, 1938.)

But the difference from Anglo-American life is even more basic
than language and religion. It probably begins in childrearing. What effect the practice of swaddling Navajo babies and binding them to a cradle board has on Navajo personality, I will leave for others to decide (Kluckhohn, 1962), but I can attest that Navajo children are probably given the most permissive childrearing of any people on this continent.

This permissiveness extends until puberty and slightly beyond. The child experiments with sex as casually as he experiments with anything else (allowing always for individual exceptions). And then the pregnancies come, and then the relatives begin questioning the girl: 'who is the man?'

The consequences of this change are rather traumatic for the adolescents. A few months before, they were as unrestrained as can be imagined. On the recognition of pregnancy, the girl must come to terms with her approaching motherhood. The boy must leave his parental home, either as a wanderer or as the son-in-law of a stranger, for these people are matriloc al as well as matrilineal. His father-in-law is in a situation that is equally difficult, for he is the patriarch on his wife's land, among his wife's people. This means that virtually any of his authority rests not so much in his formal possession of a right to rule as much as in his own personality. For this reason, the Navajo patriarch rules more by nondirective techniques than anything else, and extended Navajo households are constantly in the process of breaking down as older patriarchs die, and they are equally building up as newer ones gain power.

There is, consequently, a potential for a high degree of tension in the Navajo households, especially among men. This tension is if anything increased by the fact that open conflict among Navajos is to be avoided if at all possible (although of course conflict does occur). Understandably, the incidence of psychosomatic illness is high. When a man suffers pain (for the men are most often involved, as is understandable, since it is the man who suffers the most serious familial dislocations), he will approach his family for help in acquiring the services of a medicine man. Medicine men are expensive. They must be paid if their medicine is to be effective. His maternal family will come to his aid. Word of this effort naturally comes to the father-in-law and the wife's people. Navajo medicine is essentially a curing ceremony; its center is the patient. And a patient _ipso facto_ is to some degree a sacred being, because he is in contact with the gods—increasingly so as the ceremony proceeds. Events climax in a ceremony
which often extends for nine days and nights, and for some period of
time thereafter the patient is under a supernatural 'after-glow.'

The importance of this description can be seen in the way in which
the patient's behavior in relation to his in-laws has necessarily been
changed. If this relationship has been the source of his illness, then
the source of the illness has been changed. Navajo medicine thus has
an important influence on psychosomatic illness. As can be seen, it is
a highly effective system. Not surprisingly, the Navajo can point
to his religion and say (obviously, as far as he is concerned), 'it
works.'

If Navajo religion and kinship are mutually reinforcing, the same
may be said for language. The Navajo religion depends heavily on
the Navajo language, including the use of ritual prayers, songs, and
archaic words. And Navajo kinship relations are difficult to concep-
tualize outside of the Navajo language. For example, the term for
'woman' will include reference to her age, her potential relationship
to the speaker, the speaker's age, and whether the speaker is doing
the talking. The consequences of this are that the Navajo way of
thinking about kinship structure is deeply embedded in his language
and extends to all of his social relations, whether or not the kinship
is biological, as Anglo-Americans and Europeans use the term.

It should be noted that Navajo women are more conservative than
are men, although there is little concept of male superiority, in spite
of the patriarchies. The style of clothes of the women is at least a
century old; men generally wear the usual garb of western American
cattle country. The people are still matrilineal and matrilocal. Food
habits are in the hands of the women, and these remain unchanged
in many important respects. Babies are still carried on cradle boards.
The list could be extended.

Finally, there is the degree of their isolation. Located on the high
and relatively arid Colorado plateaus, few persons ever penetrate
deeply into Navajo country, primarily because of the lack of hard-
surfaced roads. This isolation, however, is rapidly disappearing as the
Navajo themselves build more roads and as their explosive population
growth literally pushes them into contact with persons outside the
reservation.

Thus, Navajo resistance to change was for some time at least not
completely a thing of their own doing, since it was dependent on their
physical isolation. But to perhaps a greater degree, the Navajo remain
isolated still because of their kinship, religious, and linguistic struc-
ture, all effectively reducing communication with the outside. They
are in this sense truly a sacred people, even in Becker's use of the term (Becker, 1950).

Whether the Navajo will go the way of such peoples as the Hutterites and the Jews is conjectural. These cultures have also been relatively isolated from the outside world by a mutually reinforcing language, religious, and kinship system, but they have been able to participate effectively in the outside world (if they so chose) because they have been literate. Each has also gone in different ways – the Hutterites resist change because of their religion (cf. Eaton, 1952); the Jews show varying degrees of religious syncretism, depending to some extent on the degree of rejection they experience from the larger society (Berry, 1951, p. 328-329).

The foregoing discussion has emphasized basically cultural reasons for Navajo resistance to change. The emphasis was on language, religion, kinship, and isolation, not on specific social systems. One may also turn to the social system of Navajo communities as sources of resistance to change. In discussing this source of change, I will use the communal model of the 'vill' that has been developed elsewhere (Hillery, 1963, 1968): a localized system integrated by cooperation and families. (The model is more complicated and extensive than this; what is presented here are only the focal components).

Some of these components already have been mentioned, particularly the spatial relationships (in the form of isolation) and the kinship structures. More specifically, it is significant that the Navajo live together in rather loose agglomerations of kinfolk, called 'camps.' Each camp will contain from several to several dozen dwelling structures and is isolated from other camps often by miles of unoccupied (uninhabited) land. This separation makes communication rather difficult – especially with non-Navajos. The boundaries around the ancestral grazing lands are well-known by each family, though they are constantly shifting as the various families grow and decline, for the Navajos own land only by the extent to which they use it, and efforts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to fence the range have met with indifference and some opposition. (There has been occasional success, especially in connection with areas containing crops).

The cooperative systems among the Navajo have a wide range of differential resistance, from virtually complete acceptance in the patterns of use and purchase of material goods to virtually no change in the patterns of mutual aid and contracts that occur in religious behavior. Notions of private property (apart from land) are in one sense quite compatible with Anglo-American customs, such that the
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Navajo have had no problem in buying the white man's goods. However, the Navajo are generally not as concerned as are white men with material things. He will allow religious ceremonials to take precedence over cultivation of crops or over buying a new automobile, for example. In the Navajo value system, religious behavior clearly has precedence.

Certain patterns of cooperation are still much in evidence in the religious ceremonials: the medicine man is paid; various persons help in the preparation of the religious 'sand paintings,' in the construction of masks, in the dancing; anyone who comes to a ceremonial must be fed, although relatives and friends are expected to contribute food to help defray the costs.

One other area should be mentioned that also contributes to the resistance to change on the part of the Navajo: their way of perceiving the world. Strangely, this perceiving is based on process rather than on categorization, and one would think that normally this mode of perception should leave them more amenable to change. Perhaps it does, and perhaps for this reason the Navajo have been perfectly willing to accept new things (such as the white man's medicine) while firmly clinging to the old (such as their own religious medicine). In most probability, the difficulty lies in the fact that the Anglo-American host culture, from which most change emanates, is itself basically a culture which emphasizes categories, and the fact that the Navajo thought pattern emphasizes process simply serves as an additional isolating factor.

Accordingly, when a Navajo learns English and attends a white man's school, he may be able to speak with a white man, and the white man may think that he is communicating with the Navajo, but the two have probably met only at a very superficial level. The very thought processes are different.

In attempting a functional analysis of the foregoing traits (R. Merton, 1968), one is impressed by two things. First, all of these traits are mutually reinforcing, in one way or another (whether the relationship is functional or dysfunctional). But, second, it is difficult to interpret any of these relationships as manifest, as intended. The Navajo simply lives his life, accepting what changes seem acceptable, firmly and even at times unthinkingly resisting others. We have isolated areas that seem responsible for resistance to change. The Navajo would not do so. For him, all of life is of a piece, and this includes the supernatural. He is merely part of an on-going process. Since the white man often insists that the Navajo follow the Anglo-
American pattern, this insistence is frequently met with hostility and anxiety. But the anxiety is directed at an alien source, not at something in his own culture that 'resists' use and manipulation.

**Resistance to change among the Trappist monks.** For centuries, the way of life of the Trappist monks has almost been synonymous with resistance to change. For example, their rule of silence, wherein one spoke primarily to superiors, lasted for 800 years; their liturgical language for 1400 years. Recently, however, especially with the Second Vatican Council of 1962-63 ('Vatican II'), the Trappists have been undergoing a new revolution, perhaps even a renewal. Latin is no longer the only liturgical language, and in cases it is not used at all. The rule of silence has been sharply modified (i.e., it now pertains only to certain places and times). Numerous other changes are equally basic.

One American monastery, containing approximately 70 monks, will be the focus of the present discussion, since it is felt by some monks as perhaps being more in the forefront of change than many other Trappist monasteries. Being more open to change, the analyst is in a better position to see what is retained and thus what is particularly resistant to change.

It is interesting that the same complex of resistant variables as was found among the Navajo are also found among the Trappists: Religion, sexual-familial patterns, physical isolation, and to some extent, language. Unlike the Navajo, however, in each case the reason for the resistance is different, and in several cases, the trait is at the same time a source of resistance and a source of change.

The monks are still Roman Catholics, of course. The Mass remains the center of their day. They come to the monastery because as Catholics they feel called to the monastery by their God.

The reasons for the present period of renewal are not simple, but there appear to be two dominant influences: changes that have developed within the separate monasteries as they live their daily lives as monks and changes that have developed within the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Where the distinction should be drawn exactly is not possible to say, but certainly long before Vatican II there were Abbots who were calling for a 'return to the sources,' particularly to the Holy Scriptures and the Rule of St. Benedict (see Belorgey, 1952; Le Bail, n.d., but probably written during the 1920's or 1930's; and Kinsella, 1962, writing on Dom Lehodey, who wrote in the first decades of the twentieth century). In any case, the past years - and especially the past four years, have been years of searching and experimentation.
And recently, the Order of Trappist monks (the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance) as a body is seeking to bring the experimentation back into more common channels. It follows that the monks were resistant to change, sought change, and currently seek somewhat to limit change because of the religious milieu of which they are a part, including both the formal religious hierarchy (Rome) and the local houses (the Abbey). Their religion is accordingly manifestly rather than latently involved in the change process.

Latin, the liturgical language of the Roman Church, has been virtually excluded from all of the religious offices at this Abbey for several years. It has been brought back only recently in certain hymns used at some of the religious services, and Latin thus displays some vitality. With this exception, language is generally no longer an isolating factor with these monks. Nevertheless, it should be noted that an affiliate monastery of nearby nuns ('Trappistines') still retains much Latin in its liturgy (although this too is changing). As with the Navajo, the women tend to be more conservative.

To speak of monastic familial patterns is also to speak of their absence. Although some allusion is made to kinship relations among the monks in terms of 'father,' or 'brother,' these terms are not looked upon by the monks, themselves, as expressing kinship relations. (There does, however, seem to be a closer connection with kinship, even if still heavily metaphorical, when the terms 'mother,' and 'sister' are used by the nuns). But if one can view celibacy as a method of dealing with kinship (and it does control sexual relations), then the monks are as resistant to change here almost as much as they ever were.

Just as the Navajos have been isolated by their location, so are the monks. But the monks chose their location precisely because it helped to isolate them. They also enforce visiting rules such that visitors may come only at certain times, and when they do come, the visitors are restricted to designated places in the monastery (i.e., outside the 'enclosure'). As with the Navajo, modern transportation is posing a problem, in that the city from which they were once fairly distant is now much closer because of hard-surfaced roads. Unlike the Navajo, however, these monks have made continued efforts to increase the isolation in which they live by stricter regulations on visitors, such as limiting the number who may stay overnight and eliminating casual sight-seeing tours.

There is an additional factor that isolates the monks, and this is their life style. The monk's time of retiring is 8:00 p.m.; he rises at
3:15 a.m. And between the time of 8:00 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. he keeps what is referred to as the 'Great Silence' - the one time when speaking is still not permitted. He may normally only eat with other monks (and this, too, in silence), not with visitors. Consequently, the monk is highly isolated from the world outside. Unlike the Navajo, however, he reads periodicals which are in the world's language (English and French, in this case), and so although the world does not see him, he sees the world.

The monks differ from the Navajos in that they are not necessarily isolated from the outside world by different thought patterns. The discussion here must necessarily involve several world views. Within the monastery, there are roughly two types of monks (although all gradations between these two types may be found). There are at the one extreme those monks who believe that their calling is to be involved in the world although at the same time to be in this particular monastery. They may work in the guest house or in some business enterprise connected with the Abbey (and not all monks who do these things would be active religious). It is these monks in particular who have no barrier to communication with active religious people outside of the monastery.

At the other extreme is the contemplative. He shares a point of view which can be communicated only to those active religious people who are themselves contemplative (for the combination is quite possible). His position can be described (if only incompletely) by saying that he believes firmly in the importance of prayer over all other things, and he believes that direct communion with God is possible through prayer. He experiences this communion if not frequently (some do) then at least significantly. In a word, he is a mystic.

The active who is not a contemplative finds the contemplative position incomprehensible. It is only the conviction of both that each has been called to the monastery by God that enables them to continue to live together. Some of the deeper conflicts within the monastery are between these two types.

The point is, that although a significant number of monks are contemplative and thus find communication with the outside world somewhat difficult, not all monks are contemplatives.

The comparison of monks and Navajos would not be complete if it did not also emphasize the selective acculturation. All of these men, of course, were born elsewhere, and so they carry changes from the outside with them into the monastery. Thus, the resistance to change
can be more readily attributed to the social structure than to the culture. Further, there are numerous areas in which change has been readily accepted: Tractors are much more commonplace in the monastery than on the reservation. The monks are highly productive and skilled farmers - even industrialized ones. Neither radio nor television is normally used in the monastery (I have seen a television antenna jutting from a Navajo mud hogan!), but there are telephones, late model cars, slide projectors, high-fi sets, and a library of more than 11,000 volumes. In short, the monks are not opposed to adopting anything that they feel might help their monastic quest. And within limits determined by their religion, they adopt anything else which they feel will make life more simple and peaceful. The resistance to change, here, is equally interesting. Several times during the course of the last five years, extremely expensive equipment, amounting to thousands and even tens of thousands of dollars, has been scrapped, rejected, or curtailed because it interfered with the dictates of their religious life. For example, an entire dairy herd has been abandoned because the monks felt that the labor and the schedule of milking made demands that were in conflict with their prayer life. Similar abandonment of chicken farming, a winery, and an electrical generating power station were made because of essentially religious demands, and the operation of an alfalfa dehydration plant has been cut in half.

Attention is now turned specifically to the communal organization of the monastery, for although this type of community lacks the family, and although it is more purposive than normal communities, it resembles them more than it does other types of social organizations (Hillery, 1969, 1971). Because the monastery is spatially isolated by choice, the settlement pattern is clustered, compact, and permanent (unlike the more scattered and shifting pattern of the Navajo). Boundaries are definite rather than vague, to keep the world outside. The base of operations of the monks' routine activities is sharply restricted for the same reason, and similarly, he must come from outside the system as a new member. All of these spatial patterns are basic to monastic life, and all of them have shown a high degree of resistance to change. They are not apt to change in the future.

With celibacy come also two other institutions that are made necessary by it and are crucial to the maintenance of the monastery as a communal organization: recruitment and discharge. Although there has been much experimentation with ways of integrating the new recruit, there has been no change in the way in which the monk is recruited. The monk is a Catholic, and he learns of the Trappists...
through his activities as a practicing Catholic. This feature is unlikely to change, simply because the monks themselves do no recruiting, nor are they likely to. Their attitude is not fatalistic — they are concerned. But their concern expresses itself in the form of prayer and in their behavior in reference to the new candidate when he comes into the monastery. The monk believes that each new monk must be there because of a call from God, or he should not be there at all. How the aspiring monk knows that the call is from God, is up to the individual to experience. The task of the other monks is to assess whether they believe the applicant will be able to integrate himself into the life of the community (and whether they will integrate with him).

The other institution made necessary by the lack of a family is the institution of discharge. Although the recruiting function remains unchanged because of the monk's religious values, the institution of discharge does not change, both because of religious and communal values. The monk that does not exhibit proper religious values or proper concern for his fellow monks would be asked to leave, although rarely is this ever done. Most often, the neophyte himself becomes convinced that this particular monastery is not suitable for him, and he goes elsewhere. This freedom to leave is basic to the communal nature of monastic organization, for it would only require a deprivation of this freedom to turn the monastery into a prison. As it is, the monks are in no sense prisoners (Hillery, 1971).

The cooperative structure, finally, is as it ever was: a system of religious communism. To be sure, there has been change even here. For example, the monks have moved from stalls in a dormitory to private rooms. But for the monk to conceive of this room as his own private property, to which he had legal and disposable rights, would be quite foreign.

In a real sense, then, the monastery resists change to some extent precisely because it is a communal organization as well as because it is a religious culture. The monk is open to change as technology facilitates certain activities he deems desirable — always in terms of his religious commitment. He is closed to change because his particular community requires that he separate himself from the world, spatially, sexually, and in the manner in which he cooperates.

Comparison of Navajos and Monks. First, each of these people show resistance to change both because of their culture and because of the nature of their communal organization. But each is also highly open to change in both areas. Resistance to change is then very selective,
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not only with respect to what is accepted but with respect to the 'mechanisms' or functions that are involved. In reference to acceptance of change, both peoples show that rural Gemeinschaftliche systems can exist effectively with industrial technology. Thus, material traits generally show the least resistance to change, ideas and values the most. Both show that the core of resistance to change is found in the religious, in the sexual-familial, and (for an earlier period among the monks) in the language systems.

But the similarities must be examined more closely, for although they are truly similarities in many cases (and this should not be forgotten), there are important differences. It should be borne in mind that change among the Navajos has been largely undirected and unplanned by themselves, whereas change for the monks has been and is being carefully thought out in many areas. For both, however, the more important reasons for the resistance may be traced to their religion. Again, the religion differs markedly. Navajos are pantheists; monks are monotheists.

Both peoples are ordinarily born into their religion. Again, there is a difference: the Navajo grows into his religious involvement. Never does he have to make a personal commitment. The monk, however, must decide at a certain time in his life (no younger than 20 years of age) that he will become a monk in a specific Order at a specific monastery.

The sexual-familial patterns are highly resistant to change. But the Navajo hardly thinks of them (compare Dyk, 1938) - they are as natural as breathing. The monk consciously chooses to commit his life to one of celibacy and from all familial attachments.

Probably language is least similar among the five traits discussed here. Navajos are isolated because their language is so different from that of Anglo-Americans that communication will always present problems, as long as Navajos speak Athabascan. On the other hand, Latin was something which previously isolated the monks from the outside world (particularly the laity), but only as far as their liturgy was concerned. Now that Latin is gone, so is the isolation, with the only possible exception that the monks still have their own jargon: refectory, canonical hours, cenobitic, father immediate, garth, hebdomadary, indult, lay brother, lectio divina, night office, oblate, prior - these are only a few terms which are in the monks' daily life. They are generally not understood in the same sense even by other Roman Catholics. However, the monks will probably regain this specialized language (not to mention the sign language that is used in
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places and times where silence must be kept) because of their isolation. The language, itself, is thus a consequence rather than a determinant of isolation.

The Navajos hardly think of their cooperative structures as something to preserve – one goes to his mother’s people for help because that is the thing to do; he feeds everyone at ceremonies again because his culture has mapped this out for him already; and so the medicine man is paid; and now so are goods purchased from the white man.

The monk purposely leaves a world of contractual obligations and enters a world where he has no possessions of his own, where almost all that he does is part of a system of mutual aid. The only contractual features of monastic life are to be found in the division of labor: Abbot, prior, priest, brother, and baker; librarian, guestmaster, cook, etc. When each of the five traits are compared separately religion is seen to emerge as a powerful force in resistance, if not the most powerful.

One is likely to forget the importance of religion when he views either the apparently large degree of religious apathy in the modern world or when he is viewing people who have very similar religious (or anti-religious) views to his own. Nevertheless, when comparing these two radically different people, one cannot lose sight of the fact that they selectively acculturate largely because of their religious beliefs.

Language is ranked after religion because the experience of the monks demonstrates how radically a change can be effected, though Latin continued as the liturgical language for fourteen centuries. For the Navajo, the resistance power of language seems strong, indeed.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, positively or negatively, sex and its consequences form a massive barrier to the introduction of change. By ‘consequences’ one should include both child-rearing and celibacy. And one should also note that women are slower to change.

Just as cultural and biological factors have entered into this social analysis, so do ecological ones. It still takes energy to move from one place to another, and physical distance can be resistant to change. But that ecology (as with sex) is not the final determinant can be seen by the fact that one can isolate himself even when distance has been largely eliminated, as with the monks.

Norms of cooperation are still very poorly understood. We have done most with contractual cooperation, probably because of its close association with formal organization (which has shown the
most intensive development in sociology). But the basic patterns of cooperation that are found within families and in systems of mutual aid have been given very little attention, even recently. We probably know more about conflict. Nevertheless, the present analysis raises important questions here. Are the practices of mutual aid among the Navajo a source of their resistance to change? Is this true also of the monks? We only know that these practices continue to exist, and that their importance is probably not completely recognized by both peoples.

Perhaps related here may be the lack of effective institutions for conflict resolution among both peoples. Neither the monks nor the Navajos have developed effective ways in which conflicts may be acted out and in which the basis for the conflicts may be resolved. Among both there is a norm that stipulates that conflicts are to be avoided.

It is perhaps extremely significant then, in the absence of conflict resolution systems, that withdrawal is used as one type of solution to conflict among both monks and Navajos (not to mention Professors!). When a monk or Navajo can no longer avoid quarrels with his fellows, he leaves. Navajos have an additional mechanism through the use of alcohol—the act of having taken a drink is often used as an excuse for conflict. The monks, on the other hand, quite often use the Abbot as a way of resolving conflict (but probably not often enough).

Conflict resolution can act in either of two opposing ways in the change process. First, the absence of a conflict resolution system makes change more likely, in the sense of increasing the possibility of the disintegration of the system. From only imperfect knowledge of other Trappist monasteries, it is my impression that those monasteries with more authoritarian abbots ('strong' rulers) have been more conservative (cf. T. Merton, 1953, Raymond, 1964).

On the other hand, the lack of a conflict resolution system may also be a resistant to change in that some potential changes may never be discussed, because to do so may be thought to be a 'sensitive' area, and, in the 'interest of peace,' confrontation is avoided.

Conclusion. This discussion does not intend to present final answers. Its main purpose is to raise questions. In this vein, of the various resistants to change that have been discussed, the following order may be proposed, in which the most important is listed first: Religion, sex, language, space, and cooperation. The evidence for religion being a resistant is quite extensive and is in general agreement with the
basic principle that opinions, attitudes, and values change more slowly than overt behavior (Berelson and Steiner, 1962). At the other pole, the role of cooperative practices in social change is exceedingly hazy.

Of course, these five factors are not the only resistants to change. They were merely the ones that emerged as most conspicuous from a comparison of two widely divergent rural people. For example, little mention is made of formal organization of the monks – the Catholic hierarchy and the Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance – because we are dealing with common factors in resistance to change. The Navajo have virtually no formal organization (the existence of a political organization for the so-called tribe is an Anglo-American creation and is hardly a part of Navajo culture).

But it is religion which shows the most interesting theoretical possibilities. Not only is it apparently the most powerful factor in the collection, but it also acts as a director that influences all of the other traits. The power of religion as a director of resistance is more apparent among the monks, but it suggests strongly that battles over social change ultimately must be fought in the realm of ideas. Here Parsons' hypothesis of the cybernetic principle of social change is confirmed. Parsons (1966) maintained that certain symbolic cultural traits (language would be included here), and especially religion, acted as a sort of master gatekeeper for other developments in the change process. The principle is analagous to that of computers: a small input of energy if properly channeled can be responsible for enormous outputs of energy in other parts of the system. We have here shown the reverse: blocking actions by religion can equally forestall outputs of energy in other areas.

In stressing the importance of religious symbols, however, we should not be seduced into making an unnecessary contrast: if ideas are most important, it does not follow that material traits are least important. As long as sex and space are important resistants, then change is never exclusively ideational.

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