

THE VALIDITY OF CHARLES REICH'S TYPOLOGY OF
"CONSCIOUSNESS" IN MODERN SOCIETY*^{1,2}

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SUMMARY

Charles Reich in *The Greening of America* has proposed a typology of life style or "consciousness." This typology is the structure around which he builds his theory of social change. In this research, Reich's typology has been operationalized and tested empirically on 702 Australian 15- to 20-year-olds with the use of image analysis. Little underlying structure was found among the variables which Reich claimed would distinguish his three types of consciousness. The only similarity between what empirically derived structure did emerge and Reich's hypothesized structure was the presence in both of a radicalism dimension.

A. INTRODUCTION

Few books in recent years have had as great an impact on English speaking societies as Charles Reich's best-seller, *The Greening of America*. The essence of Reich's thesis is that the so-called counterculture of the younger generation will change the whole American social structure and lead America into a new utopia. At the root of this revolution from within is what Reich describes as change in consciousness. The aim of this paper is to test empirically the typology of consciousness upon which Reich's whole theory is based.

Reich listed a large number of characteristics which set apart three types of persons—Consciousness I, II, and III persons. Briefly, Consciousness I is the competitive individualist, Consciousness II is the conforming organi-

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² Reprints are available from the fourth author at the address shown at the end of this article.

zation man, and Consciousness III is the "liberated" long-haired, noncompetitive radical who can see through the myths of society.

The theory starts with the proposition that technological changes in American society resulted in a shift from the dominance of Consciousness I in the eighteenth century to the dominance of Consciousness II in the first half of this century. In the past decade as a result of further technological changes the American people have begun to shift to Consciousness III. This new consciousness is changing the social structure in such a way that when it is finished America will be a "beautiful" society full of "beautiful" people. However, at this stage only a few have changed to Consciousness III, and many are still lagging behind at Consciousness I.

Reich argues that Consciousness I is the consciousness which was most adaptive for the frontier society of the eighteenth century. Self-reliance, independence, and competitiveness were needed to win the West and run the industrial revolution. However, in the industrialized organizational society of the first half of this century the adaptive consciousness became the organization man type II. As the final stage, in the second half of this century, the organizational state is changing from being the servant of man into a soul-destroying monster which is creating powerlessness, corruption, and absence of community. So the consciousness which fits in with this industrialized technocratic society (number II) is no longer adaptive. Consciousness III which rejects uncontrolled technology, which replaces organizational values with community values, is now the adaptive consciousness.

Reich's theory has been widely criticized because it assumes that man automatically adopts the consciousness which is most adaptive to his circumstances. There is also the thorny question of what "adaptive" means. Nevertheless our attack of Reich's theory is different. We look at the question of whether Reich's typology of consciousness (I, II, & III) does exist in the real world. Since the validity of Reich's theory depends upon the validity of his typology, an answer in the negative to the above question would destroy the theory.

The empirical test of Reich's typology is on a sample of urban Australians. Although Reich's typology was originally construed with reference to American society, the mass media have so acclaimed its relevance for all Western societies that a test of its empirical validity in an Australian context is in order. Even the dust cover of the British edition of *The Greening of America* proclaims . . . "What he says is equally relevant for Britain." These same generalized claims for the relevance of Reich's work have been made in Australia.

Winch (13) was the first to argue that typologies should be tested empirically. He distinguished between heuristic and empirical typologies, the former permitting a voluntary distortion of empirical phenomena by positing extreme forms of relevant characteristics while the latter seek homogeneities in heterogeneous phenomena. Winch's heuristic typology is of course very similar to Weber's "ideal type" [see Hoult (5)]. Winch argued that if a typology is not heuristic, then its validity should be tested empirically. Reich's (8) typology is clearly an attempt to mirror reality and not a voluntary exaggeration of characteristics for analytical advantage and, as such, can be subjected to empirical testing either by a factor analytic procedure as suggested by Winch or by some classification method. (2)

A point of some ambiguity in Reich's model is that at times he uses Consciousness I, II, and III to represent clusters of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values, while at other times the types describe classes of people. From a careful analysis of the book, one can only conclude that Reich is concerned both with belief structures and types of people.

In the event of an empirical test of the typology, these two structures are logically very different. For example, while a multivariate analysis may show that one dimension underlie a particular sample of test items, these same items may be used as a basis for finding several clusters of people. Thus in order to test Reich's typology by means of a multivariate procedure, it is necessary to formulate the following two hypotheses:

1. The belief statements representing each type of consciousness will "hang together" and form three dimensions which are independent or orthogonal to each other.

2. On the basis of persons' scores on test items, three clusters of people should be found, each cluster endorsing items which correspond to one of Reich's types of consciousness.

In this study, only Hypothesis I will be tested, since the computing costs of a suitable technique of analysis for Hypothesis II were prohibitive. Numerical taxonomy would have been the most appropriate procedure to use to test Hypothesis II.

B. METHOD

1. *Operationalizing the Typology*

The typology was operationalized by 24 belief and attitude statements with which respondents were asked to express their degree of agreement or disagreement. The items were arrived at through an exhaustive search of *The Greening of America*. They are listed in Table 1 under the type of consciousness they represent.

TABLE 1
FACTOR LOADINGS FOR THE FIRST THREE ROTATED FACTORS

Items for <i>The Greening of America</i> (8)	Factor I (cultural radicalism	Factor II (apathetic acquiescence with status quo)	Factor III (perception of society as sick
Consciousness I			
1. Individual effort and hard work are what all people should strive for (p. 25)	-.30	.05	-.13
2. It is only natural and right that life should be based on competition against other people (p. 2)	-.11	.17	-.09
3. Nature must be conquered and put to use	-.02	.28	-.08
4. What is needed in this country is a return to stronger moral code (p. 28)	-.27	.12	-.01
5. Money is the road to happiness (p. 28)	.00	.25	.02
Consciousness II			
6. Politics don't interest me (p. 68)	-.02	.31	-.09
7. Getting ahead in my chosen career is one of the main aims of my life (p. 60)	-.29	.15	-.18
8. It is best to have a good time now rather than plan and work for the future (p. 61)	.27	.16	.11
9. Unless you learn how to get on in organizations you will never have a good life (p. 56)	-.14	.24	-.11
10. One must adjust oneself to the needs of organizations to which one belongs (p. 59)	-.18	.07	-.16
11. You should not allow yourself to become just another cog in the industrial machine (p. 190)	.08	-.26	.05
12. Our social problems can be solved by reform and government action, not by revolution (p. 64)	-.15	-.01	-.10
13. Examinations tell you how well you are succeeding in life (p. 67)	-.18	.33	-.08
14. It is right that the people who contribute most to society should receive the biggest pay packet (p. 66)	-.11	.08	-.04
Consciousness III			
15. There is a great need for social and political action to change society	.12	-.20	.21
16. I am strongly opposed to Australia continuing to participate in any way in the Vietnam war ^a (pp. 193-194)	.17	-.14	.17
17. There is nothing wrong with males having long hair (p. 189)	.26	-.14	.01
18. Marijuana or pot should be legalized (p. 218)	.36	-.13	.15
19. I don't like going to a restaurant where it is necessary to dress up (p. 199)	.16	.12	.19
20. Most jobs in our society are meaningless and not really satisfying (p. 204)	.21	-.05	.34

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Items from <i>The Greening of America</i> (8)	Factor I (cultural radicalism)	Factor II (apathetic acquiescence with status quo)	Factor III (perception of society as sick)
21. Australian society is ugly and artificial (pp. 193-194)	.13	-.11	.44
22. I think that I would like to live in a hippy-style commune (p. 212)	.37	-.08	.24
23. Australian society is very unjust to its poor and its minorities like Aborigines (pp. 194-194)	.11	-.18	.26
24. Australian society is untruthful and hypocritical (pp. 193-194)	.05	-.11	.45

^a "America" has been replaced by "Australia" in items 16, 21, 23, and 26 for obvious reasons; similarly "Negroes" has been replaced by "Aborigines" in item 23.

Responses to the items were obtained in an interview situation in which a trained interviewer read out items and the *S* was asked to respond in one of the following categories: "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." If the *S* could not make up his mind, he was permitted to use an "uncertain" category.

2. *The Sample*

Since Reich argues that Consciousness III is only to be found in significant numbers among young people, an adequate test of the typology required a sample of young people. Thus the sample was comprised of 702 persons between the ages of 15 and 20 years in the Brisbane metropolitan area. Respondents were selected by randomized multiphase sampling procedures. First, 30 of the 51 geographical areas which make up the Brisbane metropolitan area were sampled, with areas with larger numbers of 15 to 20-year-olds having a proportionately larger chance of being sampled. Smaller geographical areas within the areas were then sampled in the same way. Finally streets within these areas were chosen by simple random sampling. Interviews were conducted in 1972 at randomly selected houses in these streets, with interviewers being required to call back until an interview was obtained with each person thus sampled.

3. *Method of Analysis*

The method of analysis chosen to test Hypothesis I was image analysis. Like factor analysis, this procedure reduces a set of variables represented in *n*-dimensional space to a smaller set of new, uncorrelated dimensions

which are defined solely in terms of the original variables. However, image analysis has an important advantage over factor analysis, or more specifically principal component analysis, in that the latter method is based on the assumption that all of the variation contained in the correlation matrix is worthy of consideration in deriving factor dimensions. Guttman's image analysis, on the other hand, partials out the variation in the raw data which is unique to individual variables, and bases its analysis on the parts of the variance of the variables which can be said to be common or shared with the remaining observable variables (4). In the present study, each type of consciousness was represented by five or more items, and it is thus the common variance rather than the unique variance of the items which is of primary interest. Image analysis is therefore particularly suited to this research problem.

For n observable standardized variables Z_j , Guttman considers for each of these its linear least squares predicted value p_j as determined by the remaining n -tests. Guttman defines the random variable p_j as the image of the test j , while that part of Z_j which is not predictable from a knowledge of the scores on the remaining tests is called the anti-image of test j . Image theory explores the properties of the set of all n images simultaneously. To study simultaneously the interrelationships of the images requires finding the image covariance matrix G . It is from this matrix that the eigen roots and vectors are extracted in image analysis, unlike principal component analysis for which the intercorrelation matrix R is the starting point. However, the G matrix is defined solely in terms of the R matrix. To obtain the image covariance matrix G , the whole correlation matrix R is deflated. The diagonal elements become the squared multiple correlations attained by predicting each variable from all other variables in the set and the off-diagonal elements are also adjusted to reflect only common covariation. The total computational procedure is outlined by Veldman (12).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In converting the R matrix to the G matrix, the amount of common variance of each variable with all other variables is computed. The amount of shared variance for each variable was found to be very low, ranging from 5.72% to 30.14%. The percentage of total variation which was common to the variable was 14.89%. These results suggest that there is very little consistency of response or structure underlying the variables being studied.

Only the first of the 15 factors extracted³ had an eigen value greater than 1.0, and this factor accounted for 49% of the total common variance. The next four factors accounted for 12%, 8%, 6%, and 5% of common variance, while each of the remaining factors accounted for only 3% or less. These results further support the above conclusion that there is little consistency of response which would make variables hang together according to some underlying structure.

In order to give Reich's typology a further chance of receiving some support, the first three factors were rotated to simple structure by a varimax rotation. In view of the low eigen values obtained, this procedure would not normally be regarded as worthwhile; however, it was carried out so that there could be no criticism that the typology was not given every chance of receiving support.

The rotated factors were in fact more sociologically meaningful than the unrotated factors. Even though none of the factor loadings exceeded .45, the factors were nevertheless identified and compared with those predicted by Reich's typology (see Table 1).

The variables loading most heavily on Factor I suggested that this was a cultural radicalism dimension and as such held some resemblance to Reich's Consciousness III. However, it is hardly surprising to isolate a radicalism dimension such as this in a pool of social attitude items (1, 3, 9, 10, 11). To further investigate the correspondence between this factor and Reich's typology, the variables with factor loadings greater than 2.5 or less than -2.5 were labelled according to the type of consciousness which they reflected. It was found that Factor I had three Consciousness III items loading positively, along with one item which, according to Reich, should have loaded negatively on a Consciousness II factor. Loading negatively on Factor I were two Consciousness I items and one Consciousness II item. Factor II on the other hand was difficult to interpret. If anything, it could be described as apathetic acquiescence with the status quo. However, it was noted that a number of markedly skewed variables loaded heavily on this factor. Thus, it may be that this dimension emerged as a result of skewness for some items in the data. By the use of the same criteria as for Factor I it was found that two Consciousness I items and two Consciousness II items loaded positively on Factor II, while another Consciousness II item loaded negatively on this factor.

³ Kaiser (6) has suggested extracting a number of factors equal to half the number of original variables. For the purpose of this study, 15 factors were therefore extracted.

Finally, Factor III was identified as a "sick" society dimension, measuring one's perception of the degree to which society could be described as "sick." Although the four items loading heavily on this factor are all Consciousness III items, this dimension clearly bears little resemblance to Reich's conception of Consciousness III.

The emergence of two independent radicalism dimensions (cultural radicalism and perception of society as sick) bears considerable resemblance to Keniston's (7) distinction between the culturally alienated and the radical activist. Keniston argued that the culturally alienated or hippie types are quite distinct from the radical activist type. The culturally alienated perceives the activist as uptight and uncool, and the activist perceives the culturally alienated as apathetic and immoral. Keniston's typology merits further testing.

D. CONCLUSION

In summary, the analysis showed that there was little structure underlying the variables representative of Reich's three types of consciousness. Moreover, it has also been shown that what little structure there is in the variable bears little resemblance to the structure proposed by Reich.

It could be said in defense of Reich's typology that the way in which its characteristics were operationalized was inappropriate; or alternatively, that Reich's typology cannot be measured by survey techniques. As the items used to operationalize Reich's typology were taken directly from Reich's own writing, the former defense could hardly be put forward. The latter defense seems tantamount to contending the Reich's typology is untestable, since an alternative strategy to a multivariate analysis of survey data for testing such a typology is yet to be put forward.

Thus Reich's theory must be regarded as having limited value, since the structure of consciousness which forms its premise is not to be found in the real world.

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