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Subculture, Social Reform and the "Culture of Poverty"

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Abstract

This essay addresses a set of issues involved in applying the concept of subculture to social problems in general and to the problems of low-status populations in particular. The approach embodied in the "culture of poverty" concept developed by Oscar Lewis is characterized as inadequate on both conceptual and ideological grounds. An alternative approach is outlined, centering on the concepts of *status class*, *focal concern*, *prime* and *nonprime subcultures*, and *elemental* and *compound subcultures*. The process of deriving explanations for customary forms of behavioral practice is approached through the concept of *subcultural conjunction*. The "culture of poverty" concept is characterized as insufficiently differentiated, failing to provide a systematic basis for comparative analysis, confused with respect to a "crucial element," and infused with unexamined and evaluative elements involving simple derogation, hidden reference standards, special-systems assumptions, and speculative inferences concerning subjective states. The currently heightened concern with the traditional issue of the relationship of ideology to scholarship is noted, and two polar positions of "social relevance" and "pure knowledge" are presented and discussed. Various accommodations by anthropologists to increasingly urgent conflicts between these positions are described—including that of Oscar Lewis—and the argument is forwarded that the level of an intellectual climate which restricts the freedom to pursue "pure knowledge" defeats the purposes both of scholarship and the achievement of needed reform.

Culture secondaire, réforme sociale et la "culture de la pauvreté"

Cet essai aborde un ensemble de questions impliquées dans l'application du concept de la culture secondaire et des problèmes sociaux en général. La façon d'aborder la question du concept de la "culture de la pauvreté" est considérée inappropriée tant au niveau conceptuel qu'au niveau idéologique. On a ébauché une approche concentrée sur les concepts de *rang social*, *d'intérêt focal*, de cultures secondaires *importantes* ou *de peu d'importance* et de cultures secondaires élémentaires et composées. On a considéré la méthode de la dérivation d'explications pour les formes habituelles du comportement à travers le concept de la *conjonction des cultures secondaires*. Le concept de "la culture de la pauvreté" est reconnu comme étant insuffisamment différencié, ne réussissant pas à apporter une base systématique pour une analyse comparée, obscur en ce qui concerne un "élément crucial" et imprégné d'éléments évaluatifs et non examinés impliquant une simple dérogation, des titres de références non mentionnés, des suppositions de systèmes spéciaux et des déductions spéculatives en ce qui concerne les états subjectifs. L'intérêt actuellement accru pour la question traditionnelle de la relation entre l'idéologie et le savoir est remarqué, et deux

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positions opposées sur la "pertinence sociale" et "la connaissance pure" sont présentées et discutées. On décrit divers ajustements faits par des anthropologistes au conflit de plus en plus pressant entre ces positions—y compris celle d'Oscar Lewis—et l'on transcrit l'argument que le niveau d'un climat intellectuel qui restreint la liberté de poursuivre la "connaissance pure" déjoue le but non seulement de la connaissance mais aussi de l'accomplissement de la réforme nécessaire.

Sub-cultura, reforma social y "cultura de la pobreza"

Este ensayo examina las aplicaciones del concepto de subcultura a los problemas sociales en general, y a los problemas de poblaciones de menos estatura en particular. El enfoque de "la cultura de la pobreza" de Oscar Lewis se considera inadecuado desde el punto de vista conceptual e ideológico. Otro enfoque se esquematiza, basado en el concepto de estatura de clase, importancia focal, subculturas *primas* y *no primas*, subculturas *elementales* y *compuestas*, y *unión sub-cultural*. El concepto de "cultura de la pobreza" es insuficientemente diferenciado, no da una base sistemática para el análisis comparativo, está confundida con respecto al "elemento conclusivo", y está infuso de elementos no examinados y de valuación que implican simple derogación, normas de referencia oculta, suposciones de sistemas especiales, y conjeturas teóricas con respecto al estado sujetivo. La acentuada preocupación actual con la afinidad de la ideología y la erudición se hace notar, se presentan y se discuten dos polos de "pertinencia social" y del "puro saber." Se describen varias composturas de antropólogos a los conflictos urgentes entre estos dos planos—inclusive el de Oscar Lewis- y se presenta el argumento de que un clima intelectual que restringe la libertad de dedicarse al "puro saber" anula tanto el propósito de la erudición como el de la reforma necesaria.

T HE CIRCUMSTANCES of persons at lower social-status levels in the United States have assumed enormous importance in recent years. The life conditions and customary pursuits of those in the lowest educational, occupational, and income categories lie close to the core of many if not most of the major domestic issues of the past decade—issues tagged with such terms as the urban crisis, the mess of public welfare, the crisis in education, the black revolution, the white backlash, a culture of violence, and crime in the streets. These developments have thrown into sharp relief a long-term failure of our society: namely, that we have been consistently unsuccessful in dealing with our low-status populations on a conceptual level – being able neither to develop generally acceptable

terms of reference nor to reach any substantial degree of agreement as to how to define or characterize this sector of our society.

This failure in large part accounts for the vagueness, ambiguity, and overlap in terms used by both the professionals and the lay public, and for rapid and often puzzling shifts in terminological fashion. A bewildering confusion of terms—such as the working class, the poor, the working poor, the black poor, the white poor, the underprivileged, the culturally deprived, the minorities, the underclass—move in and out of fashion, with their scope and objects of reference shifting, expanding and contracting to apply to different sectors of different populations at different times. Failures in national policy with respect to the social problems of low-status populations are intimately related to failures in developing adequate modes of conceptualization.

Faced in the 1960's with urgent domestic problems—many of which were related directly or indirectly to the massive migrations during and after World War II of low-status southern blacks into northern cities—policy-makers at all levels of government were confronted with the pressing need to develop policies of sufficient scope and sweep to match the scope and sweep of cities in flames, violent protest demonstrations, and the growing popularity of a philosophy of revolution among the rising class of black intellectuals. In a desperate search for general guidelines, federal policymakers came upon a conceptual model developed in the early 1960's by Oscar Lewis, a cultural anthropologist with a background in Spanish American ethnography. This model, popularized under the term "culture of poverty," played a major (although by no means the only) role in the thinking of those who formulated the "war on poverty" of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations. While many of these interpreted the concept quite differently from the way Lewis intended, there is no gainsaying that, however understood, it exerted a significant influence on federal policy.

The culture of poverty concept, in brief, centers on the notion that certain low-status populations, in Spanish America and elsewhere, manifest a particular set of characteristics which are closely related to their position in the social order and the role they play in that order; that these characteristics show a fairly high degree of mutual cohesion; and that they tend to endure over time through normal processes of cultural transmission.[1] Stated in this very general form, there does not seem to be anything too controversial about

the thesis, but it has in fact aroused violent opposition, and become embroiled in a series of disputes.

At the risk of considerable oversimplification, one can picture Lewis and his "culture of poverty" concept as fighting three different battles on three different battlefields. Not only do weapons, adversaries, and tactics differ in each, but it is often difficult to tell on which of these battlefields, among others, the current engagement is occurring. On the first battlefield the major adversaries have been politicians and their constituencies versus social scientists, and the issue is essentially that of social classes versus no social classes. The "culture of poverty" concept implies the existence of well-developed and relatively stable social classes, differing not only in income but also in life-style—a notion that many, especially in the United States, are extremely reluctant to accept.

On the second battleground both adversaries are social scientists—the anthropologically-oriented versus the sociologically- and economically-oriented. Most social scientists accept the notion of social classes in some form or other, but tend to indulge in intense and often acrimonious disputes as to conceptualizations, what the defining criteria should be, how stable these social classes are, and the scope of behavior which is affected by class-related factors.

One of the major disputes concerns the extent to which "social classes," however defined, can be credited with "culture," however defined. Many sociologists and economists concede the utility of conceiving societies as a set of classes or strata to which one may assign different values relating to such readily quantifiable characteristics as income, years of education, and rent payment. But they balk at the notion that with these numerical bases of differentiation there may be organized and persisting styles of life having a direct and systematic effect on values, outlook, customary behavioral practices, expenditure preferences, and the like. The issue of how persistent classes are and the degree to which class cultures are transmitted through time are also central points of contention.[2]

The third battle is part of an internecine war among anthropologists themselves. Most of these accept the notion that large industrialized societies can profitably be conceived as comprising a set of differentiated classes, and that such classes generally show sufficient variation from the national culture of which they are a part so that one can speak of "subcultures"—some of whose characteristics are common to all classes, and others of which differ in form, or scale, or weighting, or patterning. The dispute concerns the way that class subcultures should be conceptualized—and in some cases whether they should be conceptualized at all.

The present paper, as part of this intra-anthropological controversy, examines what appear to be two major defects in the "culture of poverty" concept as developed by Oscar Lewis. The first of these is its *conceptual inadequacy*—that is, its failure to provide the basis for a generally applicable and logically consistent theoretical model of culture and subculture. The second is its *normative inadequacy*—its incorporation on an inconsistent and unsystematic basis of a particular set of value premises which are largely unexamined.

With respect to conceptual adequacy, no direct or point-by-point critique of the Lewis formulation will be presented here, since a fair number of such critiques are readily available[3] Instead, I shall present a brief outline of a subcultural approach embodying some of the elements of general applicability and theoretical adequacy lacking in Lewis' formulation, with the hope that the differences between the two approaches will serve to clarify the character of each. It is important to note that Lewis makes no claim to having developed a comprehensive theoretical system, but regards the "culture of poverty" concept as a "challenging hypothesis." (It may be remarked that the task of developing a general explanational system based on the concept of subculture—analagous, say, to the Freudian or psychodynamic system—presents formidable difficulties, and that present formulations are still in a very primitive stage. The formulations presented here have been selected and condensed from a detailed theoretical examination of the relations of subculture and customary behavior, which, although quite comprehensive, still fails to solve some rather serious analytic problems.[4])

Before presenting what the author regards as a more adequate theoretical formulation, it is important to specify the objective of this endeavor. Obviously, a formulation which is adequate for one set of purposes may be quite inadequate for others, and later sections will attempt to show that one difficulty with Lewis' formulations is that they try to combine several sets of purposes which articulate poorly with one another. The primary purpose in the present context is that of using the concept of subculture to develop as adequate as possible an *explanation of customary forms of behavioral practice* of specified categories of persons. There is no intention of conveying approval or disapproval of these forms, nor of suggesting which should or should not be changed. It is the classic scholarly objective of *maximum explanational adequacy*.

The category of persons for whose behavior an explanation is here sought may be called *the low-skilled laboring class.*[5]

Note that this term refers to a designated *category* of persons, not to a feature or features of a style of life. It centers on the term "subculture" rather than "culture." It contains the term "class" but not the term "poverty."

I would like to make it quite clear at this point that I do not find the "culture of poverty" concept a useful one and do not use it in my own thinking or writing. The concept I do use—the "subculture of the low-skilled laboring class," or in more technical usages the "lower-class III subculture"—refers to a population which overlaps to a considerable degree that which concerns Lewis, but is far from identical with it. For example, while few persons in this category have much money in the long run, some do have fair amounts from time to time, and many live under circumstances quite different from "grinding" or "desperate" poverty. In addition, in the United States, this category does not include the approximately 50 percent of those with incomes under $3,000 who get their money from interest, royalties, dividends, pensions, and the like, and who are generally included in government statistics on the size of the "poverty" population.[6] Lewis, it should be noted, is quite aware of this problem, and tries to accommodate it by his distinction between "poverty" and a "culture" of poverty.[7]

The Concept of Subculture: Theoretical Considerations

In using the concept of subculture for purposes of explanation, it is most important to minimize the tautology to which the subcultural mode of analysis is vulnerable. For example, formulations have been forwarded along these lines: "The behavior of youth who commit crimes may be called a delinquency subculture; being in a delinquency subculture causes youth to commit crimes." Or "The way of life of poor people may be called a culture of poverty; being caught in a culture of poverty is the reason that people are poor." Statements in such forms, or in more complex forms reducible to this form, are one reason that the subcultural framework is in poor repute among many social scientists. Since, as a construct, subculture is ultimately based on behavior, the tautology involved in explaining behavior by behavior is difficult to avoid; indeed it may be impossible to avoid entirely. What is feasible is a continuing attempt to make this explanational framework as free as possible from the more obvious forms of circular reasoning. Some tautology will always remain, but the test of adequacy lies in whether the mode of explanation, whatever its degree of tautology, has the power to cast light on the nature and origins of behavioral phenomena which otherwise appear obscure or which are less adequately explained in other frames of reference.

One major way of reducing tautology is by making as clear as possible the conceptual distinction between a designated *population of individuals* and a designated set of *behavioral practices and conceptions of appropriate practice.* The term *status class* is used here to refer to the first, and *subculture* to refer to the second.[8]

Maintaining the distinction between a designated category of persons and the things they do or think helps to reduce tautology as well as to avoid a second major defect in the way subculture is often used. That is, one selects a behavioral practice or general condition (very often one not approved of) and tags it with the word "subculture." Thus we have the culture or subculture of violence, of delinquency, of poverty, of bombing, of apathy, and the like. Such usage is *ad hoc*, unsystematic, and essentially arbitrary. There are no criteria for specifying what should legitimately be considered a subculture and what should not, and there is almost limitless freedom to characterize just about anything as a subculture. For purpose of explanational adequacy, all entities designated as subcultures should have significant common properties, and should be defined within a systematic definitional framework. Moreover, the habit of applying the term subculture primarily to what sociologists call "social problems" enhances the possibility that it will come to be associated only with disvalued things, much as the term culture is taken by some to refer only to the strange customs of other peoples, not to their own way of life.

In the framework described here, the only kind of entity which can manifest a subculture is the *status class*—defined as a category of persons who share socially-recognized status characteristics which differentiate them from other societal categories, and which serve as a basis for identification and allegiance. Perhaps the clearest example is found in status classes based on sex. There are two such classes, designated "male" and "female" on the specific basis of differentiated biological characteristics. Once having defined these classes on the basis of criteria which are in large degree conceptually independent of forms of behavior one wishes to explain, one can proceed to delineate a large number of behavioral patterns and conceptions of

Unfair: concentration of behavior characterized to serve for value or premise that support conduct

(This, in turn, can lead to asking of questions about the functions of premises.)

appropriate practice manifested by persons by virtue of their affiliation with that class.

For example, those identified with the status class "males" in American society maintain an intense and continuing interest and involvement in a set of activities centering around individual and collective *competitive engagement* manifested in a thousand ways in organized athletics, warfare, business competition, scholarly debate, political rivalry, and so on. Because this consuming interest—what I have called a "focal concern"[9] is manifested in some form by all males whatever their age, social status, locality, or other bases of differentiation, it can be seen as a property of that particular class rather than of some other class. Similarly, American "females" maintain an intense and continuing interest in a wide range of enterprises centering on *mating and motherhood* and which is manifested in a thousand ways in family activities, preferred forms of fiction and drama, occupational preferences such as nursing and teaching, and many more.

These examples illustrate an important feature of the subcultural frame of reference. First, the concerns cited as characteristics of the two classes, "males" and "females," are not *uniquely* or *exclusively* properties of that class. Females are also interested in competitive engagement—through their involvement with male involvement therein and through their own. One might estimate that something on the order of 10 to 15 percent of females in the United States are consistent fans of big league baseball, compared to an estimate of 80 to 85 percent for males. Similarly, there are many males who manifest interest and concern with motherhood, both insofar as they are involved with female involvement therewith and as a relatively independent concern.

But it is clear that the *kinds* of involvement of these two classes, as classes, are quite different. Motherhood engages most women with a degree of intensity that does not affect most men; competitive engagement plays a far more important part in the lives of most men than of most women.

We are talking here about differences in the *scope or intensity* of involvement and in the proportions of the total class which maintains high-intensity interest. This is important because one of the most common criticisms of the subcultural approach is that it represents the behavioral patterns of different classes as completely distinct, separate, and mutually exclusive. In 1958 I referred to this phenomenon by noting that the focal concerns of a particular status class, ". . . while by no means confined to the class at issue, represent a

pattern of concerns which differs significantly, both in rank order and weighting, from that of other classes."[10] Some time later Oscar Lewis used these words:

> None of these traits [of the class] is distinctive *per se* . . . it is their conjunction, their function, and their patterning that define the subculture . . . that, is, the distribution of the traits both singly and in combination will be greater [for a designated class] than in the rest of the population.[11]

The kinds of statements one makes on a subcultural level, then, are essentially *probability* statements, such as: "There is a 75 percent probability that 75 percent of those designated as male or as middle class or as adolescents will manifest a particular interest or behavioral practice." Thus, when one attributes a particular characteristic to a particular status class, it generally indicates involvement by some substantial proportion of that class rather than all of it. Practices and concerns found in more than one class are generally differentiated by the *scope and intensity* of customary involvement, as in the case of parenthood as a differential concern of males and females. The various practices and concerns of a particular status class are also differentiated from those of other status classes in the degree to which they are related to one another—rather than to corresponding concerns of other classes—to form a distinctive pattern.

In order to specify as well as to limit the kinds of units to which one may attribute subcultures, the present scheme delineates sixteen categories of status classes, organized around the following five principles of categorization: biology, geography-nationality, kinship, occupation, belief-ideology, and social station. These are listed, along with the sixteen status-class categories, in Table 1. The actual status classes delineated under each of these categories will not be specified here, since our major concern is with "ranked position" classes.

In an effort to specify greater and lesser degrees of influence of status-class affiliation, the sixteen status class categories are divided into two types, "prime" and "nonprime." Prime status class categories are those whose included classes encompass the total population (as, for example, "male" and "female") and are limited in number, along with other defining characteristics detailed in the expanded treatment.[12] Status classes delineated under categories designated as nonprime may be limited in number or very numerous (e.g., "political" versus "vocational" classes), vary greatly in the degree to which they provide bases for identifi-

cation and allegiance (e.g., Puerto Rican *versus* English "national origin" classes), and do not constitute generally recognized categories which encompass the entire population (e.g., "special cause" classes).

TABLE 1. 16 STATUS CLASS BASES
FOR THE CONCEPTUALIZATION
OF SUBCULTURES*

Categorization Principle		Status Class Category
I	Biology	1. *Sex*
		2. *Age*
		3. Physical Characteristics
II	Geography-Nationality	1. National Origin
		2. *Region*
		3. *Residence Locale*
III	Kinship	1. Relational Bond
		2. Affiliational Unit
IV	Occupation	1. Vocation
		2. Avocation
		3. Habitual Pursuit
		4. Education
V	Belief-Ideology	1. Religion
		2. Politics
		3. Special Cause
VI	Social Station	1. *Ranked Position*

*Prime status-class categories are italicized.

The five status-class categories designated as prime under this system are *sex, age, residential locale, region,* and *ranked social position.* Within each of these categories a limited number of prime status classes are delineated. Following Warner, the category "ranked social position" includes the three conventional major social classes of upper, middle, and lower.[13] Within the lower class, three subclasses termed lower class I, II, and III are further delineated, with lower class I the highest. Defining criteria for each of these lower class levels have been developed, but will not be detailed here.[14] Among terms commonly applied to lower class I are "upper blue collar" or "stable working class," while the term I generally apply to lower class III is "lowskilled laboring class." This latter class is defined primarily by its level of occupational involvement and customary forms of child-rearing arrangements; ten of its characteristics with respect to education, income, expenditure practices, and criminal behavior are cited in a recent paper.[15]

One major problem in using the subcultural frame of reference concerns the actual process by which one's affiliation with various status classes affects the degree of one's involvement in certain forms of behavioral practice. If we take, for example, the customary behavioral practice of regular "informal" congregation at specific nonresidential locales, known as "hanging out" in many lower class communities, it is obvious that this practice is more closely associated with the status classes "male," "lower class" and "urban," and less closely with the classes "female," "middle class" and "rural." This problem is approached through the concept of *subcultural conjunction.*[16] Two orders of subculture are distinguished—"elemental" and "compound." An elemental subculture involves only one of the status classes, while a compound subculture involves more than one. Thus, "female" subculture is elemental, "adolescent female" is a double compound, "urban adolescent female" a triple compound, and so on. This conceptualization permits varying degrees of generality and specificity in designating customary practices, as well as serving a number of other conceptual purposes. For example, the actual nature of the "motherhood" focal concern—a property of the elemental female subculture because it is found among all sentient females regardless of their age, race, religion, social status, region, or other differences—can be characterized more specifically on the basis of subcultural conjunction; for example, it is manifested among female children (double compound status class) through involvement with baby dolls and among older females in grandmotherhood.

The concept of subcultural conjunction may be applied quite usefully to reduce some of the conceptual confusion encountered by Lewis and others in handling the problem of variation in the subcultures of different kinds of low-status populations. One can move some distance toward reducing this confusion by cross-cutting the lower class III subculture with the various status classes of the other four prime subcultures to form sets of double compound subcultures. Thus, there are male and female variants of low-status subcultures; urban, suburban, and rural residence-locality variants; southeastern, southwestern, and northeastern regional variants; children's, adolescent, and adult age-class variants; and so on. Variants based on the nonprime categories of national origin and race such as white European, Spanish-American, American Indian, and African-American variants are also important. By the same process one can become even more specific by delineating sets of triple or quadruple compounds such as the subculture of low-status urban

male adolescents—a category which figures prominently in many of the current problems of the central cities. Each of these sets of cross-cuts blocks out a set of variations of the elemental class-related subculture to permit a far more refined set of statements than are possible on the basis of a notion of *the* culture of "poor" populations.

Of further relevance is the degree of refinement possible and/or appropriate in the use of the subcultural conjunction approach. Adequate treatment of the quite complex actual techniques of this method requires an extended discussion; only a very few general comments are possible here. Delineating status classes on the basis of the prime categories of age and sex, and distinguishing five age-classes (childhood, adolescence, earlier adulthood, later adulthood, old age), produces ten compound classes, an easily manageable number. If, however, one proceeds to delineate compounds on the basis of the five prime categories, and makes even relatively gross intracategory distinctions (sex and age as above; *region* northeast, south, southwest, central, far west; *residence locale* urban, suburban, rural; *ranked social station* lower class I, II, III, middle class I, II, III, upper class), one arrives at one thousand and fifty distinguishable classes. If, in addition, one includes the further differentiation made possible through the use of nonprime categories and/or increases the degree of intracategory differentiation (e.g., earlier childhood, later childhood, earlier adolescence, etc.), the number of derivable status classes, while remaining finite, assumes formidable proportions. This exercise itself serves to illustrate with some vividness the enormous complexity of subcultural "reality," and the hazards of insufficient specification. Even so, many of the 1050 status classes derived by the above method nevertheless evoke clear images of readily distinguishable compound subcultures (e.g., adult male rural southern laboring class, elderly female northeastern upper class, etc.).

It is important to stress that the subcultural conjunction approach is not simply a highly refined basis of taxonomic differentiation to be applied mechanically or through pre-set formulae, but is rather a flexible and elastic *procedure* adaptable to a wide variety of analytic purposes, whose use calls for creativity and imagination. The specifics of application (which categories are considered "prime" under what circumstances; the appropriate degree of intracategory differentiation; the choice of categories used to delineate compounds; and the number of elements in such compounds) do not constitute the method's essential contribution. The essential contribution is its capacity

for providing the basis of a systematic and replicable application of the concept of subculture to the analysis of behavioral phenomena. In particular, it provides a basis for applying the classic methods of comparative ethnology—developed in connection with whole societies or cultures—to systematically and specifically delineated cultural units within a society. As one brief example, if one is concerned with the behavioral practice of "customary utilization of public welfare funds as a routine source of income," one might delineate as an initial study population the four-way compound status class "adult laboring class black female," and conduct systematic inquiry as to the prevalence, distribution, attitudes toward, motivations for (and so on) of this practice by directing comparative analysis to a series of other compound status classes derived by varying the elements (adult laboring class black male; adult laboring class white female, etc.). Such comparisons enable one to identify with some precision those status characteristics which are most closely associated with greater or lesser participation in this practice (e.g., sex may figure importantly, race insignificantly, etc.), and thus to seek in the conjunction of these most relevant status class subcultures the roots of the phenomenon at issue.

The "Culture of Poverty:"
Conceptual Inadequacies

How does this rather elaborate scheme for subcultural analysis bear on the conceptual inadequacies of the "culture of poverty" concept? It shows, first, that a major reason for dissatisfaction with the concept is precisely that it is *not* sufficiently elaborated. It is too global and undifferentiated. A large number of the elements of Lewis' 70-trait model and its derivatives simply do not apply, or apply inaccurately, to many of the various low-status populations with which people are familiar in the United States and elsewhere. The concepts of status class and subcultural conjunction make possible a systematic delineation of different kinds or types of variations of low-status populations on the basis of differences in age, region, urban/suburban/rural status, and the other cross-cutting status class categories outlined here.

A second and very serious defect concerns the position of Lewis' "culture of poverty" with respect to other cultures or subcultures. In the present approach the subcultures of low-status populations appear as one member, and only one member, of a set or class of analagous subcultures to which it is systematically related. Thus, the subculture of low-skilled laboring

populations appears in the context of two major dimensions—the ranked social strata dimension, where it shows important similarities to and differences from other ranked social strata such as the "blue collar" class, and the dimension of nonsocial-class subcultures, where it shows similarities to and differences from subcultures based on age, sex, locality, and so on. Comparative analysis within this latter dimension helps in ascertaining which of the subcultural elements are attributable to low social status as such; for example, the stress on stimulating experiences in the here and now, which is commonly seen as a characteristic of low-status subcultures, is also a property of the age-based subculture of adolescence at all social status levels.

By failing to position his subculture in a systematic fashion with respect to the subcultures of other social status levels, Lewis denies himself a powerful analytic tool—and it is this failure which accounts in part for accusations that the "culture of poverty" appears as a unique, isolated, and separate phenomenon without meaningful ties to other parts of the society. While Lewis does cite other social classes occasionally, he does not present a systematic treatment of the relationship of the poverty subculture to the subcultures of other social strata. Instead he compares it, for the most part, to a nebulous entity called "the rest of society." A more adequate treatment might involve a set of cultures called the culture of near-poverty, of modest means, of near-affluence, and a culture of affluence, whose features could be compared systematically to those of the poverty culture.

However, as already suggested, I see little profit in such an approach, since the concept of "poverty" does not seem to provide a good basis for a systematic treatment of subcultural differentiation. My objections are based, among other things, on dissatisfaction with an income-based criterion, with the use of a general condition such as "poverty" or "violence" to specify a whole class, and with the evaluative connotations of the concept. Lewis himself agrees that no single characteristic can adequately characterize a class-related subculture, and that the essence of a subculture lies in the complex network of *relationships* between its various component features. It is often useful to select one feature out of this complex by which to characterize the subculture as a whole, but income seems considerably less sensitive to status-related subcultural differences than other characteristics. My use of the term "low-skilled laboring class" reflects research findings that occupational circumstances seem to play a more critical role in life-style than income, and also that it is

easier to see the logical connections between occupational involvement and other characteristics of any social class.

As noted earlier, it is important, in the interests of minimizing tautology, to attempt to designate a specific population separately from the subculture it manifests. If one avoids the circularity of using the term "poverty" both to define the class and to characterize its subculture, and instead designates specific social strata on the basis of specific defining criteria, one can then treat the particular characteristics of low status populations as manifestations for formal features found on *all* status levels. One can examine, for example, variations among the several classes in the forms and frequencies of such elements as educational attitudes and practices, income levels, recreational practices, prevalence and kinds of illegal pursuits, and so on.

A third conceptual defect concerns the "crucial element" aspect of Lewis' formulation. While Lewis has chosen to characterize his subculture by the term "poverty"—which is most commonly understood to mean having little money—he does not cite "low income" as the central feature of the subculture, but rather something having to do with "organization." Lewis never specifies very clearly what he means by organization, and in fact runs into trouble in trying to reconcile the apparently conflicting notions that slum communities rank low in "organization" but at the same time contain units with great solidarity and a strong "sense of community."[17] But he does make it quite clear that he regards as the crucial element of the subculture what he terms "nonparticipation in the major institutions of the larger society."[18] Putting aside the questions of the meaning of the terms "major institutions" and "larger society" (in the United States the numbers lottery is a major institution with probably more lower class participants than there are middle class participants in PTA's), Lewis suggests that if low-status populations somehow *do* become involved in the "major institutions of society" (which seem to mean in this context organizations which play some part in political decision-making processes), they no longer have a culture of poverty, even though the other sixty-nine traits of his subculture may have changed little.

The notion that a complex and multi-faceted subculture will no longer exist if one of its many elements is removed seems to indicate a bad misreading of the whole typological method of analysis, particularly as it applies to subcultures. It is not unlikely that Lewis' choice of this criterion as "crucial" was motivated less by a concern with conceptual adequacy than by

political and ideological considerations (an issue to be discussed below).

Another major deficiency in the "culture of poverty" concept, from the viewpoint of adequate understanding of low-status populations, concerns the role of what are loosely called "values." "Values" is used here in one of its many senses to refer in a very rough and imprecise way to those elements or aspects of social science formulations which attributed, either explicitly or implicitly, varying degrees of rightness, merit, worth, or virtue to some of the objects under consideration. The bases of these quasi-moral evaluations may often be found in the normative definitions of one or more cultural or quasi-cultural systems. Among these are the subcultures of the various status classes (e.g., definitions of "bad" mothering practices in the female subculture), national cultures (e.g., goodness or badness of greater or lesser degrees of popular participation in the political process), and the theoretical or ideological frameworks of special belief or theoretical systems (e.g., value placed on "effective impulse control" or "sexual maturity" within the Freudian/psychodynamic theoretical system).

It is obviously impossible to explore in any detail these systems and the kinds of evaluative standards associated with each. Instead, I shall simply cite some of the more obvious instances of special-system evaluation in Lewis' work as manifested in his choice of terms of reference. These are grouped under four categories. The first might be called "simple derogation," as when Lewis characterizes males in the culture of poverty as "irresponsible," "generally unreliable," "immature," and "punishing," and female houshold heads as "authoritarian." The people in general are characterized as "ignorant" and "suspicious" and the culture in general as "superficial" and "empty." Lewis says that his "culture of poverty" is "thin" and characterized by a "poverty of culture"—an odd phrase for an anthropologist to apply to a subcultural system with seventy distinctive traits.[19] The standards underlying these evaluations are derived from a variety of sources, and reflect widely-held moral convictions of the general public.

The second category of evaluative terms is derived from what might be called "hidden reference standards." That is, what appear to be semantically independent characterizations of the subculture or elements thereof actually involve a reference to or comparison with another subculture or element, generally unspecified. Examples of this are found in the terms "marginal," "anachronistic," "underemployment," "early initiation into sex," "lack of privacy," "minimum organization," and "absence of childhood as a special age-stage."[20] The hidden reference standard component of each of these terms can be determined by applying to each the query: "With reference to what?" The reference in such instances is sometimes, but not always, to idealized practices of middle-class adult populations.

A third category of terms derives its evaluative connotations from special assumptions as to approved or desirable states or conditions as defined within particular analytic frames of reference or theoretical systems. Lewis' formulations are influenced particularly, although not exclusively, by psychodynamic definitions of mental or emotional health and ill health. Thus, Lewis attributes to individuals in the culture of poverty characteristics such as "high maternal deprivation," "weak ego structure," and "confusion of sex identity."[21] From other special analytic frameworks come the terms "alienated," "apathetic," and "imprisoned in a vicious cycle."

A fourth order of evaluative characterization is based on speculative inferences regarding the subjective states of individuals. Lewis attributes to persons in the culture of poverty such characteristics as "strong feelings of inferiority," "strong feelings of helplessness," "hatred of the police," and a "pervading sense of hopelessness and despair." Two major issues with respect to such characterizations relate to the order of evidence upon which they are based (interpretations of various kinds of psychological tests which embody the same kinds of assumptions as the parent disciplines from which they are derived) and the issue of insufficient specification. Do all people in the culture of poverty hate all policemen at all times? Are all the people hopeless and despairing under all circumstances, at all ages, at all times?

A fifth category of valuation is evidenced less by specific terminology than by the general spirit or thrust of Lewis' formulation as a whole. This is the influence of the basic ideological assumptions and related social-reform objectives of particular political philosophies. Those aspects of Lewis' work and similar writings which are influenced by shared and generally accepted values of the national culture or of status-class subcultures do not ordinarily evoke particularly strong responses in the average American reader. Those values which are derived from particular partisan political philosophies, on the other hand, have the capacity to evoke reactions of the most passionate sort. The final section of this paper is devoted to this issue, since in my opinion the relationship between scholarly formulation and political values which figures

so prominently in Lewis' writings reflects one of the most critical issues in social science today.

Partisan Values
and Conceptualizations of Subcultures

This issue, which may be phrased in crude general terms as the relation of knowledge to values, is one of the oldest intellectual issues, and has been a highly explicit concern in social science certainly since the beginnings of its "modern" phase roughly one hundred years ago. The issue has evoked brilliant and eloquent formulations by such giants as Karl Marx, Karl Mannheim, and Max Weber, along with a host of lesser lights. All the arguments pro and con have been presented many, many times, in great and elaborate detail, often with great force and cogency. Why, then, raise the issue again at this particular time and under these particular circumstances? While the substance of the issue has changed very little over the years, it is my feeling that the social context within which it is expressed has altered very significantly, particularly within the past decade.

How can one phrase the issue, hopefully in a fair and simple manner, in order to examine its current import? Again, crudely and at the risk of great oversimplification, it is possible to delineate two general positions with respect to the objectives of the scholarly enterprise of gathering knowledge with respect to social phenomena.

The first position holds that the major and most immediate objective is to further the achievement of a good society and a good life for its members. Knowledge is viewed as an instrument for effectuating needed social reforms, and in particular eliminating such social ills as war, poverty, injustice, inequality, bigotry, class discrimination and racial prejudice. The validity of the enterprise as a whole is judged by its success in producing concrete, specific, and workable methods for ameliorating these social ills. The second position maintains that the major objective of the knowledge-gathering enterprise is to achieve as comprehensive, balanced, and accurate a picture as possible of the nature of social reality, and to develop descriptions and explanations of social phenomena which are influenced as little as possible either by the values of particular groups or by what are regarded at a particular point in time as social problems, or by the requirements of bringing about social reforms.

The two positions are phrased here as "pure" or ideal polar positions to emphasize their contrast. In practice, of course, there are many gradations and (at least in theory) a "central" position which effectively melds both objectives. Assigning names to these positions is even riskier than trying to characterize them briefly and fairly, but in the interests of conciseness the first might be called the "social relevance" position and the second the "pure knowledge" position. This issue is sometimes phrased as the opposition between "value-influenced" and "value-free" social science, but I think this is an extremely misleading formulation since few responsible scholars today would deny the influence of values on knowledge. To be human is to value, and to engage in scholarly endeavor is to value mightily. Values of a hundred different kinds enter into our work at a hundred different points—in the selection of subjects to examine, in the choice of methods to pursue, in the gathering of data, in the analysis of findings, in the interpretation of results. The issue is not *whether* values influence social science formulations, but *which* values and *how much,* and *to what ends.* For those who choose the "pure knowledge" alternative in one of its various forms, a more reasonable statement of purpose is to produce formulations which are as free *as possible* from the *unexamined* value premises of the various normative systems which affect one's work.

During the past half-century there has been, I believe, a fairly even balance between proponents of these two positions. Both sides command powerful arguments and have produced powerful champions, and this in my opinion is a good thing. Any strongly-held polar position is prone to excess, and the persisting interplay and conflict between these two has served to limit and inhibit the excesses inherent in each of the positions. The proponents of social relevance have kept the pure knowledge devotées from soaring too far off into the wild blue yonder of arcane specialization, compulsive preoccupation with picayune detail, the irresistible lure of the esoteric, or the addictive fascination of abstract system-building. In turn, the pure-knowledge school has provided a leavening influence on the tendencies inherent in the social relevance position toward self-righteous dogmatism, the studied neglect of facts and views which cast doubt on the feasibility or desirability of particular reform objectives, and the attribution of sacred infallibility to the premises of particular social or political theories. Until recently, this contest has been, by and large, a standoff, with beneficial consequences for both sides and for the enterprise of knowledge-seeking as a whole. (The term "beneficial" of course, reflects my own values.)

It is my impression that this balance has shifted markedly in the past decade, with social relevance gaining substantially at the expense of pure knowledge. Both the reasons for this and its consequences are of considerable importance, but I can touch on each only briefly here. One frequently cited reason is the increasing participation of professionally-trained social scientists in governmental policy-making, particularly at the federal level. This trend gained momentum in the 1930's with the movement of academic economists to Washington, and has now reached the point where many social scientists other than economists are actively involved in the formulation of governmental policies—not only as consultants, advisors and members of commissions but also as officials of the operating agencies themselves. Many of those who go to Washington come to relish being close to the centers of power, and the understandable occupational concerns of those with direct responsibility for policy have produced many both direct and indirect pressures for the development of "policy-relevant" social science formulations. These pressures, often originating with the most able men in the field, have diffused widely throughout the profession, with many consequences—not only in obvious ways such as the choice of areas for study and the sources of research financing, but in more subtle ways as well. There is increasing reliance, for example, on standards for judging the worth of a scholarly product by the ease with which it can be converted into programs of direct action, rather than by its empirical or conceptual adequacy.

A second reason, one which engages us all at present, is related to the massive social reform movements which have swept the nation during the past decade. These center around the civil rights and anti-war movements, but have caught up in their wake a variety of related movements in such diverse areas as the participation of the citizenry in local government, the restructuring of the university, and the renewed thrust for women's rights. These social movements have had a powerful impact on the work of scholars, both directly and indirectly. One of the most direct involves what might be called "market pressures." Most academic scholarship is conducted either in or under the influence of universities, and most scholars are in close contact with and highly sensitive to the actions and attitudes of college students—a group which is currently one of the most active in reform movements. Sensitivity to the concerns of this constituency has resulted in many efforts—some quite conscious, others less so—to tailor the academic product to fit the

market demand. These market-like influences have affected not only the choice of subject matter for academic course offerings and the way in which courses are presented, but extend to the most basic levels of formulation, conceived by the professor with the student battle cry of "relevance" resounding in the background.

Related to these market demands is a set of pressures which exert a significant influence on the work of some scholars of the over-thirty generation. One group—men who played a major role in devising the intellectual formulations which undergird the present social movements—is gratified that their ideas have achieved such extensive currency and have had so marked an impact; these men continue to play an active part both in leading and supporting the younger activists. A second group—men who made fewer contributions to these conceptual formulations—is nonetheless much concerned lest they appear to be following rather than leading the intellectual trends, and has become more royalist than the king, pressing the battle cries of "action" and "relevance" more fervently than the young activists themselves.

It is my feeling that Lewis' work has been affected, in a more subtle fashion, by this latter tendency. A comparison of the general formulations accompanying *The Children of Sanchez*, published in 1961, with his more recent statements shows a marked increase in particular ideological and political influences. For example, in 1961 Lewis wrote: "I want to draw attention to the fact that poverty in modern nations is not only . . . the absence of something; it is also something *positive*—a way of life [which is] remarkably stable and persistent."[22] His 1967 formulations, in contrast, emphasize the "lacks" and "absences" in the "culture of poverty" (recall the phrase "a poverty of culture")—the very tendency he decried seven years before.[23] The more recent formulations at the same time provide evidence of the increasing influence of ideologically-derived evaluation and represent an effort to play down the "remarkably stable and persistent" quality of the subculture in order to play up the feasibility of changing it through particular programs of social reform.

Given the present intellectual climate, it seems of the utmost importance to distinguish as clearly as possible between two separable issues. The first is: How *feasible* is the objective of developing a body of social knowledge which is as free as possible from unexamined values; and the second: How *free* should a scholar be to pursue this objective? The first issue, whether the quest for knowledge minimally influenced

by values is either feasible or desireable, is infinitely arguable since there are so many kinds and levels of "values" involved and so many kinds and gradations of "influence." The issue of whether such an endeavor is even *desirable* is also highly complex, involving such factors as the unpredictable "practical" uses of "pure" scientific research, the most economic utilization of limited knowledge-gathering resources, and many more. In all likelihood, these issues will not be resolved for a long time to come; but the continuing debate will probably be beneficial.

As to the second issue, the freedom of scholars to pursue an ideal of pure knowledge, my own values virtually dictate a strong and unqualified position. Whatever its feasibility, it is my firm conviction that scholars should be free, and should remain free, to pursue this objective if they so desire and can arrange supportive resources. It is this freedom which is threatened, and dangerously threatened, in the present intellectual climate. The pure knowledge position has come to be considered, often by the most capable and perceptive proponents of social relevance, not merely as a rather harmless diversion to be regarded with amused tolerance, but in terms of the most active and passionate kind of moral condemnation—as an outrage, an abomination, an iniquity. For many of those to whom the terms "involvement," "action," and "relevance" have become the rallying cry of a great new movement towards a more just and a more humane society, the term "objective description" is an acrid pejorative, and the words "pure knowledge," "detached scholarship," or "scientific objectivity" are utered only in tones of the bitterest sarcasm.

A colorful albeit highly orthodox statement of this position is offered by Alvin Gouldner,[24] who conceptualizes sociological enterprise primarily as an instrumentality for one particular kind of social reform program and sees the major task of the sociologist as that of developing what is in effect the guiding intellectual charter for this particular "radical transformation" of the social order. "The task of the radical sociologist is not only to participate in radical political action, but also, and in part through this, to radicalize his own work." Gouldner reiterates the conventional scorn for the sham of "objectivity" and forwards the conventional argument that since sociological statements which do not carry an explicitly radical message are by definition antiradical, there is no such thing as a nonpolitical sociological statement. His characterizations of some of his sociological colleagues are consistent with his rejection of attempts at "objective" description: they are "castrated . . . the gelded servants

of the system" and are engaged in the business of helping to "clean up the vomit of modern society." Such statements make Lewis' evaluative characterizations seem quite temperate.

These shifts in the climate of permissible intellectual choice have affected every serious student of human behavior, impelling some mode of accommodation to the increasing pressures for social relevance. Again at the risk of severe oversimplification, three prevalent patterns of adaptation may be cited. The first centers around the sentiment: Why fight it? Since we all recognize that all knowledge is heavily infused with values, that the advocacy of pure knowledge is either a delusion or a pious sham, the claim to scientific detachment a massive cop-out, and that any statement of relationship between parts of a society *is* a political statement—why be hypocritical? Accept the inevitability of values, and proceed openly and deliberately to gather, analyze, and interpret information in terms of particular social ideologies, political philosophies or social reform objectives. The writer of a recent book on poverty uses these words: "At least I am candid about my ideological orientation. Yes, my book *is* a 'dialectical argument.'"[25] I firmly uphold the freedom to adopt this stance, as I uphold the freedom to pursue pure knowledge if, at the same time, the writer makes no claim of adherence to those canons of scholarship which call for balanced and comprehensive empirical and theoretical treatment, but represents his work directly and openly as a partisan political document with partisan political aims.

A second pattern of adaptation involves a conflict— often a very serious one—for those scholars who experience at the same time a strong sense that social reforms are urgently needed and a desire to adhere to traditional canons of scholarship. This conflict appears with particular poignancy in the case of those anthropologists whose training has been centered around the concept of culture—a concept represented to them as the keystone of the discipline, its basic integrating principle, and the unique contribution of anthropology to social science. Such persons confront a serious dilemma. The concept of culture in one major formulation forwards a model of societal units whose various features are intimately related, mutually cohesive, and adaptive in varying degrees to particular social and environmental conditions, and that show, in consequence, a pronounced tendency to persist over time and be resistant in varying degrees to particular kinds of social changes. This model (dismissed by some under the term "functionalism") is not, quite obviously, a congenial one for those to whom the ready

or rapid achievement of social reform is a pressing objective. The movement toward a rejection of this anthropological tradition and its associated methods is manifest in extreme form in a current slogan, "To describe what exists now is to support the establishment," and in more extreme form in a companion slogan, "To *study* people at all is to exploit them." Evidence of this conflict emerges in the work of some of the most able and eminent anthropologists, wherein the whole concept of culture and its associated perspectives is called into serious question on the level of principle, but whose substance continues to show the powerful and pervasive influence of the concept. The resolution of the conflict in favor of social reform objectives is only apparent and embodies a strong and persisting ambivalence.[26]

A third adaptation, probably the most common, involves the attempt to combine both kinds of objectives in the same enterprise—that is, to produce work which is sufficiently careful, accurate, and internally consistent to meet the requirements of scholarly adequacy and at the same time is sufficiently specific, problem-oriented, and policy-relevant to meet the requirements of needed social reform. This seems to be the course Lewis has chosen, and the course in which he has failed. One brief example will show how the two objectives of conceptual adequacy and political orientation (which have been treated separately here) affect one another and how specific political values can affect both conceptual adequacy and logic. How can one account otherwise for Lewis' surprising suggestion that the "culture of poverty" does not exist in socialist countries? Recall that he makes a distinction between "poverty" and "the culture of poverty." He then selects as the crucial element in the "*culture* of poverty" something he calls "nonparticipation in the major institutions of the larger society." He next forwards the proposition that under socialism there *is* such participation by the poor. Therefore, it follows there can be no "culture of poverty" in socialist countries.[27]

The influence of political values on this logical argument seems obvious. Designation of nonparticipation as the crucial element in the culture of poverty rather than any of its many other characteristics clearly reflects a choice. One would expect, as already noted, that a subculture to which one assigns the term "poverty" would have low income as its central element. Moreover, even the fact that Lewis takes the trouble at all to select one critical element seems to violate his own contention that it is a conjunction of many traits rather than any single trait which defines the subculture. These discrepancies, which are puzzling from the point of view of conceptual adequacy, become clear if one assumes that it is political orientation rather than logical adequacy which dictates the thrust of the argument.

Lewis' failure to combine two contrasting objectives raises the question of whether this mode of adaptation is possible. I would say that it is possible in theory, but that the number of persons with the required capacities is so small as to be negligible. To combine competent scholarship and political relevance in a single work is not at all difficult, but to do it well is extremely difficult. The kinds of perspectives, the ways of organizing one's efforts, the ends one has in view, and the audience one has in mind in doing a creative and imaginative job of scholarly research are very different from those required to do a creative and imaginative job of policy formulation or implementation. H. Stuart Hughes, an academic historian who has performed with distinction in both roles, echoes Max Weber in a recent speech: "There is an ethos, a professional standard, a pride and honor of the political man which is different from the ethos, the professional standard, the pride and honor of the intellectual. It is not impossible to perform well in both capacities, but it is difficult."[28]

I share the conviction that the man who can perform with equally high quality as scholar and as a policy formulator is rare indeed, and few of us are that man. At the same time I believe that the task of conceiving and executing imaginative and effective policies of directed social change is vital and urgent. How can both kinds of tasks be achieved? Not, I believe, by an attempt to combine the two roles in a single person, but rather by maintaining a climate wherein *both* kinds of persons—the activist, the reformer, and the policy-innovator; *and* the scholar, the knowledge-seeker, and the abstract-theory builder—are given the scope and freedom to do as well as they can that which each does best. It is always possible, where it does not happen naturally, to arrange modes of communication and contact whereby the concerns of the activist will inform the efforts of the scholar, and the formulations of the scholar facilitate the efforts of the activist. The purposes of social reform, however urgent, are poorly served over the long run by a social climate which degrades or devalues the worth of pure knowledge.[29]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The bulk of Lewis' published work dealing with low-status populations consists of autobiographical accounts by individual informants, taped and edited. However, statements on a more general or theoretical level do appear in several places in his works. Among these are the Introduction to *The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family*, Random House, New York, 1961, pp. xi-xxxi, and a section entitled "The Culture of Poverty," in the Introduction to *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty, San Juan and New York*, Random House, New York, 1965, pp. xlii-lii. Another version of this statement appears in "The Culture of Poverty," *Scientific American*, Vol. 215, No. 4, October 1966, pp. 19-24, and a third version, also entitled "The Culture of Poverty," in D.P. Moynihan (ed.), *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives From the Social Sciences*, Basic Books, New York, 1968, pp. 188-189, which in turn is taken from Oscar Lewis, *The Study of Slum Culture: Backgrounds for La Vida*, Random House, New York, 1968, pp. 4-21.

2. Different viewpoints respecting this issue are presented in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*, by Herbert J. Gans, "Class and Culture in the Study of Poverty: An Approach to Anti-Poverty Research," pp. 201-228; Lee Rainwater, "The Problem of Lower Class Culture and Poverty-War Strategy," pp. 229-259; and Walter B. Miller, "The Elimination of the American Lower Class as Federal Policy: A Critique of the Ideology of the Poverty Movement of the 1960's," pp. 260-315.

3. Some of the published criticism of Lewis' position, in varying degrees of specificity and generality, may be found in the following: Martin Rein and S. M. Miller *Poverty, Policy, and Purpose: the Dilemmas of Choice*, Bureau of Social Science Research, Washington, D.C., 1965; Hylan Lewis, "Culture, Class, and the Behavior of Low Income Families," and "The Culture of Poverty Approach to Social Problems," in Hylan Lewis, *Class, Culture, and Poverty*, Communicating Research on the Urban Poor, Washington, D.C., 1967; Herbert J. Gans in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*; Elizabeth Herzog, *About the Poor: Some Facts and Some Fictions*, Children's Bureau Publication 451-1967, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C., 1968; Peter H. Rossi and Zahava D. Blum, "Class, Status, and Poverty," in Moynihan, (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 36-60; Charles Valentine, *Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968; Frederick S. Joffee and Steven Polgar, "Family Planning and Public Policy: Is the 'Culture of Poverty' the New Cop-Out?", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, May, 1968; Harland Padfield, "New Industrial Systems and Cultural Concepts of Poverty," *Human Organization*, Vol. 29, 1970, pp. 29-36.

4. Walter B. Miller, *Subculture and Customary Behavior*, Report submitted to the National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Public Health Service, January, 1965.

5. See Walter B. Miller, in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 260, for a discussion of the subculture of low-skilled labor in the United States. The term "Lower-class III" is used to refer to the indicated population in W. B. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs," *Annals of the American Academy*

of Political and Social Science, Vol. 343, March 1966, p. 99. Definitions appear in W. B. Miller, "An Urban Lower Class Community," in S. M. Miller and S. M. Lipset, (eds.), *Poverty and Social Stratification* (in preparation).

6. Herman P. Miller, *Income Distribution in the United States*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., Goverment Printing Office, 1966, especially Tables 2-3, p. 43.

7. O. Lewis, *La Vida*, p. xlviii, and "The Culture of Poverty," *Scientific American*, Vol. 215, No. 4, October 1966, p. 34.

8. W. B. Miller, *Subculture and Customary Behavior*, p. 24 *et passim.*

9. Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1958, p. 6.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

11. O. Lewis, in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 192. A brief version of this statement also appears in O. Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez*, p. xxvii.

12. W. B. Miller, *Subculture and Customary Behavior*, p. 70.

13. W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Status System of a Modern Community*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1942.

14. For a brief and popularized comparison of selected characteristics of lower class III, lower class I, and middle class subcultures, see Walter B. Miller, "Understanding the Subcultures of Different Social Classes," *Forum*, Spring/Summer, 1970, pp. 18-20.

15. Walter B. Miller, in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 260-262.

16. Walter B. Miller, *Subculture and Customary Behavior*, p. 75.

17. Compare the emphases in O. Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez*, p. xv, starting with "The sense of community if quite strong . . ." with O. Lewis in *Scientific American, loc. cit.*, p. 22, starting with "The community . . . has a minimum of organization . . ."

18. O. Lewis in *Scientific American, loc. cit.*, p. 21.

19. O. Lewis, *La Vida*, p. lii.

20. *Ibid.*, p. xlvii, *passim.*

21. *Ibid.*, p. xlviii, *passim.*

22. O. Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez*, p. xxiv.

23. O. Lewis, in Moynihan (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 189, *passim.*

24. Alvin Gouldner, "Toward the Radical Reconstruction of Sociology," *Social Policy*, May/June, 1970, pp. 18-25.

25. Charles A. Valentine, "Reply to 'Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals'," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 10, No. 2-3, 1969, p. 197.

26. Among cultural anthropologists who have questioned the utility of the concept of culture as a valid basis of explanation for general and/or specific purposes are Elizabeth Jane Bott, *Family and Social Network*, Tavistock Publications, London 1957, p. 218: Elliot Leibow, *Talley's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston/Toronto, 1967, p. 208; and Lisa Redfield Peattie, "Anthropology and the Search for Values," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1965, pp. 362-372.

27. O. Lewis, *La Vida*, p. xlix.

28. H. Stuart Hughes, "The Need Now is to De-politicize the University," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, September 15, 1969, p. 36.

29. An October 20, 1970 letter from the late Oscar Lewis to

former editor Marion Pearsall indicated that he found this "a very thoughtful article" and that he "should certainly like to write some short comments on it." Dr. Lewis' untimely death made this impossible.

New Footnote, to Paragraph 1, p. 4:

Mark Twain, a self-appointed expert on thuggees, also locates homicidal subcultures in the American hinterland. In the process of describing mining communities in early Nevada, Twain tells us:

> If an unknown individual arrived, they did not inquire if he was capable, honest, industrious, but-- had he killed his man? If he had not, he gravitated to his natural and proper position, that of a man of small consequence; if he had, the cordiality of his reception was graduated according to the number of his dead. It was tedious work struggling up to a position of influence with bloodless hands; but when a man came with the blood of half a dozen men on his soul, his worth was recognized at once and his acquaintance sought... To be a saloon-keeper and kill a man was to be illustrious. Hence the reader will not be surprised to learn that more than one man was killed in Nevada under hardly the pretext of provocation, so impatient was the slayer to achieve reputation and throw of the galling sense of being held in indifferent repute by his associates. I knew two youths who tried to "kill their men" for no other reason-- and got killed themselves for their pains... The desperado stalked the streets with a swagger graded according to the number of his homicides, and a nod of recognition from him was sufficient to make a humble admirer happy for the rest of the day. The deference that was paid to a desperado of wide reputation, and who "kept his private graveyard," as the phrase went, was marked, and cheerfully accorded... The best known names in the Territory of Nevada were those belonging to these long-tailed heroes of the revolver.... There was a long list of them. They were brave, reckless men, and traveled with their lives in their hands. To give them their due, they did their killing mainly among themselves, and seldom molested peaceable citizens, for they considered it small credit to add to their trophies so cheap a bauble as the death of a man who was "not on the shoot," as they phrased it. They killed each other on slight

provocation, and hoped and expected to be killed them-
selves-- for they held it almost shame to die otherwise
than "with their boots on," as they expressed it.

Twain, M. (Samuel L. Clemens), Roughing It. Hartford:
American Publishing Company, 1872. Pp. 339; 340-341;
343; 344-345.

Though the phenomenon described in this quote is clearly sub-
cultural, even Twain (who is given to hyperboles) does not assert
that "long-tailed heroes of the revolver" were representative of early
Nevada citizenry. The difference between a frontier mining town
and a modern slum rests in the fact that in the former, extreme
violence practitioners were admired, whereas in the latter, their
                merely
deviance is/considered less extreme than in middle class circles.