

THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING
THE DAVIS-MOORE EXPLANATION OF
STRATIFICATION

by

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ABSTRACT

We attempt to apply Mannheim's discussion of the sociology of knowledge to the controversy surrounding the Davis-Moore argument. Mannheim distinguishes between the immanent and extrinsic interpretation of a body of intellectual knowledge, that is, between, on the one hand, interpretation in terms of the premises prescribed by an intellectual work, and on the other, while holding the basic premises in abeyance, in terms of its relationship to the wider existential situation. Extrinsic explanations seek to relate the thinker's political "perspective" to his position in the wider social system, mainly in terms of the "class" or social group, to which he belongs. For example, Mannheim interprets nineteenth century German conservative thought as a response, generated by the needs of the class to which its creators belonged, (the "declining bourgeois class") to the challenge to its position by another class ("the ascendant group.") We claim that, to a large degree, the controversy is explicable in terms of the conflict of political perspectives on the problem of social inequality, with the qualification that one area of the exchange is basically a conflict of methodological axioms which does not manifest an underlying clash of political opinions. Perspectives are identified by the exaggeration of some facts about human societies, as

generally conceived, to the exclusion of others; and, by the failure of proponents and critics alike to consider relevant empirical evidence and theoretical arguments presented by other thinkers. We claim that proponents adopt a conservative, their critics a liberal view of stratified inequalities. Further, when the perspectives of different contributors are viewed as representative of wider trends of the political thought of American intellectuals throughout the twentieth century, a new dimension of meaning is afforded the controversy. Thus, the implicitly conservative argument presented by Davis and Moore is viewed as part of the post-war conservative reaction to the radicalism of American liberal intellectuals during the early thirties and to their commitment after 1936, to New Deal measures to reduce the scale of prevailing social and economic inequalities. Criticisms of their argument are viewed as a liberal counter-attack, prompted by the intellectual articulation of conservative thought in the early fifties, and which reflect, in their essentially limited and defensive approach, the climate of opinion of American liberal intellectuals in the post-war period. Whilst many of Mannheim's statements are supported by our discussion, especially those concerning the development of conservative thought as a "counter-ideology," to meet the challenge of another alien and hostile ideology, his statement that the perspective of an intellectual work is determined by the needs and

aspirations of the class or group to which its creator belongs, must be modified on the basis of our examination of major trends of intellectual thought in American society: The major developments in American political theory were not generated by the needs or aspirations of well-defined social groups, but by such variables as the changing conditions of the American economy, for example, the Great Depression, the New Deal reforms and the later recovery of the capitalist economy both at home and abroad during the post-war period; the prevailing mood of the American public as expressed in post-war conservatism; and, America's relationship to the rest of the world, particularly, the emergence of a polar confrontation between America and Russia.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The first section of the paper consists of a discussion of Mannheim's theoretical framework in order to assess what aspects of his "sociology of knowledge" are to be retained for the analysis of the controversy surrounding the Davis-Moore theory of stratification.

Mannheim distinguishes between immanent interpretation of an idea, and extrinsic interpretation.¹ The former is a matter of examination "from within." The intellectual phenomenon may be discussed in terms of the assumptions prescribed by it, in terms of another system with premises different from its own. or, the discussion may start from the given premises and attempt to draw correct conclusions from them. Immanent interpretations may also seek to establish the intellectual origin of an idea or interpret ideas by reference to the totalities of world views that correspond to them. What is characteristic of all types of explanation "from within" is the attempt to grasp the intellectual phenomenon from the "ideological" sphere itself.

Explanations "from without" hold the prescribed assumptions in abeyance in order to relate the intellectual phenomenon to something outside itself. Mannheim distinguishes two kinds of extrinsic interpretation, namely, explanation by reference to un-meaning existence, and explanation by reference to meaningful existence.

1. Karl Mannheim: "The Ideological and the Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena," (1926).

The point of the distinction is to show that it is mistaken "to locate sociological explanation in the sphere of unmeaning causal explanation and to apply to it the axiom that the genesis of an intellectual phenomenon cannot determine anything concerning its meaning and validity." For it is maintained that the sociological functionalization of a system of meanings contributes a novel interpretation of meaning with respect to existence. More simply, the sociologist contributes a new meaning to an idea by relating it to a wider social existence. The idea is related to a social reality conceived of as a comprehensive system of meanings.

Thus Marx's explanation of individualism, which characterizes 18th century methods of inquiry, by reference to the free competition of bourgeois society is not an explanation of theoretical axioms in terms of unmeaning existence. Rather it is an interpretation of the ultimate axioms characteristic of a historical type by reference to an underlying social order conceived of as a system of meanings. It is not then an objective causal explanation in the scientific sense.

In summary, sociological interpretation of an intellectual phenomenon involves first, the suspension of intrinsic understanding, second, the assertion of a relationship of an intellectual phenomenon to something outside it, as the function of which it then appears. The functionalization of an idea thus bestows new

meaning on it. These existential meanings are the presuppositions of its validity, even though they are not seen by the theory itself.

A great part of Mannheim's discussion concerns the relevance of the findings of such a sociological inquiry, to the validity of the intellectual phenomenon examined. He urges in "Ideology and Utopia"¹ that the findings constitute a critique.

Having stated that sociological interpretation is relevant to validity, he proceeds to a discussion of the epistemological implications of this statement. He may be accused of doing precisely what he criticizes the epistemologist for - namely, of deciding beforehand what types of knowledge are possible and legitimate. If the sociology of knowledge can contribute to the determination of validity one may ask, why is it necessary to establish the claim beforehand? Mannheim argues that philosophy ultimately follows the type of understanding attained in those disciplines it proposes to examine. Thus, the formulations of Hume and Locke concerning the nature of scientific explanation have been undermined by more modern philosophers, who have had to take into account a far more extensive range of scientific theory and research.²

1. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. (1936) Chap. V.

2. See S. Toulmin, *Philosophy of Science*, New York, Harper, (1960).

In this case it is unnecessary to establish the claim for the sociology of knowledge on an epistemological basis. The attempt is a substitute for the demonstration that sociological interpretation affects in any real sense appraisals made on an immanent basis.

Elsewhere¹ Mannheim asserts that the alternative to the view that sociology of knowledge is relevant to validity, is the view of immanent and extrinsic sociological interpretation as incommensurable. Thus, one discusses an idea as valid or invalid solely in terms of other ideas, or one accepts only functional meanings as valid and discards immanent discussion as 'ideological'. If the two approaches are interpreted as heterogeneous, it is necessary to choose between them. Here Mannheim assumes that the criterion whereby a discipline is accepted or rejected, is its usefulness for determining validity, validity here meaning 'true', in an absolute sense. Immanent interpretation consists of an examination of the logical consistency of axioms, or, one accepts the axioms and reviews them in terms of others. Extrinsic interpretation concerns the choice of axioms i.e. the evaluative element, which is then explained in terms of the social position of the thinker. By whatever criterion of truth is selected, the truth of a proposition must be assessed independently of how it happened to be arrived at. To claim that the source of a belief for example is

1. Ideological and Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena, op. cit., p.14.

relevant to its validity, is to extend a single criterion of validity to two different types of knowledge. It follows from this that Mannheim has conceived of validity as absolute, or 'inherent' in things, and as totally independent of the particular nature of the propositions he is examining to ascertain their validity.

In summary, it is agreed that to turn from an immanent to an extrinsic interpretation involves a qualitative change in the experience of the intellectual phenomenon, but the claim that such a change constitutes a 'critique' (i.e. is relevant to its validity) is rejected. Mannheim's discussion is relevant to the treatment of the sociological controversy to be examined. It is instructive to attempt to account for the development of a theoretical controversy in terms of a wider existential process. Intellectual phenomena where they come into conflict, do not generally refute each other immanently. Unlike the natural sciences, such theories or arguments do not generally contain the conditions under which they may be refuted.¹ In these cases it makes sense to ask why they are considered valid at one time and not at others within a given intellectual community.

1. Karl Popper - Logic of Scientific Discovery, New York, Basic Books, (1959).

Mannheim argues,

It is the intellectual existential situation which overcomes another such situation and a theory replaces another theory only as a part of this existential situation.¹

In the controversy under discussion the original argument which is subsequently criticized, is not replaced by another. In fact the Davis-Moore theory of stratification continues to be reviewed as a feasible argument in general text books on stratification.

However, it is instructive to examine (a) the rise of criticism as an interesting event in itself (i.e. to ask when, why and how it arose), and (b) the types of criticism put forward; further, (c) to relate both to the wider intellectual existential situation.

Kurt Wolff² considers the feasibility of turning from the immanent interpretation of American sociology to an extrinsic interpretation. He suggests that some socio-cultural factors are operative in the 'scientific' work of sociologists.

The fact that valuations enter into research suggests that American sociology may be treated as an orientation. For example, "objectivity" is a value itself, and entails the value of the specific role-types to be adopted. Again, extra-scientific factors enter into the sociologist's work when he contemplates writing with the possibility of

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1. K. Mannheim - "The Ideological and Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena", op. cit., p.14.
 2. "Notes Towards a Socio-Cultural Interpretation of American Sociology," by Kurt Wolff, American Sociological Review, 7. (October. 1946). p. 545.

publication, i.e., the selection of the area of inquiry, and the constitution of the study are co-determined by the consideration of publication.

Wolff suggests two traits whereby the orientation of American sociology may be analyzed -

- (i) the attitude towards the status quo
- (ii) the problem of the selection of human characteristics.

He forwards three main examples. With reference to the first trait (a) he draws upon C. Wright Mill's analysis of social pathology¹, and asserts that the central concept of 'adjustment' implies a middle-class morality and a participation in the gradual progress of 'respectable' institutions. (b) W. Lloyd Warner's caste theory of race relations in the Southern states, implies, by its use of the concept 'caste' that Negroes are in fact inferior. Racial prejudice and discrimination are here structuralized into a more or less static feature of the status quo system. (c) In the sociological research of R.E. Parks, Wolff, (citing Gunnar Myrdal²) states that there is a systematic tendency in his working to ignore all possibilities of modifying - by conscious effort - the social effects of the natural forces. The universal and uncritical use of the concepts of the ecological school indicate an unfavourable attitude to

1. C. Wright Mills, "The Professional Ideology of the Social Pathologist," in Power, Politics and People, ed., I.L. Horowitz, New York, Oxford University Press, (1963).
2. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, (1944; new edition, New York, Harper and Row, 1962.)

change and a "laissez - faire" attitude.

Wolff argues that American sociology can also be characterized as an orientation in terms of the absence of the recognition of the tragic aspect of man. It overlooks one side of man in order consciously or by growth, to provide "that unified and coherent theory which men have always craved."

On the basis of these examples, he suggests on the one hand, the co-determination of certain concepts by aspects of American culture, on the other, a selective objectivity which omits one major characteristic of man.

He points out that his own examples of theories are not representative and that his concept of American sociology is vague. (He suggests the problem may be tackled by contentual analyses of courses, books, and sociological journals.) Although there is no attempt to see the theorists reviewed as representative of different trends in the 'sociological community', it is possible to infer from Wolff's own references, that the generally conservative nature of American sociology is challenged by a group of critical thinkers around the mid-40's. (Wolff cites C. Wright Mills, Gunnar Myrday, Harting, O. Cox, and M.M. Tumin¹).

The present study aims at a more precise analysis

1. One prominent figure in the Davis-Moore controversy to be reviewed later, is M.M. Tumin.

of the changing perspectives of American intellectuals and sociologists specifically during the period 1910 - 1960, in order to explain why the controversy arose when it did, and the particular way in which the initial stimulus to disputation was given. The dominant perspectives of the contributors to the controversy will then be related to the wider intellectual situation.

A theoretical framework for the identification of perspectives is given by Mannheim,¹ and it will be examined for its usefulness.

Mannheim suggests perspectives be identified in terms of (a) the analysis of meaning of the concepts used. This requires an analysis of the key concepts in any body of thought. It is held that a partial or one-sided treatment of any given concept indicates the social position of the proponent. (b) the phenomenon of the counter-concept. Where a concept reflects the observer's interest, a counter-concept may be formulated by another thinker to cover at least some aspects of the concepts which have been omitted. (c) the absence of certain concepts. This indicates the absence of a definite drive to "come to grips with certain life problems." (d) the structure of the categorical apparatus. The differences in categorical apparatus (e.g. morphological and analytical) may be related to the different basic

1. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, op. cit., Chap. V p. 673.

intentions of the thinkers. (e) dominant models of thought. The implicit or explicit models of how 'fruitful thinking' can be carried on are again related to the social position of the observer. Different groups have different ways of interpreting the world. (f) level of abstraction is determined by investigating the level of abstraction beyond which a given theory does not progress or the degree to which it resists theoretical, systematic formulation. (g) the basic ontology which is presupposed.

Mannheim's demonstrations of the usefulness of these concepts are not always convincing. In one example he argues that differences in categorical apparatus may be explained by the different social positions of the writers. He argues that Conservative thinkers of 19th Century Germany tend to use morphological categories whereas the analytic approach characterizes thinkers of the left. The difference is explained as follows:- Groups oriented to the left intend to create a new world, and thus divert their attention from the ongoing reality. They tend to think in abstract terms, to atomize the given situation into its component elements in order to recombine them anew. Conservatives conceptualize in such a way as to stabilize the elements still in flux, and at the same time invoke sanction for what exists.

However, in the controversy surrounding the Davis-

Moore argument, it is clear from a conceptual analysis that Davis maintains a conservative, Tumin, a liberal position. Davis' approach is analytical. He argues at a high level of abstraction (for example, he delineates position and incumbent). Moreover, he recombines the elements of his conceptual analysis by means of a functional factor - (the social need to place and motivate individuals within the social structure). The essentially 'conservative' conclusion drawn is that one aspect of the status quo, stratification, is inevitable. Tumin, although he generally argues within the framework put forward by Davis, employs a concept of class which includes both position and the performance of the incumbent. In this way, he is able to discuss a whole realm of problems which on the basis of Davis' conceptual scheme¹ would be irrelevant - namely, class inheritance and its consequences for society, such inequality of opportunity, (which results in obstacles to the maximum utilization of available talent) and the reinforcement of economic and political inequality. Tumin's more 'morphological' approach, enables him to criticize the status quo as unjust, and on the basis of this criticism he advocates a search for institutional alternatives to stratification - clearly a liberal standpoint.

1. Kingsley Davis; "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification" American Sociological Review 7, (1942) No. 3.

The relationship between social position and the perspective, as identified by the nature of the categorical apparatus, is more variable than Mannheim implies.¹ Moreover, similar examples could be brought forward to show the variability of the thought-model and level of abstraction as indicators of social position.

It is maintained that the most feasible method of identifying perspectives is in terms of the analysis of the key-concepts, the counter concept and the absence of certain concepts. The main difficulty they all involve however is what to select as having been omitted by the theorist under discussion. Thus Wolff in his article discusses the absence in American sociology, of the 'tragic aspect' of man. However, he could equally well have selected 'creative potential' of man, a specific concern of nineteenth century European sociology and hardly characteristic of American Sociology. Thus there will always be a wide area of considerations which any particular sociological theory may neglect, and the characterization of the perspective underlying the given theory clearly depends on these aspects the investigator chooses to select. In the controversy to be examined however, this methodological

1. With reference to an earlier point, the variability of the relationship raises the question, in what sense can Mannheim's framework be said to be useful in the determination of a more valid, objective statement, when it is unreliable in this way.

difficulty is overcome in part by the fact that each critic attacks the Davis-Moore argument by drawing attention to those aspects of stratification which he thinks the proponents have overlooked. Thus to identify the ideological views underlying the controversy, the investigator may take his cue from say the liberal critic who himself indicates what kinds of omission characterize a conservative orientation, and in doing so, defines the "counter-concept," to use Mannheim's term, which characterizes his own perspective.

Chapter II

THE FUNCTIONAL PREMISES OF THE DAVIS-MOORE ARGUMENT

In this chapter we aim to discuss some aspects of the Davis-Moore argument and some criticisms of its basic functional premises, pointing out, wherever possible, indications of the "perspectives" (in Mannheim's sense) which underlie contributions by proponents and critics to the controversy.

In the 1945 article, Davis and Moore, starting from the proposition that no society is "unstratified", attempt to explain the "universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any social system," and to specify those factors which determine the rank of various social positions. Briefly, their argument runs as follows:- any society must motivate individuals to fill various positions which are necessary for the production of goods and services in a society. Further, any society must motivate individuals, once having attained those positions, to diligent performance of the duties involved. Some positions require particular abilities and talents, and are "more important" to society than others. Since talented and trained personnel are scarce, there must be a system of differentially distributed rewards, in order to motivate appropriate individuals to aspire to important positions, to acquire the necessary training for them, and, once

in them to perform duties diligently. Rewards are of three types:- things which contribute to sustenance and comfort; things which contribute to humour and diversion; and, things which contribute to "self respect and ego expansion". The two determinants of differential reward are a) the functional importance of positions and b) the scarcity of talented, trained personnel. The distribution of unequal rewards by position is determined by both factors.

"Social inequality is thus an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons."¹

They proceed, from the explanation for the universal existence of stratification, to attempts to explain both the roughly uniform distribution of rewards between major types of position in every society, and also, the variations which occur in stratification systems from one society to another: Uniform trends are explicable in terms of four "major societal functions" i.e. religion, government, economic activity, and technology. Positions responsible for the direction of these activities are the most functionally important in every society, and are uniformly highly rewarded. Variations are explained in terms of whatever factors

* 1. K. Davis and W.E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," American Sociological Review, 1) (April, 1945), p. 243.

affect the two determinants of reward, functional importance and scarcity of personnel. These factors are subsumed under two headings, i.e. the degrees of internal development (technological, economic and cultural conditions) and the "external conditions faced by a society," (e.g. war or peace with other societies.)

In the discussion of the first "major societal function," i.e. religion, Davis and Moore explain as follows the fact that religious functionaries are highly rewarded in terms of wealth, power and prestige in every known society:

"The reason why religion is necessary is apparently to be found in the fact that human society achieves its unity primarily through the possession by its members of certain ultimate values and ends in common..."¹

How highly religious functionaries are rewarded relative to other positions, depends on a number of factors. One factor is the "nature" of the ultimate values and ends which are held in common. For example, where ultimate values tend to be expressed in anthropomorphic rather than in transcendental terms, as in technologically advanced, in contrast to mediaeval societies, the position of priest is less functionally important, and thus less highly rewarded, relative to other positions. Other 'internal' factors range from "the degree of occupational specialization," "the existence of an economic surplus," and "the illiteracy of

1. Ibid. p. 246.

the populace."

Davis and Moore apply similar arguments to the "societal functions" of government, economic activity, and technology.

One major concern of critics of the Davis-Moore argument is to examine the concept of "functional importance":- Tumin interprets the "functional importance" of a position to refer to the degree of contribution to "social survival," and questions the status of propositions containing the latter term, as contingent propositions. Tumin argues that "survival value" is unclear, unmeasurable and possibly tautological. (By tautological he intends that if the "status quo" means everything present in it, all parts must be considered positively functional in the sense that they are part of the "status quo")¹ Simpson² states that it is impossible to validate empirically lists of necessary conditions for social survival, and points out that Tumin and Davis³ both suggest lists which differ significantly from each other.

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1. Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critique," American Sociological Review, 18 (August, 1953), p. 88.
 2. Richard Simpson, "A Modification of the Functional Theory of Social Stratification," Social Forces, 35 (December, 1956), p. 132.
 3. Kingsley Davis, Human Society, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 30; John Bennett and Melvin M. Tumin, Social Life: Structure and Function, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948) p. 2.

"This difference indicates the basic weakness of such lists. Any investigator is free to invent his own list, and no one can gainsay him, for no one has found a way to test the validity of such a list..."¹

To the objection that necessary conditions for social survival are impossible to validate by experimentation, Davis replies that the impossibility of empirical tests does not of itself, make a concept worthless.² However, Simpson raises the more pertinent issue that lists of functional prerequisites are perhaps determined by the sociologist's intuitive evaluation of those positions which are most essential:-

"The reasoning with regard to these universal social needs is often circular. Positions are said to be important because they meet one of the needs, but one suspects that some of the needs have been invented to account for the positions, it having been assumed in advance that the positions must be functional or they would not exist."³

The suggestion that Davis and Moore's statement of "universal social needs" is derived from a particular conception of society, is developed by Huaco, who asserts that these universally necessary functions are in fact the "various analytical parts of their implicit model of society."⁴ To support this contention, Huaco

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1. R. Simpson, op.cit., 133.
 2. Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis as a Special Method in Sociology and Anthropology," 24, (December, 1959), p. 768.
 3. R. Simpson, op.cit., p. 133
 4. George Huaco, "A Logical Analysis of the Davis-Moore Theory," American Sociological Review, 28, (October, 1963) p. 802.

demonstrates that the four "major societal functions" correspond to the four analytical levels of the Marxian model of society:-

DAVIS

Religion
Government
Economic Activity
Technology

MARX

Upper layer of superstructure
Lower layer of superstructure
Relations of Production
Forces of Production

Davis' only reply to these criticisms, is that the concept of functional importance is unmeasurable and evaluative. But,

"Rough measures of functional importance are in fact applied in practice. In wartime, for example, decisions are made as to which industries and occupations will have priority in capital equipment, labor recruitment, raw materials, etc. In totalitarian countries the same is done in peacetime, as also in underdeveloped areas attempting to maximise their social and economic modernization. Individual firms must constantly decide what positions are essential and which are not."¹

Huaco objects that Davis' examples are drawn from economic systems of production which are either partly or totally planned, and as such are "useless for drawing inferences applicable to unplanned systems."² Most societies throughout history, he asserts, have been "unplanned." Unfortunately Huaco's comment denies the facts that human conduct is purposive i.e. goal-oriented, and that, due to government legislation many areas of social interaction are regulated. However, the point

1. Kingsley Davis, "Reply," American Sociological Review, 18 (1953) No. 4, p. 395.

2. G. Huaco: A Logical Analysis of the Davis-Moore Theory, op.cit., p. 803.

may be made that an over-all commitment to some goals and a systematic implementation of them is not as typical of human societies generally conceived, as is the case in business enterprises and industrial organizations.

Davis' reply does not clarify his earlier discussion of functional importance. In his examples above, the criterion of a position's importance is the subjective evaluation of it, according to certain ends, by political or economic groups within society. In the 1945 article the proponents clearly intended a position's importance to be determined "objectively" by the sociologist. To this end, they suggested that the uniformly most important positions in every society are those which perform "major societal functions," whilst shifts in the relative importance of these positions are attributable to an array of internal and external social factors. According to this statement, political leaders may be disapproved by groups within society, but the latter's subjective evaluations are strictly irrelevant to a sociological statement of the functional importance of major governmental positions.

Some sociologists have criticised the concept of "functional importance" in closer detail:- Simpson considers two clues for the determination of relative functional importance that were given by Davis and

Moore in a foot-note to the original article:¹

- (a) the degree to which a position is unique, there being no other position that can perform the function in question
- and (b) the degree to which other positions are dependent upon the one in question.

He objects that the suggested "clues" do not suffice to assess the relative functional importance of the positions of "garbage collector" and "janitor"

"These positions are presumably about equal in functional uniqueness and the extent to which other positions depend on them. Yet we might feel that the garbage collector is more important since uncollected refuse presents a more serious problem than unswept floors."²

The "clues" were intended to supplement the Davis-Moore argument, but Simpson's objection misses its central concern to show that the most important positions in every society must carry rewards great enough to prevent scarce, qualified personnel from being attracted into less functionally important positions. It would have been more consistent with this central concern to ask why such similar positions as janitor and garbage collector etc. carry uniformly low reward in every society, than to demand a statement of the relative rank of all occupational positions in a given society.

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1. K. Davis and W.E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," op.cit., Footnote 3, p. 244.
 2. R. Simpson: A Modification of the Functional Theory of Stratification, op.cit., p. 133.

Elsewhere, Simpson argues,

"Although it may be admitted that a position which is uniquely capable of performing an essential function is important, this statement still begs the question of how essential a given function is."¹

Again, he has not considered the entire argument. The proponents not only designated "major societal functions," but also ventured to suggest that some "functions" (i.e. the integration of common ends) may be "more essential" than another, (i.e. the discovery of the technical means to the given ends.):-

"...the importance of technical knowledge from a societal point of view is never as great as the integration of goals which takes place on the religious, political and economic levels."²

One general feature of the above criticisms and of Davis' reply, is the tendency to overlook Davis and Moore's attempt to determine the most important positions by reference to "major societal functions." The concept of "societal function" contains two logically separate propositions. One concerns the existence of functional prerequisites, the other the structural arrangements indispensable to their fulfillment. The confusion of two distinct propositions is evident in the following statement:-

1. Ibid.

2. K. Davis and W.E. Moore; "Some Principles of Stratification," op.cit., p. 247.

"Owing to the universal necessity of certain functions in society which require social organisation for their performance, there is an underlying similarity in the kind of position put at the top, the kind put at the middle and the kind put at the bottom of the scale."¹

(my emphasis)

The question of which activities are necessary to the "survival" of a society is logically prior to an attempt to determine which structural arrangements are indispensable to the performance of those activities. Since however, neither proponents nor critics have discussed the former concept of functional prerequisite, we shall examine the discussion provided by Aberle et al.² Their model of society is more qualified but basically similar to Davis and Moore's conception of society as a "system of action."

Aberle et al begin their essay by defining "society" as distinct from organization, community, and culture, as,

"a group of human beings sharing a self-sufficient system of action which is capable of existing longer than the life-span of an individual."³

They then stipulate four conditions any one of which is sufficient to bring out the termination of a

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1. K. Davis: Human Society, op.cit., p. 371.
 2. D.F. Aberle, A.K. Cohen, A.K. Davis, M.J. Levy Jr., and F.X. Sutton, "The Functional Prerequisites of a Society," Ethics, 60 (January, 1950) pp. 100-111.
 3. Ibid. p. 101.

society. These are as follows, "the biological extinction or dispersion of the members," "apathy of the members," "the war of each against all," and the "absorption of the society into another society." With these negative conditions in mind the article proceeds to a list of prerequisites i.e. conditions which must be met to ensure social survival.

The essay contains a number of difficulties. For instance, the process of justifying the inclusion of each functional prerequisite in their list is determined in part by their conception of society as a "self-sufficient system of action." The assertion that "the control of disruptive behaviour" is a functional prerequisite follows directly from the conception of society as an "integrated system." A theorist, such as Riesman, who conceives conflict as endemic to society, fails to see why a society cannot "survive" unless disruptive behaviour is effectively controlled. This is the implication of Riesman's statement:-

"...societies can tolerate even without disintegration, much more disorganisation and even ruin than many people recognize."¹

A second major difficulty is that not all the four "negative conditions" are, as they claim, contingent

1. David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study in Changing American Character*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, (1953), p. 45.

statements. According to their discussion, the condition of the "war of each against all," is a condition in which, normative regulation is absent and human conduct is based on "force and fraud." It follows from the definition of "society" as a "system of action" that the meanings attributed to situations involving other human beings cannot be purely private; that is, in order for a "system of action" to exist, there must be some common patterns in the way human beings define such situations. Now, if it is true by Aberle et al's definition of society that human behaviour must be normatively regulated, their statement, "the realisation of the condition of the war of each against all" (i.e. in which no norms exist) leads to the demise of a society," also follows from their definition of society.

Aberle et al claim to determine functional prerequisites by reference to contingent conditions but in those instances where they refer to the "war of each against all" this is clearly not the case. For this condition, whilst it may be more or less approximated in different societies, cannot be fully realised in a given society. It is not an empirical reality but the hypothetical antithesis of "society" as defined by Aberle et al, i.e. an indeterminate flux as opposed to a "system of action". By contrast, conditions such as the "biological extinction of the

members," and "the absorption of the society into another society," may be regarded as conditions which can be fully realised in an empirical instance, for example, in the cases of the Tasmanian aborigines and of some tribe of American Indians in the U.S. society, respectively.

In summary, the examination of Aberle et al. attempt to justify a list of functional prerequisites, demonstrates the point suggested by Tumin, Huaco and Simpson, that a statement of functional needs depends ultimately on the selected model of society or the particular conception of human behaviour adopted.

Davis and Moore's "societal functions" are generally assumed by critics to be functional prerequisites, but some clearly entail a relativized notion of functional requirement which refers to the "proper functioning," of a society, and not its "barest survival". For example, the "functions of technology," as presented by Davis and Moore, are requirements for the efficient production of goods and services in complex, industrial societies. They stress the differential talent and training required by highly specialized positions in these societies.

"The explanation of why positions requiring great technical skill receive fairly high rewards...is the simplest case of the rewards being so distributed to draw talent and motivate training."¹

1. K. Davis and W.E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," op.cit., p. 247.

As Aberle et al point out such emphasis is incorrect for societies, "so simple that any technique can be learned by any individual who is not feeble-minded."¹ Schwartz's study² also indicates the inappropriateness of Davis and Moore's stress on differential talent and training for some societies. In his study of an Israeli collective farming community, he notes the development of a surplus of personnel qualified to perform important administrative positions. These individuals were routine, unskilled workers, who had acquired over a generation, the knowledge and skills required by administrative jobs. ~

Davis and Moore have considered the "functions of technology" solely in the context of complex, industrial societies, and thus implicitly incorporate the concept of a functional requirement relative to the "proper functioning" of this type of society. However, they do not use this relativized concept in an empirically meaningful way, for they fail to specify for a given system the range of possible states within which the system may be said to be "properly functioning." They recognize, in principle, the need for such precise empirical delineation, where they say that the "functional importance" of positions is deter-

1. Aberle et al., op. cit., p.105

2. Richard Schwartz, "Functional Alternatives to Inequality," American Sociological Review, 20 (August, 1955), pp. 424-30.

mined by a wide range of variables which include the level of technological development, political and economic institutions etc. But they make no use of this observation in their explanation, since the listed variables are not dealt with systematically in their inter-connections with the functional requirements of a given system.

Turning now in our discussion of "major societal functions," to the logically secondary proposition that a particular structural arrangement is indispensable to the fulfillment of a designated functional requirement, Merton¹ points out that at least one assertion by Davis and Moore in this respect is unwarranted by the empirical facts of modern societies:- They assert that "religion" is indispensable to meeting the functional requirement of the "integration of common values," but this statement is hardly consistent with the tendency for conflicting evaluations of problems of widespread concern (e.g. birth control) to be fostered by diverse religious groups within modern industrial societies. Moreover, there is no evidence that non-religious people subscribe less readily to common values than those devoted to religious doctrines, but this assumption is implicit in their proposition.

1. R.K. Merton: Social Theory and Social Structure, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, (1949) Chapter I.

Davis and Moore are extremely selective in their "universal" statements of indispensable structural arrangements. If we ask what particular empirical facts are subsumed under the generic term "religion," it becomes clear from constant references to "the priesthood," and "the religious activities"¹ in a discussion which ranges from mediaeval to modern types of society, that they have in mind the existence of a single, unified religious organization. Whilst this assumption may be correct for some primitive societies, it is clearly incorrect for modern industrial societies.²

Another possible line of objection is that each of the functional requirements designated by Davis and Moore may be met in a number of ways other than by the structural arrangement they select. Thus one might suggest that "the integration of common ends" may be as well effected by political ideology and organized mass meetings as by religious belief and ritual.³

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1. For example, "...it is easily possible for intellectuals to exaggerate the degree to which the priesthood in a presumably secular milieu has lost prestige," in "Some Principles of Stratification" by K. Davis and W.E. Moore, op.cit., p. 245.
 2. See R.K. Merton: Social Theory and Social Structure, op.cit., p. 19.
 3. R.D. Schwartz applies this kind of reasoning to the statement of the functional indispensability of stratification made by the proponents.

So far we have been concerned with conceptual problems. Stinchcombe,¹ however, is less concerned with these than with the possibility of validating empirically statements which include the term "functional importance." The legitimacy of the Davis-Moore argument rests upon the possibility of deriving verifiable empirical consequences from it:- He suggests that having identified changes likely to occur in the relative functional importance of positions, due to changes in internal or external conditions of the society in question, one could state the consequences likely to result in empirical terms. For example, one could predict that in times of war, the position of general is more important relative to other positions, than in peace-time. Thus one would theoretically expect generals to be more highly rewarded than groups "which have nothing to do with victory," (his examples are those charged with the care of incurables, the aged etc.)

Stinchcombe states that if the "derived" empirical consequences do not in fact occur, then it may be a) because the theory is untrue b) because the position of general is not in fact more important relative to other positions in time of war,

1. A.L. Stinchcombe, "Some Empirical Consequences of the Davis-Moore Theory," American Sociological Review, 28, (October, 1963) p. 805.

or, c) because sociological measurements of reward may be inadequate.

A closer scrutiny of the Davis-Moore argument reveals other difficulties for empirical validation. Variations in positional ranking are to be understood not only in terms of whatever factors affect the functional importance of positions, but also those which affect the scarcity of qualified personnel. Stinchcombe ignores the latter determinant and thus fails to see that the Davis-Moore argument embraces the possibility that his "derived" consequences will not occur. One could explain the absence of increased rewards for generals in terms of their theory ; for example, since the common desire of members for national victory motivates a relatively greater number of scarce, qualified personnel to aspire to be generals, extra inducements in the form of rewards are unnecessary. The example is speculative, but it serves to point out that any discrepancy between consequences "derived" from the explanation , and actual observations can in theory be attributed to a wide array of "other factors" in the situation. This, in effect, makes their analysis immune to empirical disproof:

Some critics have argued that the logic of the Davis-Moore argument is reminiscent of classical economics theory. Riessman comments,

"Indeed, Adam Smith reached almost the same conclusion and for almost the same reasons when he discussed why certain occupations

should command a higher remuneration than others."¹

Simpson² restates the argument in terms of supply-demand analysis. The concept of functional importance is interpreted as the "effective demand" of the consuming public. Similarly, scarcity of qualified personnel is viewed as one factor which affects the supply of position holders.

Factors affecting the demand for positions and the services they provide, are:- a)"cultural values":where most members of a given society evaluate highly religious activities, the position of priest will be demanded and highly rewarded with prestige, wealth and power etc. In contrast, a society where secular activities are evaluated highly such positions as entertainer , businessman, etc., will carry the highest rewards. b)technology: whereas in a technologically advanced society, engineers are in great demand, in a simple, non-literate society occupations are not generally differentiated in terms of skill. c)the power of groups and individuals to reward,i.e. some positions more than others endow their incumbents with the resources which facilitate the hiring and rewarding of servants.

Factors affecting the supply of position-holders and

1. L. Riessman, Class in American Society, Glencoe: The Free Press, (1959).

2. R.Simpson, op. cit., p.132.

and their services are: a) talent and training necessary to the conscientious performance of positional tasks. b) power to restrict the supply of personnel; for example professional associations restrict entry into their professions, labour unions monopolize the supply of labour available to employers. c) product differentiation: through mass media advertising, the consuming public is persuaded of the uniqueness of a particular product, in that no other item can provide the satisfaction it affords. d) the process of career choice: values, goals, family and social background, lead different people to choose different occupations. e) labour mobility: the degree of ease with which workers can shift from one occupation to another affects the speed with which imbalances (in which rewards of one occupation fall, while those of another rise) can be rectified.

The supply and demand of services provided by different positions, together determine positional ranking.

"Assuming a given supply of these services the greater the demand for them, the higher will be their rewards. Assuming a given demand for these services, the more limited the supply of those who can furnish them, the higher will be the rewards."¹

Simpson modifies the Davis-Moore argument to include as determinants of positional ranking a wider range of factors, than the importance of positions, and the

1. R. Simpson, op.cit., p. 134.

scarcity of qualified personnel; for example, the "power" of groups within society to influence the general distribution of rewards. The unequal rewards of prestige and wealth "attached to" the positions afford their incumbents greater opportunities to hire and reward servants and assistants or to restrict entry into their privileged groups. However, in making this point, Simpson abandons Davis and Moore's central concern with how positions are attained. The "power of groups within society to influence the general distribution of positional rewards," concerns the behaviour of incumbents once positions have been attained, and this is explicitly beyond the scope of Davis and Moore's analysis.¹

Further, Simpson abandons the proponents' major functional premises. He translates, "functional importance," as the effective demand for the services a position provides by the consuming public. Thus, the sociologist's "objective" judgement, is explicitly replaced by the subjective evaluations of the members of a society, of the "importance" of a position. He replaces Davis and Moore's attempt to explain the ubiquity of stratification in terms of its positive functionality for the entire system, by a narrower aim to show which factors are most significant in determining the relative rank of all occupations in a

1. K. Davis and W.E. Moore, op.cit., p. 242.

given society.

In some respects, these modifications improve the argument. The proponents conclude that certain positions, due to their functional indispensability must carry high rewards in every society but Simpson argues that the shape of a give system of differential positional rewards depends upon the combined operation of a wide range of factors. E.g. He recognizes that the level of technological development influences the demand for certain types of positions and services: His schema allows for changes in the distribution of rewards which are denied by Davis and Moore's statements of the inevitability of high rewards for some types of position.

Simpson also qualifies Davis and Moore's behavioural assumption that qualified personnel will not train or perform diligently in complex, exacting positions, unless induced to do so by the offer of differential rewards. Their assumption that a rational calculation of self-interest is the major factor in the career choices of most individuals, is qualified by the extension of the factors which affect the supply of qualified personnel, to include the individual's goals, values and social background. Although Simpson makes explicit the supply-demand model of classical economics which underlies the Davis-Moore argument, he modifies the basic behavioural assumption of economic theory.

Clearly, Simpson has not "reduced" their argument to economic distribution theory, since rewards other than monetary ones are considered and since factors other than the price movements are seen to offset the supply of position-holders and their services.¹

In conclusion, following Mannheim's suggestion that the perspective of an intellectual body of knowledge is indicated by the partiality of its key-concepts, we argue that Davis and Moore's statements concerning, "major societal functions," are derived from a particular conception of society. The authors assume a high level of occupational specialization which requires differential ability and talent for some positions, and also highly unified religious organizations. Facts peculiar to complex industrial and simple non-literate societies respectively, are presented as "universal." Moreover, it is on the basis of these "universal" facts that high rewards for religious and technical positions are explained as "functionally indispensable" for all societies. Thus the proponents' conservative bias is illustrated by the attempt to explain stratified inequalities as universally necessary, without proper consideration of the respects in which societies differ.

1. Richard L. Simpson, op.cit., p. 134.

Furthermore, their emphasis on the inevitability of high rewards for certain positions, manifest a static bias in that they deny the possibility of future changes in the pattern of reward-distribution due to cultural and technological developments.

Although most critics challenge the proponents' claim that stratification is inevitable, their failure to examine the latter's basic functional premises or to explain stratification from a fundamentally different perspective renders most criticisms inconsequential. This indicates a defensiveness of the part of the critics, a trait which we will show later to be representative of the climate of American intellectual liberal thought in the 1950's.

Chapter III

SOME MAJOR OBJECTIONS TO THE DAVIS-MOORE ARGUMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to examine criticisms and replies which are directed to two main issues:- First, that stratification does not operate to meet effectively the functional requirement designated by Davis and Moore, and is in this sense, dysfunctional. Second, that the proposition stratification is indispensable to the meeting of the designated functional requirement is questionable on the grounds that evidence drawn from studies of experimental communities suggests the existence of alternative social arrangements; further, because the proposition rests on highly questionable assumptions about human motivation.

We attempt to indicate the "perspectives" underlying the arguments presented by proponents and critics alike, and to demonstrate that this area of the controversy is basically a conflict between "conservative" and "liberal" intellectuals, concerning the "justice" of stratified inequalities.

Most objections that stratification is dysfunctional are addressed to Davis and Moore's claim that, "social inequality...ensures that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons."¹

1. Kingsley Davis and W.E. Moore: "Some Principles of Stratification," American Sociological Review, 10, (April, 1945), p. 243.

Critics object that the proponents over-emphasize the efficiency with which stratification operates in this way as a selective mechanism since in every stratified society, many "potentially capable" individuals are not trained or recruited to important and exacting positions appropriate to their capabilities:- Under-privileged children experience obstacles in the development of appropriate motivation for training and upward mobility. Other obstacles result from the tendency for incumbents of highly-rewarded positions to give their own children absolutely or relatively greater opportunities to attain the same positions in the next generation, and from the tendency for elites (political, economic, professional etc.) to restrict access to their privileged positions. Thus, one critic asserts,

"Whether or not differential rewards and opportunities are functional in any one generation, it is clear that if those differentials are allowed to be socially inherited in the next generation, then the stratification system is specifically dysfunctional for the discovery of talents in the next generation."¹

Buckley claims, that, only if the facts of class inheritance are implicitly taken into account by defining "qualified persons" as those individuals with "socially nurtured and matured skills,"² are Davis and

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1. Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis," American Sociological Review, 18, (August, 1953), p. 389.
 2. Walter Buckley, "On Equitable Inequality," American Sociological Review, 28, (October, 1963) p. 799.

Moore correct in stating that in every society, stratification ensures that the most important positions are filled by the most qualified persons.

"In a word, the Davis-Moore theory can operate only within or on the base of the more fundamental facts of stratification in actual societies."¹

By "socially nurtured" skills Buckley presumably refers to the tendency for members of hereditary upper classes to teach their children certain skills, for example, those of administration and leadership in preparation for their later assumption of these positions. His point is, that if "qualified" means "potentially capable" individuals, equal access to training and recruitment to highly-rewarded positions must exist for all members of a society in order for stratification to operate as Davis and Moore describe it. The proponents' implication that the system of stratification accurately reflects the differential talents and abilities of members of the society, where they claim, "social inequality...ensures... most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons," entails an assumption of equal opportunity. But this under-states the discrepancy between the American ideal of equal opportunity and actual practice. Critics argue that Davis and Moore's explanation, "reproduces with remarkable faithfulness, a culturally circumscribed

1. Ibid.

ideology,"¹ offered by the privileged to the less fortunate, that "class differences" reflect "intellectual capacity."

Davis replies to these charges of ideological bias by pointing out that critics' objections are not based on careful scrutiny of the Davis-Moore argument, but on an adverse reaction to a demonstration of the necessity of an institution which they strongly disapprove. Of Tumin, Davis says,

"He argues throughout his critique that stratification does not have to be, instead of trying to understand why it is."²

However, in reply to critics' objections that stratification is dysfunctional, Davis acknowledges a degree of over-statement in the 1945 article: He draws attention to his account in "Human Society,"³ of the ways in which stratification is limited in its selective effect, by the operation of other institutions. By making a conceptual distinction not generally made by sociologists of stratification, between the system of unequal rewards "attached to" positions, and the ways in which individuals are recruited to them, Davis is able to accommodate the facts of the most rigidly

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1. W. Buckley, "Social Stratification and the Functional Theory of Social Differentiation," *The American Sociological Review*, 23, (August, 1958), p. 369.
 2. Kingsley Davis, "Reply," *American Sociological Review*, 18, (1953), p. 394.
 3. Kingsley Davis, *Human Society*: New York: The Macmillan Company, (1948), pp. 366-378.

stratified societies into his argument. In a caste society where positions are generally ascribed at birth, the selective effect of the system of stratification is said to be "limited" by the operation of another functionally necessary institution, the kinship system.

The institution of the family gives to the children of the incumbents of some positions in one generation, relatively or absolutely greater opportunities to attain the same positions in the next generation. But the family's limiting role is never complete due to such considerations as caste fertility and mortality differentials, changes in the physical environment and technological advances, which give rise to the creation of new roles and the destruction of old ones. Thus, there will always be some degree of vertical mobility which allows the system of stratification to induce qualified persons into important positions.

In these arguments, Davis, as the critics, assumes that a degree of individual mobility is a necessary condition for the efficient operation of stratification, as Davis and Moore account for it in the 1945 article. He concurs with the critics that restricted mobility and access to training and recruitment to important positions, prevent the "optimal utilisation of talent"¹

1. M.M. Tumin, op.cit., 389.

in a society. However, he claims that such restrictions result from the operation of the kinship system and the role of inheritance, not from stratification, defined as differential positional rewards. He points out that critics attribute restrictions to equal opportunity, to stratification, because they define stratification differently, i.e. to include the inheritance of class status. But,

"One cannot expect a theory designed to account for the universal existence of institutionalised inequality as between positions, to be at the same time, an explanation of class status."¹

Since proponents and critics agree that inequalities of opportunity for training and recruitment to highly-rewarded positions result from the inheritance of disprivilege, and are dysfunctional for the efficient production of goods and services in a society, one might suppose that the controversy would end there. However, critics proceed to object to Davis and Moore's definition of stratification. Buckley contends that their definition is "basic conceptual flaw" in their explanation. He claims the proponents confuse "social differentiation," the existence of specialised roles, with "social stratification," which he defines as,

"the existence of strata, generally agreed to refer to specifiable collectivities or sub-groups that continue through several generations to occupy the same

1. Kingsley Davis, "Reply," op.cit., p. 396.

relative positions and to receive the same relative amounts of material ends, prestige and power..."¹

Buckley's insistence on the "customary" definition of stratification, constructed from the writings of many European and American sociologists, to refer to "class inheritance" causes him to miss the point of Davis and Moore's conceptual distinctions. The proponents recognize that amongst socially differentiated roles, some are more important to the "proper functioning" or "survival" of society, than others. If the production of goods and services in a society is to be efficient, these roles must be conscientiously filled by competent persons. It is in terms of this functional necessity that they explain the ubiquity of stratification. The tendency for individuals, having attained important and highly-rewarded positions to pass them on, or, to pass on the opportunities for attaining them to their children, constitutes a logically distinct problem which Davis and Moore do not try to explain, but which is the main focus of Buckley's definition.

In reply to Buckley, Davis states that what is or is not to be called stratification is a purely terminological question, providing one distinguishes between the system of differential positional rewards and the

1. Walter Buckley, "Social Stratification and the Functional Theory of Social Differentiation," op.cit., p. 372.

ways in which particular individuals are recruited to them.¹ But Davis' reply begs the question. In order for Buckley to see the point of distinguishing these inter-related aspects of social stratification, he would have to recognise the universal existence of differential positional rewards as a problem in its own right.

We suggest that the way stratification is defined may not be a purely terminological matter, but may be related to the sociologist's desire to present social inequality in a favourable, or less favourable light. The fact the proponents define stratification in such a way that the "dysfunctions" of class inheritance cannot, logically, be attributed to it, may indicate a proclivity on their part, to make conceptual distinctions which support what is basically a political opinion of the desirability of social inequality. On the other hand, critics' refusal to seriously consider an argument which purport to show that, in some limited respects, stratification (as they define it) may be positively functional, indicates their political conviction of the injustice of stratified inequalities, and their desire to reduce them.

Certainly, there are clear indications that political opinions underly many of the objections and replies considered above. For example, Davis' conservative

1.K. Davis, "The Abominable Heresy: A Reply to Dr. Buckley," American Sociological Review, 24, (February, 1959), p.82.

attitudes are indicated by his assumption that "full" equality of opportunity would be dysfunctional for the entire social system in that requirements for family solidarity set limits to the degree of social mobility a society "can tolerate."¹ Interesting as such speculation is, very little empirical research has been directed to the relationship between rates of mobility and the stability of the social structures of given societies.² However, available studies undermine Davis' unqualified assumption that stable social structures are incompatible with much mobility. For example, in his studies of Newburyport, W. Lloyd Warner deliberately selected a community which he thought exemplified the social stability of "Yankee culture"³ Oscar Handlin, however, pointed out that this city had an extremely high rate of in-and-out migration.⁴

Davis' conservative opinion is indicated by an argument presented in Human Society, which we have not yet considered. He claims that stratification operates

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1. Kingsley Davis, Human Society, op.cit., p. 370.
 2. S.M. Lipset and R. Bendix, Social Mobility in Industrial Society, Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, (1959), p.264.
 3. W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Social Life of a Modern Community, New Haven: Yale University Press (1941), pp. 38-39.
 4. Oscar Handlin, "The Social Life of a Modern Community," New England Quarterly, Vol 15 (1942), p. 556.

at all times to induce the most qualified persons into the most important positions: One cannot explain, "the low estate of the sweeper castes in India, as compared with the priestly castes...by saying that sons of sweepers become sweepers, and the sons of Brahmins become Brahmins."¹ Since there is a tendency for some positions such as sweepers to be low and others, such as priests, to be high in the scale of differential positional rewards, Davis concludes, "the functional necessity behind stratification seems to be operative at all times, despite the concurrent of other functions,"² such as that of the kinship system.

If one distinguishes between the operation of stratification "at any given time," and "over-time," Davis' conclusion is seen to be both conservative and a-historical: He does not adequately account for the contemporary functioning of caste society for his claim that stratification operates at any given time in this type of stratified system, as a selective mechanism, under-states the extent to which occupations may be almost exclusively ascribed at birth. The historical origin of differential positional rewards could be partly explained in terms of their argument if one assumed that it was once necessary to attract

1. Kingsley Davis, Human Society, op.cit., p.370.

2. Ibid.

men into the priesthood. But again, one would have to assume that this selection of competent individuals took place before the development of hereditary strata and the tendency for positions to be ascribed at birth.

Dennis Wrong points out that the argument lacks a "truly historical perspective,"¹ because it fails to recognise that,

"Any theory of class structure, in dealing with a given historical period, must include prior class structures among its data;...and...any general theory of classes and class formation must explain the fact that classes coexisting at any given time bear the marks of different centuries on their brow..."²

Wrong prefers Schumpeter's historical account of changes "over time" in the position of families and firms within stable social structures and ultimately, of changes in the structures themselves. By viewing a given class structure in terms of such long-run changes as the gradual climbing, over several generations, of the representatives of a given family line to the point where an apparently secure hereditary class position is achieved, Schumpeter avoids Davis and Moore's error of interpreting a system of stratification as a "reflection of the available talent and ability," of the individual members of that society.

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1. Dennis H. Wrong, "The Functionalist Theory of Stratification: Some Neglected Considerations," *American Sociological Review*, 24, (December, 1959) p. 778.
 2. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes*, New York: Meridian Books, (1955) p. 111.

Strictly speaking, Davis and Moore's reiterated decision not to discuss stratification in terms of how individuals are recruited to positions, precludes consideration of patterns of upward mobility and class inheritance. But these considerations, are relevant to Davis' discussion of the kinship system, which, he says, limits the selective effect of stratification, by the transmission of stratified inequalities from one generation to the next: Davis has clearly failed to consider in precisely what ways the shape of the distribution of positional rewards may be modified over time by the changing class positions of families in that society.

Commenting on the ideological bias of the critics, Wrong observes,

"It is strange how insistence on the alleged inefficiency of unequal opportunities often leads sociologists to stress genetic endowments the importance of which they are disposed to minimise in other connections. I suspect that this argument is another instance of the proclivity of contemporary social scientists to find "factual" or instrumental reasons for supporting views they ultimately favor on ethical grounds."¹

Wrong's claim that critics over-emphasize differences of "potential capabilities" between individuals in order to demonstrate the "alleged inefficiency of unequal opportunities," is inaccurate, for, as we have seen, critics and proponents agree both that equal opportunity is restricted by class inheritance and that

1. D.H. Wrong, op.cit., p. 779.

this restriction is dysfunctional for the "optimal utilization of talent," in a society. Wrong's "demonstration" of critics' bias does in fact reveal his own conservative attitudes towards stratified inequalities.

Wrong claims that the bias of critics is indicated by their failure to consider that, unlike some positions, (e.g. mathematician, physicist etc.), other important positions do not depend on over-average genetic talents, but on administrative and leadership skill. These positions may be best filled by members of hereditary classes who are "to the manner born" and who have been "subjected to a process of character-molding beginning in infancy," in preparation for the later assumption of these roles.

This argument, (which, incidentally, was first presented by the English conservative philosopher, Edmund Burke) assumes the existence of "responsible" hereditary upper classes, i.e., that normative expectations exist on the part of all members for the efficient and conscientious performance of their duties. Wrong concedes that hereditary classes' monopoly of highly-rewarded positions may produce inadequate motivation to perform the necessary tasks adequately, but, "it cannot be assumed that a hereditary ruling class always degenerates into a "decadent" leisure class in the Veblenian sense." Responsible aristocracies,

"deeply imbued with an ethos of honor, responsibility and noblesse oblige," have existed in some societies.

Wrong's suggestion that critics have overlooked the possible development of a responsible hereditary ruling class, fails to take into account recent widely-noted developments in American society:- According to C. Wright Mills,¹ the main social division is not one of "class," but increasingly between a "power-elite" which makes all the major decisions and a "manipulated mass." The power-elite is not a "ruling class" in the sense of a stable and continuing group which pursues a settled policy, nor does hereditary ascription appear to be the principal means of entry into this powerful, unified group of political, business and military leaders. Furthermore, it is far from being "responsible." One of Mills' principal accusations levelled against the power-elite is that it is "irresponsible, and does not know exactly where it is going."²

However, Wrong's observation that critics exaggerate individual differences in genetic endowment is supported by the following exchange between Tumin and Moore, concerning the "justice" of stratified inequalities: Tumin overemphasizes genetic endowment to the total neglect of other well-known facts about human behaviour:-

1. C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite," New York: Oxford

2. T.B. Bottomore, Critics of Society, New York: Pantheon Books (1968), p. 57.

Tumin claims, "no society can expect or demand from an individual any more than that of which he is capable."¹ Amongst people of equal native endowment, differences in socially relevant traits such as occupational attainment, are determined by social factors, such as the inheritance of class status. Assuming men are equally conscientious, it is unfair that these socially determined differences should be rewarded unequally. Amongst people of unequal native ability, differences in occupational attainment are both genetically and socially determined. Thus it is unfair to reward highly differences which are both biologically and socially determined.

In reply,² Moore rightly points out that Tumin's moral argument is over-deterministic. The assumption of "equal conscientiousness" is a serious weakness in the argument, for one cannot dismiss purpose from human behaviour as the phrase implies. It is not feasible, writes Moore, to take the view that "society is all and the complexities of individual motivation are a purely dependent variable."

Tumin stresses differences in genetic endowment and in the inheritance of class status which determine an individual's occupational attainment, but forgets

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1. M.M. Tumin, On Equality, American Sociological Review, 28, (February, 1963), p. 26.
 2. W.E. Moore, "Rejoinder," American Sociological Review, 28, (February, 1963), p. 27.

that since individuals can choose whether or not to work diligently, they must be motivated to perform adequately in complex and exacting positions. Moore points out that different positions are unequally demanding in terms of the effort and skill required. Equal reward for unequal work, would, says Moore, require a degree of "martyrdom" hitherto unknown.

Tumin's exaggeration of genetic differences to the neglect of the purposive nature of human conduct, and the fact that various positions are unequally demanding, reveals the strength of his conviction of the "injustice" of stratification.

Schwartz¹ concurs with Davis and Moore's explanation of the ubiquity of stratification in terms of its operation as a selective mechanism, but presents empirical evidence for the existence of other social arrangements i.e. functional equivalents which have precisely the same selective effect:- This evidence is based upon a study of two Israeli settlements, which although similar in type of agriculture and ethnic composition etc., differ markedly in terms of economic organization. Orah is a collective kvutza in which material benefits are roughly equally distributed. There are few independent decision-making jobs and a large proportion of routine semi-skilled jobs. Tamim is a smallholders' moshav, in which most family heads must utilize their

1. Richard D. Schwartz, "Functional Alternatives to Inequality," *American Sociological Review*, 20, (August, 1955), pp. 424-30.

decision-making and administrative skills to secure a living.

Assuming all other factors equal, states Schwartz, one would expect a shortage of routine workers in the kvutza and a dearth of responsible decision-makers in the moshav. According to Davis and Moore's argument, one would expect differential rewards for each type of position for which qualified personnel are scarce. However, in each settlement measures other than differential rewards have developed to ensure qualified persons perform conscientiously in these positions. For example, in the kvutza one major way has been to change positional requirements so that they coincide more closely with available motivated skills. Mechanisation of farm work tends to reduce the number of routine jobs, whilst the number of decision-making jobs has been increased by the assumption of positions by members outside their own community in government settlement projects. In the moshav, positional requirements have been modified to coincide more closely with available skills, by the collective undertaking of economic activities which decreases the numbers of decision-making jobs; and increases the number of routine jobs.

Another major means of ensuring qualified persons fill important positions in each community is the modification of members' skills and motivation to suit

prevailing positional requirements. In the kvutza after continuous immigration of unskilled workers, many developed over time the necessary skills for decision-making jobs. A partial solution was found in limiting immigration i.e. accepting immigrant trainees for a short period but refusing them permanent membership in the community. Emigration of dissatisfied individuals and training programmes calculated to produce a low level of aspiration for managerial positions, have also served to modify the working population to suit the positional requirements of the kvutza.

Schwartz suggests that his evidence of the existence of functional equivalents to stratification poses this question for the Davis-Moore argument: "Why are not societies able to survive using the alternative social arrangements to stratification?" Davis and Moore must, he claims, extend their argument to account for the fact that stratification rather than one of its functional equivalents exists in most societies. Schwartz claims that the proponents cannot do so, without referring to the deliberate perpetuation of stratified inequalities by powerful groups within society. He suggests,

"They may have erred in stressing the maximum effectiveness instead of the individual satisfaction which inequality typically brings to those powerful enough to control the distribution of rewards."¹

1. R.D. Schwartz, op.cit., p.430.

Schwartz' argument is basically that an under-supply of appropriately skilled and motivated personnel may be rectified by means other than the offer of differential rewards, such as job rotation, emigration etc. The basic premise of his argument is speculative for he states, "...one would expect..." an under-supply of workers in each community. Schwartz is unable to demonstrate empirically that the social arrangements he discusses developed in each community as a response to the shortages of skilled personnel. Furthermore, Schwartz, as Richard Simpson, concentrates on one determinant of positional ranking, i.e. the scarcity of qualified personnel, to the neglect of the other, i.e. functional importance of positions. Since Schwartz does not show social arrangements other than stratification, meet the functional requirement of motivating qualified persons to fill adequately, important positions, it is doubtful whether his evidence requires Davis and Moore to modify their argument to include the power element of stratification.

However, some unexplored implication of Schwartz's evidence are significant. Davis and Moore's emphasis on the differential skill and ability required by various positions may be inappropriate for agrarian societies like the kvutza in which occupational specialization is so low that unskilled workers were able, over time, to develop the skills required for administrative positions. The proponent's neglect of Schwartz's

evidence, despite Davis' later statement, that the most relevant evidence for propositions about functional requirements is provided by experimental communities set up by religious or political sects,¹ indicates their commitment to the idea of the theoretical necessity of stratification on grounds which are ultimately moral and political.

Tumin challenges the motivational assumptions basic to the Davis-Moore argument.

"A generalized theory of social stratification must recognize that the prevailing system of inducements and rewards is only one of many variants in the whole range of possible systems of motivation which, at least, theoretically are capable of working in human society."²

He suggests the striving for differential rewards of income and prestige is not an indispensable motive which drives people to make the effort to occupy positions which are important and require training.

Three alternative motivational schemes are, "joy in work," "social service," and "social duty." Although no historical evidence of their institutionalization exists, Tumin asserts that this is in theory possible.

Davis rejects Tumin's "alternatives" to stratification.

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1. Kingsley Davis: The Myth of Functional Analysis as a Special Method in Sociology and Anthropology, American Sociological Review, 24, (1959), pp. 757-773.
 2. M.M. Tumin, Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis, op.cit., p. 388.

Motivation to attainment of complex and exacting positions cannot be based simply on "joy in work," for if everyone elected to do as he pleased, "the whole population would wind up in only a few types of position." "Unrewarded altruism" is inadequate to elicit socially adequate behaviour, "as any sociologist should know." Finally, Tumin's suggestion that, "social duty" could be institutionalized so that, "self and social interest come to coincide," is actually accomplished by the operation of differential rewards, as Davis and Moore explain.

Davis states that these three types of normative expectation actually motivate few people to attain demanding, important positions. Moreover, they are "supplementary rather than alternative," to stratification, in that they motivate some individuals to perform diligently in positions, but do not motivate individuals to attain those positions in the first place. Davis' basic objection is to the impossibility of the institutional changes Tumin suggests. The alternative motivational schemes are rejected as "utopian," in the sense that they repudiate the then known facts of human motivation. "...we were not concerned," says Davis, "with the indefinite or utopian future but with societies as we find them."¹

1. Kingsley Davis, Reply, op.cit., p. 397.

The above exchange represents a conflict of perspectives i.e. between a conservative outlook which stresses that the motivation of the human individual is unchanging, and an outlook, which in the Liberal-Progressive tradition emphasises the perfectibility of human nature and man's naturally co-operative virtues.

Tumin argues that Davis and Moore's assumptions about human motivation are not universally applicable to all known societies because some societies do not evaluate highly the differential skill and ability required by various positions, and do not reward such positions highly in terms of income. In Israeli Kibbutz, "a debate continues whether to assign higher, equal or lower salaries to the more versus the less skilled."¹ Although differential skill tends to be evaluated highly in industrial societies, there is nothing, "demonstrably natural," about reacting to it in this way.

"A number of additional facts such as very particular learned motivational schemes and social goals arranged in very particular hierarchies are required to be present and to be understood if we are to understand in turn why we have existing forms of occupational stratification."²

Tumin's distinction between social differentiation,

1. M.M. Tumin: "On Inequality," op.cit., p.20.

2. Ibid., pp. 20-21.

the ways in which positions differ in terms of the complexity, cleanliness etc. of its tasks, and stratification, the tendency for differentiated positions to be unequally rewarded in terms of prestige and income etc. is valuable. He rightly points out that comparisons in terms of the intrinsic characteristics of positions e.g. that one position requires more skill than another, have no, "exigent or unavoidable implications for stratification." Whether or not differences in the skill or cleanliness required by various positions give rise to differential prestige ratings etc. depends on how members of a society evaluate these intrinsic characteristics. But Tumin neglects to consider that differential skill may not be highly rewarded because, due to the low level of technological development and occupational specialization, one position does not require very much more than another. Thus, he emphasises "cultural variability" to the exclusion of objective variations in conditions such as level of technological development.

Elsewhere, Tumin attempts to challenge motivational assumptions basic to the Davis-Moore argument by showing that the American system of stratification prevents rather than enhances the development of appropriate motivation for adequate role-performance in every institutional area. His argument is as follows:--

"...if most available goods and services are distributed as rewards for performance of roles in the emphasised institution, other institutions will suffer from the absence of rewards required to motivate performance of necessary roles."¹

Tumin claims that the tendency for rewards to be concentrated in the economic structure of American society, "produces" relatively inadequate rewards for conscientious role-performance in other institutions, particularly the kinship system. Prestige, which is allocated primarily on the basis of income and occupation, has become the dominant criterion of an individual's moral and social worth in every institutional context. Since the "traditional" rewards for adequate performance of parental tasks, mainly, a range of personal gratifications, and community approval, are no longer adequate, economic criteria for evaluating role performance "invade" the family system. The invasion takes such forms as, "competition among parents for invidious distinction as parents in terms of the goods and services with which children are supplied."² The "invasion" is dysfunctional both for the family and the entire social system:- Parents rated low on the economic index of social worth are able to balance their unfavourable self-images with

1. M.M. Tumin, "Some Disfunctions of Institutional Imbalances," American Sociological Review, (February, 1963), p. 221.

2. Ibid., p. 219.

favourable definitions acquired through conscientious parenthood, as long as rewards gained in one institutional context are not subject to instrumental use in other institutional areas. If "social cohesion" depends significantly on the degree to which members sense their membership in society is valuable, the influx into family life of invidious distinctions based on economic criteria is likely to be dysfunctional for social cohesion.

Tumin's explicit aim to refute Davis and Moore's explanation is unsuccessful; since he is exclusively concerned with motivation to conscientious performance of positional tasks, that is, with behaviour after various positions in a society have been attained, he does not greatly undermine Davis and Moore's explanation of how positions come to be filled in the first place.

The major difficulty of the argument is that Tumin assumes prestige judgements are derived from economic variables, but he does not specify the presumed connection between position on one of the objective hierarchies of income scale or occupational classification and a "total prestige-rating" based upon it. Research evidence¹ indicates that the occupational - economic complex is the core of overall prestige ratings in American culture.

1. See, Milton M. Gordon: Social Class in American Sociology, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., (1963) especially, Chapter V.

Parsons¹ notes, too, that a society tends to emphasise certain criteria as more crucial for stratification than others, in terms of dominant values, and suggests that the occupational system is the dominant element in American social stratification. Nevertheless, these same studies indicate that there is much more than this core complex - an important addition consisting of such criteria as " styles of life," personal behaviour,² social participation and community power etc. Gordon notes that the exact method whereby these separate stratified variables are to be combined into an individual's "total prestige score" is as yet unresolved.

Given the multiplicity of variables which are relevant to a total prestige-rating, it is theoretically expectable that any given individual represents in himself dispersed positions on these several component criteria. For example, an individual may be low on the income scale but high in educational attainments. There is then, a certain degree of inconsistency in his over-all status situation.

Tumin's argument that prestige ratings derived from economic variables are subject to instrumental use in non-economic contexts of action, such as the institution

1. Talcott Parsons: "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," in his volume, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, revised ed., Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, (1954).

2. M. Gordon, op. cit., p. 177.

of the family entails an exaggeration of status consistency and comparability in complex industrial societies. By contrast, Davis and Moore are clearly aware of the existence of some status inconsistency where they state, "economic return" is one of the main indices of social status, but, " a position does not bring power and prestige because it draws a high income."¹ Further, Moore points out that Tumin's neglect of the problem leads him to imply that a society without substantial differentials in income would be "unstratified." But, "income equalization might well heighten the differentials," in other variables relevant to stratification.

Tumin's preoccupation with the economic aspect of stratification is indicated by his statements in other contexts. The following quotation indicates an early predisposition to emphasise the negative effects of stratification in its economic aspect. Throughout the text book in which the quotation appears, class conflict and economic determinism are stressed to an extreme. The post-war period of economic improvement is accounted for as follows:-

"In America the growing inequality in power among classes has been obscured by the relative equality in the area of wide dissemination of cheap, mass-produced commodities. This process works towards a blurring of some of the expectable attitude differences between classes in the face of disparity between ideal and real patterns."²

1. K.Davis and W.E. Moore, op.cit.,p. 246-247.

2. J.W. Bennett and M.M. Tumin: Social Life, New York: A.A. Knopf,(1948), p. 80.

What is "expectable" in American society is clearly determined by the authors' own preconceptions of the "ideal" society as classless.²

In other criticisms, Tumin attempts to show on the basis of a comparison of the job role and parental role in the U.S.A., that motivation to performance of positional tasks would be developed more efficiently by equal rather than unequal rewards.¹ This argument is that, whereas in the job structure rewards tend to be differentially allocated according to position, in the parent-role structure rewards (in the form of personal gratifications and community approval) tend to be given in direct proportion to effort. If one assumes, as Davis and Moore, that men can only be motivated to conscientious performance by the offer of differential rewards, the "average employee" should work harder than the "average parent." But, "actual behaviour reverses these theoretical expectations,"² since the average parent typically works hard regardless of personal rewards, whereas the average employee tends to calculate the minimum work required.

Tumin's comparison is unconvincing in view of the decisive affectional bonds between parent and child which are not present in the work situation; further, because he is exclusively concerned with performance of

1. Melvin M. Tumin, "Rewards and Task-Orientations," American Sociological Review, 20 (August, 1955), p.419-23.

2. Ibid., p. 421.

positional duties, rather than the attainment of positions in the first place. But more interesting from the point of view of a discussion of Tumin's ideological bias, is the marked discrepancy between the view of the American kinship system presented in this and in the article discussed above. In the former he considers available rewards for the performance of parent roles are adequate, yet in the other article, (written one year later) he claims such rewards are "inadequate" and are increasingly replaced by "economic criteria of moral and social worth." Tumin's determination to refute the Davis-Moore argument appears to exceed his desire for theoretical consistency.

In conclusion, we have attempted to identify the "perspectives" of proponents and critics, following Mannheim's suggestions, in terms of their partial or one-sided treatment of various concepts and problems, and by their failure to consider important arguments and empirical evidence presented by other contributors to the controversy. Mannheim suggests that perspectives may also be identified by the thinker's implicit or explicit model of how "fruitful thinking" can be carried on; but in the area of the controversy presented above proponents and critics do not differ in this respect - indeed critics do not often present objections to the Davis-Moore argument which assume different theoretical premises.

In a later chapter we shall relate the conflict of political opinion which has both initiated and sustained the controversy, to the conflicts between American liberal and conservative intellectuals during the course of the twentieth century. The failure of critics of the Davis-Moore argument to present an explanation of stratification from a radically different sociological perspective will then be explicable in terms of the liberal intellectual's lack of a viable political ideology, which would provide an alternative to the prevailing conservative mood of the fifties.

Chapter IV

FUNCTION AND CAUSE: A METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

In the preceding chapter we reviewed the controversy surrounding the Davis-Moore argument in terms of the political perspectives underlying various criticisms and replies. But not all contributions to the controversy manifest ideological bias. Some objections to the argument are based on a conception of causal, scientific explanation of human behaviour, which differs markedly from that of the proponents.

We begin the discussion of the scientific status of the Davis-Moore argument by demonstrating in a logical and systematic manner the implications for it of some issues raised by the critics.

In the 1945 article, the proponents argue that stratification meets a designated functional requirement, and then conclude,

"Hence, every society no matter how simple or complex must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."¹

Davis and Moore do not define the particular force of "hence" But they appear to proceed from a statement of a functional requirement to a categorical assertion that a certain institutional form is a necessary feature of

1. Kingsley Davis and W.E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, 10 (April, 1945), p. 243.

any society. Later, Davis claims that the statement of the theoretical necessity of stratification is a general hypothesis inferred from the known facts of human societies.

"If a social form is actually found in all known societies it would seem harmless to entertain the hypothesis that it is indispensable."¹

He claims further that it is a contingent statement, in principle susceptible of verification or falsification, although the latter is unlikely in view of the ubiquity of stratification.

Tumin interprets the proposition as a statement of some "inherent necessity" in the "nature of man" to be unwilling to work hard or acquire specialized knowledge, unless induced to do so by the offer of differential rewards. Davis and Moore's assumption that a particular motivational pattern is a permanent feature of human behaviour is not a correct inference from available evidence, for there are indications that man is capable of institutionalizing a range of alternative motivational schemes other than inducement by differential reward.

In reply, Davis objects that the "evidence" Tumin

1. Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis as a Special Method in Sociology and Anthropology, 24, (December, 1959), reprinted in System, Change and Conflict, ed., N.J. Demerath and P.A. Peterson, New York, Free Press (1967).

presents is largely speculative. His alternative motivational schemes are "utopian" in that they do not reflect real social developments.

Unfortunately the exchange of ideas stops there. But the question has been raised of whether Davis is warranted in calling the proposition, that stratification is theoretically necessary, a predictive inference. According to Hempel's analysis¹ the proposition contains two distinct predictions:- (1) a designated functional prerequisite will always be satisfied, and, (2) this functional prerequisite will always be satisfied by means of stratification.

The first prediction assumes, "a general law to the effect, that, within certain limits of tolerance and adaptability a system of the kind under analysis will - either invariably or with a high degree of probability - satisfy by developing appropriate traits, the various functional requirements...that may arise from changes in its internal state and environment."² Hempel calls this a (general) hypothesis of self-regulation. Only if it is possible to specify the empirical referents of the key terms, "system," "limits," "adaptation" etc.,

1. Carl G. Hempel, "The Logic of Functional Analysis," in Symposium on Sociological Theory, Ed. Llewellyn Gross, New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row Publishers, (1959), Chap.9.

2. This rests on Hempel's view of scientific explanation as the subsumption of individual events under general causal laws.

of this general, hypothetical law is it possible to give clear empirical meaning to such connections as "hence," and "consequently." The hypothesis that a social system will tend to fulfill its own requirements must be given in an objectively testable form. Otherwise, a prediction based upon it will be, in principle, unverifiable. At its simplest, the problem is, how can the prediction that a given functional requirement will be satisfied, be verifiable, if one cannot state in empirical terms what it means for a "system" to "function properly." Since Davis and Moore do not attempt to delineate these terms precisely, as we showed in Chapter Two, the first part of their predictive inference is unsatisfactory.

The second part of Davis and Moore's prediction is that the designated functional requisite will always be satisfied by means of stratification. They assume there are adequate grounds for stating that a given social form is indispensable to the fulfillment of a particular functional requirement. As Hempel points out, the empirical grounds for this assumption are questionable. Parsons, for example, states that, "the function of the rain dance might be subserved by some other ceremonial," in order to demonstrate that in many concrete cases there appear to be a number of cultural items which can effectively meet the same functional requirement. Furthermore, Merton has insisted that the concept of the

functional indispensability of given cultural items and structural arrangements be replaced by the concept of functional equivalents in sociological research.

In addition to these general considerations, one critic of the Davis-Moore argument has presented empirical evidence for the existence of social arrangements which meet precisely the same functional requirement as stratification.

These considerations have serious implications for the scientific status of the proponents' prediction that stratification is functionally necessary and inevitable. This is a matter of logical inference. The statement that a given cultural item (x) is a necessary feature of a social system may be validly inferred from two propositions:- One, that according to a general law of self-regulation, a certain functional requirement must always be met; two, that there are adequate grounds for expecting (x) rather than one of its functional equivalents to meet this functional requirement.

The above points may be presented in schematic form¹ as follows:-

- (a) If system (s) is to function properly,
(proper functioning being defined in terms of specified internal and external conditions) then condition (n) must be satisfied at some future time (t).

1. Carl Hempel, op.cit., p. 283.

(b) If item (x) were present in (s) then as an effect, requirement (n) would be satisfied.

(c) (Then), (x) is present in (s) at (t).

The failure of Davis and Moore to provide adequate grounds for stating propositions (a) and (b) means that they cannot validly infer (c). Thus their statement, "stratification is a necessary characteristic of any society," appears to be very limited in its predictive import, when it is considered on the basis of a strict view of scientific explanation.

Critics, Dore and Bredemeier, deny that Davis and Moore's functional explanation of stratification is a scientific causal theory on the grounds that conditions under which one can make the transition from a statement of "the function of x;" to a statement of the "cause of x" contain serious difficulties.

Bredemeier¹ criticizes the legitimacy of calling an explanation in terms of function, causal. He maintains that sociologists often confuse statements concerning the functional consequences of (x) with statements concerning the causes of (x). This confusion stems from their tendency not to distinguish two separate approaches to functional analysis: Explanations which attempt to assess the part played by an observed item (x) in the maintenance of some larger system (y) in which (x) is

1. Harry C. Bredemeier, "The Methodology of Functionalism," American Sociological Review, 20, (April, 1955), p. 173.

included, are of the general form, "the function of (x) for (y) is (t)," where (t) are the consequences of (x) for (y). On the other hand, explanations which attempt to explain the origin of (x) must look for the causes of (x) itself. Sociologists, however, often confuse these distinct kinds of explanation and incorrectly assume that, having shown, "the function of (x) for (y) is (t)," they have explained the cause of (x).

The transition from one type of conclusion to the other is logically incorrect. The statement "the function of (x) for (y) is (t)," can be translated into this statement, "a contributing cause of (y) is (t) of (x)." Thus, whilst a functional explanation of a given cultural item does tell us something of the contributing cause of the wider system in which the item is implicated, this kind of explanation tells us nothing of the cause of that item, itself.

With specific reference to the Davis-Moore argument the statement, "stratification functions to make the division of labour workable," may explain stratification as a contributing cause (or cause of the persistence) of the division of labour, but it says nothing about the "cause" of stratification itself.

In reply, Davis argues that the functionalist approach does not examine only the consequences of a cultural item for the wider social system.¹ In sociology as in science, some kind of system is usually

1. Kingsley Davis, *The Myth of Functional Analysis*, op.cit., p. 393.

being dealt with. Thus, "an analysis of the effect of one factor must always be made with the possibility in mind of the return effect, or "feed-back." Accordingly, Bredemeier overlooks the reciprocal influences of "cause" and "consequences," whereby an effect may, in turn, come to modify its original cause.

Davis' example of the operation of a "feed-back" is, significantly, biological.

"...the increase of fish (y) in a pond has the effect of increasing the toxicity (x) of the water, the growth of the fish population (y again) will eventually cease unless other factors intervene."¹

But whereas the concept of "feed-back" may apply to items and their effects which can be empirically delineated and measured as in his example, it is difficult to see how the concept applies to the Davis-Moore explanation of stratification, in which such precise delineation is not even attempted.

Huaco's critique² is relevant here. He points out the ambiguity of the Davis-Moore argument involved in their statements of the relation of stratification to the operation of two factors, the functional importance of positions and the scarcity of qualified personnel. They state

1. Ibid.

2. George Huaco, "A Logical Analysis of the Davis-Moore Theory of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, 28, (October, 1963), pp. 801-804.

the operation of the two factors given above i.e. the functional operation of stratification is determined by the operation of an underlying mechanism. In another part of their argument they explain stratification according to the, "proper functionalist approach," in terms of its consequences for the wider social system. Here, stratification is said to be an "unconsciously evolved device;" that is, a determinant, which ensures that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Huaco concludes,

"In the first version of the theory, unequal rewards are the effect of the operation of the mechanism surrounding unequal functional importance; in the second version of the theory, unequal rewards are the cause of the operation of the mechanism surrounding unequal functional importance."¹

One might suppose from this that Davis' concept of "feedback" is an attempt to justify the ambiguity of the inter-relationships of the various factors considered.

Some contributors to the controversy have specified the conditions under which they would accept that a functional explanation of a given item (x), in terms of its consequences for the wider system (y), constitutes a statement of the cause of (x).

Bredemeier argues that the transition is logically

1. G. Huaco, op.cit., p. 804. Note that Huaco omits the second determinant of positional ranking, scarcity of qualified personnel. Generally critics deal with one or the other, but rarely both.

adequate if the individuals who compose the group or society examined can be said to be aware of, and intend, the consequences of (x) for (y).¹ In Merton's terms this means that the explanation must be conceptualized on the level of "manifest functions," to refer to, "those objective consequences for a specified unit... which contribute to its adjustment or adaption and were so intended."²

Dore adopts a similar view. "Sociologists are not always precluded from making the...transition from the function of x to the cause of x. Human institutions are now purposefully designed on a scale rarely attempted before." He cites as an example the causal explanation of the origin of Chinese communes in terms of the intended purposes of historically identifiable groups and individuals.³

Wrong⁴ and Schwartz implicitly adopt the same view when they suggest that a full causal account of stratification must refer to the intended purposes of powerful

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1. Harry C. Bredemeier, *The Methodology of Functionalism*, op.cit., p.173-180.
 2. Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, (1949), Chap.I.
 3. Ronald Philip Dore, "Function and Cause," *American Sociological Review*, 26, (December, 1961), pp.843-853.
 4. Dennis H. Wrong, "The Functionalist Theory of Stratification: Some Neglected Considerations," *American Sociological Review*, 24, (December, 1955), p. 430.

groups within society, "to augment and perpetuate privileges and rewards to their own advantage."¹

Critics claim that another condition for the transition from a statement of the function of x, to the cause of x is that the special approach of evolutionary functionalism be employed.

Bredemeier takes Davis' explanation of the incest taboo² as an example. Davis states that this cultural item exists, because it has the latent function of preventing confusion of kinship roles. Bredemeier claims that a more satisfactory explanation in terms of latent function is as follows. He hypothesises,

"...societies which somehow stumbled upon a definition of mother and son roles which made sexual responses impossible had an advantage in carrying out the socialization process, so that they are the only ones which survived..." (my emphasis).

Here, Bredemeier claims that one may explain the persistence of a social form in terms of its definite advantages for "social survival." But the statement, societies which have the incest taboo are, "the only ones to survive," carries the implication that the incest taboo is indispensable to the fulfillment of a functional requirement; for a functional requirement is also defined by reference to "social survival."³

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1. Richard D. Schwartz, "Functional Alternatives to Inequality," 20, (August, 1955), p. 430.
 2. Quoted in Harry C. Bredemeier, op.cit., p. 173.
 3. See Chapter Two for the difficulties involved in such an assertion.

It is then difficult to see how Bredemeier's restatement differs from Davis' functional statement.

Dore presents a more cautious reformulation of the Davis-Moore argument in terms of evolutionary functionalism. It is not open to the objection we raised for Bredemeier's account because Dore slips the concept of "manifest function," into the explanation. Thus part of the reason social forms survive is that human beings explicitly recognize their advantages, and deliberately institute them. Dore suggests,

"...for some reasons some societies which began the division of labour also had, or developed a system of unequal privileges. Those which did, bred more rapidly, acquired resources at the expense of, and eventually eliminated, the others. Perhaps...their obvious superiority in wealth, power... induced the others to imitate their institutions wholesale including the principle of stratification..."

These hypotheses are, he admits, unlikely but they constitute several causal chains, the relative importance of which could "be assessed in the light of historical evidence." But it is difficult to take Dore's suggestion seriously due to the absence of adequate historical accounts of the presumed transition from non-stratified to stratified societies.

Simpson objects to Dore's restatement of the Davis-Moore argument because the assumption that practices which are not advantageous, but definitely detrimental to

"social survival" will be eliminated, is questionable.¹
Whilst some social forms are clearly dysfunctional, others are neither "adaptive" or "maladaptive," but, like the human appendix, functionless. Quoting Riesman, he asserts,

"Societies can tolerate, even without disintegration much more disorganisation and even ruin than many people recognize."²

Dore recognizes the limited value of the evolutionary approach. Evolutionary theory is irrelevant to some institutions which did not "evolve" but were conceived and deliberately set up, such as the political system of the U.S.A. In such cases it is necessary to apply a weaker version of evolutionary theory, which defines causally important conditions for the transmission of a cultural item, once originated. This would involve stating in what ways an item is not dysfunctional. But since such negative conditions can be enumerated at length, all play a small part in a complete causal explanation. The problem remains, of assigning relative significance to the variables identified.

Dore adds to the above conditions for the transmission

1. Richard Simpson, "A Modification of the Functional Theory of Social Stratification," *Social Forces*, 35, (December, 1956), p. 132.

2. David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, (1953), p. 45.

from "function" to "cause" "the postulate of an immanent tendency universal in human societies, for the parts of a society to be integrated into the whole. "Given such a tendency the function of an institution is its *raison-d'être* and hence its cause."¹ He argues that Davis' statement concerning the postulate of functional unity, "It would be silly to regard such a proposition as true,"² destroys the possibility of the transition from "function" to "cause".

Dore's argument is unsatisfactory for even if one granted the condition of perfect functional unity, the possibility still exists of several social arrangements all equally capable of meeting effectively a given functional requirement. Thus the problem pointed out by Hempel, of demonstrating empirically that one of these social forms is indispensable or at least more likely to occur than the others, remains unresolved. Consequently, Davis and Moore's statement of the functional necessity of stratification cannot be said to be a statement of the cause of stratification even if we assume a condition of perfect functional unity.

On the whole the above criticisms do show that the grounds for making the transition from a statement of the function of a social form to statement of its cause are logically inadequate. Further, that the conditions under

1. R.P. Dore, *op.cit.*, p. 845.

2. Kingsley Davis, *The Myth of Functional Analysis*, *op.cit.*, p. 389.

which such a transition could be made contain serious difficulties. Davis replies that although functional analysis is at a primitive stage, in that not all theoretical statements are logical inferences or empirically verifiable, it is still causal analysis because it explains phenomena, as any science, "from the standpoint of a system of reasoning which presumably bears a relation to a corresponding system in nature."

Davis conceives scientific explanation as a system mode of reasoning. He asks,

"How else can data be interpreted except in relation to the larger structures in which they are implicated? How can data on the earth's orbit for example be understood except in relation to a system in which they are involved - in this case, the solar system or the earth's climatic system."¹

Functional analysis does not differ in its basic premises and concepts from scientific explanation for it typically relates the parts of a system to the whole, and relates one part to another.

Critics tend to treat functional analysis as a special mode of sociological explanation but this is not so. Functional analysis does not differ basically from sociology in general. The "requirement-meeting" mode of reasoning, as Merton points out, typically seeks to interpret data, "by establishing their consequences for the larger structures in which they are implicated."²

1. Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis," op.cit., p. 393.

2. Quoted by Kingsley Davis, op.cit., p. 393.

If, says Davis, this means that among the considerations used to interpret a given item are its consequences for the larger structure, then this is true of any science.¹

There are special problems for sociological analysis which derive from the nature of the subject matter, society. The analyst cannot be totally objective in describing social reality because social reality is only meaningful in terms of the participants' shared definitions. Moreover, over and above the difficulties of objectivity, functional analysis often adopts a kind of language which is close to purposive and moralistic reasoning, and should therefore be abandoned.

In the following pages we do not intend to explore the complex problem of the objectivity of sociological explanation; our main concern is to contrast the different conceptions of scientific explanation espoused by Davis and his critics.

Davis' argument that sociological or functional analysis² is frequently intuitive and unverifiable but yet "scientific," rests on an analogy between the natural sciences and sociology, which assumes both disciplines typically try to show how a given unit is related to a wider system in which it is implicated.
³ Dore objects that this analogy is misleading; whereas

1. Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis", op. cit., p. 393.

2. The terms are, according to Davis, inter-changeable.

3. R.P. Dore, op. cit., pp. 843-533.

in nature the parts of a given system are in continuous interaction with each other, in social systems the parts do not affect each other simultaneously. He writes,

"The mutual relation of, say, the system of socialization to the system of political control is mediated by the personality structure, and as such it is a relation which requires a long time interval to work through the whole causal sequence."¹

Dore points out further that the analysis of systems such as the solar system can, as Davis suggests, dispense with the notion of cause in favour of function, but this is strictly the mathematician's function, not that of the sociologist. Dore's point is that the system-mode of reasoning means very different things when applied in the natural sciences and in sociology. Whereas the concept of causality cannot be applied to Davis' "system-explanation" of stratification, it can be applied to Davis' examples of "system-explanation" in the natural sciences.

We do not intend to examine Dore's highly technical arguments in this respect. He appears to have successfully translated a "system-explanation" of a given event, (the movement of the moon) into an explanation which relates a whole series of individual events to each other by means of general, causal laws.

Having presented arguments for the conception of scientific explanation in terms of the subsumption of individual events under more general laws, Dore claims that similar principles of explanation may be applied to

1. Ibid.

sociological theory. Davis, he says, assumes a, "special and hardly universal," view of what scientific sociological analysis should be. But the system-mode of reasoning is not the only viable approach. An equally viable alternative is the search for regularities in the concomitant occurrences of social phenomena, and the attempt to induce causal laws from such regularities in order to incorporate them eventually into a comprehensive theory.

According to Dore's view, institutions such as marriage and stratification are summary generic terms for individual events, and statements about the functional interrelations of institutions are ultimately generalizations about causal relations between individual recurring events. Thus,

" 'the system of stratification functions to make the division of labor workable,' is a generalized summation of lower order generalizations to the effect that for instance, 'men submit to a lengthy medical training because they have the prospect of greater rewards,' etc., which are themselves generalizations from statements of particular events ('Jack submitted...because he had...')."1

Questions about the "cause" of an institution, are then questions about particular events - either with the particular events associated with the origin of the institution, or with the recurring events which compose the institution. The concept of function blurs the precise causal relations imputed and yet descriptions

1. Ibid.

in terms of function seem somehow causal; "it makes it easier for institutions to be treated as ultimate units without constant reference to the empirical content of such concepts..."¹

The disagreement between proponents and critics concerning the relation of "function" to "cause" is basically a disagreement over the nature of scientific explanation. On one hand, Davis interprets it as the attempt to relate an item to the wider system in which it is implicated. On the other hand, Dore interprets scientific explanation as the subsumption of the given item under more general causal laws. According to the former interpretation, the concept of function is unnecessary since it adds nothing to the system mode of reasoning; according to the latter, it is inadequate because it precludes the consideration of individual events in relation to general causal laws.

Adopting a view of sociological explanation similar to Dore's, Bredemeier² suggests that a causal explanation of stratification must be given in terms which are ultimately reducible to individual recurring events and to psychological propositions. Thus he attempts to reformulate the Davis-Moore argument in terms of empirically testable motivational patterns and psychological principles.

1. Ibid.

2. H.C. Bredemeier, "The Methodology of Functionalism," op.cit., especially pp. 178-180.

Bredemeier concurs with the "basic logic" of their argument, which is that,

"if people are motivated to maximize their rewards, and if they can do so only by performing the most important functions their talents permit, then they will distribute themselves through the role structure in the manner most efficient for the social system."¹

He goes on to point out that implicit in this argument are assumptions about motivation.

"The empirical significance of the two 'if' premises cannot be fully understood until they are conceptualized on a level which states clearly the structural sources of motivational orientations and the psychological process of adjustment to those sources."²

In other words whether or not stratification operates as Davis and Moore claim, depends on the process of psychological adjustment to certain motivational patterns. A functional analysis which does no more than present the consequences for the wider society of a given social form is complete. A thorough analysis indicates the motivational conditions that make these consequences functional. In order to complete any functional analysis one must restate the functional requirements of a society in terms of the kinds of behaviour individual members of that society must manifest. Thus, the question should always be raised as to what kind of motivational patterns lead individuals to behave in the required way. Furthermore, Bredemeier points out that the psychological

1. Ibid., p. 178.

2. Ibid.

principles underlying these motivational patterns should be made explicit. Having made these theoretical statements, the observer should examine the full range of behavioural consequences of all known motivation structures.

The explanation of stratification based on these methodological arguments is as follows:- If the division of labour is to be made workable, people must fill diligently the occupations for which they are best suited in terms of intelligence, skill, etc. The motivational mechanism which would lead to such behaviour would be such that self-respect follows from playing the role one is best suited to. The psychological principle assumed here is that people act to maximize gratifications and what is most gratifying to human beings is that certain normative criteria of self-respect and ego-enhancement be met. The consequences of an observed motivational structure which makes self-respect depend upon having a certain position or income, are that many people are deprived of self-respect. Compulsive adjustment to such deprivation may be one of several types: compulsive achievement or dominance; aggression; ritualism etc., any one of which constitutes a source of instability.

In reply to Bredemeier, Davis writes, "One critic feels that the only way the consequences of an action can serve to explain its persistence is by the actors

perceiving the possible consequences and guiding his behaviour accordingly. To visualize the unrecognized social consequences of an action as leading by their unrecognized effect on the conditions, to the continuous reinforcement or minimization of that action in society is too much against the grain of ordinary discourse,"¹ Davis further characterises Bredemeier's approach as "utilitarian"; but although the latter clearly adopts such an approach where he states one condition for a transition from "function of x" to "cause of x," is the participants' awareness and purposeful institution of the objective consequences of x, Davis under-rates the complexity of Bredemeier's reformulation of the Davis-Moore argument.

Bredemeier states that stratification exists not because its consequences for society are perceived by the actors, (which would be a utilitarian explanation); rather, the idea of latent function is retained. The purposes the actors have in mind are treated as not necessarily including these consequences, but as being part of the mechanism by which social requirements are met. Thus, Bredemeier's retention of the concept of latent function means that he completes rather than

1. K. Davis, The Myth of Functional Analysis, op. cit., p. 393.

replaces the Davis-Moore argument.¹

In conclusion, critics raise some significant objections to Davis and Moore's functional explanation but the major attempt to restate the argument in terms of the principles of methodological individualism does not depart fundamentally from the authors' functional premises. In reply to his critics, Davis tries to justify functional analysis as essentially similar to sociology in general. Sociology is characterized by the "system-mode of reasoning," which, he claims, "any science" employs. The basic disagreement between critics and proponents, concerns the conception of scientific explanation as applied to human societies, the latter adhering to the "system-approach" the former to that of general causal laws. The disagreement here is ultimately a conflict of methodological axioms, and does not appear to be generated by a conflict of political perspectives. Thus Mannheim's suggestion that a body of intellectual knowledge may be analysed entirely in terms of extrinsic interpretation must be modified. At least part of the controversy surrounding the Davis-Moore argument can only be interpreted on an "immanent" basis.

1. As R.P. Dore points out in "Function and Cause," op. cit., Bredemeier undermines the argument presented earlier that causal explanations in functional terms can only be given via a) motives and b) evolutionary theory.

Chapter V

THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE CONTROVERSY

In this chapter we discuss in its wider social context the ideological bias manifest in the controversy surrounding the Davis-Moore argument. In its widest context, we shall review the major lines of development of American thought through the early decades of the twentieth century to the early sixties, pointing out wherever possible, those factors, internal or external to American society which appear to have significantly influenced the intellectual climate of opinion. The content and scope of the ideological conflict which appears to have initiated and sustained a large area of the controversy, is given a new dimension of meaning in a narrower context, when viewed as representative of certain trends of intellectual political thought in the post-war period. Thus, the Davis-Moore argument, which we showed to be an implicitly conservative explanation of stratification, particularly in its unqualified presentation in 1945, is representative of the post-war conservative reaction by the business community and conservative critics, and more generally by the American public, to the extreme radicalism of intellectuals in the early thirties, and their subsequent rapprochement with government in the New Deal reforms. The absence of an immediate counter-attack by sociologists who espoused a more liberal view of stratified inequalities, and the fact that when the counter-attack was made in the early fifties,

it was essentially of a defensive nature and was presented on an unresolved ideological basis, are symptomatic of the vulnerability of liberal intellectuals to conservative criticism for past associations with radicals; associations which liberals themselves came to regret. The lack of a vigorous response is indicative also of the despair of many liberal intellectuals of a new rapprochement with government, similar to that of the Progressive period, or to that of the New Deal era, whereby their political proposals could to some degree be implemented.

The intellectual climate of the early thirties in America was generally one of extreme radicalism and was an outcome of the estrangement from their country felt by most American intellectuals in the twenties. The overall climate of opinion had in the twenties been one of revolt; intellectuals had assailed politicians and businessmen for their personal and cultural inadequacies (as in the diatribes of H.L. Mencken) whereas in the earlier Progressive era they had attacked the concentration of wealth and power as inimicable to individual liberty. They had been excluded from political life by the return to power of a strong conservative leadership which dissolved the intellectuals' brief rapprochement with government, and also by public reaction, against Woodrow Wilson for his advocacy of the war and through whom intellectuals received wide national recognition in the Inquiry of 1919. Even in the Progressive era, the rapprochement of intellectuals with government had been

short-lived; moreover, before the Inquiry, when a large group of intellectuals acting as advisors accompanied Wilson to Paris for the drafting of the Peace Treaties, intellectuals had not been used extensively to assist government agencies. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, considered the intellectual association with government important and attracted many into public service, but to quote Hofstadter, he, "embodied the American preference for character over intellect in political life."¹ After the election of 1912, Woodrow Wilson, who had been President of Princeton University from 1902 to 1910, did not really make use of the many intellectuals who supported him. Only under the pressure of war in 1916, with the creation of such agencies as the Military Intelligence, Chemical Welfare and War Industries Board, did Wilson amend his attitude.

After the dissolution of this short-lived rapprochement, and partly as a reaction to it, some intellectuals in the twenties expatriated themselves; others became estranged from political life, despising it as conformist, conservative and materialistic. Furthermore, their separation from the business community was dramatized by the Sacco-Vanzetti case of 1921 - 1927, and in 1929 reinforced by the Stock Market Crash.

It was in this context of an increasing estrangement from American political and economic life, that in the early thirties a large minority of intellectuals became

1. R. Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1964), p. 208.

impressed by Soviet achievements in economic planning and technological advance. They adopted the Soviet Union as a model for the reform of their own society. Some entered the Communist Party. Many leading intellectuals, e.g. John Dos Passos and others voted for the Communist Party in 1932. But this was the "politics of despair," to use E. Digby Baltzell's phrase.¹ Few of those who joined the Communist Party, however, were to withstand the, "stultifying rigors of Party discipline," and after the 1934 election, 7,000 members, (one third of the party membership) resigned. The whole intellectual climate of the thirties was reflected in the New Deal efforts to change the economic and cultural environment through legislation towards more equal conditions. But in the first period of the New Deal (1932-35) most intellectuals, being committed to central planning as the major means of social change - for the radicals to be accompanied by revolution and the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and for the larger group of liberal intellectuals to be set within the framework of existing institutions - considered the government's measures to be, "frank experimentation," within orthodox institutions and undirected by a clear ideology.

John Dewey's statement in, "Liberalism and Social Action," (1935), is representative of this mood.

"Experimental method," he wrote, "is not just messing

1. E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment*, New York: Vintage Books, (1966), p. 262.

around nor doing a little of this and a little of that in the hope things will improve. Just as in the physical sciences, it implies a coherent body of ideas, a theory that gives direction to effort." He criticized Roosevelt's pragmatic approach to politics. " 'Reforms' that deal now with this abuse and now with that without having a social goal based upon a plan, differ entirely from effort at re-forming in its literal sense, the institutional scheme of things." Central social planning was urged as, "the sole method of social action by which liberalism can realize its professed aims."

American intellectuals in the early thirties were more radical in the reforms they urged, than those of the New Deal in its first period, yet, ironically, intellectuals came to support the New Deal after 1936, when government measures were more conservative in emphasis. Later we shall examine the major factors which led to this moderation of liberalism.

The dominant ideas of radical intellectuals were frequently taken up from the social sciences, as developed by John Dewey, William James, Charles A. Beard, Thorstein Veblen, L.H. Cooley, etc. Dewey's emphasis on the plasticity of human nature to express itself fully, unfettered by the harmful conditioning of competitive, bourgeois culture,"¹ was shared by many intellectuals

1. Ibid., p. 268.

in the 30's. The premises of environmental determinism were evident in many areas of intellectual thought, viz. theories of crime, law, religion and the arts. Radicals attributed importance to such books as "Das Kapital" (first English Edition, 1886), the "Golden Bough," (1890) and Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward," (1888).¹

However, any statement of the radicalism of intellectuals is subject to many qualifications.² Although many intellectuals expressed a concern for environmental reform, few could be termed Marxist. This is indicated by the revival of Bellamy's "Looking Backward." In it, the author visualized a utopian world, run by experts in the interests of all rather than for the profits of a few. Bigger and better consumer goods would be increasingly in supply, but above all, the utopia was to allow men to express their naturally co-operative virtues. While this utopia, "out-socialized the socialists," to quote the author, its gradual advent was to be without revolution or class war. Marx's ideas gained a new-found popularity amongst American intellectuals. But it was the literary intellectuals (for example, John Dos

1. When in 1935, Charles A. Beard, John Dewey and Edward Weeks of the Atlantic Monthly, independently selected the most important books of the last half-century, these three were chosen.

2. T.B. Bottomore, Critics of Society, New York: Pantheon Books Inc., (1968), p. 37.

Passos, James Farrell, John Steinbeck etc.) rather than social theorists, who incorporated them into their writings. Whereas Dos Passos in "U.S.A. Trilogy"¹ wrote about the evils of the capitalist system, social theorists, Berle and Means advocated a system of "managed capitalism" in "the Modern Corporation and Private Property," (1932). In this system the economy would be regulated by the state, and in this regulation, a responsible business community should play a leading part.

The Lynds' sociological study, "Middletown in Transition," was representative of the "radicalism" of social theorists. The Lynds' original intention to document further social changes of cultural adaptation to technological change had been abandoned, for an analysis of class structure and dynastic power, neither of which had been prominent in the earlier study. Although the analysis was influenced to some degree by Marx and Veblen, it was clearly not Marxist in its conclusion that the reaction of the worker to the mutual mistrust between, "the business class," and "the working class," was largely an individual experience for each worker and was not, "generalized by him into a class experience."

The Lynds' study did, however constitute a break with the traditional remoteness of American sociology

1. Published between 1930 and 1936.

from political and social struggles. The Ecological School, particularly, eschewed the political in their sociological studies conducted during the revolt of the twenties: Although there had been detailed investigations at the University of Chicago, into a wide range of public problems, research studies had been devoid of critical, moral and political evaluation of American society. The "scientific" explanations of society in terms of "natural processes," which were thought to underly the human will, were indicative of the general view of intellectuals of the inefficacy of political participation during the twenties.

The radical ideological committments of many intellectuals in the early thirties stimulated an unprecedented sensitivity, notably by the Lynds, to inequalities of income, status and power, an awareness which was continued in later years by Lloyd Warner's studies of the American class structure, and John Dollard's "Caste and Class in a Southern Town." The Lynds' study, however, was hardly typical of sociology in the thirties. The ideas of European sociologists, especially, of those concerned with class structure and class conflict such as Marx, Weber, Sombart, Pareto and Mannheim, were only beginning to be known at this time, and did not penetrate widely into American sociological theory or research. Only Lasswell and Parsons took up concepts from European sociology,

(the latter in social theory alone, the former in both theory and empirical research), but both were in different ways more concerned with questions of political and social order than social inequality and conflict. Mannheim's comment in 1932, was largely applicable to American sociology.

"American studies start from questions in nowise connected with those problems which arouse our passions in everyday political and social struggle."¹

The emergence of radical intellectual thought committed to the Soviet Union as a model for reform, was accompanied by a "strictly native brand of radical thought."² The latter was an affirmation on the part of almost all American intellectuals, except fellow-travellers, of the Progressive-Liberal tradition. Some of these intellectuals, such as patriarchs John Dewey and Charles A. Beard, developed an articulate body of liberal opinion hostile to the dual despotisms of Communism and Fascism. Others extended a more sympathetic rejection of Communism, specifically, the editors of the Nation and the New Republic, who tended to evaluate Communism more favourably than Fascism, but rejected the

1. Karl Mannheim, "American Sociology," from *Essays in Sociology and Social Psychology*, by Karl Mannheim, edited by Paul Kecskemeti, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., (1953), Chap. 4, pp. 185-94.

2. op. cit., E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment*, p. 267.

former on pragmatic grounds, viz. as largely inapplicable to the American situation, rather than on moral grounds.

The extreme revolutionary imperative of radical thought shifted after 1936, mainly due to radicals' support of the Popular Front which put off indefinitely the call to revolution, and ended after 1936 in the "domain of either-or."¹ Their adherence to the either-or abstractions of pure socialism or the preservation of capitalism (by which they meant Roosevelt and the New Deal measures) is illustrated by an article from the New Republic in 1935, which urged,

"either the nation must put up with the confusion and miseries of an unregulated capitalism, or it must prepare to supercede capitalism with socialism. There is no longer a feasible middle course."

A significant abandonment of ideology in the second half of the thirties, facilitated support and participation in Roosevelt's reform programmes, which only a few years earlier, had been rejected as "ad hoc" measures. Coser's comment that intellectuals no longer found a contradiction between working for the government and working for reform, is apt.² The extent of the influence of intellectuals in government has, however, been over-emphasized since, and was exaggerated at the time.³

1. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., "Sources of the New Deal," in Paths of American Thought, by A.M. Schlesinger Jr., and M. White, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., (1963), p.389.

2. L.A. Coser, Men of Ideas, A Social View, New York: The Free Press, (1965), Chap. VI.

3. Ibid.

Intellectuals were introduced into the government in the first New Deal with the creation of the Brains Trust to F.D.R. by Raymond Moley during the election campaign of 1932. This group of men, distinct from Roosevelt's election staff, were employed for the purposes of research and consisted of Moley, Rexford, Tugwell and A.A. Berle. After the election of Roosevelt they came to be known as the most conspicuous of a large group of intellectuals assisting the public service. Many of the proposals and plans of these men were thwarted; moreover, the reform programme was at this time generally unsupported by liberal intellectuals.

During the second period of the New Deal, the reform measures were given a more conservative emphasis, which was generally accepted by American intellectuals. The liberal "brains trusters" from the Columbia University economics department, were gradually replaced by more conservative men from the Harvard Law School. These men, who were inspired by the decentralizing philosophy of Louis D. Brandeis, called for a change of emphasis from centralized planning to a government-regulated redistribution of wealth in order to give greater consuming power to the mass of consumers.¹

Although by 1940, the intellectual rapprochement with government had passed its peak, intellectuals and

1. E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment*, p.243.

experts were required during the war-years to staff such agencies as the Offices of Strategic Services, and the Office of Scientific Research Development.

In summary, the intellectual rapprochement with government was typically, a large group of intellectuals and experts from diverse disciplines, acting in an advisory capacity. In the second period of the New Deal, particularly, the intellectuals who assisted the government could by no means be termed revolutionary but, alienated from the assumptions and objectives of the business community, they sought to reform the system.¹

The strongest criticisms of the New Deal reforms especially after 1936, came from the business community. The antipathy of businessmen to economic reforms was expressed early in the New Deal as its accustomed power and authority, which had been virtually untouched during the "years of inaction" of Hoover and Coolidge became threatened by increasing federal regulations. For example, the Security and Exchange Act horrified the president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, who protested that America "had been built on speculation." Nevertheless, despite increasing federal regulation the major reforms of the early years centered on the National Industrial Recovery Act which, as an experiment in centralized planning under the co-operative leadership

1. L.A. Coser, op.cit.,p. 181-2.

of big business and government, was supported if reluctantly by many members of the business community.

After the N.R.A. was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the New Deal measures turned from centralized planning to a compensating economy viz. to a government-regulated redistribution of wealth designed to encourage the masses to spend rather than the few to save. The more conservative emphasis of Roosevelt's reform programme was not approved by the business community, mainly because they realized the costliness of the proposed income and inheritance taxes.

The Liberty League, founded in 1934, was an organized expression of the general hostility of the business community to New Deal reforms. The League was devoted to the defence of the Constitution, the protection of the American Way of Life, from New Dealers, Communists and the "inevitable dictatorship" of Franklin D. Roosevelt. These ideas were articulated in a flood of pamphlets e.g. "Government by Busybodies," and "The Way Dictatorships Start," and provided the most "concise summary of conservative political thought....written in the United States, since the Federalist era."¹

The preoccupation of the Liberty League with either-or abstractions matched the polarized alternatives

1. E. Digby Baltzell, op.cit., p.244.

of the extreme Left after 1936. For example, Al Smith at the opening of the 1936 campaign year, the height of the League's crusade to preserve the American Way of Life, attacked the New Deal as Communist and urged:-

"There can only be one capital, Washington or Moscow...There can only be one flag, the Stars and Stripes, or the flag of the godless Union of the Soviets."¹

It would be mistaken to imply that the business community was "unanimous"² in its antipathy to the New Deal, for the Liberty League had more publicity than followers, whilst a substantial proportion of its funds for 1935 and 1936 were contributed by a small number of bankers, industrialists and businessmen. Moreover, some businessmen clearly stood to profit from attempts to increase mass purchasing-power, especially those engaged in the newer consumer and communication branches of industry. Nevertheless, the antipathy was sufficiently widespread to call forth this statement in Time magazine, in April, 1935:-

"Regardless of party and regardless of region today members of the so-called upper classes frankly hate Roosevelt."

In the early thirties, the interpretation of Fascism had been a major source of contention for intellectuals whether radical or liberal. The former believed it to be an extension of capitalism, the latter, of whom the most

1. Ibid.

2. This claim was made by F.D.R. in his election campaign of 1936.

articulate was Alfred Bingham, maintained it was a misdirected revolt against capitalism. By 1935, with the rise to power of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany the desire to oppose it over-rode differences of interpretation, and liberals and radicals joined in support of the Popular Front. The liberal alliance with radicals was viable in terms of the former's Left-Right world-view. As Russia was under attack from National Socialism, and since Soviet ideological ends of social inequality were taken to be "progressive" liberals placed the Soviet Union on the Left as opposed to the retrogressive and totalitarian Right.

The trend towards moderation on the part of liberal intellectuals contrasted with the political views of the Liberty League. The former's relative abandonment, of ideology was the outcome, first, of the compromised position intellectuals were thrown into as a consequence of the rise of National Socialism: The liberal commitment to central planning had been pushed into the background as liberals joined radicals in the Popular Front defence of democracy. Second, the collapse of the Popular Front with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact, served to undermine the ideological basis of both radical and intellectual thought. The Popular Front with its basic premise of a union of "progressives" against Fascism increasingly lost support after reaching its climax in the Spanish Civil War. As the totalitarian

aspects of the Soviet Union became apparent, largely due to the Moscow Trials, there was a general retreat from the Popular Front and in 1939, with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact it collapsed.

For the liberal intellectual the collapse of the Popular Front resulted in a modification of their world-view viz. the development of a liberal-conservative dichotomy, opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, Left or Right. The liberals' association with radicals had been viable in terms of the former's world-view, but with the collapse of the Popular Front, and in the context of the growing dimensions of the Cold War, they showed a significant abandonment of pro-radical sympathies.

Former sympathizers and fellow-travellers, such as Vincent Sheean, Ralph Bates and Louis Fischer, renounced the Soviet-Nazi pact and the New Communist policies. To some extent sympathy for the Soviet Union was revived by her relations with the Allies during the second World War, but with the advent of the Cold War in the late 40's, Communism was renounced as hostile to democracy.

After the Second World War the conservative mood became more generalized. One indication of this is the popularity which was accorded Hayek's "The Road to Serfdom," in which the author argued that the ideas of central economic planning whether liberal, Nazi, socialist or Communist, led inevitably to totalitarian serfdom.

The book was hailed by anti-New Deal publications, bought in quantity by a number of American corporations, and rapidly became a best-seller. Despite Hayek's protestation, "that he did not wish to be a spokesman for any political group,"¹ he found he had given the first intellectual articulation to the American conservative mood.

The post-war conservative mood was in part a response to the recovery of capitalism both in America and internationally: The U.S.A. and Soviet Russia emerged from the second World War as the only two world powers. The U.S.A., through the Marshall Plan, implemented in 1946, and private investment refinanced and aided the recovery of European industrial centres and Japan, on capitalist lines, to meet the threat of Soviet Communist takeovers. Thus, the post-war conservative mood in America was a response to the recovery of capitalism at home and abroad, for American capitalism was now seen as the only viable alternative to the threat of Soviet Communism.

Following the 1946 election to Congress of Republicans, many Republicans led by Senator Robert Taft, proceeded to attack the New Deal legislation. The Democrat Truman had been more favourable to big business than Roosevelt had been, although he endeavoured to maintain

1. Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade: America 1945-1955*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1956), p. 8.

the New Deal orientation to governmental intervention in favour of lower income groups. The Republican Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act thereby weakening the power of unions and proceeded to reduce income taxes for upper-income groups. In the New Republic came the following comment:-

"This Congress brought back an atmosphere you had forgotten or never thought possible... victories fought and won years ago were suddenly in doubt. Everything was debatable again."¹

Turning now to the sociological controversy under examination, we consider Davis and Moore's implicitly conservative explanation of stratified inequalities, presented in 1945, to be representative of post-war conservative reaction to the New Deal reforms, particularly those designed to reduce the scale of prevailing economic inequalities by government-regulated redistribution of wealth through tax legislation. Moreover, the Davis-Moore argument is not only clearly anti-thetical to the egalitarian ideals of most American liberals throughout the thirties, but is in marked contrast to the assumptions about man and society which dominated the radical climate of thought in the early thirties.

In contrast to the political nature of sociology during the thirties, Davis and Moore's sociological approach is explicitly non-evaluative and non-political.

1. E.F. Goldman, op.cit., p.57.

Thus they state their concern is with "scientific explanations" of known facts about all societies, not with how societies, "ought to be reformed." Their emphasis on the inevitability of one dominant institution, stratification, contrasts with the commitment of intellectuals in the early thirties, to radical reform of the entire social system based on egalitarian assumptions, and with the commitment of most intellectuals after 1936, to Roosevelt's government-regulated tax-distribution proposals to reform economic inequalities. The opposition by Davis and Moore to environmental reform is illustrated by their emphasis on the unchanging, "indispensable" items of social structure. Further, they assume the rational calculation of self-interest to be a permanent feature of human motivation. This assumption about man, i.e. that he will not undertake important, exacting positions or acquire specialized knowledge, unless induced to do so by the offer of differential rewards, contrasts markedly with the view of intellectuals in the thirties, that man is naturally virtuous and co-operative.

In 1945 the U.S. joined the United Nations and as the difficulties involved in peaceful co-operative relations with Russia were revealed, members of the American Communist Party became increasingly feared and subject to charges of conspiracy and treason. In the context of this general fear of Soviet Communism, which had begun in 1939 with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact as the totalitarian aspects of Stalin's rule became

evident, many intellectuals were held in suspicion by the American public and some were dismissed as early as 1945 from university posts, for past involvement with New Deal reforms. One such case was that of Homer Rainey who was dismissed from the presidency of the University of Texas in 1945 because of his "New Dealish" opinions, and insistence on academic freedom for subordinates.

The Truman administration sought to meet the Communist threat with a policy of defence and containment. Liberal intellectuals having abandoned their former ideological commitments held, "liberalism...cannot meet totalitarianism with an opposing ideology: it must be dealt with on an ad hoc "pragmatic" realistic basis."¹

Liberal intellectuals in the fifties were in no position to return battle to the conservative attacks of the McCarthy era. They had, as Hofstadter puts it, been "caught out" by history.

"Some four hundred liberal intellectuals appended their signatures to a manifesto denouncing the fantastic falsehood that the U.S.S.R. and the totalitarian states are basically alike, and describing the Soviet Union as a "bulwark" of peace. This document was reproduced in The Nation the week that the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed. Intellectuals thus caught out were not in the best historical, moral or psychological position to make a vigorous response to McCarthyism."²

1. Frank A. Warren: Liberals and Communism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, (1966), p. 230.

2. Richard Hofstadter, op.cit., p. 40.

Intellectuals abandoned their ideological commitments of the Popular Front period with the result that when they were most vulnerable to attack during the McCarthy investigations of communist infiltration in the universities, they no longer had a viable political philosophy in terms of which to meet the conservative counter-attack.

One indication of the abandonment of previous ideological commitments is the appearance in 1952 and 1953 respectively, of two books, by John Kenneth Galbraith ("American Capitalism") and David Lillenthal ("Big Business: A New Era"). Both writers had been involved in New Deal administrative agencies, but both now defended the concentration in industry and the technologically progressive character of large-scale industries. The fact their departure from the Progressive-Liberal tradition of American intellectuals met with no significant degree of protest, and from other writers, suggests that "the anti-monopoly sentiment which was so long at the heart of Progressive thinking is no longer its liberal central theme."¹

The liberal views on human nature had changed. The assumptions of the fallibility of man, his proneness to evil, had, as Warren states, "become liberal as well as conservative clichés since the war, just as man's

1. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1965), p. 314.

co-operative tendencies and good-will were the liberal clichés of the Popular Front."¹ This change of attitude was general amongst the liberal intellectuals of the post-war period. Less optimistic than in the Progressive era, or in the 30's, liberal intellectuals tended to turn from a commitment to reform of their country, to an acceptance of dominant American institutions.

Many intellectuals in the early fifties exhibited a strong pro-American orientation. In 1952, the editors of *Partisan Review* gave a "quasi-official recognition"² to this new intellectual mood in devoting a number of issues to a symposium entitled, "Our Country and Our Culture." "American intellectuals," they said, "now regard America and its institutions in a new way... Many writers and intellectuals now feel closer to their country and its culture... For better or worse, most writers no longer accept alienation as the artist's fate in America; on the contrary, they want very much to be part of American Life."

The over-all intellectual climate of opinion after the Second World War was increasingly moderate, and exhibited a strong pro-American orientation. This post-war mood was clearly not conducive to a liberal-counter-attack on the Davis-Moore explanation of stratification.

1. Frank Warren, *op.cit.*, p. 231.

2. R. Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism*, *op.cit.*, p. 394.

It was not until 1953 that the initiative to liberal criticism of the argument was given by M.M. Tumin. We suggest that this criticism was prompted by the intellectual articulation in terms of comprehensive political philosophy, of an implicit category of political preference.

Before the early fifties, whereas the business establishment explicitly stated their conservative attitudes, for example, in the series of pamphlets issued by the Liberty League after 1936, intellectuals usually stated their conservative attitudes implicitly, through appreciation or in defence of the free-enterprise economic system, or in terms of isolationist policy. One example is William Graham Sumner, one of the "founding fathers" of American sociology who frequently incorporated the values of the business establishment into his writings. Although he was primarily a champion of the middle-class and was left-wing in the sense that he recognized as significant class divisions and conflicts in community life,¹ he took over many ideas of Social Darwinism and was as extreme as Spencer in his opposition to "amateur social doctors" with their socialist plans for "nourishing the unfit." He believed the upper classes were the main benefactors of civilization. "The millionaires... may be fairly regarded as the naturally selected agents

1. C.H. Page: *Class and American Sociology: from Ward to Ross*, New York: The Dial Press, (1940), p. 10.

of society for certain work." They get high wages and live in luxury, but the bargain is a good one for society. There is the intensest competition for their place and occupation. This assures us that all who are competent for this function will be employed in it, so that the cost of it will be reduced to the lowest terms..."¹

Post-war conservative reaction against the New Deal reform programmes and the radical-liberal alliance in the Popular Front was heightened in the context of the Cold War. It is no coincidence that the emergence of conservative intellectual theory has run parallel to the appearance of Soviet Communism as the first real threat to American values and security.² Morgenthau asserts,

"Europe in contrast to America has known classes determined by heredity or otherwise sharply and permanently defined in composition and social status, which have had a stake in defending the present status quo or restoring an actual or fictitious status quo of the past. But for the defence or restoration of what status quo could the American conservative fight? For private power, states' rights... exclusive male suffrage, slavery or perhaps the British Monarchy? The absurdity of this rhetorical question illustrates the absurdity of the conservative position in terms of purposes within the context of American politics."³

1. Quoted in Richard Hofstadter; *Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, (1945), p. 44.
2. T. Molnar: *The Decline of the Intellectual*, Cleveland: Meridian Books, (1961), p. 273.
3. Quoted in T. Molnar, *op.cit.*, p.273.

Morgenthau's point needs to be qualified. Frequently conservative attitudes are justified in terms of the Constitution. Thus the National Industrial Recovery Act was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and during the McCarthy era, intellectuals were accused of unconstitutional disloyalty. What makes this practice unfeasible from the point of view of political theory, is that the Constitution itself is an essentially liberal document based on egalitarian assumptions.

Conservatism became intellectually significant in the context of the emergence of the Soviet Union as a threat to the American "way of life." Russell Kirk's "The Conservative Mind" appeared in 1953. In it the author attempts to demonstrate the existence of an intellectual tradition from Burke to Santayana. Continuing his articulation of conservative thought, the weekly magazine National Review was launched in 1955, and had as its explicit aim, "a deep going renewal of American life in the spirit of the western and American tradition," and sought to give direction to the "conservative intellectual resurgence."

In the context of the Cold War, conservative writers articulated a long-felt revulsion against New Deal Reforms. According to Minogue the most popular attack on liberals is in terms of the liberal tendency "to refer all problems to the largest available

political authority."¹ For the liberal, all widespread problems invite a solution by state activity."²

Conservative writers typically resent the growing authority over private life, preferring the autonomy of the individual and of institutions. They stress the idea of "privacy and equality, or privacy and a certain kind of justice," and claim that liberals have been "insensitive to the nexus between privacy and freedom." Further, they have generally followed Kirk's lead in criticising the optimism, characteristic of Progressive thought, of the conviction of the "natural goodness" and perfectibility of man.

Liberal intellectuals are sometimes criticised for their past ideological commitment to the Soviet Union as a model for reform, whilst conservative writers urge in contrast, the American "way of life," which they define by patriotic and moral standards. Kirk, for example, asserts that "conservatism" represents the, "preservation of the ancient moral traditions of humanity."

Peter Viereck has criticized Kirk and contributors to National Review, for "succumbing to...the conservatism of nostalgia, the confusion of concrete living roots with abstract yearning for roots,"³ and for evading such issues as McCarthyism. He rejects the idea that

1. Quoted in Jeffrey Hart: The American Dissent: A Decade of Modern Conservatism: New York: Doubleday, (1966), p.17.

2. Ibid.

3. Peter Viereck: Conservatism Revisited, New York, Collier Books, (1962), p. 150.

conservatism is an ideology; it is rather a "balancing and transcending"¹ of ideologies.

Viereck is representative of a number of "new conservatives" (e.g. Raymond English, Chad Walsh, Thomas Cook, Clinton Rossiter, J.A. Lukacs, August Hecksher, Will Herberg and Reinhold Niebuhr) whose orientation is more liberal. They describe Adlai Stevenson as conservative, and reject the right-wing conservative mentioned above. Clinton Rossiter, for example, defined a conservative as a man committed, "to no particular policies but must aspire to an imaginative, hopeful and tolerant outlook,"² thereby rejecting the anti-liberal orientation of Hayek, Burnham and Buckley. Further, Viereck and Rossiter make a distinction between conservatism which embodies traditions of freedom, and liberal formulae that define it. "Conservatism is not identical with liberalism nor with optimism about human nature, utilitarian emphasis on material progress, or trust in the direct democracy of the mass."³

The emergence of articulate conservative thought, then, embodied two main types - "thoughtful conservatives," of whom Viereck is representative and the "rightists."

1. Ibid.

2. H. Wish: Society and Thought in Modern America, Vol II, New York: David McKay Company, Inc., (1962) p. 601.

3. P. Viereck, op.cit., p. 144.

The rightist element dominates intellectual conservative thought as Viereck acknowledges in the title of one section of his book: "The New Conservatism: What went wrong?" The difference between these brands of conservative thought must not, however, be over-emphasised for they share a basic opposition to Communism, a support of the American "way of life," and the principles of individual freedom.

The criticisms by many American sociologists of the conservative implications of the Davis-Moore argument were then prompted by the emergence of articulate intellectual thought by a minority of American intellectuals in the early fifties. These criticisms reveal a strong commitment to the Progressive-Liberal tradition of intellectual thought:

Tumin's "extreme cultural relativism," his assumption of the extreme placticity of human beings and his optimistic view of human nature are representative of progressive intellectual thought, particularly of the social sciences as developed by John Dewey, Charles A. Beard, Thorstein Veblen etc.). These became orthodox reading for many American intellectuals in the early thirties.¹ Thus, Tumin's suggestion that certain motivational schemes such as "joy in work," "social duty" etc. could be instituted as alternatives to stratified inequalities, requires, as Moore stresses, that men be willing to do "unequal work for equal pay"

1. E. Digby Baltzell, op. cit., p. 270.

and betrays an optimism concerning the naturally co-operative virtues of man similar to Edward Bellamy's:-

"Men by natural intention and structure are generous not selfish... sympathetic not arrogant, god-like in aspiration, instinct with divinest impulses of tenderness and self-sacrifice."¹

Most criticisms of the Davis-Moore argument as we discussed in earlier chapters, manifest a commitment to the reform of social and economic inequalities, a commitment which was shared by most American intellectuals after 1936. The emphasis of Tumin's arguments, particularly, reflect the primary concern of the New Deal measures to reduce the scale of existing economic inequalities.

More important than the similarities, are the differences between the critics' political ideas and those which came to the fore in the early thirties: Tumin suggests "alternative arrangements" to stratification which are not viable alternatives in the sense that they reflect real social developments. He himself acknowledges that they are "utopian" in the sense that they are unsupported by historical evidence, but nevertheless claims they are, in principle, possible. These proposals are of such a nature that they could not be instituted by a government; further, they postulate a future society which depends for its

1. Quoted in E. Digby Baltzell, op.cit., p. 269. Bellamy presented in fictionalized form the major assumptions and ideas of the social science of the Progressive Era.

realization upon a "moral conversion" which would repudiate the then known facts of human behaviour.

Intellectuals of the thirties were hopeful that their social theories could, to some extent at least, be implemented. The New Deal reforms essentially reflected the overall intellectual concern with environmental reform, whilst some of their number had been introduced into government in an advisory capacity.

But Tumin's unrealizable proposals are, in marked contrast, symptomatic of the sense of impotence and despair of liberal intellectuals in the early fifties at their exclusion from the political life of their country, their vulnerability to attack from conservatives, businessmen, politicians and a strong minority of intellectuals, and finally at the lack of hope of any new rapprochement with government.

Most objections to the Davis-Moore argument presented by American sociologists in the course of the fifties, are not convincing. On the one hand their objections that stratification is dysfunctional and that Davis and Moore have ignored the element of power in their explanation, are irrelevant in terms of the theoretical framework employed; on the other hand, demonstrations of alternatives to stratification are essentially based upon the same premises and the functional concepts employed by Davis and Moore. No alternative account

of stratification has in fact been put forward by the critics, since critics do not generally stray far from Davis and Moore's functional propositions (viz. of functional importance, functional prerequisites). The reluctance of critics to offer serious criticisms of the basic assumptions of functional analysis, or to abandon this framework in order to present stratification in a significantly different perspective than Davis and Moore's are symptomatic of the post-war liberal intellectual's lack of a viable ideological framework in terms of which he could counter-attack the conservative emphasis on functional necessity of dominant institutions. In the absence of a new reform movement, liberal intellectuals have, not surprisingly, been unwilling to examine in a detailed, realistic way, the need for reform in dominant institutions.

Critics appear to be motivated more by a desire to reject and ridicule the claim that "stratification is functionally necessary", than by a desire to present serious theoretical objections. Indeed one critic, Tumin, has involved himself in a series of contradictory statements (viz. concerning the family system in American society) in order to show in one article, that stratification is dysfunctional, and in another article, that more equal positional rewards would enhance conscientious role-performance in every institutional context. The lack of effective criticism of key concepts

on the part of all critics, betrays their rejection of the conclusion itself, rather than the basic premises and methods whereby the conclusion was reached.

The criticisms are in this sense similar to the views of a minority of American intellectuals which came increasingly to the fore in the course of the fifties, and whose main concern is to adopt a critical stance vis-à-vis the "absorption" of American intellectuals into American culture. Loren Baritz characterizes their major to show that "...any intellectual who accepts and approves of his society prostitutes his skills and is a traitor to his heritage." They consider aberation not as a risk that must be run to preserve integrity, but "as an obligation which preconditions all other obligations."¹

This "new note"² of insistence on a critical viewpoint may be interpreted as a "symptom of despair" at the institutionalization of the avant-garde. Certainly these critics all deplore the middle-class approval of works of such "professional Jeremiahs" as Vance Packard, C. Wright Mills, David Riesman, William H. Whyte. Nevertheless, it is significant that these intellectuals are for the most part engaged in an essentially

1. Loren Baritz: The Servants of Power, Middletown, Connecticut, (1960). Quoted by R. Hofstadter, op.cit., p. 397.

2. R. Hofstadter, op.cit., p. 398.

non-political expression of their estrangement from society.

Despite the criticisms by Irving Howe, Norman Mailer, C. Wright Mills and Delmore Schwartz presented in the Partisan Review symposium mentioned earlier, that most American intellectuals had surrendered to current pressures to conservatism, that they had shown, "a shrinking deference to the status quo," "a soft and anxious compliance," "a painful lack of militancy," these critics do not provide a new philosophy to meet the need of a viable ideological framework on the part of most American liberal intellectuals.

This is evident in C. Wright Mills' *White Collar*, (1951) in which he appears to embrace both the rejection of the labour movement as a self-seeking group within the framework of a modified capitalist society, and the desire for a "third party" which would question the existing capitalist way of life, or at least, the structure of power. But since C. Wright Mills explicitly recognizes that white-collar workers are politically impotent and apathetic, he has no choice but to regard their participation in such a political insurgency in their "true interest," but extremely improbable.¹

1. T.B. Bottomore considers other of Wright Mills' writings from a similar view-point in *Critics of Society*, op.cit., pp. 53-61. Also, W.J. Newman: *Liberalism and the Retreat*.

The emergence of this powerful minority of dissentient intellectuals was probably conducive to criticism of the implicit conservatism of Davis and Moore in the 1950's. It is significant that the most persistent of the critics, Melvin M. Tumin, had been mentioned by Kurt Wolff in 1946 as one of a small minority of intellectuals, characterized by a "conscientious adherence to the critical attitude," and an explicitly value-oriented approach to sociology. Wolff mentions a study in which Tumin attempted an evaluative comparison of cultured types using Sapir's distinction between "genuine" and "spurious" culture.¹

In respect of their attempts to repudiate Davis and Moore's argument, and of their lack of a clear ideological framework in terms of which an alternative explanation could be given, critics are representative of a tendency, centered in a powerful minority of dissentient intellectuals, to criticize their fellow intellectuals and social conditions in America, in a negative, destructive way and on an unresolved ideological basis.

1. Melvin M. Tumin, "Culture; Genuine and Spurious: A Re-evaluation." American Sociological Review. (1945).

CONCLUSION

In accordance with Mannheim's suggestions, discussed in Chapter I, we have attempted to go beyond an immanent interpretation of a body of intellectual thought in order to explain it in terms of something else, as the function¹ of which it then appears. Thus, having demonstrated that the sociological controversy under examination was initiated and sustained by a conflict of political opinion, we showed that this political conflict was representative of more general patterns of political conflict amongst American intellectuals.

However, the analysis departs from Mannheim's conception of the sociology of knowledge in one important respect: According to Mannheim, extrinsic interpretation involves an attempt to explain an intellectual phenomenon by reference to meaningful social existence. In the example given, in "The Ideological and the Sociological Interpretation of Intellectual Phenomena" the individualist type of inquiry characteristic of the eighteenth century, is explained by reference to, "an underlying social order" viz. bourgeois society, conceived of as a system of meanings which includes the idea of free competition. Elsewhere,² the existential

1. 'Function' is used here in the mathematical sense of co-variation. See R.K. Merton: Social Structure and Social Theory, Chap. I

2. Karl Mannheim: Ideology and Utopia, (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and World Inc., First Published in 1936), Chap. IV.

connection involves more specific class variables derived from the Marxist model of society, viz. "ascendant classes," "declining classes," "threatened classes" etc. For example, nineteenth century German conservative thought is interpreted as a response, generated by the needs of the class to which its creators belonged (the declining bourgeois class) as it was confronted with the challenge to its position by another class, (viz. "the ascendant group representing a new epoch.")

We do not propose to discuss the theoretical and methodological ambiguities and problems involved in these statements. However, the account of dominant trends in intellectual thought suggests that the Marxist model of society which underlies them is largely inapplicable to the U.S.A. The major "existential factors" which influenced the development of intellectual thought were not class variables but the changing conditions of the American economy, for example, the Great Depression, the New Deal reforms and the later recovery of the capitalist economy in the post-war situation; the prevailing mood of the American public as expressed in post-war conservatism; and, America's relation to the rest of the world, for example, the emergence of a polar confrontation between America and Russia.

American liberal and conservative intellectuals do

not "articulate the interests and aspirations of opposing groups" within society as Mannheim suggests; indeed, liberal intellectuals in the post-war situation have no well-defined alternative to conservative thought. Liberals face a dilemma in that the conservative's defence of the American "way of life," is essentially an attempt to conserve principles which are themselves liberal. On the other hand, liberal intellectuals do not espouse "radical" ideas due to the radicals' commitment to collective means to the attainment of democratic ends. In the context of the Cold War, liberal intellectuals are increasingly vulnerable to public reaction against their past sympathy towards the Soviet Union as a model for reform by centralized planning, and for their past alliance with radical intellectuals during the Popular Front period when the totalitarian aspects of Soviet Communism became apparent.

The inappropriateness of the Marxian model of class to American society is indicated by the Lynd's study, "Middletown in Transition," which concludes that the working class in Muncie did not develop a distinctive ideology; further, that there was no indication of a class struggle since resentment of workers to prevailing political and economic inequalities was an individual rather than a class experience. More recently, C. Wright Mills' studies of American society

do not demonstrate a Marxist emphasis. The "power-elite" which consists of three coalescing groups- the political, big business and military leaders- whose members are alike in social background, experience and aspirations, is not, as Bottomore points out, "a ruling class in the sense of a stable and continuous group which pursues a settled policy."¹ Moreover, the division Wright Mills stresses is not one of class, but a cleavage between the power-elite and the masses:-

"The top of modern American society is increasingly unified, and often seems wilfully co-ordinated: at the top there has emerged an elite of power. The middle levels are a drifting set of stalemated, balancing forces: the middle does not link the bottom with the top. The bottom of society is politically fragmented, and even as a passive fact, increasingly powerless: at the bottom there is emerging a mass society."²

Rather than describing political and social conflicts in the Marxian tradition, Wright Mills emphasizes the political apathy and impotence of the masses, and the inefficacy of politics in a society increasingly controlled by an elite.

Not surprisingly most studies of social stratification in America have been orientated to a functionalist model of class. Lloyd Warner's techniques and concepts

1. T.B. Bottomore, op.cit., p. 57.

2. C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite", New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., (1956), p. 324.

have been refined, but his attempt in "Yankee City" to show the essential inter-relatedness of apparently disparate behaviour and institutions by focusing on the "class-structure,"¹ is representative of American sociological studies of social stratification.

If, however, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is modified so that "existential situation" includes a much wider array of variables than "class," it is interesting that most of his observations concerning the nature of conservative intellectual thought have been supported by the preceding discussion of trends in American intellectual thought.

Mannheim stated that,

"Conservative mentality as such has no predisposition towards theorizing. This is in accord with the fact that human beings do not theorize about actual situations in which they live as long as they are well-adjusted to them."²

Furthermore, it is only the "counter-attack of opposing classes and their tendency to break through the limits of the existing order,"³ which calls forth an intellectual articulation of conservative thought. Mannheim's main point is that it is primarily the threat of a counter-ideology whose proponents belong to a "socially ascendant class" which provokes the articulation

1. R.K. Merton: Book Review: Lloyd Warner's "Yankee City" Survey Graphic (1942).

2. K. Mannheim: Ideology and Utopia, op.cit., p. 299.

3. Ibid.

of formerly implicit conservative attitudes on the part of the "threatened class." The articulation is not, Mannheim observes, generally given by members of the social class itself but by "a body of ideologists attached to it." In the case of conservative thought in nineteenth century Germany, the most notable was Hegel.

Mannheim's observation that conservative attitudes only become explicit in the context of a counter-ideology is supported by a discussion of conservative thought in American society. The most concise summary of conservative thought since the Federalist era and before the fifties was given in a flood of pamphlets issued by the Liberty League after 1935. Before 1935 the first New Deal centered on the National Industrial Recovery Act, which, as an experiment in centralized planning under the co-operative leadership of both big businessmen and government, did not seriously threaten the power of the business establishment. After 1935, at the time the flood of pamphlets issued by the League, denounced New Dealers, Communists and the dictatorship of F.D.R., businessmen's profits were being seriously threatened by the second New Deal tax and inheritance legislations. Although many intellectuals were radical in their opposition to the capitalist system and urged centralized planning as a means of reform in the early thirties, the 'counter-ideology'

they presented was not sufficient to call forth an articulation of conservative thought. Only in the context of New Deal legislation which threatened effectively to reduce their profits, were implicit conservative attitudes articulated by the business community. Their acceptance of the English economist F.A. Hayek after 1944 indicates the breadth of their search for a broader philosophy.

The first intellectual articulation of American conservative thought was not given until the early fifties, when a minority of intellectuals made explicit, not the needs or aspirations of a "class" or group as Mannheim suggests, but the prevailing mood of the American public. Conservatism had become increasingly generalized after the end of the Second World War, largely as a response to the recovery of capitalism at home and abroad and in the context of the Cold War, in which the U.S.A. confronted Russia as the only other world power. Soviet Communism was perceived by the American public, political leaders etc. as an alien and hostile ideology to which American capitalism was the only viable alternative. Intellectuals explicitly countered Soviet Communism, by urging the American "way of life," defined by patriotic and moral standards, and by defending dominant American institutions of the family, religion and democracy.

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