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CROSSING CLASS LINES:

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

by

Gloria Barbara Levin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Psychology)
in The University of Michigan
1975

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Saul Cooper, Co-Chairman
Associate Professor Mark Chesler, Co-Chairman
Professor Jesse Gordon
Professor Richard Mann

PREFACE

> I was speaking with a professor-friend, one who is fond of Bach chorales and the world of theoretical ideas. He was giving me insight into the feelings that faculty members had about myself and fellow students in an academic program which claimed to value practical experience over scholarly achievements. He likened us to Israeli sabras. Wanting validation that we were like my most romantic notions of pioneers in the building of a new order, I asked for relevant descriptive adjectives. I may have heard the exact words wrong, but I clearly understood the meaning: along with "strong, vibrant and dynamic" were "raucous, emotional and primitive."
> At that very instant, class consciousness "clicked."

Over the years, I observed friends who, only after completion of their dissertations, realized that their dissertations were really about themselves and their unresolved problems. I was able to short-circuit that process by, first, deciding what I wanted to learn about myself and then constructing a dissertation around that. The methodology allowed me to confront those personal issues by meeting with others who confront similar issues and, together, considering possible solutions and ways of maintaining our collective sense of integrity. The dissertation's utility, therefore, lies in its ability to help me lead a better life and, being a functioning member of my social environment, it holds out the possibility that, in so doing, others may lead better lives also.

This dissertation, being such a personal inquiry, requires a relaxation of our accustomed scientism, at those times when that serves no real purpose. In fact, this dissertation is, in good part, directed to counter narrow objectivism when those methods to knowledge become weapons (however unwitting) against people and, ul-

timately, against knowledge itself. This approach to the subject matter may cause some uneasiness in some quarters, dealing as it does with matters which could conceivably lead to social conflict and an upsetting of the "social equilibrium." My feeling is that, in the world's present crisis, this conflict is inevitable. I would like to play a part in understanding and communicating the roots of that crisis, such that our analysis is based on reality rather than myths propagated by all sides. This dissertation represents such a task.

The members of my dissertation committee not only tolerated my maverick inclinations but actively encouraged them. My independent work habits tend to insulate me while I think and write. However, each member's contribution predated this effort. The dissertation is really the culmination of my relationship with each: Saul Cooper has seen me through all the milestones and crises and kept me moving when my inclinations were to dawdle. Mark Chesler opened the doors to renegade ideas and provided me with the courage to pursue them. Dick Mann, when I most needed it, provided a model of principled scholarship and activism. Jesse Gordon reminded me that our personal histories root us in the present and also direct us to future change.

Gratitude is also extended to: Bill McKeachie who was not put off by my dissidence and recognized my need for a few of the traditional rewards along the way. George Rosenwald's glorious eloquence expressed the right words just when I needed to hear them. My students kept me honest. My friends kept that self-questioning from incapacitating me from good deeds. My family, in never being quite sure

what I was up to (but supporting me nevertheless), reminded me that I'm not always all that sure myself.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Professor Peter R. Mattis. I sorely miss what his participation in this self-exploration would have meant to both of us.

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INTRODUCTION

Equality, Opportunity and Schools

Much like the old argument, determining whether a glass is half-empty or half-full, the American system of social stratification is seen by various authors as either a facilitator of or an obstacle to equal opportunity. We are told that the "American System" is one of uniquely open access to a better way of life and that success is blocked only by one's inborn limitations and a lack of will. Shown examples of this society's Horatio Algers, we are told to set our sights high. Yet, in the early 1960's we discovered the "other America" (Harrington, 1962), always present but blocked from visibility by the optimistic rhetoric. Later in the decade minority groups began to realize that their access to opportunity was blocked, not by genetic inferiority or a lack of motivation, but because their social identities (of sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, etc.)were accorded low status by those in power. Horatio Alger was, after all, a male WASP! Although the myth of America as a meritocracy was being chipped away, old myths die hard.

The school is one institution widely seen as contributing to an individual's life chances within American society. Here, it is asserted, one's capabilities and hard work translate into concrete achievements and are rewarded by success, with only the vagaries of luck to hold one back from his or her potential. As our post-industrial

society has become increasingly dependent on expertise -- measured more by academic credentials held than by one's specific competencies (Berg, 1970) -- the school has become central to individual social mobility. However, schools are embedded within the larger social and economic context of American society and thus reflect the distribution of resources in that larger society. The children of elites benefit further from the advantages of the superior education they can purchase with their economic power; the children of the lower-classes are, in contrast, further disadvantaged by their inferior schooling. Those who begin life with an advantage continue to hold and even increase it, surrounded as they are by resources which are culturally-valued.

What starts out as inequality in resources soon is converted to inequality in opportunities; the educational system is the principal mediator in this conversion process. Deprivation in resources during the primary grades continues to impact on the person throughout his life, even for those few who somehow manage to make it to higher education institutions. Those who would work for fundamental social reform are, therefore, inevitably confronted by our educational system as a target for change.

Rationales for Change in Universities

During the ferment for social change in the 1960's, activist students and faculties of the larger universities directed public attention to the inequities and eliteness within these powerful institutions. A major focus of their demands related to the responsibility of the university to a broader public -- broader, that is, than the corporations and public bureaucracies being served at that

time. This focus took several forms although all were interdependent in effect. These forms can be viewed as the structural, cultural, and political rationales for institutional change.

First, universities were held responsible for admitting larger numbers of formerly-underrepresented groups so as to right structural wrongs. The egalitarian ideology of American society holds out the hope to all persons, regardless of their social class of origin, that they can succeed (surpassing their parents' social class) through their own efforts. The university is the major institutional channel within society which provides both the education and the tangible certification which offer upward social mobility to its graduates. Historically, however, universities primarily trained the children of the upper classes, especially those elite institutions which gave admissions preference to the offspring of alumni. High tuition costs and limited need scholarships further conspired to exclude children of the lower classes from university education and thus from opportunities for social and economic advancement. Although the major demands of the 1960's centered on increased admissions of blacks, other groups -- women, native Americans, latinos and those from lower-class backgrounds -- also benefitted from the pressure exerted on universities. Traditionally, these groups had been virtually excluded in larger numbers from higher education, either because of overt discrimination or less visible, but no less effective, exclusionary practices. Further impetus was given to this demand by federal legislation which threatened to withhold badly-needed funds from universities practicing discrimination.

Second, the activists believed that these new categories of

students could bring into the university practical know-how and diverse cultural perspectives. The activism of the 1960's was coincidental to the establishment of social programs stimulated by the War on Poverty, during which time the research and consultation skills of some academics were solicited (and well-remunerated). However, many academics recognized their personal limitations -- both in terms of their theoretically-oriented training and their lack of sensitivity to minority groups. The skill training required for new professional roles was not developed within the research-oriented university, and academic "quality control" precluded the employment of non-credentialed practitioners. The compromise consisted of support for mutual learning and teaching between academics and their practically-skilled minority students. The combination of conceptual training and practical skills would create the new professional model of "participant-conceptualizer" (Bennett, et. al., 1966). The university would benefit from a retooling of its faculty, and its ivory tower image could be recast without resorting to radical changes within the university, i.e., without massive changes in personnel, values or power relationships.

Third, universities grew increasingly mindful of an obligation to serve the broader public by generating expertise within the university for the benefit of underserved and politically under-represented segments of the population. Their lack of political muscle stems, in part, from inadequate leadership and insufficient collective organization promoting group-interests. Minority group students, utilizing skills developed within the university, could serve their communities and constituencies as advocates, organizers, trainers and researchers. At the same time, inflation, lower student enrollments and consequent cutbacks in uni-

versity budgets conspired to severely restrict the academic job market. Emphasis for training in the non-academic sector, where graduates would be forced to seek future jobs, would -- it was said -- become a high priority. The recruitment of minority group students, often underwritten by governmental and foundation grants, would eventually produce professionals who would return to work in their own communities. The diversion of new graduates from the already-overstaffed academic market place would, parenthetically, lessen the threat to the jobs of the current academic staff and their proteges, mainly affluent white males.

INQUIRING INTO THE OUTCOMES

The first wave of non-elite professionals of substantial number is departing the universities, degrees in hand. We can begin to inquire into their mutual impact and thus the accomplishment of the three goals (rationales) listed above.

Increased economic opportunity. The lack of statistical record-keeping on graduate students' class origins prohibits determination of the extent to which the first goal is being accomplished, because we are uncertain of the size of the subpopulation. However, most officials admit that the student population continues to come in disproportionate numbers from the upper-middle to upper classes. Furthermore, factors which are external to the university (primarily economic) complicate such a determination. Non-elite professionals are entering the job market at a time when unemployment is high in all economic sectors. They are further impaired by their lack of well-placed family connections which give an edge to upper-class students in a competitive job market. The irony of this situation is that these people, finally at the point

of benefitting from their new opportunities, are again blocked by persistent economic realities.

Diversifying cultural perspectives. To what extent have non-elite students been successful in contributing new cultural values to the university? Several authors (Dollar and Gittell, 1974; McDermott, 1969; Sennett and Cobb, 1973; Sexton and Sexton, 1971) have noted that professional elites not only control the dominant value system but also define non-elite value systems as inferior. Cultural pluralism, rhetoric to the contrary, is not viewed favorably by professional elites who "look down a long nose of condescension" at others (Novak, 1973). Rather than change itself, the university expects the non-elite student to become resocialized to its ways.

Promoting fundamental social change. Finally, does the university constitute a force or provide an institutional base for political change? Has the university itself been affected by the social change efforts of the last decade? Proshansky (1972) observed that whatever changes were accomplished resulted from the university's need to reduce conflict, not out of an intellectual belief in the merit of the changes. The self-interests of academic elites, tied as the university is to the ruling class, lie in the protection of the status quo. The university has remained substantially unchanged in its basic structure, values and power relationships. The newly-admitted non-elite students are, therefore, confronted by an elite university, one that is linked with the economic privileges, cultural values and political realities that served to exclude them in the past and continue to exclude their social class peers.

Another approach to the inquiry of the mutual impact of non-elite students and universities can be found within the subjective experi-

ence of the students themselves. What has been the experience of professional training for these persons of working- and lower-middle class backgrounds? How do they perceive themselves, their environment, and their relationship to it? How have they been altered by that experience? Where do their loyalties and commitments now lie?

Considerable research has been directed to the experience of non-white students in the university (e.g., Epps and Gurin, 1975; Gibbs, 1973) because they are the most visible and often the best organized of non-elite students. White students from lower-class backgrounds, on the other hand, are essentially invisible as a social grouping: there are no affirmative action guidelines for them, no special services for their academic preparation and social adjustment, no earmarked scholarship funds. Feldman and Newcomb (1969) reviewed that body of social science literature which addresses the impact of higher education on students from lower-class backgrounds. They ask:

> What kinds of students change in what kinds of ways, following what kinds of experiences, mediated by what kinds of institutional arrangements (p. 5)?

They found that simple hypotheses relating cultural discontinuity (between home background and the college environment) to the adjustment of students are not supported in a clear and consistent manner. Contrary to their conclusions, however, the wide variability in findings may well point to the need for a closer look at old assumptions and the generation of new research directions. Whenever social scientists become entangled in abstract methodological arguments over human concerns, it is an especially opportune time to return to the natural context and listen closely to the people who are experiencing those "social science concerns" as personal realities.

Richard Rodriguez's characterization of himself as the "new American Scholarship Boy" powerfully describes the feeling of being caught between two worlds, between the cultural legacy of the past and the economic, cultural and political privileges offered by the future.

> Certainly, the academy changes those from alien cultures more than it is changed by them...Those of us who have been scholarship boys know in our bones that our education has exacted a large price in exchange for the benefits it has conferred upon us...(1974, p. 28).

These students confront a three-pronged decision: (1) to adapt to the university environment, hoping that their resocialization will be ultimately rewarding; (2) to drop out of the stress-filled environment of the university, thereby relinquishing their best chance for upward mobility; or (3) to rebel against the eliteness of the university, possibly seeking political means to real and fundamental institutional change. Bowles (1972) describes the latter group as:

> ...People who have had at least a taste of inequality and hardship, who are old enough to be politically active and yet young enough to have dreams and take chances, and who are brought together on a day-to-day basis through common experience (1972).

The university is a mere reflection of the larger society. Like the half-empty or half-full glass, the new professional from non-elite class origins can either work to maintain the social system which permitted his/her success or endeavor to change a social system which systematically excludes the vast majority of Americans. The rationales for extending educational opportunities to non-elites -- economic, cultural and political -- are the context in which the preceding issues must be resolved, and they reflect assumptions about the determinants of social inequality.

Directions

This study attempts to explore alternative perspectives of social inequality through the experience of current graduate students from working- or lower-middle class origins in an elite university. Various approaches to understanding the determinants of social inequality are outlined. We then turn to an assessment of the adequacy of two competing theoretical perspectives.

The predominant social science mode, Functionalism, frames the subject of our inquiry in terms of the concept of "status inconsistency." This framework, along with several social-psychological theories used to refine the original concept, are outlined. A critique of the theory centers around six major theoretical and empirical areas as they relate to the explanation of social phenomena.

The second mode, Social Change theory, is proposed as an alternative perspective to Functionalism. This approach appears to correct for the limitations of the Functionalist mode. The basic elements of Social Change theory are presented through a point-by-point review of the earlier critique of Functionalism. Although each provides a useful framework for understanding certain social factors and observations, neither of these competing approaches is sufficient to the task of explaining the complexity of our inquiry. Later, an attempt will be made to synthesize the Functionalist and Social Change orientations to the experience of people who are in the process of crossing class lines, in this case achieving upward social mobility through educational means.

CHAPTER I

A COMPARISON OF COMPETING THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Determinants of Social Inequality

Stratification, said to be a universal characteristic of all societies -- even those originally established to be "classless" (Parkin, 1971) -- differentiates people into hierarchical classes. based on an unequal distribution of privileges, rewards, rights, obligations, power, influence, values, etc.. The impact of this system should not be underestimated; to a large extent it determines one's life chances. How has this system of variable positions evolved, and how do we account for the placement of a specific individual within that system?

Leaving aside those who would support the primacy of hereditary or intrapsychic factors in determining one's position vis a vis social inequality, the social determinists are themselves fragmented into opposing camps. One area of conflict revolves around a single- vs. multi-deterministic perspective on social stratification. One group asserts that social inequality is determined by a single, underlying and independent factor from which all other factors are derived as consequences. Marx, the principal theoretician of this group gave primacy to the economic structure; "..hence, the productive system is the nucleus around which other elements of society are organized" (Lipset, 1968, p. 298). Although he was aware of cultural, political and other factors, he believed these factors are

ultimately shaped by underlying structural conditions. Dahrendorf (1959) attempted to revise Marxian theory so as to update its validity and thus its relevance to the evolution of contemporary historical conditions in Western societies. In post-industrial society, technical and service segments displaced production in importance to the economic system. The growth of a managerial class demonstrated that the production-based class structure no longer reflected a simple dichotomy between the owners of the means of production and their workers. The single determinant of class inequality in this new context is, according to Dahrendorf, authority, exercised by those occupying dominant positions (or offices) over those in subordinate positions.

Critics of single-variable theories fault uni-determinism as overly-simplistic for the complexities of society. Most contemporary social scientists have opted for a multi-dimensional view of social stratification although they differ widely as to which factors are salient. Weber (1946) added the concept of "status" to Marx's production-oriented concept of "class." This additional factor emphasizes those realities of society which are distribution-oriented -- in which a society accords prestige as a non-material commodity. Neo-Weberians continue to argue over ever-increasing numbers of factors believed to exert independent effects. Wrong explains that:

> Sociologists, sometimes out of a polemical desire to refute prevailing scholarly or popular stereotypes, often stress the primacy of one set of cultural determinants over others (1972, p. 279).

These determinants include race, religion, family lineage, kinship, income, wealth, occupational prestige, community power, ethnic origins, consumption styles and education -- as well as combinations of those

factors. For example, Gordon (1964) introduces the concept of "ethclass" (economic class and ethnic origin) as particularly descriptive of the American social system.

Although classical Marxian theory is not wholly adequate to the task of explaining social stratification, no adequate comprehensive theory has replaced it to date. Marx formulated the theory of class so powerfully that he defined the parameters of the argument for later writers. Yet, even though there is no real agreement on a definition of social class, researchers continue to act as if there were, assuming wider agreement than exists in fact.

The Functionalist Concept of Status Inconsistency

A demonstration of this state-of-affairs can be found in the area of empirical research dealing with "status in/consistency." Lenski (1954) derived the general concept, which he called "status crystallization," from earlier multi-dimensional writers such as Weber and Benoit-Smullyan. To this basic theoretical orientation, Lenski added the existence of a number of hierarchical dimensions of social status. He then defined status inconsistency as an individual's differential placement on two or more of these dimensions. The total configuration of ranks is treated as an independent variable, exerting an effect on the person independent of the person's ranking on any dimension singly. People are said to be high or low on status consistency or, conversely, high or low on status inconsistency, depending upon the particular differentiation of their total status profiles. Those ranks associated with various dimensions are said to "imply each other" (Goffman, 1957); in other words, comparable ranks tend to communicate consistent

role expectations.

Thus, status inconsistency tends to communicate conflicting expectations for role behavior. These conflicting expectations inevitably lead to frustration because the status inconsistent person is unable to satisfy all expectations demanded of him simultaneously. As a result, the status inconsistent condition leads to various personal and social tensions. A large number of attitudes and behaviors have been posed as possible outcomes of status inconsistency-generated strain. Those which are self-directed (or intra-punitive) include: psychophysiological symptoms (Jackson, 1962); mental illness (Dunham, Phillips and Srinivasan, 1966); unstable self-image (Hughes, 1945); poor social relations (Adams, 1953); social isolation (Zalesnik, Christensen and Roothlisberger, 1958); and mobility-striving (Fenchel, Menderer and Hartley, 1951). Other-directed behaviors include: prejudice (Treiman, 1966); interpersonal conflict (Exline and Ziller, 1959); small group inefficiency and dissatisfaction (Adams, 1953). Finally, politically-oriented attitudes and behaviors said to derive from status inconsistency include: liberalism (Lenski, 1954); preference for change in the distribution of social power (Goffman, 1957); right-wing extremism (Rush, 1967); participation in social movements (Geschwender, 1968); and partisan alignment with the Democratic party (Segal and Knoke, 1968).

The contradictory results of this vast array of empirical research (e.g., political liberalism vs. right-wing extremism) points to the error of treating all statuses as if they were equally important and thus, all status discrepancies as equal in their effect. We can better explore status inconsistency by differentiating those

statuses which are essentially achieved by the person (e.g., education, occupation) from those which are ascribed to the person by the cultural context (e.g., race, sex, ethnic origin). The way in which a person responds to her own status inconsistency-generated stress is dependent on the particular pattern (or profile) of inconsistencies (Geschwender, 1968). Therefore, a pattern of high-status race and ethnic origin (e.g., WASP) but low educational attainment was found to respond to the resultant strain by developing (intra-punitive) physical symptoms. Conversely, the opposite pattern (e.g., a black professional) leads to the utilization of political (outer-directed) means to change (Jackson, 1962). In light of the contradictory findings, an explicitly stated socio-psychological theory of motivation was needed to explain the dynamics of the phenomenon so as to test predictive validity. A number of theoretical explanations have been developed to better account for the observed phenomena.

Status Equilibration Hypothesis

The most general explanation is put forth by Fenchel (1951) who notes that the observed behavior of a status inconsistent person can be seen as a "quest for consistency" among ranks. One's responses to discrepant ranks of various status hierarchies is to move toward a leveling of ranks. People will generally seek to inflate or deflate their status rankings such that the profile of status rankings will be congruent. Most persons, naturally, prefer inflation of their lowest status rather than deflation of their highest status.

Expectancy Congruence and Social Certitude

Sampson's Principle of Expectancy Congruence (1963) and Zaleznik's

Theory of Social Certitude (1958) are similar in form; the difference is that the former is a more general treatment of the latter. Here, rather than merely define status inconsistency as any inconsistent pattern of rankings, one must first determine if the parties involved expect a pattern of consistency. Generally, each status position carries an implied behavioral expectation, i.e., people respond to an individual according to the level of deference implied by his status. When the individual's status ranks are congruent, interpersonal relationships are simplified; all parties to the interaction know what behavior is expected. Status inconsistency, on the other hand, leads to difficulties in interpersonal relationships due to these conflicting expectations. The first case is known as "social certitude;" the opposite, "social incertitude." Social incertitude leads to intrapsychic anxiety for the status inconsistent person as well as for those with whom he interacts. This sets in motion forces tending toward the creation of status consistency. Pressure is exerted on all individuals in the interaction to create and maintain a condition of social certitude and finally expectancy congruence.

Social Exchange and Distributive Justice

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), an outgrowth of motivation theory, lays the conceptual groundwork for the theory of Distributive Justice (Homans, 1961). We are motivated by self-interests, primary of which is our social identity. We enter into social exchanges with others so as to act on that self-interest by having our social identity affirmed or mirrored by others. We seek to surround ourselves with those most likely to affirm our identity by responding to our highest status. Within the social exchange relationship, participants attempt

to strike a "bargain" as to how they will serve each other's self-interests. Participants may elect to respond to someone's lowest status so as to increase their own bargaining positions in the social exchange interaction. Obviously, the more variable a person's status rankings, the more vulnerable she is to disparagements and the less she is able to strike a favorable bargain in her self-interest. The resultant frustration is responsible for the appearance of symptoms listed above.

"Distributive justice" refers to a social exchange in which investments and rewards are distributed in such a way as to be perceived as "just" by the participants, i.e., a person who has worked hard (representing a high investment) expects a high reward in return. Therefore, an individual strives for an equity between investments and rewards. If the actual reward is less than that which was expected, the social exchange relationship is considered unfair. She may elect to decrease the investment or strive to have the reward increased in order to effect equity. If the reward is greater than that which was expected (based on the initial investment), she may feel guilty and strive to increase the investment or, conversely, have the reward decreased. In terms of status investments, a person who invests his low statuses to an encounter (e.g., a working-class black with minimal education) will experience guilt if his reward is high. The opposite, however, is far more likely to be true in this society: a person with high status investments (white, college educated male) feels cheated when his reward is low (unemployment).

The exchange relationship becomes even more complex for a status inconsistent person of mixed investments, especially those with high

achieved and low ascribed statuses. The reward he expects is determined by his perception of his investments. If he feels his low ascribed status should be salient to an exchange, he will expect low rewards. Conversely, if a person feels his high achieved status should be most salient, he will expect high rewards. In this society education, as the primary route to upward mobility, represents the most common opportunity for increasing one's achieved status.

Marginality and Social Mobility

An individual in whom is combined high-achieved and low-ascribed statuses is a particular case of the "marginal man" (Stonequist, 1937). A marginal man is subjected to pressures quite unlike those experienced by persons with a consistent status profile. Hughes' (1945) classic article treats the Negro physician as a special case in point. The context of conflicting social expectations evokes discomfort not only within the marginal individual but also for her colleagues. Since any deviation from widely-held stereotypes tends to be unsettling, the first person of her kind to achieve a high status position is usually excluded from the "informal brotherhood." Hughes notes that marginal persons tend to solve this problem by social segregation; thus, the Negro physician would have an exclusively Negro clientele and would avoid contact with Whites so as to avoid the inevitable exclusion. Kolack (1968) updates this thesis and relates it to the social work profession. Its marginal members, judged to be dissatisfied, are seen as a potential source of conflict within the profession. In this case, as with other examples of marginality, dilemmas are an indirect result of upward social mobility.

As a society becomes increasingly technological, it requires

enormous resources of human expertise. If the number of elites (to which society accords primary consideration) is insufficient to meet technical wo/manpower needs, non-elites of promise are offered these opportunities usually reserved only for the progeny of the elites. Thus, technological societies tend to be less rigid, as determined by the extent of upward mobility. The social structure of the United States, being relatively fluid and highly technological, uses higher education as the primary channelling mechanism for non-elites. Thus, the education of non-elites implies widespread marginality and its resultant consequences.

A Theoretical and Empirical Critique

Despite the recent efforts to refine the concept of status inconsistency, contradictory findings persist, and existent theories have proved inadequate to account for these contradictions. Box and Ford (1969) fault the basic assumptions upon which the status inconsistency concept is based. They believe that the theory of status inconsistency is invalid because it is logically incomplete, and in order to complete the theory, one must adopt untrue propositions. By exposing these propositions as invalid, they can account for the empirical contradictions. However, the false assumptive base of status inconsistency accounts for a wider range of inadequacies than that explained by empirical contradictions. My critique of the status inconsistency concept (and the social-psychological theories conscripted in its service) centers around six major, and often overlapping areas: (1) ideologies; (2) methodology; (3) contextual realities; (4) objective conditions; (5) subjective perceptions; and (6) collective identities. These areas outline the parameters of the

following discussion in which an alternative approach is suggested, with radically different consequences.

(1) Ideologies

The first critique of status inconsistency research is pivotal to succeeding issues, dealing as it does with the underlying ideology of the concept and theories constructed in its service. Normative and empirical aspects of ideologies are used to justify and explain current structural arrangements in society or, conversely, to pose preferred alternative structures. Various ideologies have been invoked to justify and thereby legitimize the scarcity and unequal distribution of resources, most notably money, knowledge and credentials. The principal ideology of this type is Functionalism, as represented in the writings of Davis and Moore (1945), Durkheim (1960), Merton (1957) and Parsons (1953). Status inconsistency research is a direct outgrowth of the Functionalist approach; its assumptions, therefore, can best be scrutinized by an analysis of its approach to social perspectives.

The group which holds greatest resources also has greatest access to the institutional means of legitimation; it, in turn, uses the legitimized, dominant ideology to continue to maintain its control over these resources. Thus, questions of ideology are ultimately translated into structural realities which have cultural impact. The privileged class uses the dominant ideology to define the prevailing distribution of rewards as just and desirable. Dominant American ideology stresses individualism, competition, and self-reliance, reassuring the privileged that their success was won by those very

qualities and that the unprivileged (presumably without those preferred qualities) do not merit the rewards that accrue to the successful. The unprivileged, in response, often blame their lack of success on themselves, "buying into" the dominant ideology. However, they may also reject the tenets of the dominant ideology. Thus,

> ...people in favored economic positions work out individualistic explanations for wealth and poverty while the poor develop explanations which emphasize luck and social structural forces at work (Huber and Form, 1973, p. 13).

Functionalists justify the existing order by emphasizing those societal aspects which maintain the social equilibrium. Primary to Functionalism is the view that reward inequality is necessary for any complex society; thus, inequality represents the most effective process to insure that societal positions of importance will be filled by the most capable persons. These positions tend to require the most extensive training and carry the most responsibility. Differential rewards, therefore, provide the impetus or motivation for the most capable members of society to endure the preparation and shoulder the burdens of responsibility.

> (Functionalism) focuses on the social mechanisms by which men are molded and shaped, by which norms are imposed upon them, and by which they are made to <u>want</u> what a particular social system happens to require (Gouldner, 1970, p. 421).

The mechanisms of social control and socialization are central to this approach not only because they are socially functional, but also because their functional consequences are valued. Functionalism is, therefore, oriented to maintaining the current social <u>order</u>:

> ...to seek order is to seek a reduction of social conflict..to seek a moratorium on..social changes...to seek a predictability of behavior...to seek order-giving mechanisms...to seek or prefer 'structures...' To pursue and to speak in the name of social order, then, is to

> defend, not order and not the status quo 'in general,' but the existent order with its specific and differential distribution of life chances, which endows some with special advantages and others with special liabilities (Gouldner, 1970, pp. 251-252).

As an ideology, Functionalism is particularly attractive to those who have a stake in the current structural arrangements. It not only poses normative statements which justify current inequities but also attributes qualities of moral and social superiority to those who occupy those socially "important" roles. "A social theory that takes as its central problem the maintenance of social order is thus more ideologically congenial to those have more to lose" (Gouldner, 1970, p. 254). Most contemporary social scientists, by virtue of their professional status and attendant rewards, frame their theories within the Functional ideology. Therefore, the primacy of the Functional approach in social science research is indicative, not so much of the nature of society, but of the rewards granted to those who help maintain the system as is.

(2) Methodology

The two central methodological issues of all scientific research relate to the reliability and validity of the findings. Reliability refers to the replicability of findings; validity is the extent to which the method measures that which it purports to measure. Status-inconsistent research can be faulted on both counts.

Reliability -- Efforts to replicate Lenski's original findings on the relationship between status inconsistency and political behavior (1954) have been unsuccessful to date. Kenkel's (1961) retest of Lenski's work produced results which did not support the original findings. Lenski (1961) thereupon argued that Kenkel's use of dif-

ferent indices of status does not constitute a faithful replication effort. Although Lenski's come-back is valid, it only serves to spotlight the widely-divergent methods and status dimensions used in all of the studies. Indeed, hardly any two studies have utilized the same methodologies or dimensional indices of status. Both Sokol (n.d.) and Brandmeyer (1965) attempted replications, using Lenski's methods with only minor refinements but were again unsuccessful in supporting his original hypothesis. The lack of replication up until now, of course, should not imply that the findings can not be replicated. It should, however, give one pause before "building castles on (status-inconsistency) sands!"

Validity -- The validity of the findings of status inconsistency research also can be challenged. While various researchers have used different status dimensions in their methodologies, no real effort has been made to determine which dimensions are most salient in any particular context. Instead, researchers seem to utilize those indices of status which are easiest to measure and/or data which are readily available. (Most status inconsistency research consists of secondary analyses of already-collected data which are not always appropriate to current tasks.) The question is posed: does status inconsistency really exist as a social reality or is it simply a heuristic device of social science researchers? Frequently, the ability to accomplish a statistical manipulation leads the researcher to intuitively-wrong predictions and empirically-false conclusions. Some groups with similar patterns of status inconsistency are treated as a single statistical group although they do not function as a social unit in reality, nor are they conceived as such

by themselves or by the society.

The addition of the theory of Expectancy Congruence has, to some extent, corrected some of the most blatant inadequacies in this regard; however, it is insufficient to account for findings which do not make logical or empirical sense. In fact, the major criticism of this whole area of research constitutes a critique of contemporary sociologists and social psychologists who are self-proclaimed neo-Weberians. These persons have trivialized Weber's original work and, in so doing, "forget the forest for the trees" -- and rather reedy trees at that!

(3) Contextual Realities

Status inconsistency "theory" was formulated to be universalistic -- a theory which can span all historic and geographic contexts. However, comparative studies of social phenomena should have amply demonstrated the critical impact of diverse histories and cultures on human behavior. For example, Portes' (1972) efforts to account for lower-class leftist-radicalism in Chile with status inconsistency conceptions proved inadequate. He attempted to explain this inadequacy by invoking methodological (measurement or operationalization) errors, but his hypothesis again is not supported. However, he neglected to even consider the obvious: slum dwellers in Chile confront significantly different economic, cultural and political realities than confront workers in urban America -- the context of most status-inconsistency research.

(4) Objective Conditions

Overlapping these areas of criticism is a realization that

status inconsistency research tends to obscure structural conditions by placing total emphasis on status considerations. Clearly, status determinations are partly based on objective considerations (e.g., the highest paying occupations tend to be accorded highest prestige in our society). Yet, the cultural system, from which status hierarchies are derived, is but one determinant of social phenomena. Despite the extensive list of statuses posed, the basic unidimensionalism of the status inconsistency concept is limited in its ability to predict and explain the broad range of human attitudes and behaviors. Socioeconomic status is a crucial variable in determining and understanding all social phenomena. It is, according to Worden, Levin and Chesler (1975), "the master variable." It may not be the only variable, but no social phenomenon can be understood by ignoring its impact.

This research direction, with its many methodological and empirical contradictions, has been unsuccessful in separating out a status inconsistency entity as an independent variable. In fact, alternative explanations can be posited for many of the findings of status inconsistency-derivation; an individual's life chances and self-interests are two such alternatives. Both relate to the structural conditions of society, i.e., the system of stratification which functions to include or exclude persons, to nourish or starve their potentials.

The first alternative explanation of status inconsistency research findings refers to life chances, representing opportunities for alternative modes of adjustment which depend on the individual's position within the social structure. Thus, attempts to determine

a person's propensity for joining a social movement (as Geschwender, 1968, frames within the status inconsistency model) must take into account one's opportunity for doing so. If the political system outlaws any such membership (as in a dictatorship) or if the person is isolated from any ongoing social movement, he can not be expected to join a social movement. More directly relevant to this study is the distribution of educational opportunities within this society. Despite the rhetoric of "open educational opportunity," the reality is that an individual's position within the economic hierarchy determines the extent to which he can qualify for such opportunities. The educational system, within a mixed capitalistic economy such as is found in the United States, makes available more and higher quality resources to those occupying the highest economic positions. This is true not only for those who can purchase their education through private institutions, but is generally true also for public schools wherein public financing schemes favor the already-privileged. Wolfe (1974), in criticizing the notion of education as a commodity to be bought and sold, disputes the conception of education as the primary means to class equality. Prior educational inequalities perpetuate succeeding inequalities and one's access to and preparation for further education. Although Weber defined classes as aggregates of individuals with similar life chances, status inconsistency research does not account for these life realities, instead considering all people -- implicitly, if not explicitly -- as having similar life opportunities.

The concept of self-interest is closely related to life chances and the correct identification of one's position in the stratification

system. Marx said that people in the same economic stratum tend to behave similarly because they share the same objective interests, by virtue of that very placement. For instance, lower-class students who confront discrimination in achieving an education not only share this situation as an objective life condition, but may also share an interest in changing the situation, constituting a potential for collective action.

(5) Subjective Perceptions

The duality of social reality -- objectivist and subjectivist -- is a subject of concern for many social scientists, among them Berger and Luckmann (1966) and McCall and Simmons (1969). Subjectivity refers to one's perceptions of social reality and her placement within that reality. Status inconsistency research has been based almost entirely on objectivism, either through the arbitrary manipulation of statistically-derived status determinations or in terms of normative expectations. In terms of statistical manipulations, we have seen that the research's objectivism is incomplete because it underestimates the economic variable. In the second case, Nelson (1973) notes that status inconsistency research which utilized the concept of normative expectations of status rankings has been inadequate because it fails to: (a) determine empirical, as opposed to logical, expectations for various status rankings; (b) identify which groups hold which expectations, the assumption being that varying self-interests lead to differing group norms; and (c) recognize the extent to which the expectations of any individual may deviate from a normative consensus of the population. Thus, we should not generalize an individual's behavioral expectancy from that

held by the overall society because certain "deviants" do not subscribe to the dominant norms and may differ with respect to expectations of their own and others' behavior. The very fact of status inconsistency infers some degree of deviancy anyway. The use of the Distributive Justice concept by status inconsistency researchers is another example of the lack of subjectivity; Homan's original concept referred to the perceived costs and rewards of a social encounter, rather than to absolute costs and rewards, determined to exist by objective investigation.

Subjectivity of social class (perception of one's social position) is one variable which intervenes between the person's objective condition and the behavioral outcome. Thus, we must ask how a person perceives and feels toward her own ranking across distinct status hierarchies, as well as how those rankings are determined, as objectively judged by outside observers. Subjectivity of social class seems to be treated in two manners. Most pluralist writers conceive of subjectivity as the individual's awareness of her position within the social structure. This "class identification" approach is typified by Centers' classical work on the subject (1949). Most dialectical writers, on the other hand, regard subjectivity as one's awareness not only of her class ranking but also an awareness of the class system itself -- consciousness of self-in-environment. This latter approach stems from the general area of reference group theory and its related concept, relative deprivation.

By stressing objectivism, status inconsistency research presumes a dominant culture from which members of the population derive norms and expectations for behavior. The subjectivism of reference group

theory recognizes the existence of distinct subcultures which incorporate and reinforce norms in its members which are contrary to the dominant culture. Subcultures often develop when the dominant culture is made inaccessible to a group of persons. Ulf Hannerz (1972) explores "ghetto culture" as a reaction against the dominant culture from which blacks are generally excluded. Its members derive guides to action from the ghetto culture which are alternative to the mainstream. Subcultures which develop out of social oppression may persist as a conscious rejection of the dominant culture and as an assertion of one's own culture. The current upsurge in ethnic consciousness described by Feldstein and Costello (1974), Novak (1973) and Wenk, Tomasi and Baroni (1972) is witness to this cultural pride and preference.

Reference group theory poses reference points upon which persons can comparatively evaluate their own positions within society. Most individuals do not view the total society as a frame of reference but, rather, subgroups of society. An individual's reference group is generally the group in which he is a member. This should not imply that the poor are unaware of the rich; it is just that the rich are so distant socially that they do not constitute an appropriate standard by which the poor can compare themselves. Unlike the traditional view of a continuum from poor to rich, this poses the existence of discrete clusters in which, for example, the working-class is as distinct from the middle-class as black is from white (Levison, 1974). Contrary to Hodge and Treiman's (1968) assertion that American democracy generates wide inter-class contact, most reference group studies have found fairly narrow reference groups

for the majority of Americans because of inequalities in social access and mobility.

In rigid stratification systems, reference groups tend to be narrow; relatively open systems allow more inter-class visibility. Generally, narrow reference groups minimize political grievances; dissatisfaction tends to be highest in open societies where people are aware of inequities. The concept of relative deprivation accounts for these findings in which a person's feelings of deprivation relative to others are tied to the nature of the social structure itself. Thus, Scase (1974) finds more class consciousness among Swedish workers who had wider reference groups than British workers. He sees the Swedish political system and the Socialist Party as accounting for the difference in class consciousness.

Some persons, however, may select a reference group in which they do not hold membership. In rigid societies this positive orientation to a non-membership group is explained as fantasy; in more open societies, it can be explained as "anticipatory socialization." Merton and Rossi (1953) note that the resultant consequences of anticipatory socialization are pertinent not only to the individual but also to the membership group and the social structure itself. Anticipatory socialization is functional to an individual who strives to membership in a new reference group, as long as the social structure allows for the possibility of eventual admission to that group. This is, however, dysfunctional to the subgroup from which the person is defecting as it affects group cohesion and morale. The selection of a reference group in which one is not yet a member is functional to a social structure which claims equal opportunity

because it supports the legitimacy of the structure, allows its authority to remain intact, and reinforces the assertion of open opportunity.

The marginal man is a special case of an individual taking as a reference group a group in which he does not hold membership. In a society where barriers to mobility are found (contrary to the status inconsistency assumption of total permeability), he is poised on the edge of several groups but not fully accepted by any, neither the excluding group to which he aspires or the group from which he has defected. In many cases, the rebuff from the strived-for, non-membership group results in a return to the membership group and a strengthening of loyalty to its cultural norms. Thus, the black professional may choose to live and work exclusively within his own black community rather than continue to risk rebuff by the white establishment.

Marx attempted to account for the two forms of subjectivity by conceptualizing transitional stages in the historical development of class. The first stage (klasse an sich, class-in-itself) exists when an aggregate of individuals who occupy similar objective positions within the social structure "do not understand their class position, the controls over them, or their 'true class interests'" (Lipset, 1968, p. 299). Commonly known as "false consciousness," this concept was given contemporary significance by Lenin (1943) as "trade union consciousness." With particular relevance to the American labor establishment:

> ...organized labour directs its main efforts towards winning a greater share of resources for its members -- not by challenging the existing framework of rules but

by working within this framework (Parkin, 1971, p. 91). This functionalist conception of class is characteristized by intra-class competition in which each member of the class strives to better himself at the indirect expense of the striving and eventual achievement of fellow class members.

Although klasse an sich tends to stabilize the predominant social order by legitimizing existing rules governing the allocation of societal resources, Marx believed it would be a necessary stage in the development of a "true" or "revolutionary class consciousness." Klasse fur sich, class-for-itself, represents the opposite conception of class, in which a self-conscious class uses (or is prepared to use) political means in waging a class struggle. Marx, however, was somewhat vague in predicting intermediate stages in the development of class consciousness -- from klasse an sich to klasse fur sich.

(6) Collective Identities

The final critique of status inconsistency research refers to the individualistic nature of the context and the findings. Most status inconsistency research ignores the fact that people exist, to the greatest extent, in social contexts. Although this research has been faulted for making incorrect cross-level inferences -- from aggregate findings to individual predictions (called the "ecological fallacy" by Berry and Martin, 1972), the "group" referred to is not a functioning social unit. It is rather a statistically-derived group, of which its "members" may have no knowledge, to say nothing of collective loyalties or identities.

Socially mobile persons with characteristics undervalued by the

society do, in fact, form collective identities and social enclaves. Black college students have formed black student unions and Afro-American cultural centers. As more women enter training programs for managerial and professional careers, they are forming collective identities and social/political groupings. Most professional associations, for example, now have minority caucuses, formed in reaction against the associations' unresponsiveness to the demands of minorities. Yet there seems to be a need for a critical mass of minority people in order for them to form such social support groups. The few token individuals who slipped through in the past existed as isolated individuals with a limited collective identity, mostly because there weren't enough of them to form a collectivity. The more the system opens up to allow the entrance of persons of under-valued social identities (unaccompanied by fundamental change in the social structure itself), the greater will be the possibility of the formation of collective identities and collectivities with the potential for fundamental social change.

Summary

Most social science research on upward mobility has tended to utilize the concept of status inconsistency or a related Functionalist approach. I have already pointed out the limitations of such theoretical and research directions as applied to such a phenomenon. It now remains for me to propose an alternative approach, correcting for those limitations and offering the possibility of a new perspective on the self-in-environment.

An Alternative Approach -- Social Change

The alternative ideological approach to Functionalism, variously called Social Change (Gouldner, 1970); Social Conflict (Horton, 1966); Power Elitism (Mills, 1956); or Oligarchism (Hunter, 1953), views society as inherently unstable and conflicted. While Functionalists emphasize status dimensions of inequality, Social Change writers stress power and the way in which it is used to uphold interests of one group at the expense of the others. Here, social inequality leads to inevitable clashes between groups holding competing interests vis a vis current structural arrangements.

This alternative approach will be outlined by referring back to the six areas of criticism in the last section and by posing new ways of framing the questions to be asked and the ways in which they are asked. Later, I will attempt to synthesize the two conflicting ideological approaches for the purpose of understanding the complexity of the phenomena under study.

(1) Ideologies

Dominant ideologies disseminated by the social science establishment determine the methodology which will be utilized in studying social phenomena as well as which of these will be defined as "social problems." Ideological bias of social scientists is rooted, to a large extent, in their ignorance of other life-styles, limited as these social scientists are in their social contacts. The inherent distortion of

ideological bias produces myths which are legitimized by those professionals who control many of our social institutions. Therefore, they are led to define subcultures other than their own as "problemmatic" rather than as merely "different." The myths so derived not only justify their own vaunted positions within the social structure but also generate "social problems" which they can study -- and for which they are well-paid by governmental elites. Because their skills and predilections tend to be individually-oriented, i.e., focused on individual change rather than system change, their diagnosis of certain groups as problemmatic requires interventions for which the social scientists claim to be equipped. This appears to be a high-level conflict of interests in the end.

On the other hand, a Social Change ideology which emphasizes social conflict is suppressed in our major social institutions, such as the university. This is reflected in the paucity of social science research which examines the "cleavages" of social reality and their expression in social conflict.

In this approach, classes are seen as correlative, i.e., one group benefits at the other's disadvantage. So long as a group holds power and controls society's economic and cultural institutions, it continues to reify the order from which it benefits. Social Change ideology asserts that those in power occupy those roles not because they possess any superior personal characteristics but because they have utilized the advantages of their privileged positions to gain more privilege. This dialectical perspective was

advanced by Marx and continues to frame the ideology of the Old and New Lefts.

Through social conflict, disadvantaged groups may hope to bring about a revolutionary change. The desired end is contrary, however, to the Functionalist's perception of them; rather than promote disorder (of which the Functionalists accuse them), Social Change theorists and activists visualize a new order. The class struggle is, therefore, a driving force of historical change and promises a constructive outcome for the masses. By emphasizing creative activism, it negates the Functionalist's characterization of social dissidents as inadequately socialized people. The focus here is on environmental transcendence and its predisposing factors rather than on symptomatology or patterns of adjustment to the existing environment.

(2) Methodology

A Functionalist-based study uses methodologies which support conventional ideological assumptions and values, focusing on the anxieties, symptomatologies and coping mechanisms of its subjects. Methodology parallels ideology in that the latter provides a framework for the former. An alternative methodology suggests rival plausible hypotheses because new perspectives flourish in alternative modes of framing the issues under study.

Most status inconsistency research, as I have indicated, consists of secondary analysis of already-existent data which were originally based on Functionalist ideological assumptions and outlooks. Possibly because of the "suppression" of Social Change

ideologies within most universities and research institutes, very little work has been accomplished, relative to the more prevalent Functionalist approach, upon which dissident researchers can build. This alternative approach, applied to a specific category of persons in a particular environmental context, is not sufficiently developed so as to permit the profitable testing of delimited hypotheses. Rather than trivialize it, this self-in-environment phenomenon can best be studied through broader, possibly more tentative methods than that represented by traditional social science practice. An exploratory methodology can accord full respect to the complexity of the experiential data. This complexity requires the use of several convergent methods rather than dependence on any one method to answer all questions.

(3) Contextual Realities

Recognizing the critical impact of the surrounding context on existence and behavior, one must observe, describe and analyze the impact of explicit historical and locational factors which have relevance to the subject matter. Marxian analysis is based on an historical model; understanding is derived from an historical analysis of unique and changing events. History tends not to move in a straight line direction with all factors and events converging towards the same end. Thus, analysis must be constantly reviewed for changing historical forces and moods.

Locational (geographic) factors are no less important as a contextual reality. This is illustrated in Wegner's (1973) study of working-class students at the University of Hawaii. Contrasting

his results with those of Ellis and Lane (1967) at Stanford, he claims that the environmental differences between these two schools account for the dissimilarity in findings. Thus, Ellis and Lane's findings of high levels of anxiety in working-class students at elite, private Stanford are not replicated at the University of Hawaii -- an urban school on a relatively small island which has a high percentage of working-class students. He believes that the extent of adjustment of these students is largely determined by the increased social continuity with family and high school friends of commuting working-class students at Hawaii. The locational context of Stanford, on the other hand, is seen as culturally disjunctive for working-class students. Although both studies are framed within the Functionalist perspective, i.e., focusing on modes of adaptation of aliens, Wegner's study at least recognizes the impact of contextual realities on human phenomena.

(4) Objective Conditions

Understanding the objective aspect of reality is crucial in determining one's life conditions and self-interests. Yet, despite the fact that status inconsistency-related research is objectivistic, that objectivism is based on nonmaterial, status conditions. Although status-relations are important reflections of objective conditions, they are more salient on the local community level (Warner, 1963). The continuing and pervasive influence of economic forces on the national level requires that we not neglect the material bases of human life. Social structure exerts a powerful influence on the nature of human relations; our position within the economic "marketplace" is central to Social Change perspectives, as depicted here.

These assertions, however, have broader implications, reflecting as they do the dispute between those who view social class behavior as trait- vs. situationally-determined. Within this dispute is a clue to valid theoretical links between the individual and society. This dichotomy is discussed by Ryan (1971) and Valentine (1969). Trait theorists emphasize a culture of poverty in which personality traits and behaviors are not only different from the affluent, but dysfunctional to success in this socioeconomic system (Chilman, 1966; Lewis, 1966; Liebow, 1967; and Moynihan, 1965). Viewed only as atomized individuals who share certain traits in common, it does not imply a collective potential; in fact, those very traits block formation of a functioning collectivity.

Situational theorists, on the other hand, view poverty (and other social class-linked behavior) as determined by the objective conditions an aggregate of individuals share, by virtue of a social structure which excludes them (Jencks, et. al., 1972; Cloward and Piven, 1971; and Rainwater, 1970). They criticize trait theories because they are "teleological in that they explain an institution by its consequences rather than by its antecedents" (Huber and Form, 1973, p. 24). That is, since the social structure predates the individual, behavior should be viewed as a response to the conditions imposed by the structure. Further, this perspective allows for the possibility that these people, when conscious that their exclusion is arbitrary, may form a collective identity and act upon it to change the social structure, in line with their self-interests.[1]

Underestimation of objective conditions has led many writers to doubt, ignore or deny the continued existence of social classes in

American society (Wilensky, 1966). They view social class as a merely heuristic device for constructing statistical aggregates, rather than believe that class-determined conditions exert an independent effect on attitudes and behavior. These writers assert that other demographic variables (e.g., race, ethnic identity, etc.) exert a far greater influence than does class -- if it exists at all. They point to alleged class levelling and open opportunity as evidence of this position. Certainly, the material advantages of the entire society have increased over earlier eras. However, this should not deny the existence of significant gaps between classes. Those who would place almost all Americans within the "great middle-class" are glossing over the greater reality of differential life chances within this society. Nor is this gap only between the very poorest members of society and all the rest. Rather, we can easily perceive a social "buffer zone" between the working-class and the middle-class which is as significant as that between other groups within society. Observations and considerable literature point to a working-class culture distinct from those above or below in the stratification system (Berger, 1971; Gans, 1962; I. Howe, 1972; L. Howe, 1970; Jackson, 1972; Kahl, 1957; LeMasters, 1975; Levitan, 1971; Miller and Riessman, 1961; Rainwater, 1974; Rodman, 1963; Ryan, 1973; Sexton and Sexton, 1971; and Shostak and Gomberg, 1964).

The differences in culture, however, are a direct consequence of differential life chances imposed on social classes. Culture is merely the superstructure of more fundamental class-based interests. For example, the often-stated "concern for security" of the working-

class is a reflection of workers' insecure position within society -- only a paycheck away from unemployment and eventual poverty (Levison, 1974).

On the other hand, some who acknowledge the existence of classes point to the docility of American labor to disprove Marx's predictions of an imminent class struggle. Evidence of a middle-classized labor force proves to them that classes are, indeed, heuristic. Observations of working-class embourgeoisement[2] should not, however, imply that the working-class leads a bourgeois existence nor give credence to assertions of the non-existence of lower- and working-classes. Balbus (1971) utilized interest group theory to distinguish between objective conditions and subjective perceptions of one's class position. Thus, "a person may be affected by something whether or not he realizes it" (p. 152). Marx's distinction between the klasse an sich and the klasse fur sich is a similar version of the same concept.

(5) Subjective Perceptions

Psychological awareness of one's objective condition is, by extension, an awareness of one's "best" interests. Subjectivity is ultimately a perception of oneself in the surrounding environment; how the person "stands" in contrast to others. Reference group theory has been invoked by some to explain a perception of the American lower-classes as having no (or limited) class consciousness. Generally, the lower the social class, the narrower the reference group and the more likely that the reference group is restricted to the lower class. The development of lower-class class consciousness

is dependent on widening the reference group such that one is aware of self in the total (economic, cultural and political) system.

A number of social scientists explicitly deny the existence of class consciousness; on the other hand, most concede its existence although they often act as if there were no such subjectivity, by ignoring its impact on attitudes and behaviors. There is something almost "un-American," it seems, about the study of class cleavages. Although Centers called it "the most neglected area of psychological inquiry" in 1949, the situation has not changed significantly some twenty-five years later.

Those social scientists who do inquire into class consciousness do so on the basis of diverse ideological beliefs. In contrast to the recognized class consciousness of European workers, some researchers hypothesize a number of factors which have retarded the development of class consciousness among the lower classes of the United States. While conceding the existence of some of these factors, neo-Marxists pose alternative outcomes which can conceivably lead to more, rather than less, class consciousness. Several obstacles to the development of class consciousness are specified below, as are the neo-Marxist rebuttals addressed to each, in turn.

(1) AFFLUENCE

• Evidence. Relatively rapid economic growth and labor union strength in collective bargaining for their memberships have led to widespread affluence and complacency for most workers. The salaries of most manual workers are comparable now to those of many segments of the white-collar work force. Workers feel that they have a stake in the current system and their future possibilities.

They are unwilling to risk that which they have for dubious promises of more later.

• Rebuttal. Despite the seeming validity, considerable evidence exists to the contrary. First, the increase of material standards has been accompanied by a rise in material expectations. Affluence could, in the long run, become a dynamic, liberating force, as expectations will always outpace material rewards. Second, although material conditions have improved overall, the gap between the poor and the rich has actually increased over the years. Third, only a minority of American workers, and the most skilled workers at that, are presently unionized.

(2) CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

• Evidence. The mass productive capacity of modern industrial technology places consumer goods within the economic reach of virtually all classes. Therefore, the lack of visible signs of class is not conducive to the development of class resentment against the privileged class, a central dynamic for the existence of class consciousness. Rather, their new-found affluence provides them the resources necessary for participation in the culture of the middle-class. Their "affluent" material conditions also encourage the development of new (middle-class) values. All of the above points to the blurring of class differences and, thus, the erosion of group distinctiveness from which class consciousness would otherwise flourish.

• Rebuttal. As incomes and expectations increase, corporate capitalists move in to exploit the new consumer market. They create false needs for luxury products through advertising in the

mass media and then fill these needs with their own products. The mass media, as powerful influences, set norms for product-linked behavior: "Ring around the collar" aims to create a guilt in housewives which can be assuaged by purchase of a laundry product. Expensive automobiles hold out promise for the company of a sexy date. Thus, affluent workers fall into penury in their race to keep up with the mythical "Jones'." The consumer movement is a vehicle, however, that both re-educates and organizes people to fight these influences.

(3) RESIDENCE

• Evidence. One symptom of rising affluence among American workers is their suburbanization. This is viewed as a classless life-style, supplanting the cohesive ethnic communities ("urban villages") through which cultural values were traditionally transmitted and preserved and from which workers moved when their economic positions improved. The middle-classification (or embourgeoisement) of the working-class is evidenced by the political passivity and economic conservatism of working-class suburbanites.

• Rebuttal. Berger (1971) disproved this contention in his study of auto workers who were relocated to suburban residences when their factory moved. He found their class consciousness to be dependent more on their occupation than on the community in which they lived. Furthermore, all suburbs are not affluent. Differing real estate values reflect the class differences among suburban residents. Also, Wrong (1972) asserts that the primary attachments of the working-class persist. The homogenization of the working-class

suburbanite is, therefore, not supported by the evidence.

(4) SOCIAL IDENTITIES

• Evidence. Non-class related social identities are more important to the development of group consciousness than is social class. These (ethnic, sex, race, age, etc.) identities dilute the impact of social class as a determinant of social life. Ethnic identity is the primary source of group consciousness. Ethnic enclaves provide a sense of community, opposed to the Marxian notion of anomie from which class consciousness would otherwise develop.

• Rebuttal. Successive immigration waves and related patterns of ethnic and race discrimination in America have related class and ethnicity. Although many of these groups assimilated somewhat and anti-discrimination laws were enacted, old exclusionary practices still persist. Therefore, class and ethnicity demonstrate an "add on" effect which makes difficult a differentiation of class, ethnicity and race as sources of salient group identification.

(5) WORK CONDITIONS

• Evidence. Advances in productive technology and modern management have undercut the major force behind the development of a Marxian class consciousness -- that force is worker alienation. Work conditions are improved and the nature of the work itself is more inherently rewarding. Managers trained in human relations have a collaborative relationship with workers, and workplace democracy is a growing trend. These changes in work attitudes and relationships result in greater worker loyalty to the employing organization and thus retard the growth of class consciousness.

• Rebuttal. Managerial efforts have merely camouflaged the basic worker-owner relationship in which the one profits from

the physical labor of the other. No amount of piped-in music, soft lighting or production team modules will erase that fundamental distinction. In fact, worker alienation is not only greater (Aronowitz, 1973), but it is not restricted to the traditional blue-collar work force. Rather, the managers themselves, as well as white-collar service personnel and public employees, are joining the labor movement to a startling degree. The growth and diversification of a larger labor movement points to the potential of a worker vs. owner class consciousness.

(6) NATIONAL HISTORY

• Evidence. The national history of the United States, unlike the feudal histories of Western Europe, did not have institutionalized economic, cultural and political patterns of oppressor-oppressed relationships. There is, therefore, no history of American class struggles from which class consciousness would otherwise develop.

• Rebuttal. Our true history is replete with the struggles of oppressed classes -- native Americans, foreign immigrants, Chicano farm laborers, Appalachian coal miners, poor white tenant farmers, etc. In fact, American history records slavery as an example of a "class" struggle which turned into class warfare. The true history of this nation has been replaced by a sanitized version, one which white-washes the violence and oppression that have been constant themes. A small number of revisionist historians are attempting to present a more accurate picture -- warts and all.

(7) SOCIAL MOBILITY

• Evidence. The relative fluidity of the American social

system provides opportunity for inter-generational mobility. Since working-class children have greater opportunities than did their parents, they do not develop a loyalty to their present class if they expect to achieve a higher class position eventually. Anticipatory socialization and cross-class identification weaken the psychological bond to the class of origin. Thus, the influence of class is weakened.

• Rebuttal. The concept of equal opportunity, as has been discussed earlier, is a quasi-myth. Although there is considerable social mobility in statistical terms, qualifications for employment have increased proportionally. More education is now required for jobs for which an earlier generation qualified at an earlier time. Since basic values are formed early in life and are primarily class-based, the upwardly mobile may pay a high price for their mobility. On the other hand, it is conceivable that they may develop even greater consciousness of and loyalty to their class origins if they are both aware of that price and unwilling to pay it.

(8) CULTURAL HEGEMONY

• Evidence. Elite control over institutions of education and socialization allow manipulation of the dominant ideology. The lower class is systematically imbued with ideological beliefs which most frequently support the interests of the elites rather than their true self-interests. Values of competition and individualism, as well as belief in personal reponsibility for success, exemplify this ideological manipulation in the service of elites and the subversion of the development of class consciousness.

• Rebuttal. Although credible, this explanation is generally framed within the Functionalist mode. It ignores the possibility of those dissidents who, in rejecting socialization to the dominant belief system, become "environmental resisters" (Moos, 1975).

Some traditionalists concede that the above-listed obstacles are surmountable; however, they assert that these obstacles are surmounted only during unique life-cycle or historical periods. For example, class consciousness may be viewed as a transitional stage for "new workers" -- either youth first entering the labor force or uprooted rural workers recently moved to the industrial metropolis. Class consciousness is also recognized when certain historical events converge so as to make the class system particularly visible -- as in the Depressions of the 1880's and 1930's. Although class differences are endemic in a class-based system, the awareness of these differences as well as the resolve to act on them depend on the development of class consciousness.

(6) Collective Identities

The shared interests of class members represent a potential base for group loyalty and a psychological bond for class antagonisms. However, full class consciousness can only be operationalized through the individual's social participation in working for collective goals. We must distinguish, however, between collectivism as an instrumental means and as an end in itself. Most trade unionism organizes individuals into working groups as a means to secure benefits for the individual, rather than as a self-conscious collec-

tivity prepared to act for the interests of the collectivity itself (Bottomore, 1966).

Marx said that true political (or revolutionary) class consciousness could be developed only in the context of a class struggle. Two of the necessary conditions for the development of collective consciousness are class leadership and class visibility. Class conscious leaders are central to the effectiveness with which the class struggle could be waged. Class members must also be visible to each other so that they may be aware of the existence of others who share similar life-interests and move to join forces with them in pursuit of these interests.

A Summary

The Social Change perspective provides a contrast to the Functionalist mode. In this section I addressed each Functionalist critique in turn and, in so doing, posed an alternative way of approaching social inequality. However, ideologies cannot be definitively proved or disproved. We can only explore the extent to which any perspective seems to account for social behavior. In the following section, I will attempt a synthesis of Functionalist and Social Change approaches which can then be applied to the experience of people crossing class lines -- in this study, graduate students from working- and lower-middle class origins who are in the process of upward social mobility.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Marginality theory clearly reflects this trait vs. situation dichotomy and the preferred social change alternative implied by each. A trait approach would emphasize the marginal man, a type of individual who exists within a bicultural situation and is characterized by certain marginal traits. The preferred social intervention in this case would be individualistic or exceptionalistic, i.e., directed to changing the individual's traits through education, psychotherapy, etc.. The situational approach, on the other hand, views the situation as marginal in that it determines which arbitrary characteristics (race, sex, education, family lineage, etc.) will be accorded status and material rewards. This view leads to a contrary social intervention strategy -- attempting to change the social situation which causes one to feel marginal.

[2] The notion of embourgeoisement has been used variously by Marxists and anti-Marxists to account for the seeming-placidity of the working-class in Western industrial societies as their material advantages increase. Marx believed this to be a temporary phase, one which would not detract from the ultimate growth of revolutionary class consciousness in the working-class. In fact, he predicted that the middle-class would itself in time join the (revolutionary) working-class in its class struggle. Anti-Marxists, on the other hand, see embourgeoisement as an integral part of the evolution of industrial society in its post-capitalist phase. As the economic position of workers improves to the point that they are materially indistinct from the middle-class, so does their distinctiveness as a separate cultural entity diminish. In this anti-Marxist view, workers join the middle-class rather than the reverse. The embourgeoisement theory proves to anti-Marxists the invalidity of Marx's view of history and, therefore, his theory. Although orthodox Marxists continue to assert the original theory in defiance of all empirical evidence to the contrary, neo-Marxists (with a more flexible perspective) are attempting to frame the seeming middle-classification of the working class in new ways (Goldthorpe, et. al., 1969).

CHAPTER II

A SPECULATIVE SYNTHESIS OF APPROACHES

In the preceding section I discussed the traditional split between two competing ideologies, Functionalism and Social Change. In that discussion, I outlined some of the major arguments between these two approaches and the ways in which they have been countered. The split between these two approaches and thus, between the two groups of social scientists committed to one or another perspective, has often taken on an aspect of internecine bickering.

All ideologies are grounded in normative, as well as empirical statements about the world in which we live. The very selection of any social phenomenon as a "social problem" reflects that normative aspect (Horton, 1966), as does the shrill quality of the dispute between social scientists supporting a single ideology as the only valid description of society. Ideologies, as distortions of reality, ultimately cannot be proved or disproved. They do, however, offer useful tools for the understanding of social phenomena and provide a framework leading to systematic analysis. Assessing their adequacy is more useful for framing the context in which social phenomena are studied than as any decisive test of the ideology itself.

The competing ideological approaches are indicative of differing perceptions of working- and lower-middle class graduate students at elite universities.[1] The Functionalist approach, being predominant in the social science establishment, exerts greater influence on the ways in which these people are perceived and treated. Its primary stance is to regard these persons in terms of their assimilation to the new values, norms and life-styles of the university. They are seen as either socialized or inadequately socialized to the "superior" university culture. This approach emphasizes the extent to which the student adapts to the elite university environment, mirroring as it does the larger, dominant society to which the student presumably aspires. Curiously, however, upwardly mobile people, no matter what their "adaptation," are often treated pejoratively in the traditional social science literature. Those who are successfully socialized often are seen as "overconforming," a notion which was disputed by Hopkins (1973). On the other hand, those who are not (or refuse to be) socialized are seen as rebels -- symptomatic of pathology -- and thus, the focus of professional concern and intervention.

Functionalists can be faulted for not respecting the particular stresses felt by at least some working-class students at elite universities. By labelling them in terms of pathology, they ignore the ambivalence of their role -- rooted as it is, not in personal characteristics but in the environment itself. This role demands that they adopt a new culture, one in which they may not feel comfortable and/or accepted. These stresses are experienced as a series of life dilemmas by non-elite students.

Dilemmas of Upward Mobility

In assuming the superiority of dominant culture over working-class culture, the Functionalist perspective is unnecessarily myopic. Upwardly-mobile students encounter a dramatically different (not superior) belief system within the university and, in so doing, confront life dilemmas surrounding their cultural dislocation. I will briefly discuss some of the major dilemmas of upward mobility which can be explained in an alternate manner, i.e., dilemmas stemming from differences between cultures and the objective conditions in which these differences are rooted.[2]

Although their opportunities are increased from those of their parents, non-elites nonetheless carry values, beliefs and lifestyles, shaped by the culture of their familial origins and often inimical to an elite university. In his article "The Laying-on of Culture," McDermott views the university as destructive of the indigenous culture of the working-class.

> To the extent that (these) students acquired the external trappings of the university, they seemed both culturally pacified and made culturally passive. Pacified because they were acculturated away from their own historical values and traditions; passive because they could at best be spectators of a culture whose home remained an alien institution (McDermott, 1969, p. 297).

Material advantages and social benefits accrue to the professional role being achieved, not to the person's working-class heritage. Thus, one must become "cultured" to achieve respect. Yet "capturing that respect means he no longer respects himself" (Sennett and Cobb, 1973, p. 23).

The two worlds are indeed different, if not irreconcilable.

Many such children, from an early age, give unquestioning allegiance to the new culture represented by the school -- identifying with their teachers rather than their parents and desirous of those rewards which are allocated only within the elite culture. Without so much as a glance back, the non-elite student may enthusiastically subscribe to the conventions of success because "looking back can jeopardize the certainty he has about the desirability of this new academic culture" (Rodrigues, 1974, p. 17).

At some point, however, the non-elite student is reminded of her roots because that past is recognized as influencing her present condition. This point may represent a simple nostalgia for family and old friends and a discomfort with the still-alien world of academia and success in conventional terms. Newly-learned analytic skills are eventually applied to one's own culture as the subject of almost-detached curiosity. Being a "cultural anthropologist in one's own family kitchen" (ibid., p. 26), she is likely to find much of value that is missing in the elite environment. These values may center around the warmth of personal relationships, cooperative patterns of interaction and down-to-earth honesty.

Yet, even as the student gains new appreciation of her cultural legacy, her family grows increasingly aware of the distance between them. Their pride in her accomplishments is mixed often with complex and conflicting sentiments, among them sadness, jealousy, awkwardness, dismay and confusion.

> I came upon my father looking through my bookcase...
> He quietly fingered the volumes...with that combination

> of reverence and distrust those who are not literate sometimes show for the written word...However much he would have insisted that he was 'proud' of his son for being able to master the texts, I knew, if pressed further, he would have admitted to complicated feelings about my success (ibid., p. 16).

Parents, whose own life opportunities were obstructed by the Depression, bad luck or personal failings, put a high premium on educational credentials for their children. They often sacrifice their own financial comfort at the very time that their earnings slack off and they approach retirement, so that their children will have a better chance for success. They perceive college and graduate school in uncomplicated terms, i.e., the credential is a passport to a good salary, clean work and respect within the community. Being unfamiliar with higher education themselves, they are unaware that these material opportunities are almost inevitably accompanied by less tangible, inner changes within their children. They are unprepared for their children's new-found disrespect for authority and questioning of (or contempt for) other strongly-held family and/or religious values. The most sensitive among the families are painfully aware that a major part of their children's lives are totally inaccessible to them. Although the child may sorely regret that distance and reach out for the family experience, she is acutely aware of how little of her chosen life she shares in common with her family.

Despite the losses, however, the family could still absorb the disappointments if assured that their sacrifices were not in vain. However, the shrinking academic job market must make parents skeptical of the benefits of higher education. Disposed, by dint

of their limited education, to conceive of education in practical terms, they are not often sympathetic to the students' protestations that education should be regarded as an end in itself. Parents have pinned their hopes on higher education as the guarantor of a better life for their children -- "better" in the sense of providing access to material rewards while retaining cherished values. Neither seems to be assured anymore.

Unable to discuss these dilemmas candidly with her family because of the pain it would cause (or being geographically distant), the student might wish to turn to her peers for understanding and support. However, unable to differentiate class origins of her peers, the working-class student may feel surrounded by upper-class people and may feel as if she were the only one of her kind. The elite university is a particularly difficult locus from which to develop collective identities around social class. This "class invisibility" retards the formation of a support group which could articulate their particular stresses, needs, doubts and fears and which could take collective action on their problems. Dissidents, those who wish to change the larger system, are left to work alone and probably less effectively.

Understanding the ways in which these dilemmas are experienced, perceived and confronted (if they are), is the task of this study. Some believe the student must eventually choose betweeen the two worlds and note that the "superiority" of the elite environment normally wins out. However, this overly harsh indictment belies the prevalence of ambiguities and dilemmas in all aspects of life.

On the other hand, many authors, emphasizing social and psychological stresses confronting working-class graduate students in elite universities, have concluded that these students would be "better off" in public, non-elite colleges catering to the working-class (Wegner, 1973). Others, calling for a revitalization of local communities, feel that working-class students would be "better off" in their own community colleges (Dollar and Gittell, 1974). Although these authors represent political opposites, their call for what amounts to social class segregation only serves to increase elite hegemony over elite institutions and further restrict working-class opportunities.

Creative Use of Dilemmas

The majority of students from non-elite origins probably are socialized to the dominant culture and the rewards therein. However, a minority of students are not resocialized -- not because of inadequate socialization but by conscious decision. In a British study of eighty-eight working-class children who became middle-class adults, Jackson and Marsden found that most "developed into stable, often rigidly orthodox citizens who wish to preserve a hierarchical society and all its institutions as they now stand" (1966, p. 213). This majority consciously rejected its class origins, slipping into the middle-class and even adopting middle-class prejudices against the working-class. Yet, Jackson and Marsden also discovered a small minority who refused adaptation to the middle-class. As children "they were distinctly against the

school and for the neighborhood, and preserved their own codes of judgment and behavior" (ibid., p. 212). Other than a brief mention of their existence, the writers do not explore the roots or nature of their dissidence. Moos (1975) calls these persons "environmental resistors" and urges more attention be paid those who choose to transcend their environments.

The "cultural shock" experienced by non-elite students may give rise to new understandings about themselves and their surroundings. They may rediscover their cultural identities as a direct result of their cultural alienation from the university they attend. The more elite the university, the more extreme is the cultural alienation. In fact, an elite university is superior to a non-elite one in the availability and quality of resources. Ironically, elite universities in the United States tend to be centers for radical intellectual thought. Because their (mostly privileged) graduates move smoothly into technical, professional and managerial positions, these institutions can be relatively secure in offering the widest range of intellectual expression and can then congratulate themselves on their academic freedom in the process.

Dissidents, on the other hand, may use the resource-rich university to develop skills useful to lower-class constituencies and may reject the belief systems promulgated by and for elites within the university. Thus, the unintended consequence of more open admissions at elite universities may be a radicalization of those who have come to recognize the institutions' value contradictions while benefitting from their access to superior resources. This

represents not only a positive response to social alienation but also represents potential for a popular insurgency directed to accomplishing fundamental changes within the university.

Charles Willie, in his recent article "Marginality and Social Change" (1975), sees an alternative response to dissidence. Citing Moses and Martin Luther King as two examples, he recalls the historic role of marginal men in stimulating social change through reconciling group differences.

> They truly were marginal men who found identity in the synthesis of groups so that each person in the groups (and each group) could learn from the other and be more than what either was alone (p. 12).

Although somewhat alien to both groups, the marginal man is familiar with both of their points of view. He can thus bridge the gap between opposing groups, somewhat akin to a labor mediator. "Marginal people who fall between the cracks may be alienated, but marginal people who rise above the cracks are synthesizers" (ibid., p. 12). Stonequist also recognized this creative use of marginality as "the crucible of cultural fusion" in which, by resolving your own dilemmas, you are altering those systems to which you are linked (1937).

In discussing the creative use to which personal dilemmas can be put, we can see illustrated the differing ideological perspectives. The "dissident" hypothesis is based on a Social Change perspective; dissidents actively resist the environment and seek fundamental change within it. The "cultural synthesis" hypothesis is based on a liberal variant of Functionalism; those synthesizers, in the end, seek social order through a pluralistic cultural fusion.

Attempting an Integration

Traditional Functionalism does not seem to elucidate many observable social phenomena including environmental resistance. A liberal variant of traditional Functionalism has been introduced to correct for its more glaring deficiencies. Liberal Functionalism is a response to what Gouldner calls "the coming crisis of Western Sociology," i.e., the increasing obsolescence of traditional Functionalism in light of current socio-historical trends (1970). Modern Functionalists have sought ideological refinements through an attempted convergence with Marxism. Gouldner, however, belittles this attempt as merely "making it easier for Marxist students to become Functionalist professors" (ibid., p. 335). He makes a strong case for the philosophical and logical non-compatability of the Functionalist approach (regardless of refinements) and Marxism.

The Social Change perspective, on the other hand, does not adequately account for the majority of people who do not dissent from the dominant social order. The motivations of these cases are more reflective of the Functionalist perspective. Thus, each perspective is useful in specific contexts. Collins (1971), in his analysis of the roots of rising educational requirements for jobs, found each theory accounted for part of the explanation. He calls for further empirical study of the interaction between the two theories.

To argue over which ideology is more "conservative" or "radical," which is dedicated to changing or maintaining the social order, is

to remove us from the empirical nature of social events. Of course, we must be vigilant about the myopia which our ideological assumptions structure into our perceptions of experience. However, theoretical disputes almost inevitably lead to the trivialization of human behavior and divert attention from real world concerns. A return to the natural context can provide fresh perspectives on our social world and contribute to the development of theory. We can then determine the adequacy of the competing ideologies by the extent to which each seems to account for findings in the natural context. An empirical investigation of these perspectives can be contemplated within the context of this study, utilizing the concept of class consciousness.

Developing an Analysis of Class Consciousness

Although class differences are endemic to a class-based economic system, the awareness of these differences as well as the resolve to act upon them depend on the development of class consciousness. Class consciousness, as a concept, cuts across both ideological perspectives. It also provides an analytic tool to be used in systematically addressing the various issues raised within this study. In the preceding chapter we conceived of class consciousness in dichotomous terms, i.e., a person is or is not considered to be class conscious. However, this conception is misleading in its oversimplification of what is, in reality, an interrelationship of many complex factors.

A graduated conception of class consciousness is more useful in differentiating the subjective translation of objective conditions.

By distilling concepts of those both within the Marxian dialectical tradition (Lukacs, 1971; Mills, 1951; Ossowski, 1963; Reich, 1969) and the liberal variant of Functionalism (Landecker, 1963; Leggett, 1964), we can conceive of the development of class consciousness as sequential stages in which members:

- are conscious of their true positions and interests within the prevailing social structure (a cognitively-based class identification);
- feel a psychological bond with persons with whom they share similar life conditions and self-interests (affective class loyalty);
- are aware that the social structure is characterized and fueled by a basic class antagonism and have identified their class enemies (affective class resentment); and
- are purposive in waging a collective struggle against perceived class enemies with a will to change their objective conditions in pursuit of their self-interests (conative political class consciousness).[3]

This sequential gradation of mental states can be viewed in the context of a cumulative "value added approach" (Smelser, 1962). Each stage (or mental state) is a necessary predeterminant for the succeeding stages; each takes its roots from and builds upon precedent stages. In other words, a person who does not identify his membership within a class will not be expected to demonstrate loyalty to that class; selection of a class target towards which

one feels hostile is dependent upon a recognition of and loyalty to one's class of membership; finally, a person who does not express affective responses to the class of membership and the class of opposition is unlikely to exhibit political class consciousness serving the interests of his class of choice. Therefore, the sufficient condition for political class consciousness is the combination of the preceding three stages.

Until more refined conceptually, the above-listed stages should be considered as points on a continuum of class consciousness rather than as discrete and permanent stages. Because people tend to shift their class consciousness depending upon the variability of contexts in which they are living at different times, it is difficult to speak of specific persons being "class identified," etc.. Rather, the manner in which they do or do not demonstrate these mental states seems to be a conjoint function of their environment and individual predilections. This schema of class consciousness, although still in development, can be utilized to explore the nature of those environments and the roots of those individual differences which seem to encourage or retard the development of consciousness about one's self in one's environment.

The subjects of this study, graduate students from lower-class origins, suggest another refinement of the concept of class consciousness. Suspended in transit between two classes -- the class of their origins and the class of their intended destination -- they have a choice of classes with which to be identified; towards which to feel loyal and/or hostile; and in whose interest to act collec-

tively. The process through which this class target choice is made can be understood within the context of reference group theory (Merton and Rossi, 1953). Those whose class target is the class of destination, hereinafter referred to as "affirmants," illustrate the concept of anticipatory socialization (ibid.); those to whom the class of origin is most salient may best be viewed within our impending exploration of dissidents. The schema of class consciousness, therefore, is expanded as illustrated in Figure 1.[4]

Figure 1

A model of class consciousness

Mental State	Class Target: Class of Origin	Class Target: Class of Destination
Class identification	Dissident	Affirmant
Class loyalty	Dissident	Affirmant
Class resentment	Affirmant	Dissident
Political class consciousness	Dissident	Affirmant

Class consciousness is characterized not only by gradations of mental states and chosen class targets but also by its saliency, strength, consistency and diffusion throughout the members of a class. These characteristics may be employed to explore the

objective conditions under which class consciousness is most likely developed. For example, severe material deprivation seems to retard the development of class consciousness while a certain level of improvement in material conditions tends to be associated with the development of class consciousness. E. P. Thompson's classic study of the early British labor movement demonstrated that skilled workers were in the movement's forefront and were the most class conscious of all workers (1963). Similarly, the rising expectations of graduate students from non-elite class origins, in concert with certain perceptions and sentiments, may represent conditions conducive to the formation of class consciousness, whichever the class target. Exploration of these issues will be attempted within the methodological framework of this study.

FOOTNOTES

1 Henceforth, the phrase "working-class or lower-middle class" will be shortened to "working class." However, unless otherwise specified, "lower-middle class" will be understood.

2 The discussion of dilemmas encountered in the process of upward mobility merely anticipates the empirical evidence of this study. Based on published narratives as well as my personal experience, the discussion acquaints the reader with potential, rather than inevitable, outcomes and experiences.

3 In addition to those already listed, further references to the gradations of class consciousness are: Class identification (Centers, 1949; Hodge and Treiman, 1968); Class loyalty (Novak, 1973); Class resentment (Cole, 1964); and Political class consciousness (Marx and Engels, 1947; Mills, 1951).

4 In the mental state of class resentment as is noted in Fig. 1, the class target is reversed, i.e., the person feels resentful of the "opposing" class. For example, an affirmant would be more likely to express resentment towards the class of origin (a Welfare mother) than towards the class of destination (subsidized corporations). Naturally, this is reversed for dissidents.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

General Approach to the Study

This study is an exploratory investigation of persons from working- and lower-middle class origins who are in graduate training at a large, prestigious university. The study attempts to understand how these persons view the process of their own social mobility achieved through higher education and thus, their view of the social system through which that mobility is being enacted. I am, in the meantime, assessing the ability of two conflicting theoretical/ideological perspectives to explain the resultant human behavior.

The limited development of research on these issues does not permit profitable testing of a few narrowly-conceived hypotheses. It does, however, afford an opportunity to explore many general hypotheses about the experience of these persons and, ultimately, the potential consequences for them, the university, and the surrounding social system. As such, it represents preliminary efforts at generating a "grounded theory" -- one in which empirical data lead to the generation of hypotheses which may be tested later in a more narrow and precise manner (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In attempting to assess the adequacy of conflicting theories, both of which have been invoked in the past to explain the

phenomena at issue. I will seek to refine, negate, or achieve a synthesis between them in the context of the questions being addressed by this investigation. The methodology was designed so as to correct for the weaknesses of prior research efforts in this area, as described in Chapter I.

The nature of this research task is best served by an informed eclecticism -- a multiple operationalism combining several complementary methodological approaches which permit the researcher to focus on complex phenomena from various perspectives. This sort of "methodological triangulation" frees the researcher from overdependence on any one method and can improve the quality of the resultant product. Despite the diversity of methodological techniques, all are utilized for a single end in this investigation: understanding the experience of crossing class lines, as it is apperceived by the individuals themselves.

The natural-scientific methodologies which have been employed primarily to address the issue have proved limited in their ability to conceptualize and explain resultant behavior. A phenomenological approach, on the other hand, allows the researcher to gain access to the individual's perceptions of his world and the personal value system he imposes upon that world (Giorgi, 1970). This subjective approach penetrates the meaning individuals impose upon their surrounding environments and thus ascribes more importance to the symbolic than the sensory sources of data. The individual establishes and articulates his own reality from which the researcher may conceptualize; the relevant variables then emerge from the data.

This reverses the traditional empirical model wherein the researcher not only pre-establishes the conceptual categories to be investigated but also infers meaning by observing the individual externally. The phenomenological approach, therefore, is deemed preferable for explaining the experience of working-class graduate students in the process of crossing class lines.

The discovery of personal meaning, however, as Balbus (1971) has demonstrated, depends upon an accurate assessment of the objective life conditions with which these meanings are intricately related. False consciousness of non-existent interests or lack of consciousness of true interests are the two examples for which individual objectivity and subjectivity are incongruent. The utilization of multiple methodologies from both objective and subjective perspectives can go a long way in ascertaining the broader reality of human existence.

In this study, the primary methodological techniques used were self-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires categorized participants as <u>objectively</u> qualified according to the definitive criteria established for this study. The interviews focused on the <u>subjective</u> feelings and experiences of those same participants. Complementary techniques which were employed to a lesser extent included document analysis, informant interviewing, participant-observation and self-analysis (McCall and Simmons, 1969). The last-named technique, self-analysis, reflects my own experience as a graduate student at an elite university. Because my own class background falls within the limits of

the population, I myself represent an instrument of analysis. This method, however, involves the risk that my subjectivity would act as selective blinders and predispositions. On the other hand, my involvement in the subject matter not only provided the impetus to undertake this investigation in the first place, but provided critical data leading to informed issues raised with study participants. My own awareness of these risks, the addition of objective measures, and participants' evaluations of my effectiveness in conducting objective interviews constituted validity checks on my biases.

In the end, however, this methodology is admittedly less precise and controlled than traditional experimental research. However, prior efforts at precision and control generally led to the selection of those indices which are most easily measured rather than those deemed most crucial in their effect. A trade-off seems necessary -- complexity of the experience for precision of methods -- until such time as the state-of-the-art of research methodology is better developed. This exploration, therefore, is not meant to be the ultimate investigation of the subject matter. It does represent, however, a concerted effort to understand complex phenomena from diverse perspectives and using varied methods. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a description of the research procedures utilized and the ecology of the research process itself.

Research Procedures

The methodology utilized in this study was designed especially for my specific research objectives and included the following steps or procedures:

Definition of the population

All participants were graduate students at the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus. Beyond that, the definition of the population began with the primary requirement that their origins be working- or lower-middle class. Although there are no firm rules on class determination, the definition was based on a multi-dimensional conception of social class, with parental (1) income/wealth; (2) occupational prestige; and (3) education, as the primary variables (Hodge and Treiman, 1968). My intention was merely to determine that a person's origins (or family background) was nominally working- or lower-middle class. For the purposes of this investigation, I had no need for specifying the class background beyond that.

I used the following criteria as somewhat flexible "rules of thumb." The income ceiling, i.e., the highest income reported, was generally set at $15,000 although other factors taken into consideration were: the year in which the highest income was earned, implying the buying power of the income at that time; the number of workers whose incomes entered into that total; the relative permanency of that income level; and the number of dependents supported on that income. Although I encountered no such cases, I would have excluded those with substantial independent, non-earned income, e.g., inheritances, significant stock holdings, etc.. Occupations generally

sought were manual workers, clericals, small shopkeepers, certain sales positions and small farmers. The occupations of both parents were considered, i.e., neither could have an occupational level higher than those listed above. The ceiling on parents' educational levels was high school graduation although certain post-high school vocational courses or brief college attendance was acceptable. Again, the educational levels of both parents were considered. I felt that the interrelationship of the three factors (income, occupation and education) was more significant in determining social class than any of the factors would be individually.

The population was further delimited by additional criteria which include the following (and for the stated rationales):

- Race - Only whites were included in the study. Non-whites were excluded from consideration due to several factors: First, I felt that racial identities are so associated with economic class distinctions that my efforts to seek strictly class-rooted oppression would be confounded. Second, by the special admissions criteria, financial aid, and services established for them, non-whites are "treated" differently than other graduate students. The lack of these special considerations for whites (and thus, the absence of "labelling" that makes suspect such "special favors") stems from limited economic class consciousness in our major institutions. Third, external forces created by living in a racist society limit the minority person's ability to determine his own life. The relative "invisibility" of a white working-class graduate student not only allows him to internalize many of his dilemmas and ambivalences, but also allows him to deny his class background while "passing"

easily. A minority person, with highly visible racial characteristics, often does not have that choice. I am primarily interested in how people define and resolve those internal choices. Finally and most importantly, I intended to do all the interviews myself and was concerned that, if I were to interview non-whites, the cross-race factor might become a significant variable. Limited time and money made it logistically necessary to restrict my population.[1]

- Nationality - The study was restricted to U.S. or Canadian students so that the experiences would have some national base of comparability. Since I am not as familiar with other societies' economic systems, my assumptions may be proved wrong if applied to another culture.

- Degree Program - Only students pursuing Ph.D.'s were included. The Ph.D., being the highest educational credential, represents the most distinct break from the class of origin. Equivalent professional degrees (e.g., J.D. and M.D.) were excluded for simple logistical reasons, not the least of which was that I could most easily find Ph.D. students in the Summer, when the study was conducted.

- Length of Enrollment - The sample was restricted to persons enrolled in the current graduate program a minimum of two years. This minimum was selected so as to assure that the person has experienced the university environment for a significant period and to minimize the possibility of eventual attrition from graduate training.

Otherwise, the population was to be diverse in terms of sex, age, marital status, ethnic identities, religion, geographic origins,

fields of specialization, etc..

Participant recruitment

The population is essentially "hidden" within the university. Unlike the case of undergraduates at the University of Michigan (PESC, 1974), no data are collected on graduate students' social class backgrounds. Furthermore, in this blue-jeaned, Army surplus culture, students do not generally bear those visual markings which would definitively communicate their class origins. Class distinctions, rather, are internal. Therefore, the utilization of scientific sampling procedures is precluded; more direct methods are required for participant selection.

For the first recruitment attempt, three methods of recruitment were utilized: (1) enlistment of persons already known to me; (2) referrals by Departmental secretaries, professors and other students; and (3) to assure the presence in my sample of potential "dissidents" (Jackson and Marsden, 1966) or "environmental resistors" (Moos, 1975), I recruited, from the picket line, graduate student employees participating in a labor union strike against the University.

For several months prior to the commencement of data collection, I pre-screened, according to my broad objective criteria, a number of graduate students recruited by the above methods, asking brief questions of each relating to parental income, occupation and education. I generated a list of persons who appeared to fit my objective criteria, who represented a broad (if unscientific) range of categories, and who had indicated interest in participating in the study when approached.[2]

The size of the sample was arbitrarily set at thirty -- a number which seemed both feasible to recruit and yet large enough to generate sufficient data from which to draw generalizations. Although I was prepared to revise that figure in either direction, it turned out to be the exact number of usable participants.[3]

Questionnaire construction

The utilization of an objectively-oriented questionnaire was directed towards (1) validating the social class of pre-screened persons; (2) generating demographic data on the participants; and (3) understanding some contextual realities for which to probe during the interview. After reviewing and rejecting as inadequate several questionnaires determining social class indices (Berger, 1971; Blau and Duncan, 1967; Centers, 1949; Hodge and Treiman, 1968; Kohn, 1969; Mayer, 1955; etc.), I constructed a questionnaire which would respond to the specific purposes of my inquiry. (See Appendix A for Questionnaire.) Questionnaire items as well as some of the less obvious rationales for their inclusion are as follows:

- Identifying information
- Personal/Social identity
  - Q 1 What importance is ascribed to social class and/or other "minority" (i.e., low status) social identities? Conversely, are the present (student) or future (professional) identities more salient than past, inherited identities?
- Education
  - Q 2-3 Has the participant attended an elite educational institution prior to graduate school such that she may have been exposed to elite values and cultural styles

prior to graduate school?

Q 4 Might non-academic experiences interrupting the academic career have had an impact on the person's career and life goals as well as having provided exposure to non-academic reference groups outside of the family?

Q 5-7 Are persons in fields with an applied and/or service emphasis more class conscious than those in fields without such career options?

- Background factors

Q 8 Social status is partially dependent upon the relevant geographic environment; thus, the same objective conditions may be accorded more prestige in rural than urban settings (Warner and Lunt, 1941). Is the rural person's class identification somewhat inflated as a result?

Q 9 Ethnic, religious and immigrant backgrounds indicate the various statuses of the person's group memberships. This relates to the earlier self-definition of the personal/social identity.

Q 10-12 Blue-collar workers are especially characterized by lack of promotion opportunities and static income levels (Kahl, 1957 and Rainwater, 1974). Has there been significant economic mobility and, if so, in which direction?

Q 13 The education of parents (especially the father) is a major indicator of a family's social class (Blau and Duncan, 1967). Are the educational levels achieved by the parents consistent with other social class indices or may this be a source of status inconsistency? Is there a significant difference between the educational levels of the two parents? (Geschwender, 1967)

The education of siblings may indicate the importance accorded to education within the family and whether there may have been sex or birth order differences in applying this value standard to the children.

- Social class location

  Q 14 After determining the social class by objective, but indirect, methods in prior questions, the person is directly asked to identify his social class of origin by utilizing an open-ended format (Gordon, 1958). Does this location of self within the social class hierarchy agree with accumulated data from prior questions, i.e., is there any evidence of "false class identification"?

- Future orientation

  Q 15-17 These questions begin to tap the subjectivity of the person's class consciousness by attempting to determine whether future plans might be based on any class loyalties. Do the future goals include the provision of a technical or social service or the use of political means, and, if so, are these directed toward a specific target or constituency? Does this constituency correspond with any part of the personal/social identity?

- Political action

  Q 18 Does he utilize political means for problem resolution? Are the groups in whose behalf the person has acted politically the same groups with which he has indicated he identifies? In other words, does he use political means in his own self-interest?

  Q 19 What are his general beliefs about personal vs. social determinism as the source of success? Does he apply those beliefs to his own "success"?

Questionnaire review

The questionnaire review was conducted at the start of the interview session. It provided a fairly quick way of setting a tone for the interview, establishing rapport with the participant, and gaining information about the participant's background and general feelings towards that background. I developed a preliminary series of review questions to clarify and elaborate the participant's responses to questionnaire items. As I became more experienced, several issues or hypotheses seemed to emerge from those data already collected, and I added questions which would "pinpoint" these issues directly (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 173). Although the actual review questions varied from person to person, a core of standard questions developed by trial-and-error. A sample of a typical questionnaire review is included in Appendix B.

Design of the interview schedule

The interview is distinct from but related to the questionnaire which determined the participant's objective position within the socio-economic system. The interview, on the other hand, attempted to explore the person's perceptions of that system, his place within it, and the meanings and values he imposes on those perceptions. In the absence of interview formats relevant to my inquiry, I developed a series of interview questions and discussion topics through which I could gain access to the participant's subjective reality. Although the central questions were pre-established, the interview's open-ended design allowed me to probe in particular areas that seemed fruitful. Several excellent

probes were added to the semi-structured interview schedule at the suggestion of the participants themselves.

The interview format was sequenced so as to parallel the analytic categories of class consciousness developed in Chapter II; questions reflecting each "mental state" of class consciousness are clustered and follow the ascending order of the four proposed gradations of class consciousness. Again, they are:

- class identification
- class loyalty
- class resentment
- political class consciousness

(See Interview Schedule included in Appendix C.) Information sought by the interview schedule as well as rationales for their inclusion are as follows:

The first question not only provides a fairly neutral opening but also an intimation of the personal system of values, allowing the interviewer to better pace and direct subsequent questions.

Q 1 Has she been significantly changed by the impact of the university and if so, in what direction?

Questions 2-5 refer to the structural determinants underlying class consciousness, i.e., class identification.[4]

Q 2 How does the participant perceive her academic environment and her place within that environment?

Q 3 Relates to the person's past, present and future reference groups, i.e., the group of comfort, comparison and emulation, respectively (Hodge and Treiman, 1968; Lipset, 1968; Townsend, 1974).

Q 4 Elicits beliefs about and attitudes toward the social stratification system within the United States. It

refers to the person's cognitive belief about "success" as determined by personal vs. systemic causality (Ryan, 1971).

Q 5 How does the person feel about her upward mobility? What level of support does she receive from her family? What price does she perceive herself paying for this upward mobility (Jackson and Marsden, 1966)? What rewards does she consider salient?

Questions 6-9 refer to the cultural determinants underlying class consciousness, i.e., class loyalty and/or hostility.[5]

Q 6 Does the person experience cultural dislocation? Towards which culture is she loyal? Does she express resentment toward the other culture? The critical incident is probed to further elicit positive and negative affect directed to either or both of the cultures.

Q 7 Document specific problems perceived and determine the ideological consistency regarding personal vs. systemic causality by comparing this with her response to Q 4.

Q 8 Determine the person's affective consistency in terms of class loyalty vs. class hostility by comparing this with her response to Q 6.

Q 9 If she perceives herself as class conscious, what is the source of that consciousness? Has the person's class consciousness been affected in her "cultural collision" with the university? If so, in what direction?

Questions 10-12 refer to the likelihood that the interviewee will collectivize and utilize political means for problem resolution, i.e., political class consciousness.[6]

Q 10 In whose self-interest is she moved to act politically? What is the participant's conception of her self-interest (Balbus, 1971; Jackman and Jackman, 1973)?

Q 11 What is her orientation to social change and different change strategies? The person's past and present change attempts (or lack of same) may be somewhat predictive of future behavior. Does her expected professional status negate or change that prediction in any way?

Q 12 The ability to collectivize depends upon the extent to which class fellows are visible to each other and the development of class leadership. Does the participant associate with persons of similar class backgrounds, and does she feel an obligation and/or commitment to the interests of that group?

Format for participant evaluation

Unlike Europe, social class distinctions are under-estimated in the United States. My data collection instruments' heavy emphasis on these distinctions as both intellectually-conceived and personally-felt issues would, if unchecked, leave the methodology open to charges of experimental bias of internal validity. Participants could be responding more to the single-mindedness of the research instruments than to the extent to which their own lives normally reflect those issues. In that case, their responses would be an artifact of the interview's consciousness raising potential rather than a reflection of their own reality. Are the responses representative of the experience of non-elites within an elite university or only of the experience of having participated in this study?

Acknowledging this source of vulnerability, I developed a

format for the participants' reflection upon and evaluation of the methodology. Several times during the course of the interview, I made general inquiries such as: "How do you feel the interview is going?" At the conclusion of the interview, I posed a series of standard evaluative questions (see Appendix C, p. 5) that specifically and directly addressed the issue of validity. Although these measures do not remedy all possible sources of error and fall prey to all the usual problems inherent in self-reporting, an honest attempt was made to correct for that criticism. The results of that attempt will be discussed in Chapter V.

Pre-testing the methodology

Although pre-testing is generally advisable in all research endeavors, it was particularly crucial in this study. The complexity of the data needs placed a special burden on the instruments' ability to communicate instructions and questions clearly and accurately. Also, being my first experience conducting in-depth interviews for research ends, I expected that I would make many mistakes and feel uncomfortable in this new role. Both predictions were, alas, confirmed. Recognizing the fact that the time commitment (and patience) of the earliest participants would have to be greater than of those to follow, I enlisted three friends as pre-testers, all of whom objectively qualified for the sample.

While the pre-tester self-administered the questionnaire, we reviewed each item jointly to ascertain that my intended meanings were being communicated. Each pre-tester's suggested revisions were incorporated in the questionnaires for succeeding pre-tests. The

pre-test interviews were conducted normally, although the pre-testers were encouraged to comment on the process. At the completion of the interview, the pre-tester evaluated my effectiveness as interviewer, the level of comfort achieved, and suggestions for improvement. Many changes were made in the instruments and the methodological procedures, primarily in the first pre-test. In the case of the last two pre-tests, the changes were so minor that they were counted in the final sample.[7]

Data collection

Subsequent to the pre-tests and methodological revisions, I began calling prospects, who had been recruited earlier, in order to ascertain their continued interest in participation. Although all had been pre-screened when first recruited, I re-checked their qualifications for participation. If the person was both interested and qualified, I then explained the broad purpose of the study as: "an attempt to understand the experiences of people in graduate training who are not from professional backgrounds." I also found it necessary to say that, although I was a Psychology student, the study was not intended to search out "pathologies" within the participants. If pressed for further explanation, I explained that I felt there were few black-or-white distinctions in life and that I was more interested in exploring the complexity of the "grey areas" in which most of us live daily. Other than the above, I declined to provide more detail, explaining instead that the study was more an exploration than a verification of hypotheses.

I further explained that all data would be held in strictest confidence. Although the interviews would be tape recorded, I, being the sole data collector and analyst, would be the only person seeing the raw data. Any information that could reveal the participant's identity or individuals about whom he would speak would be masked. I outlined the steps of the research process and the minimum time commitment required for the interview ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hours). Because all data collection was accomplished during June and July -- relatively relaxed months in academia -- I encountered few scheduling problems. At this time we set an appointment for the interview. I was available any time that suited the participant's convenience.[8] The interview could be held in any place that was quiet, private and free from interruptions. (About two-thirds were held in my home or office; the others in the participants' homes or offices.)

The questionnaire, with a notation of the time and place of interview, was mailed to the participant. (See Appendix A). A day prior to the scheduled interview, I called to remind the participant of the appointment and to bring the completed questionnaire to the interview.

The interview was conducted in a relaxed environment, at times like an informal conversation. At the start, I asked to be advised of any time commitments so that I could pace the interview. In most cases, the participants had no appointments that would conflict with a leisurely-paced interview; in fact, the interviews ranged from a minimum of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to five hours -- the latter being at

least as much conversational interchange as interview. Sessions were tape-recorded, freeing me from distracting note-taking.

First, I reviewed the questionnaire, reading aloud the participant's answers and asking him to explain and elaborate points. (See Appendix B). When I felt that I had a fair understanding of his background and phenomenological system, I moved into the interview schedule itself. Although the data collected in the interview were based on a self-report, my constant probing pinpointed inconsistencies and raised extremely difficult questions that required serious thought. (See Appendix C).

The interview schedule was followed by the evaluation, which was introduced by: "Could we take a few minutes to reflect back on the interview and how you felt about it?" The tape recorder was kept running after the evaluation because, in almost all cases, the participants continued to address the substance of the issues. Some asked my hypotheses and what other participants had replied. After hearing my answers, they told me where they thought they did or did not fit into that. I generally continued the conversation for as long as the participant demonstrated interest. In parting, I indicated I would be willing to facilitate small group discussions related to study issues among participants and asked if they would be interested. (See Appendix D). Within a few days of the interview, I mailed the participant a personalized Thank You note.

Data analysis

The analysis of primarily qualitative data is a complex endeavor for which techniques are even now in an unfinished state of

development. Attempting a "broad brush" analytic approach, as opposed to the testing and verification of narrow, delimited hypotheses, I had to immerse myself in the data. As a necessary tool to this qualitative mode of analysis, I personally transcribed all of the interviews.

Having done all of the data collection and transcription myself, I was able to conceptualize categories and trends while the data collection was still in progress. Emerging trends and issues were explored in succeeding interviews. The analytic scheme of class consciousness, developed in the preceding chapter (pp. 60-64), provided the framework upon which to analyze the data and through which to communicate the findings. Primary to the analysis of the qualitative (interview) data, however, was an understanding of the characteristics of the participants themselves. The range of individual differences and background factors are discussed in Chapter IV. Prior to that discussion, however, I will take up the context in which the methodology was conducted and upon which the data emerged.

Ecology of the Research Process

The preceding discussion of strategies employed in the research process is only part of the story of the methodological issues confronted and resolved, for better or worse, in the conduct of inquiry. My own social situation as researcher-participant and the social context in which the study was performed are at least as important as the actual methods utilized. The following discussion addresses the ecology of the research process of this

study. The objectives of this section are twofold: first, to acquaint the reader with the relevant social factors impacting on the issues raised by this study; and second, to suggest methodological directions for future researchers willing to look at old problems in nontraditional ways.

Situational Contexts

The locational context of this study is the graduate program of the University of Michigan. The University is an internationally recognized institution, linked to major societal institutions including corporations, the military and governmental bureaucracies. Its serves those institutions in three major ways: First, it trains students in those technical skills needed for the maintenance of the existing social order; second, it performs research in the service of these institutions; and third, it inculcates the values and styles of the dominant system within the future leaders of these same institutions. Although a public university partially supported by tax funds appropriated by the State legislature, the University of Michigan educates, at a disproportionate rate, the children of the elite, thereby reproducing the existent distribution of privileges. The Program for Educational and Social Change, in its radical economic analysis of the University (PESC, 1974), may have overstated its case in claiming that: "Here, in the name of academic integrity, are gates to prestige through which only the rich (underlining mine) can pass" (p. 27). Although the rich are over-represented within the student population, non-elites are present in the University. However, the University

does train those few non-elites who slip through the system for elite roles. This additional function of the university is often overlooked; it is a screening mechanism that legitimizes those who can be expected to support elite values and styles. The above is the objective reality and acknowledged purposes of a multiversity. This study will explore the extent to which our participants share that perception and what their attitudes are to that perception.

Principal historical factors at the time of this study were: (1) an economic recession which was partially responsible for a shrinking labor market for academics. Thus, graduates of academic training programs were facing uncertainties for future employment; (2) the relative calm on university campuses, contrasted with the political activism of the late 1960's; and yet, (3) the recent unionization of graduate student employees at the University of Michigan. With respect to the latter, the Graduate Employees' Organization (hereinafter, GEO) played a major role and was a recurrent theme in this study.

Embroiled in a protracted struggle, the union membership went out on strike against the University Administration. The strike raised many graduate students' consciousnesses about their roles as students, workers, and future professionals and prompted a new analysis of the University as antagonist. A growing labor identity began to supplant the more ambivalent and transitory identity of "graduate student." As noted earlier, I recruited many of the prospective participants from the picket line or from referrals given me by GEO members. (Incidentally, I was also involved in the

strike action.) A heated exchange between graduate Economics students, for and against the union's demands, was published in The Michigan Daily. These letters are particularly cogent evidence of the growing labor consciousness among a segment of graduate students, and the ways in which some students (although admittedly few) viewed the University's function within a class-based society. Of particular interest was the debate over the class origins of graduate students in general. (A synopsis of the exchange is included in Appendix E.) All of this becomes significant in view of the fact that so many of our participants were GEO activists, as will be discussed in later chapters.

Issues of participant recruitment

Insights regarding the objects of analysis are not limited to the formalized data collection. The process by which I attempted to locate qualified participants was equally revealing about the nature of class consciousness. The following four observations illustrate this finding.

First, I contacted faculty in many departments asking for help in locating students from working-class origins. Although most expressed genuine interest, not one knew of a single student whom they knew (or suspected) to be working-class. Yet, I later learned that several participants, recruited by other means, did know some of these professors quite well. Faculty contacts seemed rarely to give much thought to the class backgrounds of their graduate students, assuming instead that they were all from privileged backgrounds or, as one said, "they wouldn't have had the preparation

you need to get this far." This partially verifies my earlier observation that actual class distinctions are mostly invisible within the university. It also indicates the extent to which an assumption based on myth -- in this case, "here, we're all alike" -- can be perpetuated in the absence of any efforts to question its veracity.

Second, my efforts at contacting qualified graduate students presented a contrary problem. I was surprised to discover that many students who identified themselves to me as being working-class in origin, clearly were not. These instances may be explained by the eagerness of graduate students finally to be the subjects, rather than the investigators, of research. Or they may have been empathic responses to a fellow graduate student looking for subjects. My impression, however, went beyond these more obvious explanations. I felt that many upper-middle class graduate students were somewhat embarrassed by their legacy of privilege and looked to a rather romanticized notion of the working-class as a source of genuine identity. They seemed to be rejecting their suburban, all-American background which they regarded as "plastic."

On the other hand, most of those who did objectively qualify for my sample, on first contact disclaimed a working-class identification. Indeed, most of the participants did not fit into any common stereotype of the working-class although, by all objective measures, they were working-class. Their anomalies turned out to be important factors in this inquiry and are discussed in Chapter V.

As a result of these ironies, I soon learned not to accept the individual's class self-description as wholly accurate but instead asked several pre-screening questions to ascertain, objectively, her qualifications for inclusion in my sample.

Finally, several prospects who had been referred to me expressed some surprise -- even concern in a few cases -- that others may have regarded them as working-class. It seemed as if they had been trying, if not to "pass" as upper class, at least not to have done anything that would be considered "lower class" which was, by extension, "uncultured." My initial impression was generally borne out in the interview although, as usual, this was a more complex issue than it first appeared to be.

A great deal of delicacy was required, therefore, in the recruitment of participants for this study. These factors can be seen as being reflective of the general discomfort felt by Americans with the concept of social inequality and with the conception of this society as a class-based entity. Although these issues will be discussed later in greater depth, they do illustrate the context within which my exploration of class consciousness took place.

Validity of subjective data

The basic validity of data collected by qualitative methodologies are always open to question. Despite the richness of the resultant data, one must be skeptical of the extent to which they are based on a reality independent of the interview situation. I indicated elsewhere my decision to discount an interview in which the participant engaged in endless polemics over issues which

he later recanted. Although this over-reaction to the nature of the interview situation was extreme, less obvious variants also occurred. The participants were encouraged to discuss these issues in their evaluations of the interview, and most did appear to confront them honestly. The extent to which they did so seemed to be differentiated according to the participants' investments in the interview, i.e., between those whose motivation for participation was curiosity or a desire to help a fellow student out vs. those who utilized the interview as an opportunity for personal stock-taking and consciousness-raising. The latter generally were the more introspective and admitted their temptation (not acted upon) to manage responses so as to seem "better." For example, one said:

> I was trying not to be dishonest because it's very easy for me to be dishonest and then convince myself that that's what I really meant.

The concept of "better" was different for each participant -- e.g., consistency vs. spontaneity, emotional vs. rational, more vs. less class conscious, etc. The exploration of varying concepts of "better" gave me access to the personal meaning system of each participant and provided greater perspective in which to analyze responses. This should not imply, however, that those who did not admit to those feelings were devoid of them. This issue will be discussed below as an example of the limitations of the interview method.

The cornerstone of my methodology, the interview, is based to a large extent, if not wholly, on the self-reports of participants. For the purposes of this study, I utilized self-reports as the

critical data. Yet, I became increasingly aware of self-serving reports, either through comparative analysis or through occasional observations of the participants in other settings. Some inconsistencies seemed to be based on efforts at "image management," whereas others may have been a result of simple lack of self-awareness. The rigorous probing of responses gave more dimension to self-reports; however, some people skillfully defended their responses despite evidence to the contrary. These impressions underscore the need for multiple perspectives on such complex phenomena.

Finally, the population of graduate students itself was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they were exceptionally bright, articulate and often introspective -- able to capture in words intangible qualities and complex sentiments. Further, aware of the importance of the dissertation to the investigator and the frustrations thereto, they were especially considerate and responsible. Yet, their graduate training also caused them to surmise the underlying rationales for the methodology, my hypotheses and my politics, often incorrectly. For example, responses to the so-called "success continuum" (Q #19 on questionnaire) illustrate this. Many assumed it was a thinly-disguised I(nternal)-E(xternal) Scale and, being aware of the meanings attached to alternative responses, modified their answers to fit the theory. One participant laboriously measured the scale, assuming I would analyze her response by using a ruler to measure the exact spot she X'd. Another went to great lengths to list her social movement activities (Q #18) so as

to dispel (what she assumed to be) my hypothesis that working-class students put faith in individual achievement and turn their backs on their social origins. She explained:

> I grew up with a lot of people who accepted fully the American dream, wanted to make a lot of money, to achieve in this society -- who now look down on their background and the people they left behind...I think that might be a fairly typical stereotype...As we went along, I figured out that that wasn't what you thought.

In the discussion of findings (Chapter V) I will attempt to point out further areas of questionnable validity, as I perceive them.

The role of investigator

That last phrase -- "as I perceive them" -- brings up other sources of study bias. Being the sole instrument designer, interviewer and analyst, my observations are more subject to error than had there been outside verification. To what extent are the findings a function of my own values and beliefs rather than of the external realities? My own belief systems undoubtedly biased both the collection and the analysis of data. However, my involvement was not without gains which I considered to be of greater import. Being "in control" of the data, I was able to guarantee confidentiality, had a depth of understanding of the data not otherwise achievable, and could be flexible in revising the methodology in light of earlier experiences. This trade-off was carefully considered, and I chose the one best suited to the phenomenological approach.

I was also conscious of reactivity to me as interviewer -- the "me" that I am and the "me" others presumed me to be. Par-

ticipants who addressed this issue generally did so in a positive way. Several examples serve to illustrate the extent to which perceptions of me as a woman, a political activist and a psychologist respectively, facilitated candor:

> I'd have had more difficulty talking about it if you weren't a woman yourself.
>
> (From someone I once met at a political meeting) Sometimes I have a hard time talking to someone I don't know well (but) I was delighted that I recognized your voice on the telephone.
>
> (To a person who spoke of his homosexuality earlier -- Q: Did you worry how I'd respond to that knowledge?) As a psychologist, no.

Others who knew me and my class background also felt more comfortable:

> Had you been upper-class, I would have done more shtic, tried to make my background seem cooler. I didn't think I had to impress you. Not only from now but from knowing you, it didn't seem like you would have thought that was such hot-stuff.

Finally:

> The way you introduced the topic as something you wanted to explore for yourself -- that put me very much at ease.

Yet, the very absence of anyone who admitted to feeling less comfortable with these identities leads me to wonder because each of them can be perceived in a negative sense also, e.g., psychologists may be snoopy as well as accepting. The fact that none of these negatives were mentioned may indicate denial, the desire not to offend, or it may say something very interesting about a generalized acceptance of the interviewer role.

Data analysis

This analysis of subjective data, derived from more than one hundred hours of interviewing, is an awesome task. The fact that I, as sole transcriber and analyst, had also conducted all of the interviews made the task easier mentally, although terribly demanding physically. One major pitfall was the extent to which certain issues took on larger significance than the data supported. That is, an issue articulated in a particularly fascinating manner by a very few people seemed to me representative of a majority of participants. Although I decided not to code the data, I did find it necessary simply to count the number of instances in which the issue was raised so as to check the evidence against my impressions.

Another analytic issue is a reminder of what the study is and what it is not. The study is, in the main, phenomenological. This gives primary emphasis to the meanings participants ascribe to their surroundings. They act upon these symbolic realities even if they are not objectively real. The study is not, on the other hand, comparative. It does not presume to understand upper-class graduate students' feelings on the same issues, nor the differences and/or similarities to their working-class peers. This reminder anticipates possible complaints that "upper-middle class students feel the same way" about an issue so therefore, "it can't be class-based." For the narrow purposes of this inquiry, an issue is class-based if, in the participant's meaning system, he defines it as such.

A concluding note

Finally, any discussion of the ecology of the research process

must take into account the extent to which this dissertation departs from the norms of that scienticism which is characterized by impersonalism and dispassion. I thought, up to now, that I had successfully resisted that professional socialization. Yet, it was only in the process of conducting this inquiry that I realized how many of these conventions I had internalized. I had to unlearn old reflexes and prejudices about what constitutes "good research" and had to learn new ways in their place. Most of all, I had to draw upon courage to buttress my self-assurance that this was an important inquiry, and that my methodology was the most appropriate and fruitful for these purposes.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Although the population was restricted to whites, I recognize the commonalities in experience between working-class graduate students from both races. Further investigation would reveal the differences which I could only guess at in this discussion.

[2] After exhausting the first list of potentials, I initiated a second recruitment wave. This time, having already interviewed over half the desired number of participants, I recruited for specific categories thus far under-represented. I also looked for participants from the same academic programs as those already-interviewed so as to explore individual differences in experiences and perceptions.

[3] The first pre-test was not included, and two interviews were later discarded. During the course of the interview, the first participant revealed facts about his family background and current status as a student which eliminated him from the sample. In the second case, I judged the participant to be responding so excessively to the experience of "being on stage" that the validity of the resultant data was questionnable. In both cases I completed the interviews and only later, in reviewing the taped interviews, decided to discard them. I substituted additional participants for the two discards.

[4] For two opposing perspectives on class identification, see Centers (1949) and Hodge and Treiman (1968).

[5] For simplification, class loyalty and class hostility have been collapsed into a single category of the affective component of class consciousness.

[6] The class struggle is discussed in Bendix and Lipset (1958); Marx and Engels (1947); and Mills (1951).

[7] Not surprisingly, my lack of interview experience was most noteworthy in my clumsiness in juggling several tasks at once -- probing, listening, reflecting and tape-recording. The latter task frequently was forgotten during the first pre-test. The resultant erasures partially account for the discard of that protocol from the final sample.

[8] So that I might retain almost total flexibility in meeting the participant's convenience, the logistics of scheduling was

crucial. At any one time I would set a maximum of five interviews for the coming week -- never more than two in one day. If appointments had to be cancelled, I wanted my schedule free enough to accommodate the newly-scheduled appointments. I believe that the rapid succession from telephone call to interview was mainly responsible for the excellent response rate (32 of 35 contacts). The spacing of interviews, furthermore, allowed me some time to continually review prior interviews, formulating tentative hypotheses to be probed in succeeding sessions.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPANDED DEMOGRAPHY

Before turning to the analytic findings of this inquiry, it would do well to acquaint the reader with the characteristics of the participants themselves. Who are they? What are their origins? Where are they now? For what futures are they preparing themselves? The answers to these questions can be found in a compilation of data from the questionnaires, expanded by information elicited during the interviews.

Who are they?

In accordance with qualifications for selection, participants are white, doctoral students at the University of Michigan Rackham School. All but one, a Canadian, are U.S. citizens. The final sample of thirty are evenly split (15-15) by sex. Ages range from 23 to 33, the average age for women (27 2/3) being slightly higher than for men (26). Less than half (12) are married, three of whom have children. Two are divorced: one, a woman with children. The rest are in the various states of single-ness, as befits a college community these days.

What are their origins?

Apart from the objective, often class-related conditions which qualified individuals for inclusion in this study, the participants represented a very broad variety of categories. Geographically,

the East Coast and Midwest predominate (twelve each) as home regions, with the remaining six from the Far West. The families of seven of the participants live within a 50-mile radius of Ann Arbor. Almost all participants lived in the same community until college. Urban and suburban areas account for two-thirds of the home communities; only four were raised in rural areas.

Their family units are fairly small, ranging from one to four children, with a median slightly over two. Although six participants are only children (including two whose siblings are long-deceased), only two have as many as three siblings. Of those who do have siblings (24), half of them were the first born. An additional characteristic is that -- of those twenty-four -- ten have more than a five-year gap in ages between themselves and the next oldest or youngest sibling, some as many as fifteen years. Finally, not only are twice as many siblings girls as boys overall, but ten of the male participants have only female siblings. The sex of siblings of female participants, on the other hand, appear randomly distributed. This finding for two-thirds of the male participants suggest hypotheses dealing with the influence of significant women in their lives. Although this will be explored at greater length in Chapter V, it will be done hesitantly due to the small size of the sample.

The religious identifications of participants are: 11 Protestants, 12 Catholics, and 7 Jews. Although all trace their roots to eastern or western Europe, national origins of the Protestants are mainly based in Great Britain; in all cases, the Jews originated

in eastern Europe; Catholics are more diverse in national origins.[1] The number of generations since immigration ranged from three participants who, when small children, immigrated as Jewish refugees from Europe to six whose ancestors could be traced back five to nine generations in this country. Most participants, however, were second generation Americans, i.e., their grandparents had immigrated to the United States or Canada.

The parents, as would be expected, have significantly less formal education than their children; however, participants were not always sure of the precise educational levels achieved by their parents. The parents' limited education is partially explained by the fact that most were forced to leave school during the Depression to seek work. Later family responsibilities precluded the possibility of completing their educations. The mothers generally are more highly educated than their husbands; of thirty couples, seventeen mothers were the more educated. Only seven of the fathers exceeded their wives in education. (The remainder are approximately equivalent.) Statistically also, twice as many of the mothers (21) are high school graduates as the fathers (11). Although ten of the sixty parents were educated beyond high school, none had more than the equivalent of one year of college. Post-high school education was mainly in non-collegiate vocational training such as art schools, secretarial or bookkeeper training, etc.. The two (non-B.A.) nurses bounded the upper level of educational attainment. Only three parents (two fathers and one mother) received less than an eighth-grade education.

The profile of sibling educational attainment, on the other hand, is mixed to such an extent that no clear patterns emerge from the data. All siblings over the age of eighteen are high school graduates. Beyond that, approximately one-third ended their formal education with the high school diploma. Although many siblings are continuing their post-secondary educations now, fully one-third have already earned a Master's degree. On the far extreme, one family has all three children as either a Ph.D. or Ph.D. candidate.

Parental occupations are what would be expected for the working-class. The fathers are primarily factory workers and skilled or semi-skilled operatives. A few occupations are lower-middle class in status (e.g., real estate agent and postal supervisor) but, by unique circumstances, are remunerated at a working-class income level. A very few were self-employed in small businesses -- a luncheonette owner, farmer, plumbing contractor and a door-to-door peddler. Generally, they are characterized by long tenure with the same employer albeit with frequent lay-offs. Many of the fathers, as young men, moved frequently from job to job until they landed their present employment. Seven fathers are deceased and five currently retired. Four are unemployed by reason of disability: two for chronic alcoholism, one for physical impairment, and one for acute mental disorder.

Of the mothers, ten have been housewives throughout their married lives. Several others, formerly housewives, began working when their husbands' incomes ended -- due to death, disability or extended periods of unemployment. A few work with their husbands in "mom and

pop" businesses. Most of those who do work are in white-collar clerical jobs as teletypist, salesclerk, bookkeeper, etc.. In contrast to the fathers, only one mother is deceased (recently) and one retired from active employment.

A specific profile of parental incomes would be difficult to compile because of myriad complicating factors, not the least of which is that few of the participants have precise knowledge of their parents' incomes. The lower limit is in the $2,000-4,000 range (N=5), most of whom are supported solely by retirement benefits. The average current income is approximately $10,000 although few of those incomes have to support minor dependents. Only two of the families are supporting young children; all of the others are self-supporting adults. Although seven of the current family incomes exceed the flexible $15,000 ceiling I established, six of those represent the combined income of both parents. The two highest incomes are in families in which the mothers are in full-time nursing jobs at approximately $15,000 (to which the fathers' lesser incomes of $5,000 and $8,000 are added).

More important than current family incomes, however, are those incomes earned when the participants were in their mid-teens -- just prior to their high school graduation and subsequent career decisions. The ten year range of participants' ages complicates this computation, i.e., their mid-teen years vary from 1956 to 1967 for different participants -- years noted for accelerated growth in the national economy. What is more important, however, is the relative instability of the incomes during the participants' teen years. Very

few of the family income histories resemble the prototypical middle-class, i.e., consistent employment with increases or promotions at regular intervals. Most of the working-class families are prone to recurrent income fluctuations. Frequent periods of unemployment, lay-offs and medical convalescence deflate the family income, while the addition of a second income (usually the mothers' entrance into the labor market) tends to inflate the income. Even regularly employed but non-unionized workers occasionally suffered pay cuts when their employers fell on hard times for extended periods. In only two cases were there significant increases in family income. Over half of the fathers, furthermore, are deceased, disabled or retired -- most having been so for many years. Their economic benefits from non-employment, i.e., Social Security, pension benefits, etc. are meager, such that most of those families' living standards fell precipitously at some point in time.

Although some families made a point of not discussing family finances within their childrens' hearing, most participants were keenly aware of economic insecurity from an early age. In fact, these irregularities and insecurities emphasize the inadequacies of the traditional measurement of family income by objective techniques, at least insofar as the working-class is concerned. The subjectively-oriented interviews were preferable in their capacity to investigate the vicissitudes of income histories. In general, however, on the single dimension of income, most of the families fell well within the working-class, although the upper end of cases was more characteristic of the lower-middle class. Participants' self-descriptions

of their class backgrounds (Q #14 on Questionnaire, Appendix A) tended to be consonant with the objective data: five called themselves middle-class; thirteen, lower-middle class; eleven, working-class; and one, "lumpenproletariat (lower-class)." Many, however, modified the class label by indicating recent family mobility or aspirations for the children.

Combining the critical indices of parental education, occupation and income, the objective class origins of all of the participants closely approximated the working-class sample I set out to find. Within that objective characterization, however, lies an amazing array of unique family histories which will be explored in Chapter V. There was no noticeable intra-individual status inconsistency among the parents; in fact, the evidence is quite to the contrary. Most of the employed parents are characterized by occupations and incomes directly equivalent to their educations. In other words, their limited education locks them into circumscribed jobs for which they are low paid -- except for the few who are covered by union contracts. The one seeming-Horatio Alger came by his turn of fortune by a stroke of good luck.[2] The infrequency of such serendipitous instances for the locked-in working-class makes education all the more important as the only viable route to upward mobility for their children.

Educational advancement is dependent, to a great extent, on the students' cultural preparation, as well as on their natural capabilities. Yet, almost all participants described their homes as lacking in the cultural amenities and stimulation that traditionally

prepare students for the world of academic competition. Even in those families where education for the children was regarded positively, most reported that their families owned few books other than the seemingly-ubiquitous Reader's Digest Condensed Books. Dinner-table conversation leaned to local gossip and grocery prices rather than debates of abstract principles. Few had ever been to concerts, plays or foreign movies prior to college. Beyond these examples of formal culture, participants also related prior inexperience with social graces, e.g., many noted that restaurant dining was an alien experience. It is important to note, however, that their limited access to "high culture" should not imply a lack of culture. Indeed, most reported that their parents read newspapers and magazines regularly, and many were encouraged to frequent public libraries. They had dictionaries and encyclopedias, although of the type purchased at the local supermarket. If restaurants and concert halls were unfamiliar territory, family holiday dinners and VFW halls were not. The culture for which they were, in the main, unprepared consists of a set of rules and expectations which, although not essential to learning, has been prescribed as the preferable culture by those who already embody it.

For those who have not had access, in their homes, to the cultural trappings used as subtle criteria to screen aspirants, experiences outside the family take on added significance. The principal external influence for almost all participants was the school -- the norms it supported, the resources it made available, the teachers who instructed, and the peers with whom the participants interacted.

Of thirty participants, twenty-two attended public high schools, and the remaining eight attended Catholic parochial schools. Almost all attended schools which were located in their neighborhoods, although some of these schools drew from middle- and upper-middle class neighborhoods also. Many of the participants showed early academic promise and were placed in accelerated classes.[3] In these classes, their peers were, in the main, from more advantaged families. Although surprisingly few mentioned guidance counselors or teachers as important factors in deciding to go to college, their association primarily with college-bound peers was a fairly common trend. The strong influence of the family (especially the mothers) will be discussed at length in Chapter V.

Many of the participants were "super students"; a high proportion mentioned being valedictorians or ranking among the top ten in their high school graduating class.[4] Only three, all men, claimed to have performed poorly in high school -- two of whom were eventually expelled for disciplinary infractions. (These "late bloomers" actively resisted school at first but later were turned on to intellectual work during their college years.) Two-thirds of the participants received scholarships to college, and many worked part-time and summer jobs while in college.[5]

The elite quality of colleges attended was somewhat bimodal. Almost half attended nationally-known prestigious colleges including Harvard, Cornell, MIT, Mt. Holyoke, Barnard and Michigan. Another half attended mostly large public universities which draw heavily on non-elite students, e.g., Wayne State, Indiana, California State

Colleges, Fordham, etc.. Two others attended colleges which were not prestigious but which attract many wealthy students, e.g., University of Southern California. Over half (16) attended colleges in their home-towns, of whom eleven lived at home. Another five went to colleges which were within a 50-mile radius of their homes, although they lived on campus. Only eight participants attended what could be called out-of-town colleges.

All but four went directly through college without a break; another four transferred colleges at some time. Needless to say, almost all participants were outstanding college students -- otherwise, it is unlikely that they would have been admitted to a doctoral program at the University of Michigan.

Where are they now?

Regardless of their diverse origins, all participants have come to the same place and for the same general purpose -- the University of Michigan for graduate study. The majority of participants came to Michigan directly from college, although twelve took breaks in their academic careers ranging from six months to ten years, during which time they were employed, or, for the shorter periods, travelled. Six attended another graduate school prior to the University of Michigan, most receiving Master's degrees at the prior school. Only two, once having arrived at Michigan, have interrupted their graduate studies for periods of over a year duration.

Among participants, the average attendance at the University of Michigan's Graduate School is approximately four years, with a range

of two to seven years of residence. Most are preparing for or have just completed their preliminary examinations -- the step just prior to commencing their dissertation research. For most graduate students, the prelim stage represents the point of no return, i.e., once one has passed the preliminary examinations, he has pretty well decided to complete the Ph.D. degree and has been certified by his department as capable of doing so. It is important for this inquiry of the consequences of upward mobility that the participants are actually likely to cross class lines, from working-class to professional class.

Participants represent a diversity of major fields. Eighteen are pursuing doctorates in the Social Sciences and related fields (including Psychology, Social Work, Public Health, Education, Urban Planning, etc.); ten in the Humanities (including English Literature, Romance Languages, Philosophy, etc.); and two in Mathematics.[6] Insofar as was possible, once I interviewed someone, I attempted to recruit a person from the same department to serve as a cross-check on differential perceptions of the same (departmental) environment.[7] I was successful in matching participants in all but five cases. My own department, Psychology, accounted for the highest number of cases (5), due to the facility with which I could locate qualified participants.

While enrolled as graduate students, all have financially supported themselves without resort to family resources. Teaching assistantships are the usual mode of support. Others have worked in other professional jobs at University-related research institutes,

local public agencies, etc.. Only two, both women, have worked at any time in non-professional clerical positions while in Ann Arbor. (A few have worked during the summers in miscellaneous jobs outside of Ann Arbor.) The consequence of this is the extent to which participants do not seem to have regular contact with non-academic, working people while graduate students. Finally, although a few have had fellowships during their careers, no one has been supported entirely by non-work stipends.

In response to Q #1(a) on the Interview Schedule (Appendix C), participants recalled their original motives for seeking admission to graduate study. Although all had mixed motives, most felt that a graduate degree would certify them for a specific occupational role which would be unattainable otherwise, e.g., college professor, psychotherapist, research mathematician, etc.. Their secondary motives are associated with those roles -- "a privileged ambience," status and respectability. A few mentioned specific college professors as tangible role models. Some also were generally concerned with their ability to "learn a trade" or skill that would make them employable. Many were responding to their parents' job insecurities in seeking the degree. Very few (3) claimed the opportunity to be of service as a primary motive in their graduate application; most volunteered rationales which would benefit themselves personally. Once admitted to graduate study, however, many discovered the public service potential of professional roles -- primarily through their teaching. Notable in its absence was the specific mention of money as a motive; in fact, many specifically denied that salary was a

factor. However, given the often modest but comfortable salary expectations, participants could then emphasize the "psychic benefits" of professionalism such as autonomy, stimulation, etc..

Several remembered no specific commitment to graduate study but claimed a series of external factors as decisive, primarily the availability of fellowship funds at a time when they did not know what else to do or could not find employment. Similarly, a number expressed as important the fact that they had always been successful students -- "let's face it -- that's the thing I do best -- so why stop?" A few of those saw the Ph.D. as the ultimate certifier of their intelligence, to themselves primarily. Two admitted to other, highly personal motivations: a victim of an ulcer, one saw graduate study as the least strenuous activity he could find; the other saw graduate study as a safe haven from eventual life decisions. A very small number (5) claimed to have no particular reasons for coming to Michigan or felt they were unclear in their motivations -- some to this day.

When asked their expectations of graduate school prior to coming to Michigan, a majority (25) felt they had been naively idealistic. As undergraduates, their learning experiences were very rewarding and stimulating. Although they expected graduate work to be more demanding intellectually, they relished that challenge and the opportunity to do "serious work." With but two exceptions, they have been disappointed, even disillusioned, with their graduate experience in ways which will be addressed in the following chapter. Those who came without illusions were either the least disappointed or

were pleasantly surprised to find their experience better than they had expected.

A vehicle through which that disillusionment was expressed by many of the participants is the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), a labor union of graduate students employed by the University of Michigan as assistants in teaching and research. Partially by design, the sample is heavily populated by GEO members in that I recruited many participants for this study through the union. (However, I did not recruit all of them from GEO; some were recruited by other means and only later were they identified as GEO members.) Of thirty participants, seventeen are active GEO members, i.e., they were active in the recent strike against the University, attend meetings, etc.. Another three are supporting members who honored the strike but who are not themselves actors within the organization.[8] Surprisingly, (because I was not specifically recruiting them) ten of the participants were within the union leadership, i.e., union officers or stewards.

Of course, not all of the study participants who were GEO members are acting out of disillusion with the University in a general sense. A few are among the most satisfied of the overall sample and are involved in the union for the sole purpose of seeking wage increases, a distinction Marx called klasse an sich (pp. 30-1). Most, however, affiliate with the union in hopes of seeking to collectively force major changes on the University within their spheres of concern. These people are more illustrative of the klasse fur sich (p. 31). Each individual defines the appropriateness of

that sphere of concerns in terms of her political ideology as well as the firmness (or militancy) with which she subscribes to those ideologies. Differences among them are substantial, especially with regard to the issue of GEO's possible affiliation with a national labor union.[9]

The group of GEO activists within the study sample is split on the extent to which they had ever been involved in collective actions prior to GEO's formation, i.e., eight had participated in prior efforts; nine had never done so. Some of the political novices, however, turned out to be among the most active of all in the end. Having sat out the activism of the late 1960's on their respective college campuses, they had a second chance to redeem themselves in their own eyes. GEO was reported to be a profound experience in consciousness raising for almost all who participated in its struggles. They reported new learnings about the nature of the University, such as its functional linkages to the business establishment. The participation in GEO for several individuals had major impact on their lives and has led to a more politicized consciousness about themselves and their total environment, whether they decide to act upon that in the future or not.

Apart from GEO, of the thirty total participants in this study, only fifteen reported significant political involvement. Another seven report minimal involvement, that which I determined to be of the order of mere attendance at a political rally, etc.. The remaining eight have had no political involvement whatsoever. These results are somewhat surprising given the fact that all of the par-

ticipants had been university students at a time when it would be difficult to avoid any contact, no matter how minimal, with the activism of the late 1960's on college campuses. For example, one participant could think of only one instance of what he called "political involvement" -- by subscribing to a consumer's magazine, one dollar was automatically channelled to the consumer organization that sponsored its publication!

On the other hand, eight participants are general political activists of fairly long-standing. Although few had held leadership roles, many had been behind-the-scenes workers in political campaigns, anti-war demonstrations, etc.. They are characterized by fairly regular involvement in political issues, broadly defined, and tend to describe their environment in larger, politically-oriented modes. Although most are liberal/radical in ideology, a few are activists of the conservative right.

The foregoing discussion not only gives a flavor for the participants as they are now but also provides a base -- albeit a highly speculative one -- for predicting the future of these participants, i.e., <u>after</u> they have crossed class lines. Currently living within the transient state of "student-hood," they are preparing themselves for a more permanent future. The manner in which they approach that preparation and the consciousness they bring to those consequences help frame the following analysis.

For what futures are they preparing themselves?

We have already seen that many of the participants, once enrolled in their current graduate programs, have become disillusioned with the University qua corporation and have been actively engaged in attempting to change the priorities of the institution. Yet, ironically, most of them (fully twenty-three full-time and five part-time) are seeking academic careers. Only two indicate that they prefer a totally non-academic career; both of them have had considerable work experience in the non-academic world prior to their graduate study. Although academia is the preferred career choice for so many, all are confronted by a shrinking job market for college professors now and in the forseeable future. This realization is especially acute among those in certain academic fields where employment opportunities are nil. Nine of the participants, mostly concentrated in the Humanities, are most concerned with their dim prospects, having seen recent graduates unable to find employment in any college, no matter how fourth-rate. Almost all expect to complete their Ph.D. degrees. Although a few have begun to re-evaluate both the need and desire for the degree, most are proceeding ahead, deferring many decisions until after they have actually received it.

In contradiction to these employment realities, most participants, in response to Q #16 on the Questionnaire (Appendix A), continue to list their career-oriented satisfactions within the academic role. Their careers also figure prominently in their life-oriented satisfactions (Q #17 on the Questionnaire), supplemented by

concerns which center around close personal relationships, quality of the living environment and personal growth and happiness. Incidentally, although many list service-oriented goals as career satisfactions, few give these priority in their general life scheme, choosing instead more inner-directed goals.

Financial security is an important area of concern for participants, yet their expressions of material expectations are generally modest. Most would be pleased with a starting salary in the $10-12,000 range and do not expect an income much higher than that (given future inflation rates) for their peak salary. As might be expected from their families' histories, job security takes precedence over the quantity of income. "Psychic income" is a primary factor including autonomy, time to travel, recognition from colleagues for their work, and intellectual stimulation.

Finally, despite the high goals and standards with which the participants entered graduate school, their future plans are characteristically unambitious in any traditional sense of the word. Few expect or even aspire to eminence within their fields. Partly this can be explained by a realization, based on their association with truly outstanding intellects, that they are not "stars." However, many more express a feeling of being "burned out" or cynical. Although they feel they are capable of academic excellence, they now have less demanding goals and expectations for themselves. Having worked so hard to get to where they are only to be disillusioned, they now believe that the price to be paid for such eminence is just too steep and the rewards not essential for their peace of

mind.

Summary

This expanded demography has attempted to characterize the participants by more-or-less objective means, insofar as is possible considering the within-group variabilities. Some of the background factors which shaped their personal histories were described. Current life conditions were then explored -- both in terms of their shared graduate student status and the differential ways in which they perceive that status. Finally, we looked at the manner in which they are preparing themselves for their desired and/or expected futures, both as professionals and as total human beings. Underlying the statistics of this demography, however, is the palpable experience of the people themselves. The next chapter considers the subjective realities of upward mobility, finding its expression within the phenomenology of crossing class lines.

FOOTNOTES

[1] In contrast to the within-group similarities in national origins of the Protestants and the Jews, the Catholics were characterized by very diverse national origins. In all cases but one, the parental couple's respective ancestors originated in different regions of Europe, e.g., England and Italy, Ireland and Germany. Further, four of the Catholics had mixed religious lineages, although they were raised as Catholics.

[2] The father's long-time employer was anxious to retire yet unable to sell his small auto parts store. The employer, therefore, co-signed a loan for the purchase of the store with this man who had been a clerk in his business. Consequently, his income jumped from $2,600 to $15,000 per year within a few short years.

[3] More than half of the participants reported having been tracked into these classes (known variously as "Honors," "Special Progress," "College Preparatory," etc.) Most others either attended schools too small to so differentiate the (small) student population or which were themselves schools restricted to high academic achievers such as the Bronx High School for Science. Interestingly, the one Canadian participant in the study recalled that the "scholarship class" in which he was enrolled was discontinued after a year years. He said, "They decided that that was inappropriate. Perhaps they were building up a class structure within the school."

[4] This statement is qualified in its overall validity because it is not drawn from the total population. One of the drawbacks of the formative type of interviews I conducted turned out to be the resultant lack of standardization. As new questions were added to the Questionnaire Review (Appendix B) on the basis of my evolving experience, I could not return to address these questions to already-interviewed participants.

[5] (See Footnote #4 above)

[6] At one point in the participant recruitment process I made a decision to exclude from the sample graduate students in the Physical and Biological Sciences. The limited size of the eventual sample and my difficulty in locating such students made this decision necessary.

[7] Rather than accept referrals from study participants of others in their academic program, I independently sought them out. Not to have done so may have resulted in bias unacceptable to the

very purpose of the cross-check. Thus, a participant would likely refer friends who share similar perceptions of their department.

[8] Only two participants said they were opposed to the union; the others were not affected by the union, most because they did not work for the university, or because they were satisfied with their work conditions.

[9] Their differential reasonings on this pivotal issue were important to me not only as a within-group comparison but also as a technique that gave me access to each individual's phenomenological meaning system. It was particularly useful for probing the identification of class interests as well as the target class towards which the participant felt loyalty.

CHAPTER V

PHENOMENOLOGY OF UPWARD MOBILITY THROUGH EDUCATION

The preceding chapter outlined demographic characteristics of the participants, primarily determined by those objective indices obtained in the Questionnaire. In and of themselves, however, objective realities are insufficient for understanding the complexity of human experience. The open-ended, subjective interview allowed access to the participants' meaning systems related to the issues and/or dilemmas they may confront in the process of "bettering" their life chances through the acquisition of educational credentials. The differential ways in which the participants perceive these issues and the extent to which they experience and confront resultant dilemmas will be explored in the final chapter. For now, the discussion will explore the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants themselves. Insofar as possible, they will be allowed to speak for themselves through a liberal quotation of their own words, elicited during the interview sessions. Consistent with the preceding chapter, these issues will be considered in a somewhat chronological order: background factors, the quality of experience in graduate school, and the future roles they are planning and for which they are preparing themselves.

Background Factors

Although it is not the purpose of this study to determine objectively the socio-cultural factors which may have led certain individuals to have been selected out from their peers for upward mobility, I will look at some of the ways in which the participants conceive of their own "special-ness." To what past factors do they attribute their present (and expected) position in life and, more to the point, in the social stratification system? Further, because of the wide diversity of personal histories as well as the limited size of the sample, this discussion cannot definitively present a series of factors which can be interpreted as necessarily generalizable to persons in similar life situations. Nor is a rendering of individual case histories (the N=1 approach), interesting though they may be, an efficient way of communicating the mass of data. Rather, I will attempt a middle-ground -- between delimited hypotheses of the overall sample and a biography of each individual, taken separately. I will outline the trends which seem to emerge from the data, wherever possible using individual cases as illustrative material.

Attribution of success

I attempted to determine the extent to which participants attribute and differentially weight specific factors in the achievement of success -- both from their own experience and for any individual within this society.[1] The "success continuum" (Q #19 on the Questionnaire, Appendix A) elicits beliefs about the relative

weighting of personal vs. systemic factors which facilitate one's success within this society. The interview (Q #4, Appendix C) probed these beliefs in greater depth so as to determine the attitudes which underlie those beliefs. I also returned to this theme repeatedly during the course of the interview session, adding more attributional factors as they were mentioned in other contexts.[2]

A large number of factors were listed, and each participant attributed responsibility for his success to multiple factors. As one said, "it's all over-determined, anyway." Most felt that their success was due to a mixture of personal and situational factors. As expected, those who were somewhat conservative politically favored the personal causation rationale. They tended to attribute their success to inborn talents and hard work in light of the fact that they had neither past advantages or connections. They believed that, within reason, anyone could "make it" and were often annoyed at their working-class peers for not having followed their path to success:

> I do think the opportunities for success are there for anyone who wants them. God KNOWS there are enough opportunities to be anything you want to be. I think most people screw themselves up.

It should not pass without notice that in every case these persons are white males -- that group within the working-class most able to "pass" and so, most acceptable to dominant elites. (Not all white males, however, feel this way. In fact, this was a minority viewpoint in the total, mostly liberal group.)

Conversely, the more politically liberal-radical participants tended to favor the systemic rationale. Despite the fact that they

became successful without having had past advantages comparable to their wealthier peers, they consider themselves "exceptions to the rule":

> In my own life I feel that I'm an exception, that's really true. But that doesn't make me feel different about what it's like for most people...I think the fact that there are so few of us here proves that.

> I know marvelous people with drive who just didn't know how to get to step one and (I know) other boring, untalented people who are considered talented and great just because they knew the right person. Yeah, I happened to have picked up a few convenient connections myself.

> I had an unusual set of circumstances when I set out and some very good experiences. It's really capricious. Not unjust, just capricious.

It may not be surprising that in almost every case these participants were women. One firmly believes that her exceptionality is due to the fact that: "I never got the 'proper' female socialization." (Again, not all women felt this way.)

Personal attribution

Although the majority of attributions were externally-based, most participants also felt that some personal characteristics were also salient. The list included intelligence, specific talents, curiosity, a high level of energy, and a "basic internal drivenness."

> I do think you've got to be an exceptional person with an exceptional amount of drive to be a working-class person here...Modesty aside, I am the hardest working person that I know. I don't know anybody that works harder than I do. I am a driven person in a sense.

Some had difficulty tracing back the source of these temperamental factors:

> It's just that I had interests that other people didn't have. I found myself one day as a small child interested in things. It didn't seem to come from anywhere -- I've always thought that I'm pretty much independent of my background.

> I don't know why I said that there are things in this world that I want, no matter what.

Several noted that they are unwilling to settle for the commonplace:

> My mother wanted me to be something and I always remember saying: "She wants me to be that, but why should I settle for that?" She wanted me to be a dental hygienist, but I said: "Why not be a dentist?"

However, looking back on the hard work and personal sacrifices they made to satiate this internal drive, some have observed that their working-class peers who supposedly "settled for less" seem to be happy (or happier) in the end:

> I'll always envy their placidity...a satisfaction with what is, with the environment and not wanting to shake it or break it.

> Perhaps it's not for everybody. At first I felt that I did it and everyone in my position should have the motivation to achieve the highest level they can. But maybe it isn't for everybody. Maybe people aren't happy doing that sort of thing. In the last few years, my thinking has changed on this.

The remainder of this section considers some of the major external or systemically-based sources of success which were cited most frequently by the participants. The specific set of circumstances surrounding family histories of the participants was seen as the primary external determinant of eventual academic success and motivation to seek upward social mobility through higher education. The impact of the school was another important external influence.

The anomalous working-class

Demographically, the participants' backgrounds do not seem much different from the working-class which is represented in the social science literature. However, most participants experienced their family histories as anomalous in ways which were culturally continuous to their current life situations. In fact, fully twenty-two of the thirty participants described themselves as anomalous to the usual conception of the American working-class, often in very dramatic ways.

These anomalies, more than anything else, point to the inadequacy of the narrow scientism of the traditional social science treatment of upward mobility. The individual's phenomenological sense of his experience was found to be based more on the subjective perceptions underlying demographic factors than on any objective measurements in and of themselves. Although many participants experienced themselves as anomalous in ways peculiar to each individually, there were four major areas of anomaly cited by most: (1) parental impact; (2) family's status decline; (3) immigration and assimilation; and (4) ethnic traditions of scholarship.

(1) PARENTAL IMPACT -- The major anomaly cited is the very specific role played by many of the participants' mothers in encouraging their children's upward mobility -- as seen by the participants themselves. This can be explained partially by the high rates of paternal absence: four participants' fathers died early in their lives, and three had parents who divorced early. However, a more frequently-cited explanation relates to the unique characteristics of these mothers and their relationships to their husbands.[3]

Most participants describe their mothers, quite contrary to their description of their fathers, as genteel and able to hold their own in any social situation: "very charming," "my mother is very articulate and her accent is very charming," "my mother is the sort of person who could be a chameleon in the sense that whatever values people that she talks to have, that's what she says," and "she can pass in any class of people, up to and including the middle class."

These mothers encouraged their children's academic achievements, very purposively reading to the children and taking them to the public library at an early age.

> I would suspect that my mother tends to think that, were it not for her, none of <u>this</u> would be possible.

What differentiates them from middle- and upper-middle class mothers, however, is their perception of the family's limited life options. Education was seen not only as only a "good" in itself but, for many, as the means to improving one's lot. Often intelligent themselves, the Depression and women's restricted social role kept them from that mobility. If they could not do it, their children will:

> She was very proud of my doing well. But for her it was always my escape from that near-poverty. It was a route out -- those are the exact words she used.

> Ever since I was young I had definite intellectual tendencies, and my mother encouraged me in that way. She saw it as a route out. She always had a sense of the outside world, outside of where she had lived all her life...which she saw as a trap.

> I don't want to push a picture of...she's not the go-getter in terms of material goods but she is very much wanting us to have a life of stimulation and interest. She knows what it's like to work in an office where the most interesting conversation is the price of peas at the grocery store. It bores the hell out of her.

The fact that the participants have pursued an educational path to upward social mobility -- as opposed to business or even sports -- might well be influenced by the strong feminine impact on their lives. Education has been the predominant channel through which women have been able to gain some measure of security and status. It may be that the strong maternal influence is expressed in a manner particularly supportive of educational mobility.

In many cases (fourteen), the mother's encouragement was given a special edge, however, by the tension between her and her husband. Some of the mothers resented their husbands whom they blamed for the family's circumstances:

> My mother sacrificed, killed off a big hunk of herself to make that marriage work. She never wanted us to get married. We were supposed to do great things.

> He doesn't mind being working-class. He likes the guys at work. She hates them...she wanted us to have decent jobs so we wouldn't have to be whatever my father was.

The children's futures became important not only for the children's benefit or the way in which they would enhance the family's overall social status,[4] but also as a refutation of the father's influence within the family. The latter was in reaction to those husbands/fathers most like an Archie Bunker stereotype of the working-class male (coarse, intolerant, etc.):

> She's more embarrassed by my father than I am, and she always communicated that to me...I don't blame myself entirely for that.

> My father never understood my loving books. He'd always deride my studying. But my mother always defended me and said that that was the most important thing I could be doing.

These mothers were seen by their children as disparaging, either directly or indirectly, the working-class as a viable future for their

children. Meanwhile, their own middle-class values and manners provided a different, non-working-class model for their children.

(2) FAMILY'S STATUS DECLINE -- The second area of perceived anomaly relates to the discussion just preceding. That is, a primary reason behind those mothers' hostility to their working-class status (and to their husbands as the responsible party) is that their marriages represented a decline in status. This lowered status underlies many of our participants' backgrounds, whether their parents are seen as adversaries or not. Jackson and Marsden (1966), in their study of British professionals from working-class backgrounds found that many were from the "sunken middle-class:"

> ...middle class families who have collapsed through ill-health, bankruptcy, foolishness or any of the stray chances of life (p. 70).

They speculate that the children's upward mobility allowed the family to "regain contact with its lost position in the middle-classes" (p. 69). Despite the differing social structures represented by the United States and Great Britain, the concept of "sunken middle-class" seems to depict the family histories of some of the participants.

One rather extreme example of this family decline in status is found within the sample of this inquiry:

> My mother's family was upper-class in England originally and came to Canada several generations ago. This is clearly very, very important to my mother. They were very poor in Canada but it didn't matter, you know, because they were STILL the BEST family in the pioneer village where she grew up, and she transferred all that to the U.S. (where participant's parents came in the employ of a WASP millionaire as his chambermaid and butler)...My parents would never have worked for anyone who wasn't Anglo-Saxon!

Similarly to Jackson and Marsden's subjects, these parents (primarily the mothers) inculcated middle-class values in their children:

> Perhaps I'm a bit anomalous to the people you've talked to...In both my parents, in the grandparents' generation, there was a LOT of money...They lost everything they had in the Depression...There are great-aunts who still have that money. But my mother's side never lost their sense of taste and decorum. She cultivated that in me too... Decorum is one of the strongest things in her life.

> My parents were European and Viennese on top of THAT... My mother was brought up in a family that lost its money in the War and the Depression, but it still had a level of culture. The money that my mother DID get was spent on getting me piano and ballet lessons, all things that a girl of a higher class would be encouraged to do.

On the other hand, many of the parents were from poor families themselves. Although they did not experience a decline in actual status, many had been forced to abandon their own dreams of upward mobility:

> I think my father had a strong sense of himself as not accomplishing much and wanting more...(He) has a set of values that are hard for him to integrate...He's very artistic...Sometimes I think he compares himself with me and feels lowered in his own eyes because he had equal scholarship opportunities and didn't take advantage of them.

> He's such an intelligent man, such an avid reader, so capable of having done so many things...Had he had the right kind of background, he would have been a very successful kind of professional. He really wanted to be an airline pilot, and I think he would have been a damned good one.

(3) IMMIGRATION AND ASSIMILATION -- The third area of anomaly, immigrant status, represents a smaller number of participants. Although only three participants are themselves immigrants, several others express a strong identification with their parents' immigrant

status. They grew up feeling different, and their assimilation into the dominant culture was often painful:

> I got an "F" on a composition because I can't spell correctly. My teacher (wrote): "Your daughter can hardly spell." And here comes my mother (to school), barely speaking ENGLISH...She yelled at my mother for not helping me. They didn't know I was foreign. I didn't sound foreign.

Their relationship to their parents was also shaped by the experience of assimilation:

> Immigrant children tend to be the teachers of their parents. They assimilate faster -- they want to. Your parents see you as "the American." They try to push you forward in situations where it's important to talk, and they see you living the American life... They hoped I would be extremely successful.
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> As immigrants, my parents had built defenses around themselves so that we are always concentrated in UPON themselves, and we don't really have many friends.

These participants described their experience, therefore, as one of overwhelming social marginality -- a self-concept that persists to this day despite their seeming-assimilation. They realize that others assume that their family histories are similar to those of the majority of assimilated Americans. While seeming to "fit," their experience of themselves is of not fitting.

(4) ETHNIC TRADITIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP -- The strong emphasis on education within certain larger ethnic groups is the final anomaly to be discussed. Several of the Jewish participants are descended from long traditions of scholarship, although not formally credentialed:

> In the Yiddish tradition, being scholarly and intellectual was a good. To be educated, to know, and to study is to be good as opposed to being materially successful...And

> my father is still intellectual. He doesn't speak or write very well, but he read tremendous amounts in the past.

> My grandfather was a rabbinical scholar in Europe although when he came here, he sold brooms door-to-door. I suppose it did mean something to me...I'm sure there was something unconscious in there.

Although this is predictably strongest among Jewish participants, several others also interpret their ethnicity as reinforcing educational mobility. They had always been told that their ethnic group valued education and so it was "natural" for them to be educationally successful. Once they entered college, however, they were very surprised to find so few academics from their ethnic backgrounds. One has even sought out an ethnic subgroup within her professional organization -- the Italian-American Historical Society. A parallel of the ethnic tradition of scholarship is the extent to which a European cultural tradition is seen as having had an important impact:

> There's some distinctly European things going on, like Italian cab drivers who sing opera.

The middle-class European aunt of one participant encouraged his appreciation of the fine arts:[5]

> (She) took an interest in directing me, taking me to concerts, etc.. Even though they were from a lower-professional background, they had been exposed to those things in Europe.

Thus, for some, their family histories encouraged their present decisions and career directions.

For the participants, the perceived consequences of the preceding anomalies are mixed in effect. Despite their working-class backgrounds, some are advantaged by cultural continuities (i.e., social and scholarly traditions) which not only ease their transition

into middle-class styles and values represented by the university, but also make that transition desirable in the first place. On the other hand, however, these anomalies may have led parents to live vicariously through their children -- a pressure that is often burdensome. The importance with which her parents hold academic achievement was communicated to one participant at a very early age:

> One year I got a "Weak" in writing, and my earliest memory is that someone asked my mother how were my grades. My mother said, "She got all Excellents and Goods." She lied! You know, it was extremely important to present a good front.

She goes on to relate her central life dilemma:

> It would be nice if they were more satisfied, and felt that their life wasn't such a total failure...which it IS, economically...The pressure (on me) is to live a life that conforms to their ideas. And because I understand their ideas and understand that they could have no <u>other</u> and because they lead a very difficult life and have gone through a lot of traumas, in a way I feel the <u>least</u> I could do would be to satisfy them in some way. They have no other outlets for that satisfaction. Unfortunately, it would mean SACRIFICING MY LIFE!!

Another participant, whose parents expect him to resurrect the family's lost status, says:

> It makes me feel very BAD right now because I'm not sure I'm going to live up to their expectations. I keep trying to say: "Listen, I'm not sure I'm going to make it. Please try and make your expectations correspond with the expectations that I have for me" -- which is hard for them to do.

This same person recollects an incident that illustrates this pressure:

> I think he really considers himself a failure...I can remember he sat down and put his arm around me and started to cry: "I'm 50 years old. What have I done with my life? I'm nowhere. My only hope is you and your sister. Please do something with your life."

The realization of the parents' limited position may lead in oppo-

site directions also, especially in the societally-reinforced competition between fathers and sons:

> Sometimes I will prevent myself from getting ahead... My father never did it, and I feel badly to be going way over his head...even though he wanted me to do it.

There was a definite sex difference in the extent to which parents encouraged their children to be successful, i.e., boys were encouraged more than girls. For the girls, marrying a successful man was usually preferable to being successful themselves as far their parents were concerned:

> If I were a doctor or making $30,000 a year, it <u>might</u> make up for not being married and having grandchildren. It <u>might</u> -- for a while -- but never ultimately.

The father of one could only justify his daughter's attendance at a prestigious college as an opportunity "to marry the President of GM." However, once these women -- by whatever internal drive or external influence -- became academically successful, their parents began to take great and vicarious pleasure in their accomplishments also.

A similar circumstance resulted in those few cases where the male children were, in the main, autonomous from their families:

> I wasn't aware of any organized effort to raise a child. I had a lot of freedom and managed to do what I wanted.

> I think that one of the things that helped me is that (my sister) was the favorite. They showered a lot of affection on her, and I was left alone. And I think I've been able to become more autonomous than she has.

> My family had very little to do with me when I was growing up. I learned at a very early age to have very little to do with them. (College) was a world they didn't help put me in. My father brags to his friends: "Oh, we didn't give him any encouragement to go to college." To a larger extent than is NORMAL, it was TRUE.

The influence of older siblings

In many cases an older, college-educated sibling was important to the participants in culturally bridging the gap between the home background and the middle-class oriented educational system:

> I think my sister was very important to me because she lived at home while she was going to college, and I was exposed to a lot...in the sense that I had somewhere to start.

> The reason that I'm here I owe to the fact that I have a brother who is enough older -- he's more of a snob than I am -- he chose to seek his models with people who led him into a superficial acquaintance with music and literature...He taught me how to talk about cultural matters and filled in some of the (holes in my education).

In a few cases, the older sibling's success was a psychological advantage for the participant:

> My brother (a physician now) took a lot of the burden off of me. He had done it, and I knew I could have done it if I wanted.

In others, siblings who had their own vicarious stake in the participant were a mixed blessing, only adding to the problems of growing up:

> My brother came home from college and wanted me to be like the rich college girls. There I was in the middle of PUBERTY! There was no WAY I was going to be like them!...He didn't want to make me <u>into</u> a cheerleader but would tell me I had a perfect RIGHT to get my hair cut (against my mother's wishes).

Most siblings who were not college-educated were much older than the participant and, beyond a point, could no longer serve as their alternative role models because their lives were not much dif-

ferent than that of their parents. Even the college-educated male sibling was not an effective role model for the younger female because working-class girls are somewhat restricted in their upward mobility, more so than their male counterparts. These girls were made to feel different; their brothers could excel in school while still being legitimized within the peer group's world of sports, cars and beer-drinking. (Of course, males who reject the "macho" quality of working-class boys and elect more intellectual pursuits -- as is the case with many of our male participants -- are doubly penalized.)

Tracking out of the working-class

Another perceived background factor is the practice of educational tracking, often starting in elementary school and continuing throughout secondary education.[6] Having been recognized as bright by teachers or having scored well on a single standardized test, these children were placed in advanced classes. Despite the obvious benefits of greater intellectual stimulation, for many the impact of this practice was devastating. Tracking separated them from their neighborhood friends while throwing them in with a group of children from more advantaged circumstances:

> I was the only kid from my elementary school who was placed in the top academic group. But I didn't know anybody in my class. They had already established their friendships and there wasn't anything particularly interesting about me that would make them go out of their way. I never saw those kids because they didn't live in my neighborhood, and I didn't see the kids from my elementary school because they weren't in my classes. It was very lonely. This tracking business is just DEADLY for a 10-year-old kid.

When these children finally were accepted into the new peer group, however, their relationship to their parents became strained.

The children often were resentful that they couldn't have the material advantages that their classmates had -- fashionable clothes, cars, summer camps, etc.. Their parents often reacted resentfully in turn and reminded the children that they were "different" than their classmates and their families:

> My friends in high school -- we had a little clique of "brains" -- were all middle-class. My father told me that they all had more money, they were all "big shots" -- that was his term for pencil pushers, people who sat at a desk and didn't really work. And that we were very different than them; they had more money and that I shouldn't expect to have anything that they had.

Although most are genuinely proud, many parents, as Rodrigues (1974) noted, view with wariness their children's success, realizing that a wedge is being driven between them and that that wedge might well make the children feel superior to their family. Educational mobility, therefore, is seen by them as a mixed blessing and a source of family tension and eventual separation.

Several participants themselves had a clear sense of their (lesser) "station in life" and rejected opportunities for greater intellectual stimulation, believing that they wouldn't fit in with the other, more middle-class children:

> I wouldn't go to the Bronx High School of Science although it was closer to my house, because I didn't like the effete nature of the people who went there. I thought they were much too uppity.

> It had a reputation for being the "snob school." And to me that had all the connotations of upper-class kids and I just didn't think I'd fit. I'm sure I could have hacked it academically when I think about it now, but then I thought I'd be very out of place and would be inferior.

Even as late as the selection of a college, some participants were conscious of these feelings:

> (Q: Did you ever want to go to a more prestigious college?) Well, I was doing fairly well academically, and I thought I might like to try it at some time but not THEN. It was a big enough step just going to (the commuter college) as far as I was concerned.

Finally, some decided to stay in a non-elite setting where they would be "big fish in a small pond":

> I'm glad I didn't go to Harvard because I would have been mediocre...but having gone to Fordham and coming from a working-class background..in a certain sense I stood out more which was in a certain sense useful.

Thus, participants differed in their past experiences with and attitudes toward prestigious educational institutions.

Summary

Participants considered multiple background factors -- both internal and external -- as important in their decision to seek mobility through educational channels. Although some gave primary emphasis to personal capabilities, others recognized a range of systemically-based sources of success. Their family histories were perceived as anomalous to the working-class and as providing both the motivation and cultural styles which would be helpful to them in their academic pursuits. Their educational experiences prior to graduate school were important in the extent to which they were surrounded by or separated from peers of higher class backgrounds. The attitudes which they developed around class identification was strongly effected by these family and school experiences.

These background factors, therefore, were perceived by the participants as being facilitative, for the most part, to their current life situation. In the next section I will explore the exper-

ience of the participants as graduate students at the University of Michigan. In so doing, however, we continually return to their past histories as the context in which to view their perceptions of their current life situations. Thus, the focus almost imperceptibly switches to viewing those background factors as somehow dysfunctional or non-facilitative to the elite environment represented by their graduate study. That is, background factors combined in such a way as to make possible their preparation for and admission to a graduate program. Yet, once accepted, many experienced a cultural gap that pointed out their lack of preparation for graduate study and all of the cultural trappings which they feel surrounds the academic pursuit.

The Quality of Graduate Experience

Despite the diverse histories and differential ways in which those histories have impacted on the participants, they all share a similar present as graduate students at the Univesity of Michigan. Entering graduate school with a wide range of goals and expectations, most have been profoundly affected by that environment -- for better or worse. In return, a smaller number has attempted to exert an effect on that environment so as to change some of the values and relationships which facilitate the university's ability to carry out the institutional priorities. In this section I will discuss the extent to which the participants feel that they have been successful in achieving their personal and/or social goals.

Acquiring the mantle

> Look, they have the chance to "wear the mantle" and most students are going to TAKE it -- it's to their advantage, so why should they do differently?...Being a professor and having a job and making a good living and having status... I mean, those are the MODELS they have for identification...

Even those not "born to" the environment of an elite university can appreciate the casual lifestyle, worldly constituents, intellectual stimulation, and wealth of resources there -- in fact, probably more so.

> This was something entirely new, and I remember going into the library and pulling down books off the shelf and literally gobbling them up -- because of my curiosity...

In fact, one can assume that all participants -- even the most dissident among them -- have chosen to stay for some reason; otherwise, they would have left long ago. Some perceive the university in somewhat virtuous tones and are proud to have been accepted into its membership:

> Why the university exists is to add to the research core of society, to have progress, a better life and a better standard of living. And then there are the old Renaissance goals of a humanist institution preserving learning from the past.
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> I feel some pride at this university, as belonging to it -- more pride than I experienced in my (undergraduate) college. This university has generated a lot of success..Yes, I do feel pride at being here.

However, one participant -- having attained her objective of ad-

mittance to the prestigious university -- began to wonder if all that glitters is <u>really</u> gold:

> I thought I knew what it would be like but academically and intellectually it's certainly no more difficult than undergraduate school. So the change in the quantity or quality of work wasn't significant.

Some feel that their experience within the university has been a positive one, in terms of their own personal growth and professional development:

> The university offered a chance to me -- to open the door and to have access to things that I didn't, coming from the background that I had...This place is really where my identity was formed. I'm grateful for the idea of a university.

However, the university offers not only a role to which to aspire, but for some it represents an opportunity to escape from a life of unrewarded drudgery and boredom:

> Here I'm going to be doing a job I thoroughly enjoy, and they're going to pay me a lot of money to DO it! I'll have prestige and status. I'll be treated like a respectable, real person. Why didn't someone give me an award for washing twenty-five diapers a day? I would have enjoyed getting recognition for that. It was a DUTY, a responsibility, a chore, a job.

> (Q: Were you disappointed in graduate school?) No. I was so happy to be back in school after being a SECRETARY for a year and a half, that I was just THRILLED.

> There's a certain internal mental shift (in your self-concept). See, there's just a difference in coming home with a briefcase and a nice suit and knowing that I've done hard, intellectual, hopefully helpful work. I used to come home in dirty coveralls and never see the whole engine I was working on...Now I'm much more autonomous. I make decisions and people ask for my opinions.

Even those who have never worked at anything other than intellectual work need only look to their parents' lost dreams and material

insecurities as constant reminders of their fate if they do not take advantage of opportunities for upward mobility through education. For some, however, there was no conscious decision. They always took their professional education as a "given -- neither as an aspiration to nor an escape from -- it just WAS:

> So there wasn't any problem...it wasn't a DECISION. I decided I was going to go to graduate school. I started studying and doing well...I always knew I could do well if I applied myself...I wasn't thinking about what I'd do at the end.

Despite the fact that the university was not seen as being quite the citadel of virtue it claims to be, those who did not have high expectations to start are not disappointed. They are cynical about the perfectability of social institutions anyway and are in the process of carving out a pleasant and rewarding niche for themselves in the future:

> I've become resigned to the fact that not much can be done in the world. I once was more hopeful that something could be done but I guess I'm not anymore. But what I think doesn't make much difference, except for my self...(Q: Is the solution then to get an education and create a nice life for one's self?) I'm not saying that's what one SHOULD do; it's what I'M doing.

As a social institution, the university tends, more or less, to serve the interests of many constituencies -- one of which is its graduates. If they have not always benefitted from all that the university could offer, at least they do receive the credentials which profoundly affect the quality of their future lives -- especially for those of lower-class backgrounds. This may be the primary function of the modern university and, to the extent that its credentials continue to be rewarded in the larger society, it

may be considered successful. Whether that is the preferable function for a university and whether the benefits so derived are worth the costs will be discussed in the following sections. But for now, we have seen that for some of the participants, at least, the university has, indeed, "delivered the goods."

Gatsby revisited

> I felt tremendously ill-at-ease. I was having a Gatsby reaction. I could, in a sense, dominate the conversation if I wanted, but I still felt uncomfortable. So I feel that this is something -- where I came from -- that I'll never lose. I think that it will always have an influence on me in the sense that I'll always feel personally insecure in a variety of ways that I otherwise would not have been.

Despite those background factors which smoothed their path to higher education, almost all of the participants, nevertheless, feel that their encounter with the elite university environment is an alien experience -- alien, that is, to their working-class origins. Those for whom graduate school is the first encounter with an elite institution, express considerable apprehension and pain:

> It took me a long time to muster up the courage to say anything in classes. People would be from Harvard and Radcliffe and that would scare me. I was terrified. Once I started to say something in class when the professor called on me, and nothing came out!

One participant recalled an incident when she was called into a meeting with a professor soon after she arrived:

> He sat me down and said, "You know, you're the first Italian we've ever accepted...We've never taken anybody from a state school in (names state) before." At that time I didn't know what to make of it at all.

> I got the impression..that I was some kind of anomaly -- that it just didn't make sense -- that my GRE scores didn't make sense...I heard it as: "We DARE you to be good at what we think is important."..I didn't believe that people could be thinking that way. Like, "fuck YOU -- I don't see my history as an impediment."

Others feel the alienation in more subtle ways:

> I've gone to concerts (here) where people just go and listen and don't yell or clap or anything. That's strange. I feel very constrained, sort of oppressed by that.

> (In a class argument, one participant angrily rejects the consensus that, because there is no empirical evidence in the area, we can not say anything about the effect of religious institutions on universities) (Q: Do you feel they heard what you were saying?) No, I think they dismissed me as a lunatic...I'm regarded as the "house eccentric"in my department.

Another feels alien to the surrounding community:

> It's all one class -- upper-middle class. I've always lived in ghetto communities or mixed urban communities. This is a place where I don't feel any identification, no feelings of roots. I always wondered why I didn't like it, but now I realize that there is nothing in this environment for me to plug into -- nothing.

Part of that alienation is economically-based. One participant explains that the lack of agency funds to support student trainees means that the wealthy students can purchase their first-choice placement:

> For me to ask my parents to do that (pay tuition and living expenses for a year) would be very, very difficult. It's not like a quick phone call with a check coming in every month with no sweat. (For my parents) it means evenings spent going through the family budget, going through all the potential sources of money.

Two other participants are cognizant of their fellow students' privileges, as follows:

> I would love to go to Europe. Most of my acquaintances

> have been many times and sometimes they'll get together at parties and talk about it and I'm totally out of it. (One classmate studied for her prelims in Hawaii) and I can remember when I was studying for those examinations here. I was trapped and felt miserable.
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> Put a group of students on stipends and they all supposedly have the same amount of money. But one woman's mother sends her theatre tickets for the season. One guy had 2,000 people at his wedding and got enough stuff to last for years. So there are these little subtle differences. Nobody buys anything for my kids or me...

More frequently, however, participants cited cultural factors as stumbling-blocks, although generally these cultural factors can be determined to have an economic base. Several felt that without having actually been brought up in an elite environment, you can not be prepared fully for the cultural style of a prestigious university:

> Well, it was my FATHER who was the servant waiting tables. I'M not the one who knows how to behave in this kind of situation...being invited to a dinner party at a professor's and feeling a little bit ignorant.

The intellectual styles are also formidable and difficult for the participants to master. Most frequently mentioned is the analytic talent which they feel their peers have accomplished by a process of osmosis. They have visited homes of their friends where dinner conversations resemble legal debates:

> They mentally and verbally sparred with each other...I just couldn't believe it...That would have been interpreted as HOSTILITY in MY household! You'd avoid it.

The cultural styles of working-class families are not valued in the elite university, and intelligence is largely judged on the extent to which the student can present her ideas in "acceptable ways:"

> I DO have ideas but I'm not inclined to express them in groups that I don't consider I belong to. I do TRY but

> I resent HAVING to try...I would like to be articulate because I think it would be valuable to me professionally ...but I don't know how and I RESENT having to try.

The ability to "hustle" in approved academic ways is another skill that is lacking in some, as is the ability to "politic:"

> People DON'T get rewarded on merit. It has a lot of political things involved and I don't play the political game...I don't think I'd be very good at it and I'm not even sure what they ARE.

Individualism and competitiveness were two other adaptive cultural styles which were frequently cited as "foreign" to the working-class. The common-place practice by which a professor selects and grooms a protege was not only considered "foreign" but was also rejected out-of-hand by most as being counter to their needs for personal autonomy. In fact, those are only some of the values and practices that are not only alien, but which participants disdain.[7] Academic success seems to be dependent on these styles to a larger extent than they would like and so they are forced to make concessions to the elite environment. These concessions are considered by many to be the "costs" of academic achievement:

> There's some costs to it...perhaps when you're not competitive, you have more of a communal feeling and you're less interested in getting ahead...(Q: What have you lost?) ...Just a more communal, less competitive, more cooperative, less neurotic, less need achievement....Yes, I am quite proud of my family. But I'm ambitious, and I've put some of my ambitions to practice. I dislike some of the by-products but I LIKE some of the products too.

As if all of the above weren't enough, some were caught in another dilemma -- some of their peers were turning their backs on the very same "products" for which the participants were paying so dearly:

> It was very funny to be creeping up to middle-class status while everybody around me was REJECTING it.

> I always felt at a disadvantage because you can't reject it until you've HAD it. I WANTED to reject it; all my political convictions were on that side and yet...I wanted to make up my own mind first.

Those participants who experience their current life position as a series of dilemmas cope with their problems in a variety of ways. Some throw themselves into their work:

> I get very wrapped up with the computer. You lose all sense of what you're trying to do and get wrapped up in these short-term things. I've used intellectualism as an escape...and then I don't have to think about the other things.

Some are considering quitting graduate school, believing that the costs far outweigh whatever benefits could be gained, while others are held from a decision to drop out by "sheer aimlessness and indecision." For some, the dilemmas are externalized, and they are fighting against whatever forces they believe to be responsible for their untenable position -- or simply lashing out somewhat indiscriminantly at any convenient target, realizing the mindlessness of their actions. (Later I will discuss the collectivization of some of these dissidents into the Graduate Employees Organization.) Finally, most at some time or other have internalized the pain of their experience and report that they are NOT coping:

> I have a proclivity to see the problems as within me. ...I tend to internalize a lot of things that are external. I've known how I've felt about them but not always why.

Having discussed the costs that these persons are called upon to pay, it is left to consider the benefits that are attainable and the way in which those benefits might well create even more cultural dislocation in the end.

The double-edged sword

> Sometimes I feel that the academic credential is very dangerous for me. It has the potential -- it's kind of a double-edged sword -- it has the potential at the same time to sever me from my history that's made me WHO I am. It ALSO has the potential to help me develop more and more who I am BECAUSE of that history.

The fact that, up to now, the participants have been pursuing their doctorates indicates that for now at least the promise of later benefit is deemed worthy of the pain involved in its attainment. If the university is not the intellectual Shangri-la they had hoped it would be, it still offers an opportunity for intellectual exchange and stimulation not equaled in any other part of society. Throughout childhood they rarely had anyone with whom they could discuss ideas and books; finally, in the university setting they can comingle with other thinkers and dreamers:

> It's like I've been offered something -- I've eaten of the fruit of the tree...and I'm ADDICTED. I love the opportunity to hear people speak and hear music, to exchange exciting ideas, where there's MOVEMENT.

Although they may reject many of the values of the elite environment, they may also choose to discard some old values in favor of new ones. Among the discards are fatalism, racist attitudes, authoritarianism, machismo, and traditionalism. Finally, with the receipt of academic credentials, their ideas almost automatically are accorded greater respect than before and they, in the process, achieve the status of valuable human beings. Only a person who has felt the stings of disregard can fully appreciate the enormity of the benefits offered by such a milestone.

These changes are not lost on the participants' parents and may be a source of genuine alarm. They are proud of their children's accomplishments and of the realization that their children are accepted as equals among bright and talented people. Yet the parents also recognize some disturbing signs that their children feel superior to their origins, a charge to which some participants admit:

> I think in my own striving to reach a certain level -- the embarrassment of saying that my father was a waiter -- I think I felt I was better than they are. That conflicts with what I think my attitude should be.

Some will accept only part of the blame for their feelings of superiority; they hold the university responsible also for socializing them to regard "intelligent people" as "better people" -- and even then, intelligence as judged by people who have a vested interest in regarding themselves as the standard of intelligence. Having chosen to function as a sanctuary apart from the "real world," the university is free to regard its own members as the American version of the aristocracy, while regarding all others as lacking in capabilities and sensitivities. On the one hand, the participants may bitterly resent that attitude; on the other hand, they can not help but be flattered by their acceptance into the elite -- especially when it carries with it so many tempting advantages. And so, they begin to look down upon others not so chosen as "lesser." Even some of the most egalitarian of the participants acknowledged these feelings at times, although they have gone to great lengths to repress or extinguish them, as we will soon discuss.

Nor is the family able to comprehend what the student has been doing all these years. As the years of graduate study seem to drag on endlessly, many parents are embarrassed to hear their friends' queries: "Isn't he working YET?" An added source of strain is the possibility that, after all of those years of preparation, the student may not even be able to get a job. Parents' well-meaning advice to switch to a different, more marketable subject area or to quit and become a teacher, sends the fifth-year graduate student into paroxysms (especially because she realizes that, these days, that advice is not really so far off base).

Without exception, every participant felt that his or her parents did not have any real comprehension of what graduate study is like.[8] A few attempt to explain as much as possible, sending home papers they have written and commendations they have received -- the latter in hopes that the approval of others will somehow encourage the parents' acceptance of the student's suspect life-style. Several others prefer to keep those worlds separate and use the unknown as a bargaining power to, in effect, "keep them off my back," by encouraging the illusion that the son's world is so extraordinary that he should not be bothered with mundane affairs. Most participants, however, are resigned to the fact that their parents don't understand and most likely never will.

Year after year the participant's world becomes increasingly divorced from the world of his family, and they share less in common than ever before:

> It's a very hard thing to go home to your parents' house for the weekend and to find things to talk

> about with them. A lot of time you just allow yourself to watch TV. Big portions of your life you're not able to open up to them because it's not something they can understand.

By dint of their educational mobility, participants are leaving their class of origin and have been doing so ever since their first day of college.[9] Yet, we have seen already that most do not feel very comfortable in the trappings of the class of destination either. They are, in effect stranded between two classes and two cultures:

> Working-class kids basically disliked me because they KNEW I was *going someplace*, and middle-class kids never understood me because I was DIFFERENT.
>
> ---
>
> I feel like I can't go back and I can't go ahead. It's very scary.

Frequently, the end result of such conflicting expectations and the dilemmas so posed is a need for emotional support from significant others. Many relate a nostalgia for their early childhoods, seeing that period (through possibly distorted memories) as the only time when they "fit" somewhere:

> I can't say that I've been real secure in any place since I left my home. In college it was dealing with these people who were incredibly different than me...Here there's been a discomfort with professional life as I'm seeing it. Some sort of anxiety about: How do <u>I</u> fit? How do <u>I</u> make a life that's comfortable for myself within that world?

Yet, their families are unable to understand the pain and, in some cases may even blame themselves for it -- a circumstance which elicits guilt in the student and, of course, further pain:

> Sometimes I'll really feel bad about running into a snag on my thesis, and my mother will phone and ask

> how I am. I'll say I'm rotten. My mother, not ever having had experiences like that but having all kinds of problems in her life -- bad luck and everything -- will get upset and say: "I feel bad that we didn't have money way back when (so you didn't have to drop out of school and work) and you could have already GOTTEN your Ph.D. by now."

Nor does the university, which has a stake in falsely promoting itself as a classless society, represent a source of solace to the beleagured student. The widespread assumption of elite institutions and the elites who populate them is that all its members are basically the same: that they share similar experiences, material advantages, values, cultural styles, and problems. The tell-tale signs of a working-class background are only evident to those who do not share the assumption of sameness -- usually other working-class students.[10] In some cases, the upwardly-mobile student <u>herself</u> may have encouraged that assumption so as to more easily assimilate into the new culture.

Similarly, fellow students -- almost all from upper-middle class backgrounds -- are also restricted in their ability to give effective help by reason of their own experiential myopia. Their attempts to give support often seem insensitive and isolate the working-class student even more:

> I make a lot of jokes about my parents. I repeat my telephone conversations to my friends because (I feel) that I've got to tell SOMEBODY. (When friends agree) I don't let anybody mock MY parents -- I DO IT! No one else is allowed 'cause they don't DO it right... They don't have a right to (mimic parents' accents), but <u>I DO</u>! (laughs)

> (When the parents of one woman visit her, they meet an upper-class friend who is surprised at the way they ap-

> pear. The daughter mentions having initially wished) my parents weren't that way. I think she was really surprised that my parents look like -- working-class people. She was also surprised that they were intelligent. About THAT, I felt that that was HER tough luck...I got really angry at her and felt I had learned what she's like. I felt distanced from her and that she's not the type of person I could talk about it with.

A few admit to turning their resentment towards their upper-class peers into retaliation -- a bizarre game of torture:

> Upper-class kids are used to being <u>very</u> polite and if (I) want (I) can opt for a lower-class personality and sit there and tell them what I think of them...I take them on by the sparring in my repertoire. It's tough for them because I'm very quick. (It's) a weapon they don't have at their disposal.

> When I was in college I didn't mention that I was Jewish because I was afraid of anti-Semitism...Then I got into a game of getting people to admit to all of their anti-Semitism, telling them in the end who they are talking to.

Others turn it into a badge of superiority: that they have "made it" on their <u>own</u> while their upper-class peers have had their accomplishments handed to them on a silver platter. A few resort to even more childish measures -- making fun of others or burping!

A more satisfactory source of emotional support lies within the participants' marriages (or other intimate relationships). Nine participants are married to persons from a significantly higher class while only five married persons from more or less similar circumstances. Some, in fact, are working to create, within their own family, an enclave which will provide a sense of security and a lifestyle with which they may feel comfortable. Ultimately, however, these measures do not block out the outside world entirely.

You can't go home again, of course

> (Q: How do your working-class peers relate to you?) They view me with suspicion. You see, now I'm "other" in their eyes.

If the participants are distanced from their families, the elite university and their friends, they are even more distanced from those of their working-class peers who either chose not to follow the same path to upward mobility or were not given the opportunities to do so. They have little contact with these (age and class) peers except for infrequent trips home in which they soon find that they share nothing in common. (With their families, at least, they share a close relationship and mutual concern.) As students, their lives are within an academic community wholly segregated from "the outside world."

Peer relationships which they do come by casually, however, are often unpleasant and only reinforce their alienation from their class of origin. Often viewed by peers with a mixture of suspicion, disdain and deference, the participants feel at once that they are both lesser than and superior to these peers--"lesser than" in the sense of not measuring up to working-class standards, especially among the men; "superior to" in the sense of boredom with the seemingly-trivial concerns of the working-class. Conservative political convictions and racial attitudes are also major sources of contention between them.[11]

Despite these differences, several remember having felt so alien to the elite university environment and so isolated socially, that they went to unusual lengths to seek out associations with the

working-class and establish some type of limited relationship. Two incidents are particularly powerful in their ability to communicate the experience both in terms of their initial illusions and ultimate disillusion:

> (A male participant joined a local baseball team sponsored by an industrial league) I became so fucking miserable 'cause all these GUYS who were lower-class people working at Ford...My romantic visions were that these were the "cool" people. And I was sitting on the bench with them, and they were talking all this trash about niggers and how they can't stand all this (integration)..I never told them what I do 'cause I wouldn't have known how to explain it. We'd go to somebody's house after a game, and all the women would cook something and the guys would sit around drinking beer...It was awful...I just hated every ONE of them. So all of my romanticism was snubbed. What would happen if I worked on a construction crew and this was what I had to RELATE to?

> (A woman works as a substitute teacher in a working-class school and is assigned to teach Home Economics one day) I thought HERE was my chance, I had this group of women, and I was going to sit down and talk to them about "larger issues." These were all working-class girls, they were all dying to get married, to catch a man and sit home and watch TV. And I'd BEEN there, and here I WAS -- I HAD THE TRUTH!!..They ATTACKED ME...They tore me apart. Why wasn't I home with my kids? I wasn't prepared for that. It was a terrible disillusionment for me.

Several participants have opted for an integration of their class with their professional roles. During the course of the interview, for example, one woman realized that she had been restricting her research population to working-class women:

> I feel more of an affinity for WOMEN who come from my background. I think that's the focus of my research ...What I'm interested in is why I have succeeded and women who I know didn't. You asked if I'm interested in working with my class. I don't think it's class so much as females who are coming through now and why some make it. It wouldn't be very exciting

to figure out why an upper-class girl succeeded.

Another has found some measure of personal integrity teaching adults in a working-class college. A third, after a positive experience working for the telephone company, imagines that she could organize women workers:

> Not to say that a million of me's would cause the working-class to organize. But it's more likely that someone <u>like</u> me could work with them.

Despite the relative invisibility of class within the University, many have sought out students who have themselves experienced the same pains of marginality, most notably among black graduate students. Peer pressure among blacks, however, usually discourages the formation of these friendships. More likely the working-class student will look for other white students from similar class backgrounds, most particularly in the case of ethnics, each of whom reports his or her fool-proof litmus test of working-class ethnicity.

<u>Political change potential</u>

> Consciousness-raising is just raising the group's awareness of its situation. You then have to show them how they can ACT upon it. That's not so easy, there are a lot of traps. But everyone has the potentiality to be very reflective and analytical about their own situation.

The extent to which working-class students perceive the dilemmas of their marginality as socially produced will, in large measure, determine their ability to collectivize around their shared sense of oppression and to act together for political change goals. Granted, most of the participants are not and do

not desire to be political actors. Yet, most realize that fundamental change can only be accomplished through political means. As one said: "sometimes things get so bad that you have to act." Those participants who do perceive a social base to their dilemmas differ widely in their willingness to use political means to change that base -- economically, culturally, and politically. Some are politically energized by this perception. Others become politically neutralized -- through self-imposed inaction or repression from external forces. Although the willingness to use political means may have a temperamental base, the class-base is also strong. One participant, in explaining her political inaction, also communicated her economic insecurities:

> I was in International Relations, and I was sure that if I wanted a government job, I better WATCH it. Because they were making lists of SDS people and anything else like that that was going on in those days. I was sure that I was going to get to be a marked person and wouldn't be able to get work.

Many of the participants have felt politically compromised as graduate students, including the products of scholarship:

> I'm sort of an anarchist. I thought of writing my thesis on anarchy but I was afraid no one would ever hire me.

A more common experience is related by another participant:

> They were very concerned about taking me...They think anybody who opens his mouth and says anything different is a radical...The first year I opened my mouth and was traumatized..then I learned to shut my mouth. My outlook was: Fuck it! I'm not going to martyr myself. Then they said I'd become a nicer, more reasonable person and I said "my spirit has been broken" and they were so shocked that I would say that...I'm being compliant and not causing trouble and hating myself for it. They're smart. They know that as long as I keep my mouth shut...I'm neutralized...It's sad.

Professional socialization in graduate school also takes its toll, as one Psychology student tells it:

> I encounter a lot of difficulty in introducing any sociological or political perspectives in what happens to people's lives. There's a sense that that is INTERPRETABLE, so that you respond by saying: "if that's interpretable, then I better not do it." And that's reinforced...It has affected what I have done politically inasmuch as I don't see myself anymore in the forefront of political actions.

Beyond political neutralization, participants may find that the individualistic style they have had to acquire in order to become successful is dysfunctional to working effectively in political collectivities. Nor are they comfortable in any of the existent political groups, especially those of the Left, which many see as the worst kind of "radical chic dilettantism."

Within this context, the major role played by working-class students in the development of the Graduate Employees Organization (pp. 87-88) is especially interesting. The data collection process revealed the over-representation of working-class students among the leadership of the graduate student union. One of the most surprising findings of this inquiry, however, is the extent to which these union leaders, who work together closely, were unaware of the similarity in their class backgrounds:

> Running through my fellow students, the only ones whose backgrounds I can place are my very closest friends. I can tell you deep psychological problems of some acquaintances, but I can't tell you their political views or their family backgrounds.

Although a few were long-time political activists who put their already-formed political convictions into the union, the

novices became highly politicized as a result of their union involvement. Nor was this profound impact restricted to the leaders. Rank and file members who were involved in the union's strike action reported that it was an eye-opening experience. For some, the insights were primarily interpersonal in nature: "seeing the real side of my professors," "shocked at the callousness of the Administration," etc.. But for others, the strike brought to their attention the (heretofore unrecognized) political nature of the university and its relationship with the business, labor and political establishments. They also saw at close range the priorities of the university and the manner in which those priorities were formulated and implemented -- even using, when it served the university's purpose, police force.

Their new-found consciousness as oppressed workers has, for several participants, provided the framework through which to analyze other social identities which are equally oppressed. Then the political and economic roots of their oppression as workers could be understood and translated more easily to those other oppressed identities of sex, sexual preference, religion and, ultimately, the class of origin. Typically, these people find themselves returning to their "roots," so as to reassess who they are and where they are heading in life. Their participation in this study has hopefully been useful in that quest. Said one:

> The class consciousness is, to some extent, what I've been looking for in my life and it has come out of certain realizations during the strike and discussions with those people.

Although GEO is ultimately responsible, like all unions, for "delivering the goods," it has already acted as a collective unit to attack institutional discrimination against sex, sexual preference and race. Whether it will one day move to consider the larger class issues of an elite university is open to question. The presence, however, of politicized working-class students within its ranks makes the issue all the more intriguing.

Summary

This section considered the benefits to be accrued from membership in the elite university community and from the expected academic credentials, as seen by the participants. Many experienced the acquisition of those benefits as extracting a large price in confronting dilemmas of cultural dislocation and alienation. At the same time, the benefits often served to sever some participants from their past histories. Potential sources of emotional support were frequently found to be, at best, ineffective. Association with other working-class graduate students was seen as a positive step in meeting these needs. Ultimately, however, political means may have to be employed to change those institutional relationships which serve to oppress and dislocate people. The graduate employees union may represent a promising vehicle in that regard and may point the way back to the working-class roots of these students. I will now consider the future ends for which such prices are now being paid.

Future Prospects

Just as past and present are prologue to the future, so the background factors and adjustment to (or dissidence from) the elite university combine in myriad ways to point the way to personal and professional futures. The initial expectations they had upon entry are remolded in the crucible of their graduate student experiences, for better or worse. The results of that reformulation are important, not only for the participants, but also for the society in which they will discharge their professional roles in the future. Whether those roles will be enacted so as to maintain or, in various ways, challenge current institutional relationships can only be suggested in a highly tentative manner at this time. Currently, however, the participants are assessing their possibilities as well as their likelihood to follow any one of them in the future.

Career choices

Despite the discomfort felt by many participants with the cultural styles and political realities of the university, almost all are preparing for academic careers. In many cases, the psychic benefits of a university environment may be considered sufficiently great so as to merit the price paid for its attainment. For others, the aimlessness with which they originally entered graduate school persists, and so continues to point them in fairly automatic career directions. The reasons for desiring an academic career are diverse, as are the assumptions and perceptions

underlying them. That is, for some the university presents a challenge which will require years of extraordinary dedication and hard work. Others -- some of them in the very same academic departments as the former -- look forward to what they see as the leisurely, unpressured life of an academic.

Several participants -- those in academic fields with an applied focus or option -- intend to practice their profession in non-academic settings but hope to combine their practice with an academic appointment. One person, however, plans a wholly non-academic career because:

> Teaching is not essentially satisfying to me...I enjoy reading and writing SOME things but I have much more a people-orientation in general. I like administrative hustling, doing things, more than I like sitting in the library. I just don't think my talents are THERE. If I finish my degree, it will only mean that it might get me some connections, some things might open up.

In most cases, however, the academic career and the professional identity that it carries seem to have become essential to personal identities. Their work is often the major source of personal satisfaction and, once legitimized by the credential, will become more so they feel. Having invested so much into the pursuit of that legitimation, the end product seems all the more valuable. Yet, a large number are confronted by a tight (in some cases, non-existent) academic job market. After so many years of economic sacrifice and emotional stress, the possibility looms large that many will not attain the one goal for which they paid so dearly. A few refuse to consider that gloomy prospect and have put it out of mind while concentrating on the short-term goal of

earning the doctoral degree. Others, however, express bitterness at unknown social forces which told them to achieve, only to have that achievement unrewarded in the end:

> Up until a few years ago, I don't think it would have bothered me too much but now it does because I've made a lot of sacrifices for it...I don't blame anybody specific. It's the whole economic situation of the country. It's not anything any individual can do anything about. I don't even know who would be responsible for the mess.

What many <u>are</u> aware of, however, is the extent to which their peers from upper-class backgrounds, in confronting the same job market, can draw upon resources unavailable to the working-class student -- money for subsistence while unemployed or to extend their studies; family connections that open doors; and the social graces and self-confidence, bred into the upper-class, that some feel are valued more than the quality of one's work:

> I will be much more dependent on chance contacts and breaks than an upper-class graduate student. I must constantly figure an "angle" before the doors open. Many of my academic acquaintances appear to have been born with the key around their necks!

<u>Modest needs and ambitions</u>

It's not as if these working-class students are asking for much either! Although a few express a desire to be "wealthy," it was revealed on further probing that their concept of wealth is far short of most commonly-held definitions. At <u>peak</u> earning, the highest income hoped for was $30,000 -- and that represented the combined incomes of both marital partners. Most claim modest economic needs and desires. Having lived on so little for so long, even $12,000 sounds like a bonanza. Some have seen friends

graduate, only to succumb to material temptations and are aware that they may be eminently "seducible." Yet, most are surprisingly non-materialistic, sometimes out of political conviction but more frequently out of ingrained lifestyle habits and tastes.

Compared to traditional standards of ambition among highly-talented Americans, most of the participants are generally low-key -- although in no way can they be considered UNambitious. In some respects, this appearance of modest ambitions is a cultural carry-over from their unique working-class backgrounds:

> Most professionals think nothing of devoting 70 or 80 hours a week to this work...I was brought up with the attitude that a job was a job. You go there, you earn as much money as you can with overtime maybe. But you come home and your life is completely different. And (here) your total satisfaction comes from your work which is really hard for me.

For others, it may be a reaction <u>against</u> a dissimilar background:

> ...To tell you the truth that (academic) lifestyle is really somewhat analogous to my parents' life-style. OK, so it's <u>head</u> work and everyone can feel wonderful about it. But you're still working 18 hours a day again, and that's not what I want. I really want time for myself.

The few who entered graduate school with dreams of "fame and glory " have lowered their expectations in line with their personal limitations:

> When I came here, I definitely wanted to be a STAR and that was real hard. I put myself under a lot of pressure trying to be a star. I have since come to realize that I'm NOT a star, so fortunately things are now more livable.

Most, however, just feel "burned out" from all of the pressure. The ambition that brought them this far has about reached "the end

of the line":

> (Q: Do you feel you've reached your limit now?) I don't want to be the cream of the crop. (Q: Do you think you could be?) Yeah, I do. But I think there's more to it when you get to that point. I can't. I would be just miserable. You just have to recognize what you can DO.

Many of the participants, most particularly the women, are interested in focusing on the quality of their teaching, in spite of (or <u>because</u> of) the fact that teaching is probably the least valued academic activity. Some will seek jobs in decidedly non-(class) elite public colleges which nevertheless stress high academic standards. Others reject eliteness of all stripes, both academically- and class-based, preferring to teach in small, unpressured community colleges and the like.

Their motivations are not totally an escape from the discomfort they perceive in their current situation but also reflect a "coming to peace with oneself." Despite all the trials and tribulations, they have <u>survived</u> and have gained self-confidence in the struggle. They no longer feel the need to prove themselves in quite the same way as they did before. The material conditions that stimulated that ambition are expected to change in the future, and the temperamental characteristics that drove them already have undergone profound changes, as we have seen.

<u>Synthesizing the two cultures</u>

While at the same time recognizing the material and cultural advantages which accrue to the professional role to which they aspire, many nonetheless wish to retain some of the values they con-

sider to be working-class -- most prominently, honesty and unpretentiousness. The task they have set for themselves is to synthesize the two in such a way that they truly have the best of both worlds. For one, the only way to do that is to separate himself from external pressures whenever possible:

> (Q: Will you have to abandon your "gentle nature?") In my work, yes. But I want a home that's an enclave and I'll keep it there, in my enclave. In a way, graduate school is so much hard work that my sensibilities go into my work and my HARSHER side comes out at home. I don't like that...

However, when the question was put to them:

> Your children will be raised in a professional family under different objective conditions than you experienced. How do you feel about this? (Interview Schedule, Appendix C)

many were genuinely disturbed, believing that the material advantages of their children will inevitably separate them from the the class-based values the participants wish to retain. (Those who already have children, however, deny that that <u>is</u> inevitable.) Overall, although there is a sense of loss in this future, there is also a sense of gain:

> (A woman has thought about writing a novel, based on her family and showing how the time wasn't right for) the women in my family. I thought I could start the story with myself. But now I don't think I COULD. It will be my daughter who will be able to use everything to the utmost. I still had some things that kept me back. I couldn't take advantage of all of my abilities. I don't think I ever have.

<u>Noblesse oblige, redux</u>

These working-class students, with few exceptions, can expect their futures to be advantaged in ways that their past histories

were not. Can they be comfortable in that position? Or will some be nagged by a sense of obligation to those lower-class persons who want more but who do not have those background factors which facilitated the participants' upward mobility? A few participants not only reject any such feelings of obligation but also express considerable hostility toward the class of origin:

> I feel absolutely NO obligation to go back and do for them because they didn't do a whole lot for ME. That happened and I made what use of it I could. I turned it into an advantage and for others, it's still a dis-advantage. But I DID it and I feel no obligation to.. (laughs).."Thanks for the cockroaches." Yeah, sure!

Most, however, feel some sense of duty although they are unsure either how to act on it or whether, indeed, given the means, they would. It seems that their potential for service and/or political action depends, to a large extent, on the circumstances that present themselves to the participants, as well as their own desire to help.

Others, however, feel a strong sense of obligation or duty because, says one:

> Most of the people who ever get out of that area...it takes a lot of sheer chance breaks to get any kind of education. And then the people who DO that never come back. They never go back and try and change that whole environment. I've criticized that for years and now I'm going to be one of the lucky ones that have made it and, if I were to do the same thing -- well, I couldn't LIVE with myself.

Those few, for whatever combination of temperamental characteristics, background factors and experiences, have acquired the skills and credentials, have retained the capacity to survive, and still feel a strong commitment to put all of this in service to

the people left behind:

> I have a commitment to all of the other people like me who are handcuffed by the system; who are not going to make it; who are never going to have the same breaks as I had; whose children are going to grow up in Appalachia on marginal subsistence incomes; who are going to live in the abandoned company towns; who are probably going to grow up on Welfare in a one-room shack...And THAT is my strong life commitment.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Eight participants did not feel that they are successful although for differing reasons. The most prevalent rationale was their tendency to take on others' judgments of themselves or buy into exceptionally high standards imposed upon them -- by their academic departments, their parents, or themselves. Many of these people were totally segregated from non-intellectuals and used a very small, exceptionally talented segment of the population as their reference group. A few tended to blame themselves for their difficulty in finding academic appointments, despite the acknowledged unavailability of any jobs in their academic specialties. Only one felt that his career path was not indicative of success; he believes that academia is much over-valued and simply should be considered a job like any other.

[2] The "success continuum" in and of itself was limited in value because so many participants were sophisticated in the internal-external locus of control concept upon which it was based. They seemed to make their answers conform to their "best image" of themselves. However, the constant probing -- elicited by the question initially -- was very successful in determining participants' beliefs about the source of success. For example, one participant was vociferous in his belief that his success stemmed solely from his own efforts and capabilities. Yet, later in the interview he attributed some responsibility to his mother's determination, despite heavy odds, which provided him with an effective role model for later life. Also, her own connections -- non-elite though they were -- got him a job which supported him through college.

[3] In two cases, the fathers were seen as the major sources of motivation, although the mothers were also supportive, if less enthusiastic.

[4] For example, one participant feels that his father has negotiated "my Ph.D. into membership in the Shriners" -- a middle-class men's club in his community.

[5] The aunt's influence was not without parental discomfiture:

> My mother was very jealous of her because my aunt was taking me to concerts and plays and exposing me to a non-working-class area of interest which she knew she wasn't interested in.

6 Half of the participants specifically mentioned this factor, although I suspect that many others had a similar experience but did not think to mention it in the Interview (nor did I).

7 While noting many unethical practices in the university, several particularly abhorred what they observed to be an elitist hypocrisy about personal integrity:

> "The self-righteousness that sometimes comes from being an academician! People, like in Social Work, say: "I'm going to make a lot of money, but I care about people, so, boy, am I GOOD because of that!" And yet, they're ripping off books right and left from the Social Work Library!

8 Certainly, many upper-class parents also do not totally comprehend the specific rigors of graduate study. The difference, however, is that working-class parents, never having attended college themselves, have little idea of ANYTHING about the process of higher education.

9 In addition to demonstrating the sheer complexity of conflicting emotions, the following incident also points out the humorous side that underlies much of the entire study:

> (He tells of the first day of college, when his family drove him to his ivy-league college) My aunt and uncle were with them. They were going to visit their son (my cousin) who was in prison near there. My uncle is 300 pounds. I'm thinking I've got to make an impression on all these hot-shot ivy league people who I figured would be wearing blazers and smoking pipes. I figured that everyone was paying attention to me. It was like a bunch of OKIES driving up in their old Model T Ford! I felt...real ashamed. (Q: How do you think your aunt and uncle felt?) Oh, yeah. I was aware of all that stuff. Like, here are my folks taking me to college, and they're going to Elmira to visit the prison, right. Yeah, there was all this tension and it was just TERRIBLE.

10 Among these supposed "tell-tale signs" are, in addition to a predictable awkwardness in posh surroundings, mispronunciation of words read but never heard spoken in the home and crooked teeth and/or noses -- no money in working-class budgets for braces and rhinoplasty!

11 Interestingly, three of the male participants differentiate among working-class people -- between their age peers and older adults:

> I have a hard time with peers from working-class backgrounds who haven't gone to the university. I can't relate to those people at all. Yet, I find I relate very much to the older people, like the janitors and secretaries in the dormitory. I think it has to do with competition...I feel I don't measure up to their working-class standards. I'm not married, I don't have kids, I don't play football. I do drink beer -- I'm GREAT at that -- I pass on that!

> I think I have respect for OLDER blue-collar workers. Middle-aged or over. I don't have any special great respect for someone my age doing blue-collar work. (Q: What do you respect the older people for?) Their work, I guess. It's...I don't know. They work, they get dirty, they sweat..like that. (Q: And younger workers don't?) Oh, I'm aware of the contradiction.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

The preceding chapter explored the experiences of a group of working-class graduate students seeking upward social mobility through education at an elite university. This chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the empirical evidence within the context of class consciousness. Underlying the differential experiences of class consciousness are: diverse cognitive beliefs about inequality and the society's class structure; affective feelings toward the class structure in general and specific classes in particular; and those modes of action which are rooted in one's class position and feelings towards that position. Affirmation of or dissidence against the social structure will be discussed as inter-individual differences, and I will speculate on the roots of those differences. I will outline several areas of experience which seem to facilitate the development of dissident class class consciousness. Next, I will explore the extent to which each of two alternative theoretical perspectives on social inequality accounts for the findings of this inquiry. Finally, I will reassess our prospects for the achievement of a more just and equal society by increasing social mobility through educational means.

Class Structure and Class Consciousness

In recent years the social science establishment has virtually disregarded the importance of the American class structure and has, thereby, minimized its influence as a dynamic of human relationships. The extent to which social science professionals have become increasingly dependent upon dominant social institutions may partially account for this social myopia. However, the assumption of an open social system also has some basis in reality. In fact, the participants in this study could be viewed as the very embodiment of a social flexibility that allows upward mobility. Yet, the findings also suggest that a series of unique circumstances -- absent in the vast majority of lower-class persons -- have combined in such a way as to facilitate this mobility.

The conflicting evidence leads different people to different social conclusions, all of which have some empirical validity. Those who would focus on society's exceptions will find support for the contention that this society provides substantial access to opportunity. They may then conclude that persons who have not achieved traditional standards of success are either untalented or lack the internal will to be successful. Other social observers, however, by focusing on the masses, bear witness to a stratification system which they believe conspires against the lower-classes in order to maintain the prevailing distribution of privilege.

The participants in this study reflect this diversity of social opinions also, despite (or, in some cases, because of) the fact that soon they will become beneficiaries of the system of social oppor-

tunity. By exploring the roots of their differing belief systems, despite more or less similar material conditions, we may also suggest these roots within the larger society. The analytic scheme of class consciousness introduced earlier (pp. 60-64) provides a useful framework for this exploration.

In this scheme, class consciousness is viewed as a continuum marked by four sequential and cumulative stages: class identification; class loyalty; class resentment; and political class consciousness. In a general sense, upwardly mobile persons may be class conscious of their class of destination (called "affirmants") or of their class of origin ("dissidents"). The concept of class consciousness is further refined by its saliency, strength, consistency, and diffusion throughout the members of the class.

An Empirically-Based Discussion of Class Consciousness

Although the aforementioned scheme of class consciousness is a tentative model, it does provide a tool with which to analyze and through which to communicate the findings of this study. In terms of class identification, how do these working-class graduate students perceive themselves and the social system in which they are embedded? In terms of class loyalty and class resentment, how do they feel towards those perceptions? And respective of political class consciousness, how do they act in light of those perceptions and sentiments?

With respect to class consciousness, the most striking differentiation of participants is between those who basically subscribe to current institutional arrangements ("affirmants") and those who

are dissatisfied with them ("dissidents").[1,2] Certainly, there is no clear and consistent demarcation; some participants may waver from one position to the other on occasion, depending on the circumstances and the issue presented. Being graduate students (a state of transience in which ultimate rewards are still but a promise), some will surely undergo further changes. However, overall -- and based on the self-reports of participants in lengthy, in-depth interviews -- the categories seem to make "good empirical sense." This is not to say that an affirmant/dissident split is the only -- or the best -- conceptual differentiation of persons crossing class lines. It does, however, provide a possible focus through which to investigate more systematically and comprehensively the empirical possibility of this limited exploration.

The affirmants

The affirmants, by definition, identify with their class of destination, i.e., the elite professional class (albeit a low-level elite). Of the thirty participants, I considered thirteen to be characterized by their basic affirmation of the social system; seven were men and six, women (the total sample is split 15-15). By most objective criteria, they are not much different from the dissidents in terms of age, background factors, etc.. WASPs are slightly overrepresented; Jews and Catholics underrepresented slightly (six, two and five, respectively). By subjective criteria, they are quite distinct, however. For example, despite their objective similarities to the dissidents' class backgrounds, in terms of their class identification, only two described their class backgrounds as "working-class" (Questionnaire, Q #14, Appendix A). This is in marked con-

trast to the self-description of "working-class" by eleven of the seventeen dissidents. All of the WASP-affirmants considered their backgrounds "lower-middle class" or above. What makes them appear to be so different from their dissident peers? Several explanations are presented for consideration.[3]

The primary rationale is the greater degree of cultural continuity between affirmants' family backgrounds and the university environment. That is not to say that the two environments are necessarily alike; it <u>is</u> to say that they are decidedly more culturally consonant than is the case of the dissidents. However, when questioned, these affirmants were unable to articulate what in their backgrounds prepared them for the elite university culture. A WASP who now considers herself a dissident was enormously helpful as an "informant," giving me access to a culture with which I, as a non-WASP, am unfamiliar. She was raised in a "sunken-rich" home by a mother who considered herself the "last bastion of culture" in her community.[4] She is able to explain the relevant dynamics of WASP affirmants as follows:

> ...Maybe these people aren't really aware of the WASP culture...My cultural heritage was so OVERT that I was more aware of it than most WASPs are...The usual WASP attitude is: "There's the 'way things are' and then there's 'ethnicity.'

"The way things are," of course, is the dominant culture -- shared by both the university environment and at least some working-class WASP homes. Participation in the dominant culture, if only through shared tastes and assumptions, enables these working-class students to identify with their class of destination. In most cases, that identification is accompanied by a loyalty to the class of des-

tination:

> Look, the people now are happy, healthy, bright, together, attractive...(Q: Do you think wealth makes for happiness?) Yes...If you're starving to death, you don't give a shit about self-actualization.

A second rationale of working-class affirmation relates to the extent to which the WASP-affirmants seemed to explicitly deny or repress feelings of envy or hostility, and thus class resentment:[5]

> (Q: With whom do you tend to compare yourself?) I've really tried to avoid that situation as much as possible. I've tried to avoid it because it's a self-defeating thing. (Q: It never slips through?) Oh, I think about it, but I tend to ignore it. Mostly because to do that sort of thing breeds envy, and to me envy is a complete waste of time. It's very negative. It just feeds on itself. It serves no purpose.

> You never are angry at something you can understand because you can sympathize, you can even empathize. (Q: Does that understanding defuse your anger?) Yes, it does. (Q: Do you want it defused?) Anger is a very difficult thing to live with. I think it is perhaps the most purely destructive emotion. I see no purpose to anger.

Third, the WASP-affirmants were <u>stylistically</u> different from their dissident counterparts. In the interviews, many of them seemed non-introspective, and, when I inquired about this directly, they agreed. In contrast to most dissidents who experienced the in-depth interview as an intensive experience (some likened it to a therapy session), they found it fairly unstimulating and unprovocative:

> (Q: Was the interview consciousness-raising?) Not really. I'm not sure...I mean, without ever having given a thought to these questions...well, I mean, it may have crossed my MIND before. I don't sit around and think...I guess I'm not introspective. I don't like to think about things too much. It makes it too complicated. I just <u>do</u> them. It keeps things pretty simple.

> (Q: Was the interview consciousness-raising?) Not particularly. It didn't make me think about anything I hadn't thought about before.

Finally, several of the affirmants were markedly fatalistic and constantly expressed a sense of political impotence:

> (Q: Does it concern you that, as you say, your work won't have real impact on people in need?) Oh, sure. But I've become resigned to the fact that not much can be done in the world. (Q: Are you fatalistic?) More and more. I'm not sure I know why...I just think that's not the way the world works. That's not the way I view the world.

> I'm not sure there are any political solutions. Or that there are solutions...I'm not talking about solving inequality. (Q: Have you ever given any thought to how it could be solved?) Not in any extended way. Great issues get submerged in little issues when you have children around the house.

In a personal sense also, these people were less likely to deliberate over the direction of their lives. Some claimed to be aimless, and decisions were not posed, much less made. Many stated that their enrollment in college and graduate school was automatic and involved no really conscious decision-making. Returning to the dissident-informer, she reflects back on her life, "pre-conversion":

> I suppressed my own personality in order to do OK... I just did what they TOLD me and tried not to think about anything.

Given the fact that their backgrounds are more or less culturally continuous to the world of the university, the affirmants need not experience severe cultural dislocation. Given the fact that they were raised to take for granted dominant assumptions about the world, they can ease through life by taking the "path of least resistance" and be rewarded for it. Finally, given the fact that the system is doing well by them, they have no vested interest in changing it -- in fact, quite the opposite:

> You pointed out how wishy-washy, how noncommital I am on the issues. Because I've never seen (class) as an important issue. It's never been a problem for me... If it had caused me a problem, I may feel a little different.

On the other hand, their continued affirmation of the system depends upon the system's ability to deliver. If, at the end of years of education, these people (who, of the entire sample, were the most likely to equate their personal identity with their career) cannot find satisfactory professional employment, their affirmation might well be reconsidered. However, unless they confront that or a similar set of circumstances, they have no need to change their perceptions about the world and their position in it. Also, their unquestioning allegiance to the social system is more likely to be rewarded by the dominant institutions than is the unpredictability of dissidents who are dismissed as trouble-makers.

Not all affirmants, however, are WASPs. In fact, three of the affirmants (all Catholic men) are not only atypical in terms of the prior discussion, but also point to a different set of experiential dynamics of system affirmation. Their backgrounds are strongly ethnic. They are emotionally volatile and introspective. And they feel neither fatalistic nor politically impotent. What characterizes them as affirmants is their strong rejection of their class of origin, especially as typified by their fathers -- one, an alcoholic; a second, mentally disturbed; the last, described as particularly coarse. In the absence of positive experiences and feelings toward the working-class, they identify with the class of destination:

> (Q: In college, during the late 60's activism, did you feel identified with the working-class about which your upper-middle class friends were stereotyping?) I didn't feel that THEY were identifying me with the working-class

> but I felt it pretty strongly...They knew I was working-class; I felt I couldn't HIDE it. (Q: Did they feel you were an exception, better than the rest of the working-class?) I felt I was one of the good ones, not like all the rest. Now, maybe I DID that in anticipation of their feeling that, but I always felt it coming from me rather than from them.

> I don't find myself identifying with my class. I don't have a commitment of that sort. I'm class conscious in a more snobby way: Who has good taste? Who doesn't? What's vulgar, etc?

Yet, these people are currently in a state of flux. As they are maturing and establishing themselves as autonomous individuals, they are able to re-evaluate their past perceptions and sympathies. They might even be considered pre-dissident except for the fact that the class of destination holds out rewards which are not easily rejected:

> My actual attitude toward my class is that I've gotten over being ashamed of it but I've also given it up. I've taken on too many trappings of the NEW class (to reclaim it)...

The dissidents

By definition, the dissidents identify with their class of origin, i.e., primarily working-class. Seventeen of the participants were judged to be dissatisfied with the current social structure. Eight were men; nine, women. As noted before, objectively, they are not markedly different from the affirmants. The religious affiliations are five WASPs, seven Catholics, and five Jews. Eleven of the seventeen dissidents' class self-descriptions were "working-class." Of the remaining six, three each considered their backgrounds to be lower-middle or middle-class. Their conceptions of class, however, vary widely -- from "class" as indicative of more vs. less resources to "class" as a solidary group. A few are even "post-

class conscious": they have transcended class concepts for a more unified analysis:

> I've gone beyond class consciousness to thinking that the global system is going to destroy itself. It's the people who DON'T have the problems of over-consumption and industrialization that WANT them by modernizing and developing the same way. To me, we're all in the global problem together.

The dissidents generally are very different people from the affirmants, both experientially and stylistically. During interviews, they were more likely to stress cultural discontinuities between their backgrounds and the university environment; whether they ARE more discontinuous than affirmants can't be determined here. They more readily expressed a wide range of class-related emotions, including envy and resentment. They literally struggled with the interview, using it as an opportunity to do their own soul-searching and stock-taking. Despite the fact that they answered questions in ways indicating prior knowledgability and serious, sustained thought, they approached the interview as a personal challenge, searching out their own inconsistencies. They also revealed parts of themselves about which they were not proud but which contributed significantly to my deeper understanding of them:

> (During the evaluation of the interview). There were a few things about which I was uncomfortable -- like when I say that I've made it for myself...that everybody can't have a big piece of the pie so I'm going to see that we get a decent size piece and to some extent, the hell with everybody else! If they want a bigger piece, they are going to have to work for it. And I know there's a lot of that in me, but I don't know how much I like it...It's a hard thing to face...Realistically, there's only an 'in group" as long as there is an 'out group...There's only a high class as long as there are people who are worse off. There's only a place to move up to as long as you're down in the first place.

They were more likely to admit to having been ashamed of their class background (or their parents, for class-based reasons), typically as teen-agers when they were most personally insecure. By the simple maturational process, most have established themselves as individuals in their own right, apart from their families, and, in so doing, are coming to terms with that shame. As they develop further self-confidence, they are moving closer to their class of origin as a source of identity. Many are intrigued by the notion that their class identity could provide both an integrated conception of their selves and a consistent political analysis for the future:

> The class consciousness is, to some extent, what I'm looking for and has come out of certain realizations during the GEO strike.

They also knew, however, that it would be difficult to separate out temperamental- from class-based determinants of their attitudes and behaviors:

> I don't identify a lot of things that you were calling class, as class. That's why the interview was consciousness-raising. It would be neat if it WERE true because it would give me a sense of BELONGING to something; it would solidify a lot of things that I feel I don't understand where they come from. But see, I'm not sure you're right.

One tentative observation relates to those persons with multiple under-valued identities; this is a clear difference between affirmants and dissidents. Social class consciousness may be the least developed of the group consciousnesses in the United States (pp. 41-48); therefore, a facilitating factor for its development may be a precedent consciousness of other social identities which are under-valued, i.e., sex, sexual preference, race, etc.. Of the five WASP-dissidents, four not only had what they considered to be an under-

valued social identity (two were women, one homosexual, and one Appalachian), but also perceived the discrimination against that identity within a broad social context. Once they developed one (or more) group consciousnesses and made the necessary analytic linkages in their heads, they could more readily perceive class-based discrimination and identify its social source.

In general, they feel more alien to the university environment than do affirmants. The class-based consciousness which some experience as central to their core identity is also experienced as a factor which isolates them. Most feel themselves surrounded by more upper-class graduate students and rarely find others whom they consider to be working-class. Thus, just as the upper-class assume that "here, everyone's the same," so do many of the dissidents assume that "here, everyone but me is the same. Knowing that I had identified and interviewed thirty such people, many were very curious about how others responded to the same interview questions and who they were. A few took some comfort in knowing that they were not alone in their feelings and experiences:

> (Q: Did you learn about yourself in the interview?) One thing that was nice was that there are a lot of other people who are thinking the same kind of things. THAT is a lot of learning because I felt constrained that I was the only one.

For these very reasons, I brought together small groups of the participants to present the results of the study and to facilitate mutual sharing of dilemmas and problem-solving. The outcome of this effort is discussed in Appendix D.

The dissidents, while experiencing their lives as a series of dilemmas, are, at the same time, self-affirming and self-determining:

> I have a good sense of what a good person does. I haven't met it, but I am trying for it...I have a really good internal system for rewards, and I think that's where my (class) background comes in. I always had to find it for myself...I reward myself. I think to myself that I'm a good person and that's rewarding.

Dissidents were, understandably, more likely to be politically class conscious than were affirmants. Nine described themselves as frequent political actors and six, while expressing discomfort with that role, nevertheless are moved to political action under specific circumstances. In terms of this study, dissidents were no more likely to be GEO members (or even leaders) than affirmants. However, their political positions on GEO issues are strikingly different. GEO affirmants are more likely to see the union's role restricted to salary issues; GEO dissidents are at least as concerned about non-economic issues (e.g., affirmative action, child care, etc..) as economic issues, although many are also pragmatic, realizing that, strategically, the union should be built on the (primarily economic) demands of its membership.

Despite the many differences between them, dissidents, no less than affirmants, are preparing themselves for somewhat privileged positions in society. As their material conditions undergo radical change, their altered self-interests will most likely dictate new perceptions and reactions. Although this non-longitudinal inquiry will not follow-up participants as professionals, their processing of past experiences may at least give clues to future perceptions and reactions.

Conditions for dissidents' consciousness-raising

Dissidents especially experience themselves as "having one foot in each of two social strata" -- the one, their working-class past;

the other, their professional future. The tension between the two is conjointly determined by both temperamental and environmental factors. Although my exploration uncovered some temperamental factors, more focused and systematic work is required to better understand those inborn capacities and predilections of social dissidents. The interview, however, did explore in a more deliberate manner the environmental factors which dissidents viewed as having facilitated the development of their (working-class) class consciousness.

None of the dissidents' families were class conscious in any European sense of working-class consciousness. Although some of their parents belonged to unions, none were union militants or organizers. In the absence of such political class consciousness, they had to develop their own class consciousness within the extra-familial environment.

> I now feel in retrospect that my father should have displayed class consciousness with other (workers). That would have made things easier for me now. The marginality meant there were very few absolutes -- a term I learned very late and didn't quite understand. A way of living or looking at something that is hard and fast and against which one measures a situation....Because of its marginality, it's caused a lot of difficulties. I'm not certain that I wouldn't have been happier had my father walked around singing "Solidarity Together" and that I would have wanted to be a worker. (Q: But your marginality has allowed you to slide into a higher class.) Slide -- yes. But not be happy <u>doing</u> it.

There was no <u>one</u> experience said to have raised their class consciousness once and for all. Rather, a series of cumulative experiences were seen as influential and allowed dissidents to build on past perceptions and reactions.

Early contact with elites in elite-dominated settings was particularly important in the formation of dissident class consciousness.

A very few met elites in non-school settings (e.g., summer camp), but most such experiences of "cultural shock" were encountered within the school setting. Their high intelligence brought them into competition with the children of elites -- within tracked, pre-college classes, in college, and, for some, not until graduate school. The fact that they fared extremely well in that competition, out-pacing the better-prepared elites, gave them a sense of confidence in their abilities.

However, most soon came to realize that people are often rewarded for traits unrelated to merit, and that they were disadvantaged in that regard:

> I have a cartoon which shows people struggling up the "mountain of life," which is topped by a man sitting in a rocking chair and smoking a pipe. He looks down and says: "Don't ask ME how to get up here. I was BORN up here!"
>
> ---
>
> It's like running a race. If everyone starts at the same point, and I try harder than someone and as a consequence I receive more gain, that strikes me as fair. But when I line up and see someone twenty yards AHEAD of me and my task is to CATCH them -- well!...

Resentment toward the culturally-valued styles and economic privileges was also directed at those who were so advantaged. Some have not moved beyond a person-blame resentment; others (primarily the politically class conscious among the dissidents) believe that the economic/cultural/political system should be the focus of that resentment and the target for change.

As noted earlier, persons were more likely to develop <u>class</u> consciousness if they had a precedent consciousness of other undervalued social identities. Their presence in the college environment of the late 1960's made it more likely that they would be aware of

and drawn into the various movements for human liberation which were centered on college campuses at that time. A few modeled themselves after activist peers whom they respected. Most, however, began to re-evaluate and crystallize conceptions of their self-interests in line with their sense of personal identity.

In order to do that, they needed to return to their "roots" and, for almost all, that meant family:

> Now, in the last year, I've become more closely tied to them. Now that I'm older, it's nice having a family.

The more resentful they were of the elite environment, the more likely they tended to perceive the home environment in positive terms. This seems obvious, even tautological; however, many of these persons had formerly been resentful of their families. This meant not only a rejection of the elite environment but also a re-evaluation of family qualities. An example of such revisionism is:

> I have a good deal of respect for (parents) now..for their personal qualities, their ability to get through things that are difficult...I also respect their experience in lots of ways and even though I don't ask advice from them because we live in different worlds, their knowledge of their OWN worlds...my father is the type of person who knows every nook and cranny of the city. He really seems to have a feeling for what HE is.

Those for whom the family is still a painful experience are less likely to form positive feelings toward their working-class origins. They seem caught between two worlds, toward each of which they feel resentment.

Some attempted to tap their roots by seeking out working-class people. If their experiences with these non-family working-class people were positive, they were able to develop their sense of class loyalty. However, as reported in the preceding chapter, some were

disappointed with the bigotry, intolerance, etc. of these particular working-class people and only realized the extent to which they were, in fact, marginal to both classes. Ironically, those who have no contact with the working-class, having segregated themselves within the university environment, are more likely to view the working-class in positive ways -- having little empirical evidence which would disprove these beliefs.

Finally, GEO has led some to a political conception of social dynamics and their own lives. Although they do respect personal causation, they are more impressed with the extent to which their lives seem to have been influenced by external political factors. They are more able to interpret their present situation in political terms and more likely to act on those political conceptions:

> A lot of people in the academic community feel that they can be apolitical, that unions aren't proper for people like us. I'm beginning to realize more and more that you CAN'T be apolitical. That we're coming to a crucial crisis point...I'm going to have to decide what class struggle I'm identified with...

Evaluating Alternative Theoretical Approaches

The empirical results of this study lead us back to the original consideration of two alternative theoretical approaches to social inequality.-- Functionalism and Social Change. Having taken leave of the factionalism surrounding those two approaches, I was able to immerse myself in the natural life context and re-emerge with new perspectives. Neither this study -- nor <u>any</u>, for that matter -- can be a decisive test of an ideology, based as it is in personal belief systems which filter our experience of reality. Theoretical approaches are merely tools to understanding and frameworks upon which to

to conduct systematic analyses of otherwise bewildering masses of data. The research methodology of this study and the utilization of an analytic scheme of class consciousness were based upon and served both theoretical approaches at once. The extent to which either, both, or neither seemed to account for the findings will now be considered briefly.

To begin, I (and surely the reader) was aware that my own belief system, although ambivalent in many areas, has evolved over time to a Social Change perspective. Although I attempted to build in some objective checks on my perceptions and sympathies, I do not apologize for them nor do I believe -- after rigorous introspection -- that they have been invalidated by any of the general findings. The highly-personal and in-depth interview methodology allowed me access to participants' <u>own</u> meaning systems, and I actively probed grey areas until I felt, within this limited area at least, that I comprehended them on their <u>own</u> terms. (Admittedly, I felt more comfortable with my understanding of some than others.) Second, my evolution toward the Social Change perspective is rooted in my own personal history as a non-elite in elite environments. In that sense, the sample size was increased by one. Intimate involvements with the experience of non-eliteness over a long period of time has allowed me to consider both approaches. My encounter with persons from more or less similar circumstances was used to check out individual differences. The very fact that so many of the participants were <u>not</u> like me, forced me to look for the sources of those differences and thus explore the adequacy of theoretical approaches in accounting for them.

In the end, however, I find myself still supporting the Social Change perspective as most explanatory overall. Most of the analysis which threaded through this study is Social Change-oriented. Yet, the Functionalist perspective accounts for other evidence in areas where the Social Change perspective is wholly inadequate -- primarily in understanding the reality of system affirmation. Just as Functionalists can be faulted for viewing all dissidents as merely "inadequately socialized" or pathological, so can Social Change theorists be faulted for considering all affirmants as "sell-outs." The intense, although brief, intimacy of my involvement with the participants and my greater understanding of their personal histories and life experiences, lead me to reject such characterizations while, at the same time, leading me to respect these individuals as products of enormously complex personal and social factors.

Reassessing Prospects for Social Change

In conclusion, I will return to those structural, cultural, and political goals underlying the recruitment of minority-class students to higher education (pp. 2-6). The first, increased economic opportunity, holds that the university is responsible for admitting larger numbers of formerly-underrepresented groups so as to right structural wrongs. The second, diversifying cultural perspectives, states that these "new" students could bring into the university practical know-how and diverse cultural perspectives. The third, promoting fundamental social change, seeks to carry out a social obligation to serve broader publics by generating expertise within the university for the benefit of under-

served and politically under-represented segments of the population. In a sense, the working-class graduate students who participated in this study may be the legacy of those goals and the rationales (both institutionally-proclaimed and actual) behind them. The extent to which they and the university have impacted on each other provides one perspective on the prospects for achieving fundamental social change within the university and the larger society.

Increased economic opportunity

As I have attempted to demonstrate, the influence of class factors -- as determinants of personal histories and as a "motor" that to some extent fuels social dynamics -- are de-emphasized in this society. Political and social leaders are often more likely to focus on the redress of non- economic class grievances because, to focus on fundamental intervention in the class structure of the society would be tantamount to revolutionary change in all of the institutional arrangements and distribution of rewards of that society. Therefore, we more actively recruit, support and compensate race and sex "minorities" than we do the economically disadvantaged. Because of this, the working-class graduate student seems to be a rarity indeed. My strenuous efforts to recruit working-class graduate students for this study lend support to this observation.

Furthermore, the empirical evidence points to a wide range

of working-class anomalies to which the participants attribute their success. They are, indeed, exceptions to the rule of the vast majority of working-class families. These anomalies only underscore the many barriers to upward mobility for American lower-classes. The importance of sheer chance "breaks" was also seen by many as a significant attributional factor. Yet, in any society lucky breaks are rare -- otherwise, they wouldn't be considered lucky. People who are not advantaged cannot, therefore, profitably place all their faith in chance. Only the already-advantaged are able to do this, because, for them, luck is firmly grounded in their ability to have the system work for them.

Diversifying cultural perspectives

The participants were, in the main, more molded by than molders of the university environment. Most found the environment to be particularly resistant to change, and their cultural heritages were not only alien to the dominant cultural norms, but were also disparaged, if only indirectly. Whatever practical skills and cultural perspectives they may have come in with were considered either inimical to to inappropriate for the prevailing culture of the university. In fact, the extent of the cultural gap between most working-class families (even anomalous ones) and the university is demonstrated by the alienation of so many participants. The sheer force of that alienation further implies the dominance of the elite culture.

Promoting fundamental social change

The pains consequent to being stranded between two cultures and classes have taken their toll on participants, such they many feel "burned out" and cynical about the achievability of social change. Their resocialization, no matter how minimal, tends to sever them from their backgrounds and thus, their communities' acceptance of them as social change agents, even if they were to feel a sense of obligation to those communities. Most of those studying in the applied social sciences have found that the university does not adequately train in practical skills which would be useful to working-class communities. Finally, existent political arrangements function so as to allocate rewards unequally; affirmation of these arrangements is obviously favored over dissidence against them. This not only tends to politically neitralize working-class students who have few material resources to fall back on but also, with a few exceptions, tends to reinforce the prevailing system.

Conclusion -- Let there be HOPE!

Yet, despite all of the discouraging empirical evidence, there is also basis for hope. Out of these struggles, some working-class graduate students have developed a strong sense of personal identity which is firmly based in their past histories. They feel a strong sense of loyalty to those histories and the people who are, this very day, living out similar histories without similar prospects. They have a clear and consistent analysis of the roots of social inequality and the oppression that accompanies it. Finally, they tend to move to collective political solutions to fundamentally change

those social institutions which squander valuable human resources. Whether these few dissidents (and here my discussion becomes highly personal) retain their political class consciousness, will choose to act on it and will find the opportunities for doing so -- well, that's another dissertation.

The prospect, however, exists.

FOOTNOTES

[1] To be "dissident" in this context does not have the same meaning which we normally ascribe to it. A person may be dissident if she merely identifies with the class of origin (a somewhat "un-American" characteristic for the lower classes). She need not be political in that disaffection.

[2] The differentiation of participants into the two categories was arrived at impressionistically. I reviewed the Questionnaire and and interview transcript of each participant several times, underlining quotes which were relevant to the four mental states of class consciousness. I prepared a file-card for each participant, noting key words from those quotes. I then sorted the cards according to my subjective impressions. To double-check, several weeks later I reread the Questionnaires and interview transcripts through, without referral to the card sort, and listed the participants anew. The card sort and resultant list concurred in all cases.

[3] Obviously, not all explanations refer to all of the thirteen affirmants.

[4] Her family history was related on p. 128.

[5] One affirmant relates a cross-cultural observation that unwittingly illustrates such false consciousness:

> (Referring to upper-middle class people who she feels are pleasure-oriented) I felt sorry for them because they couldn't exercise will over themselves. This is exactly like Spain: the bakers consider themselves NECESSARY because, were it not for them, the people who give alms wouldn't receive the blessing and so the bakers are very proud of themselves because, in a way, they ARE more important than a rich man. So evidently that must be a universal, human characteristic -- to feel sorry for the other guy who seems to have more.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire



Dear

I'm very happy that you've agreed to participate in my study and thank you in advance for your generosity. As explained to you in our recent conversation, the study consists of two parts: This questionnaire will be followed by an in-depth interview. Please bring the (completed) questionnaire with you to our interview which is scheduled for:

If, for any reason, you will not be able to make that time, please call me in advance so we can set an alternate time.

It may be that you can not answer some of the questions simply or precisely, but please try to do the best you can. Feel free to use the reverse side of the page to expand on your answers; however, if you do this, please indicate the number of the question to which you are responding.

Once again, be assured that your identity, questionnaire and taped interview will be held in strictest confidence. I'm looking forward to meeting with you soon.

Gloria Levin (761-9897)
809 E. Kingsley #39, AA

QUESTIONNAIRE

Your Name _____ Phone(s) _____

Address _____ Age _____

1) Each of us has a personal/social identity. Please complete this sentence:
" I am a _____."
by inserting, in order of priority, those identities which are most important to you. (E.g., Jane Jones says, "I am a biologist, woman, white, etc.")

2) The high school I attended was: (check one)

_____ Public

_____ Private → (Was it, _____ Parochial or _____Prep School?)

3) My college degree was received from _____ in 19 ____.
Name of college Year

4) If there was a break in your academic career, please indicate: (a) why you left school, (b) for how long, and (c) what you did in the interim.

Questionnaire/ p. 2



5) In what year did you begin graduate studies? 19 ____. (Year)
Where? _____. (Name of school)

If not University of Michigan:

What degree program were you first enrolled in? _____ (e.g., M.A.)

In which academic program? _____ (e.g., Biology)

Entered UM in what year? 19____.

6) In which degree program are you now enrolled? _____ (e.g., Ph.D.)

7) In which academic program are you now enrolled? _____ (e.g., Biology)

8) My home community (i.e., the primary place in which I grew up) was:

____ Urban (over 100,000 population)
____ Suburban
____ Small city (50,000-100,000)
____ Town (under 50,000)
____ Rural

9) What is your ethnic background in terms of religion, nationalities of ancestors and number of generations since your ancestors immigrated to the U.S.? (Include yourself as one generation.)

10) Father's occupation when you were in mid-teens: _____

Father's occupation currently: _____

(If father retired or deceased, what was his occupation prior to his retirement or death? _____)

11) Mother's occupation when you were in mid-teens: _____

Mother's occupation currently: _____

(If mother retired or deceased, what was her occupation prior to her retirement or death? _____)

12) Combined parental income when you were in mid-teens: $_____/year.

Combined parental income currently: $_____/year.

13) Highest educational level reached by father? _____

Highest educational level reached by mother? _____

Highest educational level reached by siblings: (list by sex and age)

	Sex	Age	Educational level
#1			
#2			
#3			

Questionnaire/ p. 3



14) What socioeconomic class describes your family background?

_____

15) What is the first job you expect to receive after earning your degree?

What job would you eventually like to have?

16) List career-oriented satisfactions, in order of priority to you:

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

17) List life-oriented satisfactions, in order of priority to you:

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

18) Have you ever participated in any political actions, social movements or protest actions? _____. If so, please describe it (or them) and the nature of your participation:

19) Please place an (X) on the scale to indicate your belief in the source of one's success in this society: (Here, "success" refers to traditional notions of social prestige, material rewards, etc.)

Success derives from one's efforts and abilities	Success derives from one's past advantages and "connections"

Do you feel the source of your eventual success is in any way different than for upper-class graduate students? _____. Why?

APPENDIX B

Typical Questionnaire Review

TYPICAL QUESTIONNAIRE REVIEW

Refers to Q Item #	
1	Identity (Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)
2	Schools Describe schools you attended prior to college. - What was the socioeconomic distribution within your schools? - Were you aware of class differences then? - (If parochial school) Was the tuition expensive? - Were your parents concerned with their childrens' grades? - Were you academically successful? Socially? - Were you "tracked," i.e., placed in special enriched classes? - What was the class background of most of your friends? - Were there cliques in school? (If so, how would you characterize the group that you associated with?) - What percentage of your high school graduating class went to college?
3	College Did you always know you would go to college? - Who influenced or counselled you in that regard? - How was your college education financed? - Describe the college you attended. - Were you academically successful in college? - Were you aware of class differences in college? - Had you expected these class differences?
4	Experience (Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)
5	Graduate school (Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)
6, 7	Degree/Program At what point are you in your degree program? - Do you expect to complete the Ph.D. program?
8	Community Describe your neighborhood. - Was there class homogeneity in your neighborhood? - What were the class distinctions? - Where did your family fit in this? - Were you aware of this at the time?
9	Ethnicity (Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)

Typical Questionnaire Review/p. 2

Refers to Q Item #	
10, 11	Parents' occupations Describe your father's (mother's) history briefly. - What historical conditions were responsible for his (her) economic position? - How does he (she) feel about his (her) position? - How old is he (she)? - How does he (she) feel about his (her) work? Does he (she) take pride in his (her) work? Does he (she) feel resentful? - Has he (she) been working at the same job for very long? For the same company or organization? - Is he (she) a Union member? Supporter? Activist? - How does he (she) feel about Unions? About management? - (If retired or deceased) How old were you when he (she) retired or died? Did the retirement or death make a notable difference in your family's economic position?
12	Parental income Have there been any notable fluctuations in your parents' income?
13	Family education Do you consider your parents to be especially intelligent? - Did they have opportunities to acquire more schooling? - Do they regret their educational levels? Do you consider your sibling(s) to be especially intelligent, in comparison with you? - Did your parents encourage (or discourage) all of their children to an equal extent? - Did your siblings' educational attainments exert any influence on your educational ambitions and/or on your parents' attitudes toward higher education? - Would your parents have been disappointed had their children not gone to college and/or graduate school?
14	Class background Why do you consider your class background to be (insert appropriate response) class? - What evidence can you point to that you were (insert appropriate response) class? - How did your parents perceive your family's class position? - With what groups of people did your parents compare themselves? - Was there financial insecurity in your family, e.g., frequent job lay-offs? - Were you aware of limited financial resources when you were growing up?

Typical Questionnaire Review/p. 3

Refers to Q Item #

- Would you say your parents were more resentful of the Rockefellers or of "welfare cheats"?
- Are your spending and saving habits similar to those of your parents?

15 Career plans

Are you optimistic about your job prospects?

- What salary do you expect in your first post-degree job? (Use today's rates)
- What salary do you expect fifteen years from now? (Use today's rates)

16 Career satisfactions

(Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)

17 Life satisfactions

(Read response aloud so person can comment on it.)

18 Political

Do you consider yourself a "political person"?

- How did you feel towards the activism of the 60's? Towards the activists of the 60's?
- Have you ever organized people for politically-oriented goals? (If so, describe.)

19 Success continuum

Was there an intellectual or cultural tradition in your family?

- Were there many books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc. in your home?
- Did your parents read much? What did they read?
- Did your parents encourage the children to read?
- Did your family engage in issue-oriented discussions frequently?
- Did you have much exposure to the theatre, concerts, fine arts, etc.?

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Primary questions are numbered;
frequently-used probes are indicated by *)

---

1. (a) Thinking back to the time you were applying to graduate school, what were your goals for applying at that time?

    * Were these your actual goals? (If not, what were your actual goals?)

    * What were your non-academic reasons for coming here?

    * What were your expectations of graduate school?

   (b) Have your goals changed at all since you've been in graduate school? (If so, what are they now? Why did they change?)

    * Were your original expectations of graduate school met? (If not, have you been disappointed?)

    * Have you been successful here?

2. (a) How would you describe the nature/purpose of this University? Whose interests does it serve primarily? Why?

    * Being a state-funded University, do you think it serves the needs of the general public -- people like your family? (If so, in what ways? If not, why not?)

    * Do you consider this University elite?

    * (For GEO activists) Has your impression of the University changed as a result of your participation in the Union? (If so, how? Why?)

   (b) How would you describe the nature/purpose of your academic field? Whose interests does it serve primarily? Why?

    * How do you fit into this?

3. (a) Thinking about people with whom you feel most comfortable, what qualities do they have that make you feel comfortable?

    * Where are you most likely to encounter people with those qualities? (Probe for social class identifications.)

    * What situations make you feel uncomfortable? Where are you most likely to encounter those situations? Can you give an example?

   (b) Now, thinking about people with whom you tend to compare yourself -- especially those against whom you don't feel you "measure up," -- what are those criteria by which you tend to compare yourself?

* Is there a specific person, compared to whom you feel inadequate? (If so, in what ways?)
* Do you feel at a disadvantage in those areas? (If so, is there a class-base to that disadvantage?)
* Can that be learned? Have you tried to develop that?
* Do you tend to be competitive? (If so, in what areas do you tend to be competitive?)

(c) Finally, thinking about people you respect and would most like to <u>be</u> like, what qualities do they have that you especially admire?

* Do you have any role models? (If so, who are they? If not, do you feel any loss in the lack of a role model?)
* What kind of person do you want to be when you get older?

4. (Refer to Q#19 on questionnaire) What were you thinking when you decided to put your (X) here on the "success continuum?"

* Why did <u>you</u> succeed? What was in your background that encouraged your success? (Probe extent to which person feels s/he <u>is</u> a success.)
* How are you different from people you grew up with who aren't successful?
* Can anyone in this society succeed who is bright and motivated? (If not, is your success an exception to the rule? What makes you an exception?)
* Why aren't there more students from a working-class background in the University?

5. You are in the process of earning academic credentials which can improve your opportunities within this society.

(a) How do you feel about this?

* What does the Ph.D. represent to you?
* Do you feel it's been a personal accomplishment?
* What changes do you think you'll experience once you have the Ph.D. and some measure of success?
* Do you think a Ph.D. should make more money than a (insert relevant working-class occupation)?
* Have you left your class? (If so, when? Do you feel any sense of loss in that? How do you cope with that?)

(b) How do you think your family feels about this?

* Do you maintain close contact with them?
* What evidence do you have for their feelings? How do

you feel about their response to you?

* Do they live vicariously through you? Does your success reflect back on them?

* Do they understand what you're doing? Do you attempt to explain that to them? Do you ever encourage their awe in your work or the Ph.D.?

* Are there any pressures on you to succeed? Do you feel any financial responsibility for them in the future?

* How do they feel about their own position in life: Is there any sense of competition with you?

* Do they feel that you've changed? That a part of you is inaccessible to them?

6. (a) In what ways does the culture you experienced while growing up differ from the culture you are encountering now?

* Is there anything you especially miss from the "old culture"?

* Is there anything you especially value in the "new culture"?

* Are you able to "pass" or move freely in both cultures? Do people around here know your class background? How?

* Are you combining the two cultures successfully? How?

(b) Would you describe an incident that demonstrated the cultural differences?

7. (a) What specific problems do you encounter as a graduate student from your class background that peers from higher class backgrounds don't confront?

* What are the causes of those problems?

* How can they be resolved? Have you tried to resolve them? With what results?

* How do you feel about this situation? (Probe for resentment or pride.)

(b) How does the quality of your life as a graduate student compare with that of peers from higher class backgrounds?

* How do you feel about these differences?

* (For GEO activists) Were you aware of class differences in the response of your peers to unionization and the strike?

8. (a) How has your class background helped you in life?

* Have you ever "used" your class background to your advantage? (If so, how?)

(b) How has your class background hindered you in life?

* Have you ever been ashamed of your class background or of your family? (If so, when? How did you feel? Do you still feel that way?)

* If you had been born rich, where would you be today?

* If you were to win the Lottery, would you still be here?

(c) What meaning does your class background have for you? What has been its impact on you?

* Your children will be raised in a professional family under different objective conditions than you experienced. How do you feel about this?

9. Do you consider yourself to be class conscious? (If so, in what way?)

* Do you perceive society in class terms? Your own life?

* Considering your life as a time line, what events and experiences in your life raised your consciousness around class issues?

10. (Refer to Q/18 on questionnaire) In whose interest would you say this political action was intended? Have you ever participated in a political action to benefit your own self-interests? (Describe)

* What do you perceive your self-interests to be?

* Do you feel oppressed in any way? (If so, how? Have you done anything to change that? What?)

11. (a) Some people would like to change things. Would you?

* What would you most like to see changed?

* How could one go about changing that?

* What label would best describe your political beliefs?

* Do you feel aligned with any politically-oriented collectivity? (If so, which?)

(b) Are you now doing anything about changing that? (Describe)

* (If teaching) Does your teaching have a change goal?

* Does your research relate to that change goal? (If so, how?)

(c) Have you worked in the past for that change goal? (Describe)

(d) Do you plan to work on that change goal in the future? (If so, describe future plans.)

12. Do you come into contact with many people of a class background similar to your own?

    * Do you know many other graduate students from a similar class background?
    * How do you relate to people from the same class background who did not go on to college?
    * How do they regard you?
    * Do you ever feel socially isolated as a result of crossing class lines?

REVIEW OF THE INTERVIEW

* Did you feel comfortable in the interview? Did you feel that your responses were open and honest?
* Was this interview an accurate reflection of your usual thoughts and actions around class issues or were there any responses that, in retrospect, were an artifact of the interview situation?
* Did you know the purpose of the interview, more specific than my general explanation prior to the interview? Were you aware of my biases? What had been your expectations of the interview?
* Did you learn anything about yourself in the process? (If so, what?) Was it consciousness-raising in any way? (If so, how?) Do you think about the issues raised in this interview frequently?

APPENDIX D

Post-Script

Post-Script

The intimate involvement of the participants in the subject of the study as well as in the study itself required a very personal relationship between myself and these working-class students. Having devoted many hours to the completion of the Questionnaire and the conduct of the interview, they deserved a high level of commitment on my part to disseminate the findings to them directly. Furthermore, in the course of the study I had identified a small sub-group within the large university which shared many similar experiences, values and perceptions yet were unknown to each other. Frequently during an interview I would say to myself: "I wish I could introduce this person to an earlier interviewee because they seem to share so much in common and could really be mutually supportive." I decided, therefore, to convene interested participants for a small group discussion at the conclusion of the study when I would have results to disseminate. I also decided to return to interested participants transcripts of their own interview.

Soon after the completion of the study, I called the twenty-six participants who had earlier indicated possible interest in these discussions in order to set up available meeting times. (Two had moved from Ann Arbor, and two had earlier indicated that they would not be interested.) At that time, I also offered to return the transcripts. Of the twenty-six participants contacted, all but two requested their transcripts, and twenty-four were scheduled for one of four groups. I either hand-delivered or mailed the transcripts so that they would arrive in time to be read before the assigned group meetings. Sixteen participants actually came to the meetings, and one called to say he could not come. The remaining seven neither came to the assigned meeting nor called. The group compositions were generally mixed as to demographic characteristics. Of those (16) who actually came, nine had been categorized earlier as dissidents and seven as affirmants. All but one of the highly politicized participants attended.

After introducing participants to each other, I gave a brief synopsis of Chapter V of this dissertation. Participants were encouraged to interrupt the synopsis to ask questions, make comments, or discuss the findings with each other. I frequently asked a participant to expound on a particular finding which I knew to be relevant to his/her life. The meetings were generally friendly, and the discussions spirited. They were successful in three respects: (1) providing a vehicle for direct and personal feedback <u>to</u> participants; (2) eliciting feedback <u>from</u> the participants on the study, its impact on them, and the validity of the findings; and (3) convening persons who share some problems and providing a forum for common problem-solving. I will discuss my impressions of the achievement of each goal in turn.

(1) Feedback to participants. Various participants were interested in diverse findings, e.g., birth order of siblings and sex differences as relate to class. The women were particularly pleased to see that mothers were seen as strong, positive figures in contrast to many studies with which they were familiar. The exclusion of science students from the sample prompted hypotheses about the possible over-representation of working-class students in technical fields where cultural styles are less elite. Time restrictions limited the synopsis to a bare overview of the findings of Chapter V. Most attending participants indicated that they wanted to read the entire dissertation once deposited in the university library. One laughed: "Your dissertation is going to be the hottest property around for the next few months!" Two participants borrowed draft copies and several others asked if they could visit and read the dissertation prior to publication. Certainly, a major reason for all of this enthusiasm is natural vanity: "How many of my quotes were cited?" However, I would like to believe also that the study has intensely personal meaning for these participants.

(2) Feedback from participants. All attending participants had read their transcripts, and after the inevitable shock of seeing their words for the first time ("It reads like a 17-year old," "I'm so inarticulate," etc.), the participants reread the transcripts for content. Many were surprised at how honest they had been and at how revealing their interviews were. Although the interviews had been held at least four months earlier, some had remembered the conversations in detail whereas others had only dim memories of our encounter. A few indicated that conditions had changed since the interview or that, at that time of the interview, they were "obsessed" with an issue that has since lost its impact. In general, however, the interviews were seen as accurate reflections of the participants at the time they were conducted. Many noted that the interview had raised their consciousness around class issues and related incidents which, with their new-found consciousness, they could now interpret in class-based terms. Two persons, having recognized that they had resisted my efforts to interpret incidents in class terms, confronted that resistance within themselves and gained personal insight as a result. (One claimed new awareness of his tendency toward class denial and repressed anger against his wealthy friends.) One woman felt much better about herself as a result of the interview. Always worried that she has been co-opted without even recognizing it, she realizes now that she has retained her idealism and integrity and needs only tap them for new energy and commitment.

(3) Common problem-solving. In these group meetings, participants shared some of their problems as working-class graduate students:

- o what to do when served by a maid at a wealthy home
- o how to create a professional role for oneself within the home community for those who wish to return

- o how to survive as a "poor boy in a rich boy's environment"
- o having come to the university to find options only to reject one, where does one turn for new options?
- o where to find emotional support that responds to their needs
- o how to live in an environment (the university) where one's past history is considered irrelevant
- o how to avoid "reverse leprosy," a term invented to indicate a sloughing off of the BEST parts of oneself.

The discussions often revealed different assumptions and values even within this pre-selected group. Most evident were the differing conceptions of the working-class. For some, the working-class was to be escaped; for others, it was to be remembered fondly. For example, a discussion of working-class attitudes to work reflected differing experiences within their families and communities ("work is degrading and dehumanizing" vs. "work is a noble activity.") Just as many had complained that upper-class people assume that everyone shares their values and perspectives, here they were assuming uniformities among themselves when they didn't exist. Knowing each person's past history, I could point out why two people seemed to differ so sharply despite seeming-similarities. One discussion of the sense of community among the working-class found two people split -- "the working-class help each other out" vs. "the working-class are suspicious of other people." Only by exploring the fact that these two people were from different geographic backgrounds could one realize the add-on effect of rural vs. urban location to class background. We had to keep reminding ourselves to qualify all statements of "the working-class is..." with the phrase, "in my experience." We were not only impressed with the within-group differences but also by the realization that these differences could be retardants in ever organizing a viable class movement. Even before participants began to talk about their backgrounds, I noticed that affinities began to develop among them. I was also surprised to see how quickly the affirmants and dissidents recognized their differences and based on so little data, sometimes only by speech patterns or demeanors. Whatever the litmus test, it supported my own impressions which were based on far more data. In one incident, a participant facetiously charged another with being a working-class pretender. Ironically, the first person, during his interview with me, had denied he was working-class because "the people on Welfare -- <u>they're</u> Working-class!" The so-called "pretender" (who told me during his interview that he considered himself upper-class) protested vehemently to the group that he was, indeed, working-class! Despite these differences, some telephone numbers were exchanged and faces remembered for later recognition.

In conclusion, this method of feeding back data to study participants was certainly more personal and enjoyable than the usual one-page mimeographed abstract. The participants had an opportunity

to meet with others from more-or-less similar backgrounds, sharing problems and posing solutions. They felt less isolated, if only to know that their dilemmas were not so strange or so unique. As the investigator, I was the prime beneficiary in that I felt directly rewarded for my efforts over the preceding months and could see some of the positive results of those efforts. I was also "kept honest" by holding myself accountable to those whose very lives were examined and interpreted by me.

APPENDIX E

Exchange of Letters
Appearing in The Michigan Daily

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS APPEARING IN THE MICHIGAN DAILY

The exchange was initiated by two non-strikers who were concerned that an increase in wages would be offset by higher tuitions for undergraduate students, primarily (February 12, 1975).

> "..we view (GEO) members as students, most from families of the most privileged social strata, who attend the university to secure the credentials absolutely necessary to attain the most privileged positions in society. In or out of our current economic turmoil, these individuals are bound for the top; heading for occupations with high incomes and non-oppressive working conditions. What chance has the child of a working-class family to achieve these positions?"

They went on to recommend the following:

> "A truly progressive alternative program is one that works against the systematic class and income bias of university admissions at all levels. Demands for more black and female teaching fellows does not guarantee admissions for the poor and underprivileged. Increased grants and scholarships, abandonment of (standardized tests) for admissions criteria, random admissions, tuition charges that increase with parental income and a fight against reactionary ideology that the university exists to disseminate."

A group of union supporters responded (February 14, 1975):

> "They assert that GSA's (graduate student assistants) derive from the most privileged strata of society and will occupy high-paying positions of power in the future. While they may characterize themselves, it is hardly an accurate characterization of most GSA's. Strike support varies inversely with the likelihood of graduates from a particular department becoming professional or management personnel...(some) do not expect to get or even go after high-paying jobs... Low pay and high tuition for GSA's makes it difficult and even impossible for those with no supplemental income from family or other sources to support themselves through graduate school, which naturally prejudices the composition of the graduate student body in favor of middle-class persons... In any community there exists a multiple of contradictions but there is always one principal contradiction in the relationship between the classes."

They state that all graduate students should be on the side of labor in this issue, and:

> "...those who oppose the GEO strike implicitly want to maintain this university as a bastion of privilege and monied class, since in doing so they oppose increased wages, job control and security, (etc.)...and the mass raising of consciousness that this action precipitates."

A response in a similar vein read (February 16, 1975):

> "Marxists recognize that students generally come from 'privileged' backgrounds and are heading for 'privileged' futures. But Marxists also consistently support student protests against their own oppression...It is of no use..to argue that success of the GEO strike 'entails the reproduction of the society around it' or will not work 'against the systematic class and income bias of University admissions...' Strikes are not revolutions. (However,) a GEO victory will make it financially more possible for working class and minority students to work their way through the U of M. Obviously this reform will not alter the bourgeois nature of the University."

He ends by calling for:

> "..the transformation of the University (and ultimately society) in a 'truly progressive' way."

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