

AN APPLICATION OF CONSTRUCT VALIDATION

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Introduction

This thesis will examine the application of the rules of construct validation to a sociological concept, status consistency-inconsistency. The results should demonstrate the heuristic value of using construct validation and aid in the reduction of ambiguity surrounding this concept.

Delineation of a Sociological Problem

In deciding what constitutes an appropriate question for sociological investigation, this author was guided by Merton's two "areas of consideration"; those within the discipline and those delineated by the social milieu.¹

Merton has further explicated problems for scientific examination within the discipline as those which create "conceptual obstacles to inquiry"², of which he states:

'Periodically, investigation of a range of problems is found to have gone about as far as it can with the use of existing concepts. Useful for a time, the concepts now prove to be insufficiently differentiated, thus typically introducing the problem of devising appropriate classifications.'³

¹Robert K. Merton, L. Broom, and L. Cottrell (eds.), Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects. (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. xxix-xxxiii.

²Merton, Broom, Cottrell, op.cit., pp. xxxi.

³Ibid.