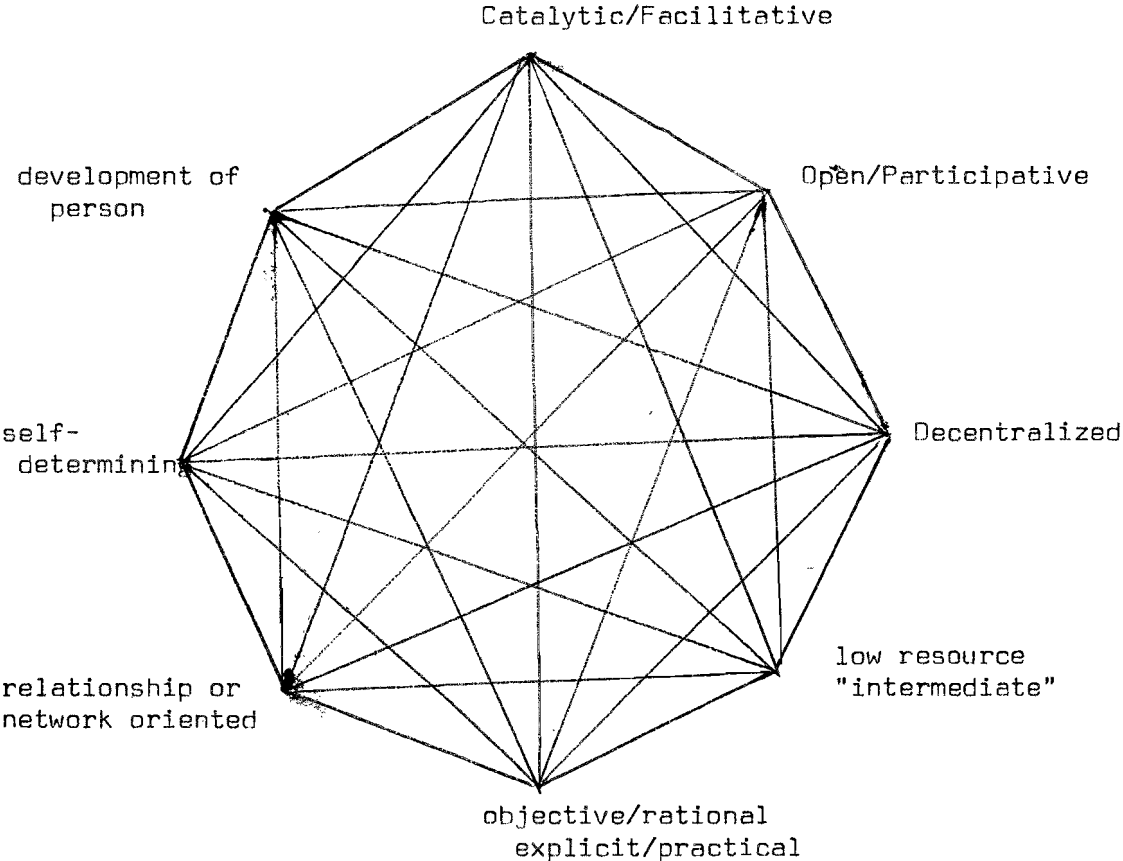


Interrelationship of aspects of the concept of social transmutation



General points concerning selection of papers

1. Preference will be given to papers which argue from working examples to general principles rather than to those which are primarily descriptive or primarily theoretical. Of greatest value are papers which present "generalized blueprints" which can be widely distributed for use by and within communities.
2. Clearly the range of topics covered by the pre-conference papers will be large.

To be most useful, papers should guard against excessive detail and attempt to supply a sense of perspective over the range of possibilities, alternatives and constraints in relation to a particular approach. In some cases this can be achieved by producing summary or review articles. (These have been indicated in the detailed description of the pre-conference report.) A sense of the interrelationship between approaches is particularly valuable.

3. Papers should, where possible, draw on the successes and failures of the centralized, high-resource projects characteristic of social change in the past, in which the policy and implementation process was distant from the individual's sense of involvement.
4. Papers should concentrate on feasible social change projects which have involve minimum resources consistent with an optimum multiplier effect.
5. It is not implied that the methods which can be advocated are value-free. Nor is it implied that some of them cannot be abused. It is suggested, however, that by stressing the use of low-resource, decentralized, open projects, the people-oriented methods are then at the disposal of people who are themselves part of the community in which they propose to facilitate social transmutation and according to their own perception of the problem.

Each method can be used to advance any value or political position. By orienting the debate to tools accessible to social activists and their organizations, the possibility of exploitative use is minimized.

6. Papers should draw attention to the relationship between the user's own concept structure, the sort of problems it enables him to perceive, and how it influences positively or negatively his choice of social change method, his attention to side-effects, and his ability to relate to other bodies, possibly using different methods.

7. Papers should objectify the "responsibility" questions with which the user of a particular method should be concerned, so that there is no illusion that use of a method is value for or wholly beneficial, and that the responsibility for these evaluations lies with the user.
8. Papers should draw attention to how the use of the social change method affects the person, particularly the interface between the person and the method in action.
9. Usually problems stimulate an almost automatic and unthinking response which takes the form of meetings, campaigns, information systems, organizations. Papers should attempt to de-mystify and objectify the choice of appropriate method so that this can be made more intelligently and creatively, and with greater effect for the resources available.
10. Papers should draw attention to the conditions in which the methods should or should not be applied -- namely their "operating characteristics in terms of the terrain" (i.e. there is no point in using tropical material in polar conditions).
11. Special attention should be drawn to

- how centralized or decentralized
- how open or closed
- how non-directive or directive
- how technocratic

a particular method can usefully be. Papers should draw attention to unforeseen and undesirable effects which arise when an otherwise successful method is employed on too large (or too small a scale).

12. Papers should preferably come from "interface people", namely those who function on the interface between research, policy determination and practical implementation.
13. The methods advocated should catalyze or facilitate the growth of new relationships or the resuscitation of relationships which have deteriorated to a rudimentary level.

They should be concerned primarily with horizontal rather than vertical relationships, namely new patterns of cross-jurisdictional, cross-disciplinary and cross-functional contact.

PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT: Detailed explanation of contents

Given the careful distinction between the papers in the report and the actual discussion at the meeting, the following list of points may be thought of as the "contents page" of the report rather than the "agenda" of the meeting. The latter would be much more discussion-oriented within the evolving framework of small groups, responding to issues as they emerge, and "inspired" by the materials presented in the report, the displays and the visits. The report is also conceived as having its own life after the meeting -- perhaps serving as material for other meetings -- but in any case to be published to achieve a wider distribution.

Given that the mix of participants actually present in Paris may of necessity not cover the whole field of social transmutation, it is important that the report should attempt to provide such coverage, even if some sections are only covered by summary articles. Only by this juxtaposition of approaches can their interrelationship be seen and the occasions when it may be preferable to use one rather than another. The summary article would be mainly used to draw attention to any general principles which have emerged from the high-resource projects (which are well-described elsewhere), without focusing on particular projects.

1a. Dimensions of social transmutation (summary paper or papers)

This section would attempt to review (in historical, political and functional terms) the relationship between different schools of thought concerning social change, as evidenced by social engineering, social innovation, social action, social development, community development, planning and policy sciences, etc. Particular attention should be given to the reasons any of these are considered to have failed, to have inherent weaknesses, or to be subject to abuse.

1b. Mapping and tracking complex psychosocial structures, together with reference to supportive technologies (summary paper or papers)

This section should suggest and describe practical (high and low-resource) means of: looking at complex psychosocial structures; mapping them to permit meaningful discussion (especially outside elite circles); and isolating the key areas in which structural change might be fruitful and have multiplier effects. Given the level of complexity which must be dealt with, papers on technologies which facilitate this tracking, mapping, consensus formation and decision process could also be included here.

2. Interaction between social transmutation methods

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the interrelationships, interactions and interdependence between the networks described in the following sections (3.1. to 3.8.). Papers should attempt to clarify how and under what conditions the different types of network are critically dependent upon each other. The aim of the papers should be to develop the ability to choose between completely different methods of social change, according to the opportunities or restrictions, and to ensure that adequate combinations of methods are selected where one will not suffice.

2.1. Complementarity of unrelated programmes based on different approaches

The papers here should draw attention to the mutually reinforcing effects of programmes focusin on different types of structure, from the concrete to the conceptual. Whilst each programme may be envisaged and implemented in isolation, it is the resultant effect on society which needs to be brought into focus. The complementarity may arise between programmes active

- during the same time period
- in succeeding time periods.

2.2. Systematic interaction between different approaches within the framework of a single programme

The papers here should cover the manner in which a programme must ensure the interrelationship of different, and seemingly incompatible aspects -- conceptual, informational, organizations, etc. For example, a building complex may become socially dead unless proper care is taken to nurture the formation of social networks, which in turn are dependent in the ability of building spaces to catalyze inter-personal interaction rather than reinforce social separation. Interaction between different programme aspects may be necessary:

- during the same time period when one activity must be supported by another
- in succeeding time periods, when one activity must be completed as a basis for another.

2.3. Possibilities of substituting one approach for another

To catalyze social transmutation, the social innovator may choose one of several means. The papers here should examine the ways in which, for example, the establishment of an information system can be made to substitute for the creation of an organization. Similarly, under some conditions of mutual suspicion it may be more useful to construct a building within which different groups have neighbouring offices (permitting them to interact informally) rather than to attempt vainly to establish an organization in which they would not wish to interact formally.

2.4. Network strategy

The variety of social transmutation alternatives available to groups and organizations, loosely linked in rapidly evolving networks, raises the problem of the coordination of such action. Papers in this section should attempt to identify possibilities for such networks to evaluate strategies and coordinate their implementation without requiring the creation of conventional coordinating bodies (which reduce the variety and flexibility inherent in the network and alienate commitment. Methods of facilitating the optimum amount of self-coordination by such bodies within a network should be identified.

3. Approaches to social transmutation and the supportive technologies required

This major section would be subdivided by type of social structure and within that by the nature of the project. The latter system of subdivisions is repeated for each type of social structure. The papers would be action and project oriented. The papers and discussion would focus on what could be done and how to go about doing it rather than attempting to supply elegant theoretical models to explain or justify the action.

3.1. Transmutation of concepts and attitudes

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the network or ecosystem of concepts, images and values (whether mutually supportive, in competition or in conflict) which govern the modes of action of people and organizations in a community. Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted. The papers should be concerned with projects and techniques which can be used in and by communities to facilitate conceptual change and innovation in the direction desired by the community. Papers should draw attention to the nature of the resources required, to the strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the methods advocated (particularly in terms of risks and unwanted side-effects which may be considered counterproductive by the community). Attention should be drawn to methods which have proved dangerous or subject to abuse.

3.1.1. Low resource projects (papers)

The papers in this section would attempt to summarize and compare the range of techniques which can be used, typically by the small or less organized interest/pressure groups (whether in isolation or loosely linked in networks), to change attitudes relating to the matters which concern them -- possibly to draw attention to emerging problems before they warrant or can call upon high resources or central organizations.

Examples of the areas from which general principles and techniques can be obtained are local community or special interest campaigns on such questions as:

- environmental pollution
- care of the elderly
- rehabilitation of disabled
- anti-litter campaigns
- peace, etc.

This section is therefore primarily concerned with forms of organized action (as distinct from organizations, covered in a later section) which usually emerge as campaigns. Papers should draw attention to the nature of the resources required, the advantages of this method of social change, as well as its limitations and unwanted side-effects.

It is expected that papers in this section could be most easily obtained from individuals or organizations which have been engaged in a sufficient variety of projects of this nature to be able to highlight a range of general principles which can be applied by similar bodies in connection with other problems.

3.1.2. Catalytic products (papers)

The papers here would be concerned with the selection and design of products which could be sold or disseminated through a social system such that by their use and without any directive explanation, they facilitate the adoption of beneficial new attitudes and modes of action.

Examples are:

- new games whose rules encourage new understanding of social relationships
- information and data display devices which facilitate perception across conventional category boundaries
- songs and slogans with a message

3.1.3. Decentralized, open, high-resource projects (summary papers)

The projects cited here, as a source of general principles and techniques, would be those elaborated on a participative basis, often on the initiative of large governmental agencies, and involving the collaboration of a multitude of nongovernmental and business groups as a mutually reinforcing network of action-oriented bodies.

Examples are:

- disaster relief campaigns
- anti-discrimination campaigns

Summary articles on this type of approach could be obtained from experienced organizers and planners of such decentralized campaigns.

3.1.4. Centralized, closed, high-resource projects (summary papers)

The projects cited here, as a source of general principles and techniques, would be those elaborated by a large (usually governmental) agency or group of agencies to mobilize and direct attitudes and resources in response to some particular threat but, typically, without consultation with representatives of those whose attitudes are to be changed.

Examples are:

- energy conservation campaigns
- development aid campaigns
- road accident campaigns
- anti-litter campaigns.

Summary articles on this type of approach could be obtained from experienced organizers of such campaigns whether in government agencies or under government contract.

3.2. Transmutation of information systems

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the many information networks operating in society (whether technology-based, formal or informal), their weaknesses and the problems of their interaction. The papers should be concerned with the characteristics of information systems or devices whose function is to facilitate the maintenance and formation of beneficial inter-personal or inter-organizational relationships, particularly in support of social change programmes within a community. Particular attention should be given to information network designs which can handle and adapt rapidly to new and unexpected problems. Papers should draw attention to the nature of the resources required, and to the strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the methods advocated (particularly in terms of risks and unwanted side-effects which may be considered counterproductive by the community). Attention should be drawn to the types of system which have proved dangerous or subject to abuse.

3.2.1. Low resource information networks (papers)

The papers in this section would attempt to summarize and compare the range of information techniques which can be used, typically by the smaller or less organized interest/pressure groups (whether in isolation or loosely linked in networks), to receive, process, store, and disseminate different types of information which are the basis for consensus formation on social change programmes.

Examples are:

- newsletters, periodicals
- bibliographies, directories, abstracts
- telephoning strategies
- low-resource computer programmes.

3.2.2. Catalytic information devices (papers)

The papers here would be concerned with the design of information gadgets which facilitate new flows of information likely to stimulate new types of conceptual or inter-personal interaction or to counteract any abuse of existing information systems.

Examples are:

- devices facilitating communication from audience to podium or between participants at a meeting (without passing via the podium)
- systems bringing individuals or organizations together on the basis of self-defined interests and not some externally imposed set of categories.

3.2.3. Decentralized, open, high-resource information networks (summary papers)

The information systems cited here would be those elaborated by a network of agencies and organizations in such a way that a wide range of individuals and organizations could be brought into relationship to their mutual advantage (across conventional jurisdictional boundaries) by the information they supply, store or retrieve.

Examples are:

- inter-university computer networks
- ARPA data network
- some environmental information systems

3.2.4. Centralized, closed, high-resource information systems (summary papers)

The information systems cited here would be those elaborated by a large (usually governmental) agency or group of agencies to enable them to plan or act more effectively in relation to problems, external organizations, or individuals.

Examples are:

- some environment information systems
- tax and credit rating information systems
- business, military and police intelligence systems.

3.3. Transmutation of social organizations and services

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the networks or ecosystems of individuals, organizations and administrative units in a society (whether they are mutually supportive, in competition or in conflict). Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted both in terms of minimal flexibility and coordination, and in terms of openness, variety, dynamism and opportunity for personal fulfillment. The papers should be concerned with projects and techniques which can be used in and by communities to generate new organizations. Particular attention should be given to new and more appropriate styles of organization which would facilitate the organized interaction of people, groups or organizations in situations, or under conditions, in which existing forms of organization are not viable or even prevent the needed interactions. Papers should draw attention to strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the methods advocated (particularly in terms of risks and unwanted side-effects which may be considered counterproductive by the community). Attention should be drawn to types of organization which have proved dangerous or subject to abuse.

3.3.1. Low resource organizations (papers)

Papers should be concerned with new types of organization or organizational techniques which can be used, particularly by the smaller or less organized interest/pressure groups (whether in isolation or in order to loosely link such groups into networks). Typically such organizational devices would be used to bring into relationship people, groups, organizations or administrative units which are currently unable to interact via conventional organizations because of the disruptive effects of inter-personal, inter-group or cross-jurisdictional rivalry and suspicion.

Examples are:

- formal organization substitutes (e.g. meetings, task forces)
- "people organizations", communes, neighbourhood organizations
- "invisible" academic and political colleges
- minimal institutions.

3.3.2. Catalytic products (papers)

The papers here should cover the conception and design of products which encourage and facilitate the creation of new organizational structures. It should be possible to distribute widely such products, or blueprints of such products, such that they can be used in a non-directive way in those sectors of society in which they are received.

Examples are:

- organizational directories designed to function as organizational "marriage brokers"
- computer software packages to permit computerized information services to be set up to automate any such brokerage service
- blueprints of new styles of organization

3.3.3. Decentralized, open, high-resource organization (systems papers)

Papers should attempt to identify the general principles and techniques associated with the design and improvement of relatively open inter-organizational systems within which there is a fairly high degree of individual mobility.

Examples are:

- inter-university systems (e.g. the proposed UN university)
- research institute networks
- kibbutzim network, youth hostel network
- open university and adult education systems
- medical care delivery systems
- leisure or community recreation centres.

3.3.4. Centralized, closed, high-resource organizational systems (summary papers)

Papers should attempt to identify the general principles and techniques associated with the design and improvement of large, closed organizational systems as social environments through which people are relocated, typically in circumstances in which the preferences of the individual are only of secondary concern.

Examples are:

- network of military bases
- network of branches of a large corporation
- network of positions on a product assembly line

3.4. Transmutation of building complexes

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the manner in which the man-made physical environment constrains individuals (or representatives of organizations) to well-defined networks of routes, corridors and spaces (whether working, living, meeting or recreation areas) thus controlling the patterns of interaction. Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted particularly in terms of hindrance to formation of beneficial human or inter-group relationships, to recreation, and to the formation of the concentration and variety of people (and groups) necessary for social innovation. The papers should be concerned with the characteristics of planned physical environments, building complexes and building techniques whose function is to facilitate the maintenance and formation of beneficial inter-personal or inter-organizational relationships, particularly in support of social change programmes within a community. Papers should draw attention to strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the advocated planned environments (particularly in terms of risks and unwanted side-effects which may be considered counterproductive by the community). Attention should be drawn to the types of planned, or unplanned, environment which have proved inappropriate or subject to abuse.

3.4.1. Low resource projects (papers)

The papers here should be concerned with projects which can be undertaken with minimal special funding to design or restructure buildings to serve new, socially beneficial functions.

Examples are:

- community centres, recreation centres
- old age centres, youth centres, playgrounds

3.4.2. Catalytic building devices (papers)

The papers here should be concerned with the types of product or design which if widely distributed enable underprivileged sectors of the population to produce better housing and community buildings at lower cost.

Examples are:

- new joining devices
- brick-making devices
- new designs (e.g. geodesic domes)

3.4.3. Decentralized, open, high-resource projects (papers)

The papers here should cite projects, usually originated by government agencies or consortia, to stimulate with financial support the construction of building complexes of social and cultural rather than purely economic value. (Plans are however drawn up through an extensive consultative process to ensure that the needs of a very wide variety of users are satisfied.) The aims of such projects are broadly and loosely defined in qualitative rather than quantitative terms.

Examples are:

- networks of community or recreation centres
- redevelopment to create urban shopping/
meeting/entertainment areas
- community effort to revivify old, but archi-
tecturally interesting, town centres
- multi-organization office and meeting centres
(whether for community groups, national
associations, or international associations)

3.4.4. Centralized, closed, high-resource projects (summary papers)

The papers here should cite projects, usually originated by government agencies or consortia (in which plans are drawn up by a centralized group in terms of their interpretation of useful development). The aims of such projects are well-defined and easily justified in terms of the economic interests of the region and the socio-economic needs of the users of the building complex.

Examples are:

- university cities (e.g. in Russia and Japan)
- new capital cities (e.g. Brasilia)

3.5. Transmutation of technology-based systems

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the variety of networks in society for the distribution or transport of energy, water, materials, goods and people. (Service networks, on which equipment is dependent, should not be omitted.) Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted particularly in terms of the manner in which they deprive particular communities of resources, reserves, generate unwanted side-effects, by-pass the communities or are unable to reach them because of their relative isolation. Attention should be drawn to the characteristics of such technology-based networks which in fact facilitate the maintenance and formation of inter-personal and inter-group relationships, particularly in support of social change programmes within a community. Papers should be concerned with methods of modifying existing networks, or of using alternative technologies, in order to support social innovation in the communities in question. Attention should be drawn to the types of technology system which have proved dangerous or subject to abuse.

3.5.1. Low resource technologies (summary article or papers)

The technologies cited here are increasingly called intermediate or alternative. The papers should identify new technologies of this type and ways of making them available to the areas in which they are needed. A principal characteristic of these technologies is that they can be put into effect with little need for external materials. It is therefore the know-how, rather than a product which is required.

Examples are:

- water-carrying devices
- wind-power devices
- water-recirculation techniques.

3.5.2. Catalytic products (summary article or papers)

The products covered here would be those which could usefully be made available in under-developed areas to stimulate community development of low-resource technologies. Some of these products may be technically sophisticated but they should not be costly to obtain or maintain.

Examples are:

- solar-power devices
- new types of plough
- simple duplicating/printing devices
- low-cost cement substitutes to improve mud-based house construction.

3.5.3. Centralized, closed, high-resource projects (summary article)

The projects cited here would be those originated by large government and private enterprise consortia (in which plans are drawn up by a centralized group using all the necessary technical expertise). The reasons for developing and making available the technology are well-defined and easily justified in terms of the economic interests of the region and the socio-economic needs of the users.

Examples are:

- dams and irrigation systems
- inter-regional roads, bridges.

3.5.4. Decentralized, open, high-resource projects (summary article)

The papers here would cite projects usually originated by government agencies to stimulate development of a particular technology by the communities in the region. The success of such projects depends less on the government seed-funding and more on community recognition of a need justifying joint action and commitment,

Examples are:

- community construction of dams
- community irrigation and road systems
- community radio/TV service
- community newspaper.

3.6. Transmutation of funding systems

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the variety of networks for the collection and reallocation of funds in society. Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted. The papers should be concerned with methods of communicating and clarifying the complex nature of such networks and the associated agreements, and with the innovative financing techniques which can then be evolved and applied more widely in support of social change programmes. Special consideration should be given to the problem of providing financial support for change in dynamic, evolving social networks responding to new problems. Papers should draw attention to strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the methods advocated. Attention should be drawn to types of financial obfuscation which have been deliberately used to conceal

3.7. Transmutation of legislative networks

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the networks of laws and treaties which regulate social behaviour. Methods of locating weaknesses in such networks should be highlighted, whether areas where legislative coverage is inadequate or where legislation is such as to fragment, hinder or prevent social change and social innovation. The papers should be concerned with methods of communicating and clarifying the complex nature of such networks, and with the innovative legislative techniques which can then be evolved and applied more widely to catalyze and support social change programmes. Papers should draw attention to strengths and weaknesses under different social conditions of the methods advocated. Attention should be drawn to types of legislative obfuscation which create the opportunity for overt and concealed abuse.

3.8. Personal development

Papers in these sections should develop an awareness of the variety of meanings associated with personal or human development. Papers should draw attention to the manner in which the social networks noted in the other sections may hinder or facilitate personal development. Papers should also draw attention to the manner in which personal development itself leads to social transmutation by changing perception, increasing tolerance of complexity and variety, decreasing tolerance of inequity, providing a wider vision of future alternatives, etc. Without giving attention to particular methods of personal development, papers should identify the characteristics of the physical and social environment by which it is facilitated particularly with reference to the design of centres in which such processes may be accelerated.