

**AN APPLICATION OF THE MODEL,
THE IMAGE OF LIMITED GOOD, IN INDUSTRIAL URBAN SOCIETY**

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“In extending the model beyond peasants . . . the problem is to determine in which contexts in which societies the Limited Good model plausibly explains behavior” (Foster, 1972b:59-60).

Anthropologists have long been interested in the structures and integrations of culture, including the unconscious assumptions shared to varying extents by the individual carriers of a culture (Gamst and Norbeck, 1976:119-147). This paper, concerned with the ethnology of modern industry and occupation (cf. Chapple, 1953; Harding, 1955; Keesing, et al., 1957; Goldschmidt, 1968), examines what is considered here as a recurring set of largely unconscious interrelations of cultural elements making for regularities in behavior, including acts and attitudes. The model of cultural integration and unconscious assumption providing the conceptual framework of the paper, is adapted from George M. Foster's ethnological model of dynamic equilibrium, the Image of Limited Good (Foster, 1965; 1966a; 1966b; 1967:11-14, 122-152; 1972a; 1972b; 1973:35-41; 1974; 1975).

The setting of the study is industrial urban United States in one of the oldest of industries—railroading—and especially concerns its employees engaged in the movement of trains. Railroad operating personnel include enginemen (engineers and firemen), trainmen (conductors and brakemen), yardmen (switchmen), and several other occupations with fewer workers than these crafts. Despite its specific focus on railroading, the study has wider applicability to many other occupational settings in these times of increasing limitation upon material good and economic growth and upon the social and psychic good engendered by these. In the final section of this paper we will expand upon the subject of the Image of Limited Good in light of the current realization of limits to economic growth.

I collected ethnographic data on railroaders of six railroad districts, each of which is a defined segment several hundred miles long. I used participant observation in all districts, and I conducted survey research among enginemen in districts which I label “A”, “B”, and “C” in this article. Although the survey data are not presented in tabular form in this paper, I considered them when generalizing on the behaviors reported. The data from the districts are held to apply to nearly all districts in the United States and, by extension, to those in Anglo-Canada.

The behavior and attitudes of railroaders across the continent are highly uniform because:

- 1) the standard code of railroad operating rules, consisting of several hundred detailed regulations, restricts permissible behavior in rail operations;
- 2) the national agreements between management and labor unions similarly limit behavior since they are based on a large number of exacting and complex work rules;
- 3) uniform railroad technology with its highly standardized artifacts, ranging from blue (stop) lanterns and flags (Gamst, 1975a:282-283) to diesel-electric locomotives containing steam boilers (Gamst, 1975b:49), places technical restraints upon possible and permissible behavior;
- 4) innumerable detailed governmental statutes which have evolved with the development of railroading restrict behavior.

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For example, a crew working twelve continuous hours *must* cease all work wherever they may be and whatever they might be doing. The crew is said to “die on the dog (twelve hour) law.” The “dead” crew then waits to be relieved (“dog caught”) by a rested crew (“the dog catcher”). Railroad patterns of action and attitude organized around just this one statute are legion. Because of these regulations, codes, and restrictions (and because of other reasons), railroaders have a very homogeneous subculture in English-speaking North America.

In his exploratory paper concerning “Social Anthropology and Industry,” Felix Keesing calls attention to the importance of the concept of “unconscious patterning” to industrial ethnological study (1957:6):

Day to day behavior, as well as any problem situation, therefore has as its background a larger setting of influences and motivations which are not ordinarily perceived, and of which the individuals or groups concerned may be little aware. What anthropologists often call the covert or implicit levels of behavior, concerned with what the theorist Sapir called its “unconscious patterning” may in a crisis situation be far more important to grasp than the observable, overt, or explicit action.

In expanding on Keesing’s guiding observation, this paper builds on the work of Clyde Kluckhohn (1941, 1943, 1949), whose thinking on the concept is based in part on that of Edward Sapir (1927, 1934a, 1934b; Modjeska, 1968). Culture is considered in the present paper as having a continuum of integration, understandable, by abstraction, as a hierarchy of several levels.

Kluckhohn discusses three levels. On the first level of abstraction, he labels the integration “patterns.” It is studied with “first order” models based upon inductive generalization of behavior, through direct observation of and participation in the “overt” or surface structure of a culture. The “covert” or subsurface integrations of patterns Kluckhohn calls “configurations.” Understanding configurations, largely unconscious to their carriers, involves a second level of abstractions, that is, a “second order” model, or construct is useful in showing relations and covariation among many seemingly inexplicable patterns of culture. A third and, to Kluckhohn, ultimate level of integration, of all of a culture, is labeled an “ethos” (1943), but he questions whether every culture has a comprehensive integration approximating an ethos (1941:128, 1943:221). At times it might be useful, we should note, to postulate integrations of configurations on a third level which is not ultimate, but merely an integration of integrations of surface patterns.

As abstractions, the multi-level integrations of culture have no existential reality of their own. They are social scientific models or metaphors accounting for and ordering, relative to a Western ethnological viewpoint, observable conduct in the empirical world. These multi-level models have value in charting the dynamics of human behavior.

The Image of Limited Good pertains to Kluckhohn’s second level of integration because the model does not describe a particular society or group but represents an ideal type having heuristic, explanatory, and predictive value. For many agrarian cultures and subcultures, the model is useful in the analysis of social leveling mechanisms (cf. Gamst, 1974:53-55). The largely unconscious configuration, or cognitive orientation, depicted by the second order model, the Image of Limited Good, is ontologically distinct from the model but the two are difficult to separate analytically as the former can only be known through the latter. The integration of culture represented by the model, under certain conditions, results in behavior inhibiting the general human tendency to maximize good/satisfaction in life. The kind of good or satisfaction deemed worthwhile, whose maximization is inhibited, varies from culture to culture. (Among railroaders a principal good can be an abstract—the number of miles they are able to run or work in a month.) An Image of Limited Good is an aspect of world view, a largely implicit guide of an individual’s acts and attitudes for his relations with things and events (cf. Kluckhohn, 1949:357-359; Foster, 1966a:385-389; Dundes, 1969:53-54). A carrier of the largely unconscious perceptions constituting the image/view may not be able to describe it (Foster, 1965:297), any more than he is able to describe the integrated regularities in the phonemics or morphology of his speech.

A formal theoretical construct such as that used for the Image of Limited Good asserts the existence of certain things in the theory, not necessarily in the real world (cf. Tyler, 1969:78). The construct is in Stephen Tyler's terms a form of "limit theory," a "nearer approximation" to native cognition, and not a road map for a particular culture. Such limit theories aid in the mapping of "actual" native cognition (Tyler, 1969:77). Therefore certain criticisms of Foster's Image of Limited Good are not valid. These are of the *pars-pro-toto* kind, where the critic disputes several ethnographic data and therefore throws out the hypothesis. This is the recurrent "baby-with-the-bath-water" fallacy, that Paul Bohannan cautions against in his discussion of the work of Whorf, the linguist (1963:45).

Foster (1972b:58) has summarized his Limited Good model:

- 1) In Limited Good societies, including "classic" peasant societies, people share a cognitive orientation in which they perceive their socioeconomic and natural environments to constitute a closed system.
- 2) The resources of the system are seen as insufficient to satisfy each member with all of the things, the "good," that he wants; not only are resources insufficient, but they are finite, static, unexpandable.
- 3) Although people in Limited Good systems believe their "good" is finite, they also know that there is more "good," perhaps in unlimited quantities, beyond the boundaries of their system, hence normally not available to them.
- 4) In a closed, static unexpanding system, as the zero-sum game model predicts, one person's gain with respect to any "good" must by necessity be another's loss.
- 5) To guard against being the loser, people in Limited Good societies opt for an egalitarian, shared-poverty, equilibrium, status quo style of life, in which no one can be permitted major progress with respect to any "good." Limited Good behavior is calculated to maintain the status quo. . . .

In this paper, the Image of Limited Good as a model on Kluckhohn's second level is applied to the study of industrial urban subcultures. In the United States, middle-class social scientists ordinarily view our society as a land of plenty, opportunity, and unlimited good with virtually no limits to economic growth. In the past, the view of unlimited good has not applied to all sectors of our society and may not so apply in the future. In the United States and in other societies, Limited-Good behaviour is always present to some extent. It exists along a continuum between the poles of viewpoints more limited and less limited (cf. Foster, 1972b:59), depending upon the circumstances in the encompassing socioeconomic system or subsystem.

In Yankee society (the largest "nation" within the overall plural society of the United States), various unconscious assumptions representative of the Image are shared to differing extents by the carriers of particular Yankee subcultures, such as that to the railroaders. Vitalization of the configuration to a position of dominance takes place under conditions of at least either relative or perceived economic deprivation, within an economic system perceived as relatively closed. For at least five decades among railroaders, approximations of zero-sum economic conditions have existed. Within their all-embracing occupational world, many forms of good (that is, economic, social, and psychic) are more than limited; they are diminishing as opportunity and gratification of employment steadily decline. For railroaders, the Image of Limited Good means that they see much of the total good of their occupational and related nonoccupational world as being limited. Though they do not view all good things in life as being limited, they hold that view for good within or derived from occupation.

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF RAILROADING

The Limited, actually diminishing, Good in railroading has two fundamental sources. The first may be noted briefly; the other is varied and not generally known, and thus must be explained more fully. The first source is the change from railways to airways, waterways, highways, and pipelines. Since 1947, United States railroads have seen an 80 percent decline in passenger miles. In the same period, freight ton-miles increased only 30 percent despite a 175 percent increase in the Gross National Product. Similar declines are reported for Canada. In both countries the decline began right after World War I.

The second source of diminishing good, one readily talked about by the railroader, is changes brought about by automation of productive technique and rationalization of work organization. The changes are numerous and they accelerated after World War II following the radical change in energy conversion for railroad motive power. Because the original basic tool of railroading, the steam locomotive (Gamst, 1975a:279-280), had come to its technological limits of size and power, an improved mechanical means to harness and use energy, the diesel-electric locomotive, was developed (cf. White, 1949:375). The replacement of the external combustion steam engine by the internal combustion diesel engine resulted in more work being performed with lessening numbers of railroaders, both operating and nonoperating (those that provide maintenance and other support services) (Cottrell, 1951). Today, after years of diesel evolution, the engine crew of a diesel freight train, consisting of one engineer, often does the work formerly requiring two to four engine crews, each consisting of an engineer and fireman, on steam freight trains. Diesel locomotives, today, continue their past two decades of increase in their power and efficiency (Anon., 1975a), allowing further growth in productivity and eliminating operating and nonoperating jobs. In the rest of this paper, only operating personnel will be considered.

Other innovations in operation increased personnel productivity. Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) allows one employee—the train dispatcher—to direct all movements on a main line from an electronic console which shows the location of all trains and also controls track switches and wayside block signals. Trains no longer wait a long time in sidings for other trains to pass them. The dispatcher, in his distant office at his CTC console, signals and switches one train into a siding only minutes before another is due to pass it at that point. Last minute schedule changes can be made, allowing efficient movement of trains and saving of time and labor. (The latest CTC consoles do not have push buttons as the older ones do; instead a computer directs movement of trains, throwing switches and changing signals along their routes.) CTC eliminated large numbers of telegraph operator-agents at wayside depots. Before CTC, these operating employees received telegraphic train orders governing train movements from the dispatcher, transcribed them on forms, and gave them to train crews enroute.

By radio, supervisors are in constant communication with crews of trains and switch locomotives to regulate and allocate work without wasted effort or duplication of motion. An electronic scanner, which reads a rectangular pattern of colored stripes unique for every piece of rolling stock, eliminates untold hours of checking car numbers on handwritten lists and on car sides for location of a particular "load" or "empty."

The ever-growing use of long, "piggyback" flat cars to carry goods in highway trailers and containers instead of in conventional box cars has eliminated many railroaders' jobs. Customarily, when a freight train arrives at its destination, a yard locomotive switches its box cars and other freight cars into various classification tracks, each holding cars for a certain industrial area or for transfer to a local railroad. From the classification tracks, transfer locomotives haul cars to local "foreign" railroads and industrial switch locomotives pull cars to satellite yards in industrial areas. In a satellite yard, the cars are again switched one or more times for "spotting" at their unloading and loading places next to a factory, warehouse, or other site. Later, a switch engine "pulls" empties and recently loaded cars to make up its train in the satellite yard and then hauls them to a receiving track in the main yard. There, a yard engine will sort out this string of cars into classification tracks for outbound trains to various destinations, car repairs, holding, or hauling to still other industrial areas and other local railroads. *All* switching and hauling is eliminated in the case of a train of piggyback cars. Instead, the incoming freight train is stopped by its road crew on a long receiving track straddled by a huge crane that lifts the highway trailers and containers off the flat cars. Averaging a few minutes per car, all loading and unloading is done by the crane operator and truck drivers without the use of any operating employees in the yard.

In large railroad terminals most of the cars are switched and classified in a "hump," or "retarder," yard. Previously, cars were switched in "flat yards" by several small yard locomotives, each having a five- or six-man crew, most of whom were switchmen. Additionally, many "car riders," other switchmen not in the crew, would assist in relaying hand signals, in throwing switches into the many classification tracks, and in riding and hand braking cars to a gentle (or not so gentle) coupling with cars already in a track. In the hump yard, one powerful locomotive, usually manned by one engineer and two switchmen, replaces all of the conventional

yard engines, their crews, and car riders. One crew member runs the locomotive, a second, on the ground, uncouples the appropriate cars as they are shoved in a mile-long string over the crest of a man-made hill, or hump, and fed by gravity into a system of automatic, track-mounted retarders which control car speed. In a tower next to the hump, the third crew member operates a computer console into which has been fed a list of car numbers and track designations of these numbers. Once the cars are uncoupled on the crest of the hump, a computer does the work of all of the other railroaders formerly employed. Switches are thrown automatically so that a car reaches its proper track and is retarded to a slow coupling with another car in the track.

Apart from hump yard operations, the labor saved by automation has eliminated the third and, where used, the fourth trainman or yardman on many crews. And the second engineman, the locomotive fireman-helper, is now phased out on most crews.

In recent years, the nearly complete termination of intercity passenger service—except in the New York-Washington corridor—has drastically curtailed opportunities of employment for railroaders. These include operating personnel who switch passenger trains in "coach yards," haul these trains to the depot, and take them on their runs to distant cities. Most intercity passenger runs were considered choice jobs by operating railroaders. For these employees, not just any but many better positions disappeared.

The "pruning of branch lines," unprofitable because of light freight traffic, often has a doubly negative effect on occupational good. Not only are work positions abolished with the abandonment of a branch, but also some of these jobs are considered highly desirable. An engineer on a western railroad, who "hired out" in the Depression, worked for decades until in the late 1960's he finally was able to bid upon and receive the much desired Paradise Local. He was on this run for a little over a year when the Paradise Branch was abandoned. "I waited over 30 years to hold the Paradise," he lamented, "and then they pulled it off."

By 1977, business atrophy and extensive automation and rationalization of work, had reduced United States railroad personnel by one-half (501,389) of the employees of 1955 (1,058,216) and less than one-third that of 1929 (1,660,850) (AAR, 1978:57). (In 1920, an all-time high of 2,076,000 railroaders were employed [Uhl, 1954:91].) Increase in productivity of railroaders since the 1930's has been twice that of the national average for nonagricultural workers. *Time* magazine, usually critical over the years of what it saw as the great problem of railroad featherbedding, has recognized that railroaders are highly productive: "Railroading, of all industries, recorded a sharp productivity gain [from 1960-1970], despite the constant complaint of its executives that they are being featherbedded into bankruptcy" (Anon., 1972a:78). High rates of productivity applied to diminishing percentages of railroad business decrease occupational good. *In railroading, an inverse relationship generally exists between intensity or productivity of work performed and increase of good.*

The elimination of most intercity passenger trains in recent years has also eliminated a special kind of economic and social good of railroaders—the trip pass providing free transportation for the employee and his family. Pass rights have long been an integral part of the wages of railroaders and, in the past, have been included by management in calculations of total remuneration of employees. Now this good has been revoked without any compensation for most railroaders.

Dislocations have resulted for some railroaders as branch lines have been abandoned, some small terminals have been closed, and large terminals have been reduced in size and work force. In order to work in an available railroad position, some workers are forced to sell their homes of many years (often at a financial loss), uproot themselves from their old home town, and relocate in another area (cf. Cottrell, 1951, 1972). House and home—fundamental sources of economic, social, and psychic good to railroaders—become insecure.

The demise of the once renowned Railway Express Agency appears in railroaders' conversation. Of the more than 75,000 employees of "the Express" in 1944, not one remained at the end of 1975, when the firm went bankrupt after a long decline. The 136-year-old agency, whose green equipment was once ubiquitous, also indirectly employed many thousands of operating railroaders. They operated trains which included express cars, manned the cars, and served as express agents in numerous railroad depots across the continent. Railroaders reason that if a formerly solid firm such as the Express could disappear, so might other parts of the rail freight business, along with their opportunities for work.

Even future limitations of good are discussed by operating railroaders. The ultimate threat to job security is the completely automatic train. The first significant experiment involving running a heavy freight train on an automated railroad without a crew, on the Black Mesa mining line, ended in failure (Anon. 1975b). However, it may only be a matter of time until the supporting technologies are perfected so such trains can be used, in some applications. Although the potential has not been realized, it hangs as a disturbing threat in the world of railroaders.

Security beyond the job, in retirement, is threatened by the great decrease in the number of working railroaders. With Railroad Retirement taxes being paid by an ever-decreasing number of workers, the Railroad Retirement System may not remain solvent. The system is a federal program independent of the Social Security Administration. The problem remains even though the diminished railroad retirement reserves were recently augmented with federal funds. It is not certain that retired railroaders will continue to receive pensions at a rate considerably higher than Social Security payments. (Higher retirement benefits for railroaders reflect the fact that Railroad Retirement taxes have always been higher than those of the Social Security System.) If the ratio of retired to employed railroaders had remained stable, possibly the Railroad Retirement System's deficit would never need to be reckoned with because it could be transferred from one generation to the next. However, the present period of large numbers of retirements of the many men who hired out in the post-Depression rail boom of World War II, with constantly lessening numbers of workers to cover the costs of these retirements, entirely precludes this possibility. Federal general revenues cannot be relied upon to bail out the Railroad Retirement System in the future because of the stark realities of mounting fiscal pressures on the revenues and the heretofore, but no longer, stable Social Security System (Shore, 1975; Koretz, 1978).

Runs, or trips, are ranked by railroaders from least to most desirable. Access to desirable runs is an important prerogative determined by a man's seniority date. With the right place on the seniority list, one may receive greater than average, yet publicly acceptable, amounts of occupational good. The greater good is acquired according to the rules of the "game of work" and is held only during certain periods of a career. What may be considered as reduced *primary good* of railroaders includes their prerogatives of seniority and the number of miles they collectively run each month, and hence, the amount of dollars they collectively earn. "Collectively" means that a given amount of mileage exists to be worked each month and that this mileage is divided among railroaders according to rules of the contract between their craft union and railroad management. Formerly, good increased generally and predictably as the railroader climbed the rungs of the ladder of seniority to more desirable jobs. Today, with the reduced number of jobs, it is said, "the old timers take their seniority with them when they retire." A man now often works a decade with little advancement to a more desirable run. Some men with years of service do not have enough seniority to work during recessions or other reductions in railroad business. Desirable runs provide what might be considered as *secondary good*, also being reduced, including prestige, power, and leisure. (Desirable runs, as on passenger trains, usually cover the miles at high speed, require greater skill and responsibility, and result in greater prestige, and bring higher pay. A man who always works in a terminal area may be called a "yard bird," one who works outside the yard, a "fast runner.") Reduction of the secondary goods, in turn, engenders reductions of *tertiary good*, including material comforts, the pleasure of conspicuous consumption before neighbors and friends, and high self-regard. A sense of pride, manliness, achievement and, most importantly, security are among the railroader's diminishing social and psychic goods. He must face the reality of an ever-shrinking pie to be divided among all.

RAILROADING AND LIMITED GOOD BEHAVIOR

An important part of the model, the Image of Limited Good, is consideration, for purposes of analysis of the society under study as a closed system (Foster, 1965:296). Not only is railroading so *considered* in this paper, it *is* to a very large extent a closed system according to the average railroader. Economically, the railroader usually cannot resign from his job and sever his railroading ties. For example, the average engineer, on typical districts A and C, has 28 years of service with superspecialized skills of railroad operations; on typical district B it is 30 years. Their skills are useless outside railroading, and the advanced age of the

enginemen makes it unlikely that they can apprentice themselves at beginning wages and security in another industry (cf. Cottrell, 1951:361). Socially, the railroader usually cannot even remove himself from the milieu of railroading in which he must labor. Many work six or seven days a week or are on constant standby, keeping within earshot of a telephone which calls them to work at any hour. The work often requires off-duty waiting for the large part of a day or more at a distant terminal, where time is spent with other railroaders. Thus, the irregular nature of his job and the long time spent in the milieu of railroading separates a railroader from life in the greater society (Cottrell, 1939; Gamst, in press). His life, therefore, incorporates patterns and symbols of culture not always, or not entirely, shared by members of the greater Yankee society.

A socioeconomic subsystem, such as that of the railroaders, does not have to be absolutely closed for unconscious assumptions depicted by the model, the Image of Limited Good, to become vitalized. A degree of closure, as in the case of the operating railroaders, is a sufficient condition. The existence of such an economic subsystem in a larger, more open system does not make inoperative or dormant the unconscious Limited-Good assumptions of those interacting within the subsystem. Knowledge of less limited or even expanding good in the larger economic system does not negate the unconscious assumptions, if individuals in the subsystem cannot, or think they cannot, effectively participate in the larger system.

In accord with Foster's model, it may be inferred that railroaders share a fundamental outlook, manifested covertly and overtly, describable as follows. Since the job-related material and nonmaterial good of every railroader is diminishing and the system in effect closed, the individual can increase his good within the system only at the expense of other railroaders, especially those in the same craft (engine service, train service, yard service, and so forth). We should, therefore, expect to find many integrations of acts and attitudes in the railroaders' occupational world which can be viewed as guided by it. In such a world, rational behavior means the railroaders maximize their security and well-being by maintaining relative positions in the normal state of affairs. As noted by Foster, "People who see themselves in 'threatened' circumstances, which the Image of Limited Good implies, react normally in one of two ways: maximum cooperation . . . , placing sanctions against individualism; or extreme individualism" (1965:301). Railroaders, and most likely many other industrial urbanities, choose the first alternative.

To maintain the socioeconomic status quo, railroaders resist activities that threaten the good. They preserve their all-embracing world of railroading. Threatening activities may be initiated by fellow railroaders (individually or in groups), by the railroad company, more rarely by another business firm or by government, and still less commonly by a railroad union. The general Limited-Good behavior, or reaction, manifests itself through trade unions wielding formal negative sanctions against some forms of threatening activities and through cliques and individuals (in the craft-group organization of the men) wielding informal negative sanctions against a wider range of the activities.

The Limited-Good behavior attempts to minimize threats to good, to level good unjustly taken from all, and to vent tensions created in part by the threats. A few Limited-Good reactions are purely tension reducing, as, for example, the case presented later in this paper of a verbal attack on railroad management before an audience consisting solely of fellow railroaders. However, all Limited-Good reactions serve this function to some degree. A railroader believes it is in his power to counter threats to his occupational good, and in taking action his personal tensions are reduced. He feels that he has some means of safeguarding his interests in an impersonal industrial world. Even if the action is not entirely effective, he has "done something" to protect his well-being. Reactions against fellow workers differ from reactions against the agencies mentioned above. The former are part of normal everyday life whereas the latter are more or less common depending on the circumstances outside of the railroaders' craft groups.

Railroaders may be usefully viewed as interacting within at least three levels of a social system. The *overall level* is that of the societal system of the United States, whose citizenry uses the railroads for transport and whose governmental agencies regulate the railroad companies and the various trade union organizations of their workers. On the *intermediate level* is found a particular railroad company (or carrier) and the union organizations related to it. Normally a national railway trade union consists of territorial units whose membership is restricted to a given carrier and whose officers bargain with that carrier, when not superseded by national officers. On a *lower level* is the railroad division, the standard operating district of a carrier. The

division has one or more terminals, with yards, shops and other facilities, where railroaders are formally organized into trade union locals and informally organized into loosely structured craft groups, such as "trainmen," "yardmen," "enginemen," and so forth.

Within craft groups of a particular division, a cultural configuration approximating that depicted by the model of the Image of Limited Good may be considered as engendering certain behaviors, many of which could be viewed as socially disruptive from certain vantage points within the overall societal structure. According to circumstances, the vantage points might be those of government regulators, the public, railroad managers on various levels, and railroaders themselves. In functionalist analysis, the degree of eufunction or dysfunction of a behavior should be assessed relative not to just one viewpoint, but relative to all the viewpoints of those of varying statuses who encounter the pattern.

LIMITED GOOD BEHAVIOR AMONG RAILROADERS

Craft-group *mores* emphasize cooperation, the sharing of good, and protection by what may be seen as Limited-Good safeguards. Though adherence to the mores is fundamental to an individual's enculturation for ideal conduct among fellow railroaders, sharing is often countered because of the human tendency to maximize good. In railroading one can endanger the common good without being observed and without much chance of being caught. Railroaders work in mobile crews of a few men, unsupervised by the craft group or management. The men in a crew cannot ordinarily serve as behavioral watchdogs for one another, not only because of the possibility of collusion but because of the highly technical nature of railroad operations. For example, an engineer could operate his equipment so that an hour is required for a movement that would ordinarily take ten minutes. Furthermore, enginemen register on and off duty separately from fellow crew members and often at a time unique to a particular run.

In engine service (and in other operating crafts) a "sharpshooter," or "sharpie," takes good not rightfully his own at the expense of others in the craft group. A common "sharp" practice is studying the order of assignments coming up for the next day or two. The sharpie marks on or off the rotating "extra" list (of men who protect unfilled and extra jobs) so that he misses a poor run (a low-paying midnight switch engine in a busy yard) and receives a choice one (a high-paying, long-distance freight train). He may even "throw away" (not claim) a few minutes of overtime, or he may "steal" a few minutes so that he can return to the extra list in an opportune position. He may "sharpshoot" on the job by killing time so that his locomotive ties up at the roundhouse after the others on his shift, thereby missing a series of less desirable jobs. A sharpshooter claims being ill when called for a highly undesirable assignment, such as a week on a switch locomotive at a distant, isolated point and recovers just in time to catch a preferred run. Many other sharpshooting maneuvers exist including the blatant act of registering less than one's cumulative mileage. In this way the sharpshooter can make an extra run within the month rather than having to "lay off" the working list because his designated amount of monthly miles has been completed.

Being "hungry for miles" and "seniority hungry" are less acquisitive kinds of behavior; nevertheless, they threaten the good of all. In the former, a man is reputed never to mark off his job voluntarily to have a day off. He is seen as rapacious and as a potential threat to all. This is because he might go beyond "never leaving anything for men on the bottom of the seniority list" and engage in more proscribed sharp practice. In the latter of the two "hungry" behaviors, the names and dates of employment of his "brothers" on the seniority list are memorized and recounted with undue zeal in conversation about advancement of seniority. As soon as a man retires, dies, is disabled, or resigns, his name is crossed off the list by a "hungry" person, sometimes a few days in advance of the departure. Such behavior is seen as vulturous and uncooperative. In discussing relative positions of seniority, one must never appear hungry. Certainly, one must never get carried away to the point where he uses his pen to correct the seniority list. An engineer, about to resign after seventeen years of service, in order to enter business for himself, marked off the working list for a few weeks to arrange his new situation. Returning to work for the final few days, he found his name already crossed off the seniority list of some 500 names. "I'm not even gone yet and some seniority-hungry bastard has crossed out my name," he stormed. As usual, the culprit was never discovered.

Good-threatening behavior ranges from receiving favors from management, and thus being called a "favorite" or a similar term of mild derision, to the abhorred violation of a picket line and thereby becoming a "scab." Those who want to produce more work than is normal for a job, and thus unnecessarily diminish the total work available, are called "wormy." A man "too wormy to sit still for a minute," will inquire about the next switching assignment before he finishes his present one. One who informs company officers of infractions of operating rules or of malingering is a "stool pigeon." Generally, a railroader who holds the carrier in too high a regard is a "company man." Such a person is thought to be able to change from a latent to an actual threat to the status quo at any time. Favorites, scabs, stool pigeons, and those who are wormy threaten good by trying to advance or satisfy themselves at the expense of all. Some behaviors related to threatening or appropriating good are not easily categorized and some have no native labels.

Limited-Good reactions vary according to the act that menaces the status quo. A sharpshooter caught not registering all of his earned miles receives, among other things, formal sanctions from the trade union, that is, restrictions on the number of miles that he may earn. Thus, at times, gains of good acquired from sharpshooting are leveled and returned to the common pool of mileage to be shared by all. Other formal union sanctions include various local rules obviating particular kinds of sharpshooting of an easily controlled nature. Informal reaction may be an individual or group act, for example, ridicule of a man who forgets to register his miles promptly. An individual or group may outmaneuver a sharpshooter and thus foil his plan. One engineer explained to others in the locker room about someone suspected of sharp practices: "So there I had the son of a bitch blocked with a cut of a hundred cars so that he like to have never gotten out. He tied up over an hour late and caught himself a nice midnight goat on the shotgun lead [locomotive on the heavy switching track]. He was so mad that he was fit to be tied."

Individual or collective informal sanctions may be mild reprimands in the guise of jest. Stronger reprimands of moderate to severe derision and characterization are given to those blatantly or repeatedly sharpshooting and to the "scabby" and "wormy." Many acts, which threaten or diminish good have additional, highly derogatory, sanctionative characterization. Though this characterizing may not "break anyone's bones," it does "hurt" psychically and undermine social status with shame, ridicule, and ostracism in the closed world of railroading. The labels are used with a person's name as terms of address and reference, seen chalked on the sides of box cars, and heard long after a person's death or retirement. "It was about forty years ago and Scabby Jones was firing for old iron-hand Petersen."

Once a severely sanctionative label is applied, it becomes a weapon to be unleashed by anyone at any time, under the most unanticipated circumstance. A railroader marked for life by severe Limited-Good sanctions might find an article about himself from a local newspaper, concerning one of his leisure time activities, on the bulletin board of the register room blue-penciled with comments on his "low" character. He cannot ever make a *faux pas* on the job without having others comment on the relation of the blunder to his character. "What would you expect from a stool pigeon like Harris?"

Another important informal collective behavior descriptive of Limited Good is "sandhouse gossip," or "sandhousing." The gossip has corrective intent and serves to unnerve those who have transgressed and those who might. Sandhousing is said to take place at the sandhouse where locomotives are waiting to take on sand; however, it can take place anywhere, in a locomotive cab, a switchtender's shanty, or a local bar, and can become increasingly malicious to fit the degree of flagrant abuse of the norms.

Limited Good acts of leveling of excess good may also be directed by the craft group at some members perceived to be commanding more than their fair share of choice runs or high mileage assignments or both, that is threatening the status quo. This was the case at the Central and Western Railway (C&W), with regard to the desirable jobs of passenger firemen. All engine service employees are paid by the mile at rates of pay increasing as the weight on the powered wheels of the locomotive increases. On the C&W, heavy 165-ton locomotive units in multiples of three or four were used in passenger service over long distances from the two terminals, Jefferson and Centralia. In such service a man is contractually and traditionally allowed to earn about 20 to 25 percent more miles than in other classes of service and these high-paying, preferred runs were allocated to the "oldest" engineers who could hold them. "Oldest" means those at the top of the joint firemen-engineers' seniority list. The firemen's allocation was more complex. These employees assist the

engineer and train to acquire and perfect engineer's skills. On most carriers across the country, men on the better fireman positions are already promoted to engineer but are "cut back firing" and work as firemen owing to lack of sufficient business to give them employment in the lowest ranks of engineer jobs. Such jobs, usually midnight yard switchers, pay less than passenger service and require more hours of work per month. Many better fireman runs were held by cut-back engineers at Jefferson, but none were so manned at Centralia at the time of the problem.

The complex letter of the almost 200-page labor contract for firemen says that, after passing qualifying examinations, firemen shall be eligible to become engineers, but the actual promotion and establishment of an engineer's seniority date begins with the first service as engineer. It also says that no cut-back engineer will be permitted to hold a run as fireman from a terminal on a seniority district while a more junior engineer is working on the engineer's extra list or holding an assignment as engineer at such a terminal. Further, engineers will be required to fill all positions of engineers on any seniority district before firemen are promoted on the district.

Engine service employees on the Jefferson-Centralia seniority district tended to have far greater seniority at the former terminal than at the latter. It is said that those with greater seniority concentrated at Jefferson to escape the scores of yard engines found in the metropolis of Centralia. As the national economy boomed after a recession, traffic increased greatly and many more engineers were needed at Centralia. In accord with the contract, instead of promoting firemen in Centralia up from passenger service to the lowest engineer position, those engineers in Jefferson who had been cut-back to passenger firemen were forced, at their own expense, to stay in motels of Centralia and to work as engineers. (Interestingly, these men had such high seniority that at Centralia they were able to hold yard engineer jobs more preferred than those on night yard switchers.) As business continued to increase, more Jefferson men were forced away from home and regular run, and junior Centralia engineers who had long been waiting to move up from a midnight switch engine to better jobs were blocked by the senior Jackson men, working during daylight hours.

The chief beneficiaries of the strange turn of contractual events were the Centralia passenger firemen. When business increased, they did not move up as was customary and take their fair share of midnight switch engines, preferring instead to hold their prized jobs. As a result, the other engine service employees united and sought the aid of the carrier to redress the situation without violating the labor contract. Ordinarily, any railroader may "lay off" his job for rest or other reason so long as sufficient men are on the extra list to protect all unmanned jobs. By such practice, the carrier insures a smooth flow of transportation to the public. In this case, the carrier permitted Centralia engineers to lay off by the score. The carrier then forced all the remaining promoted Jefferson firemen to Centralia to protect the temporarily unmanned jobs. As these men could not satisfy the artificially increasing demand to protect assignments, the passenger firemen at Centralia were required to take examinations for promotion and work as engineers. By so doing they eliminated the need for Jefferson men to work at Centralia and generally allowed the slow movement of Centralia men through the traditional progression of increasingly better engineers' runs as seniority and time progressed. The carrier gained by not having to pay for moving men continually between Jefferson and Centralia at a special "deadheading" rate.

The alliance between carrier and craft group and its representative trade union is one of many examples of correcting imbalances in a situation of declining occupational good. With passenger runs disappearing and other runs diminishing in general, it was especially necessary that one part of the craft group not monopolize prized jobs and not disrupt the equilibrium of normal allocation of jobs throughout the seniority district. Yet the temporary alliance between the C&W and the craft group and its union did not negate continued Limited-Good reactions against the carrier by individuals and by the group.

LIMITED GOOD BEHAVIOR VIS-A-VIS THE CARRIERS

Reactions against the carriers *could* be seen as part of normal adversary relations between management and labor. However, only those cases which relate directly to countering the diminution of occupational good were considered in the present application of the Limited-Good hypothesis. The men only hold the carriers

responsible for the automation and rationalization leading to reduction of opportunity at work, but they think diminishing good is in part caused by ineffective company action in gaining and holding business, a view shared by many professional economic and business analysts.

One of many Limited-Good forms of individual action against a carrier occurs when managers of factories and warehouses served by an industrial switcher crew complain to the crew about not receiving prompt service. A crew member tells the managers about the reduction in numbers of locomotives in switching service and explains that a complaint cannot be corrected by talking to divisional railroad officers, but only by telephoning the national headquarters of the railroad. Such directing of customers complaints is an attempt to provoke the wrath of higher management, to bring about what the men see as a retribution on the heads of the immediate good-diminishing superiors of the railroaders and to help halt future reductions in the number of jobs. When detected, divisional officers of the carrier retaliate against such or similar Limited-Good behavior. The officers scrutinize the crew member in question on the job until an observation is made of a violation of one of the several hundred railroad operating rules. The crew member is then suspended from service for a period from several months to over a year, and equilibrium is protected in the divisional managerial system.

Railroaders have a fatalistic view regarding the ability of management to suspend them. "When they want to get the jobs of any one [of us], they just have to lay in the weeds long enough watching us and they'll get us sooner or later." Most operating employees protect themselves against this eventuality with "job insurance," actually salary insurance, purchased from a number of insurance companies specializing in serving this need. The percentages of enginemen on districts A, B, and C carrying job insurance seem extraordinarily high: District A, 94.5%; District B, 95.2%; District C, 92.7%; yet it is quite normal. After events that jeopardize their continued employment—for example, running past a red flare placed on a track by an officer during an "efficiency test"—the men allay anxiety by joking about being "paid up" on their premiums for job insurance. While suspended under protective job insurance, a railroader often tries to show indifference to the power of the carrier over his well-being. As a freight engineer recently wrote me, "I'm so busy with other activities that I don't know when I'll find time to go back to work." The institution of job insurance and the lore associated with it may be seen as another manifestation of Limited-Good behavior, of maintaining the status quo in an industry that does not engender occupational security, and which is noted for management having authoritarian nineteenth-century characteristics.

Labor-saving devices or practices introduced by the carrier or by its local managers may evoke Limited-Good behaviors. A simple example of reacting against a job-threatening device concerns the two-way radio, now installed on almost all locomotives. A crew member may not answer a radio call from a yardmaster assigning more work or checking on progress of current work. The crew member's excuse for frustrating the efforts of the yardmaster may be: "I was busy," or "I couldn't hear the radio above the roar of the engine." A sense of some personal control over further limitation of good is thus realized and verbalized by the railroader.

In attempts to frustrate labor-saving practices railroaders might try to threaten a local manager. This must be done according to Limited-Good patterns so that no insubordination can be implied. The men must act in a way which threatens to have the manager "dehorned," that is, reduced back to the ranks of the ordinary workers. At times a yardmaster will attempt to save labor and time by ordering a "blind shove" of freight cars. A crew is told, for example, to push a string of 75 cars with their locomotive into an empty track with a capacity of 120. According to the carriers' uniform operating rules, "Blind shoves must not be made on any track." This means that a switchman must ride the lead car and others must pass signals back to the engineer. If the engineer and each man in the chain of signal passers does not have the next man in sight, the operation must stop until communication is reestablished. In "shoving blind," no switchmen are on the string of 75 cars going around the many turns in the yard tracks and an accident could occur, cars could run into other equipment. As part of the reaction, the engineer might widen on the throttle and blindly shove the cars at more than the modest speed necessary for the movement, while the switchmen on the crew sit in the cab staring into space. In the yard, air brakes are normally operative on the yard locomotives but not on freight cars being switched. If the yardmaster "loses his nerve," he might not repeat the practice and equilibrium, from the crew members' viewpoint, would be restored.

Many times the reaction against the carrier is one of verbal rebellion, purely a tension reducer, in the locker room or other places of informal gathering. "If I saw a set of those new [powerful diesel] units rolling off the end of a pier, I wouldn't lift a finger to stop 'em." In such cases no overt action need be taken and a sense of personal satisfaction is achieved against the carrier, which is thought not to care about its employees or its traffic.

Collective reaction by the craft group against the carrier for the purpose of maintaining the occupational status quo may be in conjunction with the union or apart from it. At a terminal of a larger railroad, the switchmen marked off their assignments "because of illness" on one occasion and, on a second occasion, the enginemen and switchmen observed the letter of the hundreds of operating rules to the point of achieving a near-paralyzing of operations. Both actions had the blessings of the respective unions and were partially successful in achieving certain circumscribed goals of preserving working conditions.

On yet another occasion, the engineers' craft group, nominally supervised by their union local, staged a truly paralyzing observance of operating rules, but they did not have the consent of the national union. In a time of steadily declining work, this reaction of the craft group was so heated that demands were made to the carrier to replace several of its divisional officers, who had persistently threatened the job security of the craft group members. The carrier threatened to obtain a court injunction, with the intent of having the local union leaders jailed if what the carrier saw as an illegal slowdown was not ended. The leaders of the men countered that they were merely obeying fully the carrier's operating rules. The impasse was broken when subpoenas were served requiring the men to end their job action. United States marshalls, accompanied by a company officer who identified men by name, handed each engineer a subpoena after asking him, "Are you George Johnson?" or whatever his name might be. On orders from their national office, the local union leaders locked themselves in a hotel room while the carrier filed a suit of several million dollars against them. A compromise between the national union and the carrier ended the suit and work returned to normal. No immediate results were realized from the reaction by the men.

When management encounters stiff opposition from railroaders and their national unions to attempts at further rationalization of work, the carriers sometimes seek aid from the overall societal system of the United States. In its attempts to increase productivity of railroaders, management tries to enlist the support of government regulators and the opinion of the public by charging featherbedding on the part of employees. Several massive antif Featherbedding campaigns have been mounted by the carriers nationally and in many of the states.

The campaigns are strongly and sometimes bitterly resented by railroaders who feel they have a substantial record of increasing productivity in an all-weather, around-the-clock occupation which is highly dangerous. "The railroads say we are featherbedders," said one craft group leader with indignation, "and the public believes them. People should be out here with us, working in all kinds of weather at any time of day and never knowing when they'll cash in their chips [be killed]." It is true that a man may slip under the wheels of a moving box car, or a crew on a locomotive might hit a truck with a dangerous load at any time. An accident report of the National Transportation Safety Board regarding a train hitting a gasoline truck epitomizes the everpresent danger in railroad work:

The cause of fatalities to engine crewmembers and the official was the entrance of burning gasoline into the control compartment and engine compartments which burned the occupants of the control compartment, made escape into the engine compartment useless, and forced the occupants to jump from the control compartment while the train was still moving at a speed too high to insure survival (NTSB, 1971:18).

Occupational safety, always a problem in railroading, is decreasing along with other kinds of occupational good. As noted by the National Transportation Safety Board in an annual report to Congress, "While safety improved dramatically on America's relatively modern highways, it worsened significantly for the third successive year in an older mode—railroads" (NTSB, 1975:4). In another annual report the Board said: "Problems with the nation's railroad system have promoted a continuing series of safety recommendations from the Board. Most of the recommendations have centered on derailments—there were 7,868 in 1977—track standards

and hazardous materials" (NTSB, 1978:9). The carrier's complaint of featherbedding in an industry with difficult and sometimes dangerous working conditions and with marked gains in productivity angers the men. The featherbedding campaigns heighten railroaders' anxieties concerning opportunities for work, and anxieties and resentment fuel Limited-Good reactions to management.

The information on behavior among railroaders presented here as indicative of a cultural configuration approximating that modeled by Foster's Image of Limited Good is part of a very much larger body of data. All of the data point to structural regularities in the occupational subculture of American railroading. The Limited-Good behaviors described result more from learned self-perpetuating integrations of culture than from similar individual responses to external conditions of relative deprivation. Some behavior is learned formally, other informally or by habituation. The Limited-Good behavior is part of enculturation and passed from generation to generation. It is not merely a number of similar idiosyncratic responses to a common situation. The behavior might seem "rash" or "illogical" to an outsider, but it is "rational" and "sane" with reference to the cognitive orientation modeled by the Image of Limited Good. Consequently, the behavior is normative for the railroader and helps him to achieve at least a cognitive order in his world.

IMPLICATIONS: THE FUTURE OF U.S. SOCIETY IN AN ERA OF LIMITED ECONOMIC GROWTH

We now turn to the broad question: What is the value of examining the ethnological model of the Image of Limited Good in the United States, the most affluent of the industrial societies? The answer may be called a "Jeremian ethnological" consideration (Gamst, 1974:70-71) of the restrictive ecological and economic realities of the remainder of the century, a period in which the United States may experience "the limits of growth." Both the ecological and economic limits, or restrictions, are usefully viewed as being ultimately related and thermodynamic in nature (White, 1949:363-393; Georgescu-Roegen, 1971, 1975; Adams, 1975:109-153). The Limited-Good model, and its variations, should prove useful in understanding behavior and attitudes as we react and adjust to the end of the era of perceived unlimited good.

Operating railroaders by no means exist below or even near the poverty level. However, they do exhibit cognitive characteristics and behavioral patterns associated with long-term limitation of good in their comparatively closed socioeconomic system and explainable with the Limited-Good model. (Other segments of our society probably have similar world view, especially those below the poverty level.) As more sectors of United States society experience similar long-term limitations of good, we should expect increasing incidence of such reactions. This would be especially so where an occupational or other group has some closure in relation to the overall societal system. If large-scale stabilization of our economy occurs and its significant expansion comes to an end, partial closure of a societal unit from the overall societal system might not be necessary to engender a widespread cultural configuration explainable by the Limited-Good model. As we shall note, pressures toward redistribution of income in an increasingly static economy could also contribute to a wide-spread Image of Limited Good.

In the 1970's the United States and other industrial societies have reached the beginning of the end of a century-long era of rapid industrial and demographic growth based upon inexpensive energy, abundant raw materials, and, consequently, relatively inexpensive goods and services available in ever-increasing amounts. The era of rapid industrial growth is and will be unique in cultural evolution because it is energized by large-scale, extravagant consumption by the industrial few of global, nonrenewable, fossil fuels. For most members of Yankee society, the exponential technological and economic growth was a brief time of expanding total good, which has generally been viewed as unlimited (cf. Dundes, 1971:96-98). However, such growth (and such a view) cannot continue in a world that has physical limits to nonrenewable material resources, a population that is large and (in nonindustrial countries) growing, and increased reactions by have-not peoples to the consumption of industrial societies (Forrester, 1971; Georgescu-Roegen, 1971; Meadows et al., 1972; Borgstrom, 1972; Schumacher, 1973; Meadows and Meadows, 1973; Gamst, 1974:64-71; Holden and Ehrlich, 1974).

As time progresses, ever more overwhelming amounts of capital are needed just for maintenance of present levels of industrial production, let alone continued expansion of these levels. We are presently being asked to commit larger and larger parts of our national energy budget to production of energy. This includes development of oil-shale reserves, nuclear power plants, large-scale strip coal mines, and far-off-shore deep drilling for oil, all for the purpose of protecting our present standard of consumption. On the not too distant horizon, we see other "technologist" specters hovering, such as super-energy-intensive extraction of minerals from the ocean water and common rocks. The extraction is needed to add to the supply of steadily diminishing metallic ores necessary to maintain industrial life styles. It does not appear that the high rate of growth necessary for the well-being of a capitalistic industrial society can be maintained. The future will most likely offer fewer and scarcer resources and it will be accomodated with less grandiose consumption of material good.

In industrial urban societies, the effects of the limits of growth are becoming more visible as increasing limits to general good once taken for granted are experienced. Perhaps the most important general good of United States society has been the small amount of time expended at work to earn our daily bread. This was indeed a fundamental good affording us material, social, and psychic benefits. Among other things, with low-cost abundant food, more leisure is afforded and more income becomes "disposable" for nonnecessities of life. According to the view of the average Yankee, increased disposable income allows a life more filled with good of all kinds. Regarding inexpensive abundant food, Lester R. Brown, the once optimistic student of agricultural development, says that such nutriment may be a thing of the past. The world becomes increasingly dependent on North American food production and global food shortages will become chronic:

The scarcity of basic resources required to expand food output, the negative ecological trends, that are gaining momentum year by year in the poor countries, and the diminishing returns on the use of energy and fertilizer in agriculture in the industrial countries lead me to conclude that a world of cheap, abundant food with surplus stocks and a large reserve of idled cropland may now be history. In the future, scarcity may be more or less persistent, relieved only by sporadic surpluses, of a local and short-lived nature (1975:1059).

With such prospect, pressures on food resources in the United States will continue to mount. Food costs will take more of the family income, diminish available resources to secure other products of the industrial society, and thereby limit growth.

Because of the growth dynamic of capitalistic industrial society, much of our social and psychic good is predicated upon a constantly expanding economy. Our social institutions have become dependent on intertwined economic and population growth. With diminishing growth, the effectiveness of many institutions wanes. These range from retirement under the Social Security System, to access to upward social mobility through formal education, to activity in more narrow institutions of security such as tenure for college faculty. As one student of this last institution notes:

The institution of tenure has evolved over more than a century of virtually continuous growth, over which period redirections of academic activity have never required contractions in any particular academic field significantly greater than could be accommodated by normal faculty attrition (Dresch, 1975:245).

With a Carnegie Commission projection for 1990 of only 1 percent of faculty aged 30 and under 44 percent aged 51 and over, the problem of general faculty obsolescence will place pressures upon tenure in a higher education industry experiencing little growth (Dresch, 1975:244-247). Thus the limits to economic and demographic growth in industrial society have aristocrats of labor, such as college professors, pumping away on the same hand car along the track to economic insecurity as railway brakemen.

In the United States, for some years living standards have declined for lower- and lower-middle-income families. As the era of industrial growth slows, we enter into increasing redistribution or transfer of wealth from one sector of society to another. Socioeconomic mechanisms for this transfer were developed in the four post-Depression decades. The mechanisms were not created to accommodate the problems of a static or near-static economy. Instead they were created to tide us over until the balance wheel of the market once again has the economic machinery operating expansively and allowing for the "leveling upward" of all sectors of society.

Today, it is increasingly evident that legislating benefits for low income sectors of the citizenry means taking from the higher income sectors. With an expanding economy, lower income individuals could aspire to move up. Most could get a larger slice of the pie, or so it was planned for in government policy and believed by most Americans. A large part of the bottom fifth of the citizenry, who receive only 5.4 percent of the total income, already have incomes consisting in significant part of transfer payments—including Social Security, veteran's benefits, and welfare. With a nonexpanding economy, the poor receive a larger slice of the constant economic pie, in the main, through the redistribution transfer payments and provision of public services by government. The last two mechanisms have a double leveling power. As they move money to the lower income levels, they increase the need for government revenues and thus higher taxes upon those in the lower middle through upper middle income levels. The double leveling in a no-growth economy constitutes a classic zero-sum or Limited-Good condition.

In the United States today, federal, state, and local taxes strain at the limits of extracting revenue relative to traditional middle income life styles. Also found is increasing overall restriction of economic growth and the giving of larger benefits to the needy poor at the expense of the more affluent, whose standards of consumption are lowered by diminished economic growth. The situation, if prolonged, could lead to Limited-Good behaviors of more people, even if their occupations are not directly threatened by economic stabilization. Regarding what may be considered a Limited-Good condition, apart from direct threats to occupational good, economist Robert Heilbroner explains that industrial capitalism has traditionally used increased economic output as a means of satisfying lower and middle class demands for higher standards of living while protecting the wealth and related privileges of the upper class. All classes thus receive absolute increases in income while leaving relative shares of income almost undisturbed. In other words, the upper class continued its hold on the vast amount of the private wealth in this country, while the subordinate classes received modest wage raises in real dollars adjusted for inflation. The prospect of the static or near-static industrial economy before us challenges the traditional solution of capitalism:

Under a stationary (or even a slow-growing) capitalism, continued efforts of the lower and middle class to improve their positions can be met only by diminishing the absolute incomes of the upper echelons of society. A stationary capitalism is thus forced to confront the explosive issue of income distribution in a way that an expanding capitalism is spared (Heilbroner, 1974:85-86).

A Hobbesian struggle resulting from attempts to change and to protect income distribution would place pressures upon a basic good, the democratic political apparatus usually associated with capitalistic industrial societies (Heilbroner, 1974:89-91). Additionally, limitations on the important sociopolitical good of a large degree of individual freedom of action would also be fostered by increased governmental control over goods and their consumption—a trend well under way. We are not required to abandon our one-passenger, two-garage cars and cue up for the bus, but such public policy, and others of similar nature, is not far-fetched.

Lewis H. Lapham parallels Heilbroner's view in an article on what he sees as "The Energy Debacle." He believes that uninformed calls for cut backs in energy consumption and for "zero growth" can have tragic consequences for our society:

The National Energy Plan presumably would accomplish a purpose contrary to the one intended. Given a limited supply of goods, people compete more fiercely for the smaller number of jobs, freedoms, and opportunities. They would place an even

heavier reliance on money because money would provide them with the only defense against the officiousness of government. In an open and expanding society, people will pay their taxes, study the odds, and try to improve their lot; within a closed society, they have no choice but to kill each other. This also can be construed as an equivalent of war, but I doubt whether it is one that Mr. Carter would smilingly describe as moral (1977:74).

HEW Secretary Joseph Califano sees a similar problem with lack of significant economic growth:

I think there is a limit to the extent to which we are able to redistribute wealth. The biggest difference between today and the '60's is that then we had more and more money to spend because real income was still rising. Today there isn't any money coming from some kind of economic surplus or bonus. When you want to do something new, you have to take from something—whether it is more taxes from people or money from other programs (Anon., 1977:7).

As a result of the slow- and no-growth of our economy in the 1970s, we should by now begin to see some kind of reaction against downward redistribution of wealth and its reallocation to pay for social programs desirable to the needy poor. Some socioeconomic analysts see the so-called "Proposition 13 reaction" as an harbinger of what may be viewed as a Limited-Good outlook in the general public. For example, economic writer Art Pine explains:

To many analysts, the [Proposition 13] protest represents a shift in the national outlook over the past several years—the end of the share-the-wealth philosophy of the late 1960s and its willingness to enact new social programs that redistribute income, cut taxes for the poor and close tax loopholes for the wealthy (1978:1).

If, as is probable, limits to industrial development engender a limit to increasing per capita material good and mandate either a planned or partially planned static economy, it appears that Limited-Good consequences in the social and psychic realms will grow. The model of the Image of Limited Good applicable to operating railroaders and other segments of our population will apply to still more sectors of our society as both general economic security and particular occupational opportunities diminish in response to the limits to growth. Perhaps the most important question regarding Limited-Good behaviors and attitudes in industrial urban society is, To what extent will they increase?, rather than, Will they increase? The inclination of our society to such behavior and attitudes has been noticeable for some time but not usually a focal point of concern. Several years ago, well before the gravity of restriction of growth was widely recognized, economist Arthur Okun commented on what may be seen as the inherent Limited-Good aspect of behavior in the early phase of the current economic stabilization:

When we have an expanding economy, it really alleviates social frictions. People get something out of the economy, and they are not envious of everybody else. Now, because they have not been doing so well in recent years, they are sure somebody else has been getting away with murder. They have the feeling that "I get the short end of the stick. Somebody must have got the long end" (Anon., 1972b:73).

The arguments presented in recent years in support of the advent of physical limits to economic growth in industrial urban societies are not absolutely verifiable. However, the technologists' counterarguments that the blackbox of science eventually will set everything right and allow business as usual (cf. Hueckel, 1975a,

1975b) are even less supportable (cf. Burke, 1975; Daly, 1975; Edens, 1975; Ophuls, 1975). The cognitive orientation modeled by the Image of Limited Good approximates an opposite of the cognitive orientation of those fully participating in a normally expanding capitalistic society. The latter orientation will no longer be sustainable for as many people as before.

Regarding the problems of limits to growth just outlined, in his *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*, Heilbroner has a noteworthy closing for this paper. He says that in asking the question: "Is there hope for man?" if we mean "whether it is possible to meet the challenges of the future without the payment of some fearful price, the answer must be: No, there is no such hope" (1974:136). Accordingly, the likelihood of variations of behavior modeled by the Image of Limited Good will probably increase as people lose hope for a return to the "normalcy" of the traditional rapidly expanding economy of industrial capitalism, a unique situation in cultural evolution. Marvin Harris explains a salient aspect of Limited-Good behavior appropriate to this closing paragraph:

Foster himself . . . makes it quite clear that the "Image of Limited Good" is not a crippling illusion but rather a realistic appraisal of the facts of life in a society where economic success or failure is capricious and hinged to forces wholly beyond one's control or comprehension . . . (1971:486).

What happens to our society if not just the third-generation ghetto dweller, but the middle-American feels that he cannot "work hard and get ahead" and, consequently, develops a realistic appraisal of the new facts of life?

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