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The Study of Minority Groups in Complex Societies

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It is now commonly recognized that social scientists have often inappropriately applied concepts derived from observations of dominant groups in society to minority populations whose behavior patterns, lifestyles, and values differ. Although some critics have questioned the motives of the scholars involved, more often the practice is seen as the result of an unthinking bias toward middle-class values. Despite a growing awareness, we believe the full implications of such a bias remain to be explored.

In this chapter we examine a number of issues posed to social science by the study of minority populations. Our main contention is that a strong middle-class bias has resulted in a body of research findings that focuses on alleged deficiencies in minority groups, and that this has led to faulty understanding and weak theory. We use the label *deficiency formulations* to characterize studies carried out in this fashion. The proposition we advocate is that the purposes of social science would be much better served by naturalistic studies focusing on prevailing characteristics within minority groups than by studies focusing on deficits.

There are two main types of deficiency formulation, although in practice they are frequently combined. The first focuses upon attributes socially valued by mainstream groups that are observed to be absent or weakly represented within particular minorities. At the group level this type is indicated by the use of such terms as "disorganized," "normless," and "unstable," while individuals are described as "ego deficient," "immature," or "lacking in motivation," "self-control," "the ability to delay gratification," and so on. The second type focuses upon attributes socially devalued by mainstream groups that are supposedly characteristic of certain study populations. Descriptions of families as "matricentric" and individuals as "prone to violence," "hedonistic," or "present oriented" are indicative of this type. Such conceptualizations are concerned primarily with specifying forms of deviation from valued attributes. They imply a failure or inability to behave in an appropriate way and so imply social and personal deficits. The first type is essentially vacuous with regard to information about the groups under investigation. It calls attention to the ways that people do not behave rather than how they act, and to ways they do not organize themselves rather than how they order their social lives. The second type yields more information, but of a highly selective kind. By focusing on deviations

from mainstream norms, it turns attention away from alternate social forms and organizational principles that may be of central importance within the group. To the extent that these differ from those of mainstream groups, such an approach leaves an informational void.

If identification of attributes absent or indicative of weakness is one feature of deficiency formulations, efforts to explain deficits by relating one to another is a second. Deficiency explanations assume a characteristic form in that they attempt to account for deficits in one area of life by pointing to deficits in another. Thus hedonistic behavior, for example, may be attributed to lack of internalized control; underachievement to lack of motivation; lack of respect for property to a poor self-image; or social ineptitude to immaturity. Grander theories are sometimes proposed linking an entire array of deficiencies, such as, for example, when economic deprivation is used to explain the failure of men to assume appropriate roles in the family, which in turn is held responsible for family instability, which purportedly produces pathology in children who are unable to cope, are uneducable, and unable to obtain gainful employment as adults, leading to a repetition of the cycle.

Deficiency formulations are themselves deficient in some fundamental ways. Most obvious is the distortion that comes from using concepts that have derived their substantive meaning from normative patterns within one group to characterize patterns in a group whose norms may be quite different. This leads observers to misconstrue the meaning and significance of social acts and to overlook important features of cultural and personal organization. Less obvious is the fact that such an approach necessarily leads to weak theory that is ill suited for designing remedial programs. By focusing on ways in which minority groups deviate from mainstream norms, such theory fails to provide systematic information about the more normal, everyday aspects of social life and how they are organized. Furthermore, preoccupation with deficits and deviations leads observers to ignore intragroup variability in favor of intergroup comparisons between minority and mainstream groups. As a result, deficiency formulations lead to highly fragmented and unsystematic accounts of minority groups; they generally contain far more information about the values and presuppositions of the dominant groups in which the concepts were developed, tested, and substantiated. The situation is somewhat analogous to examining fish solely in terms of the ways they differ from birds. While it may be of some interest to learn that fish cannot fly because they lack wings and appropriate breathing apparatus, there is a lot more we would want to know about fish if we were to theorize about their particular adaptive forms. We would want to know, for example, how they do propel themselves and breathe. If we did not, we would be prone to make some fatal mistakes when attempting to construct benign environments for them to flourish. The point is not that deficiency formulations are necessarily false or inaccurate, only that they are of limited informative value and therefore provide a poor basis for generating theory and developing helpful action programs.

What we want to emphasize is that a central objective of social science research must be to provide a clear sense of how the social life of a group is ordered. Even though profound frustrations exist, minority group members pursue various goals and sometimes achieve them; they actively engage in interpersonal relations from which they derive satisfaction; and they organize their activities in ways that are meaningful to themselves and those with whom they associate. A major flaw of deficiency formulations is that they neglect to document such behavior and activities and thereby fail to provide a firm basis for understanding the nature of social life among minority populations.

We hasten to add that although deficiency formulations tend to be disparaging, social scientists who employ them do not necessarily regard the people so described as inferior. We are convinced that the vast majority of social scientists are sympathetic toward the people they describe and that the tenaciousness of the deficiency bias in the face of a social ethic that has come to tolerate if not encourage ethnic and cultural diversity reflects deeply rooted epistemologic presuppositions that have shaped Western thought. Therefore in addition to illustrating the problem of deficiency formulations through examples, we will briefly explore some of the presuppositions that have informed empirical research with minority groups. We then discuss several recent attempts to confront the issues raised by deficiency formulations, followed by a contrasting of the naturalistic with the deficiency approaches to the study of minority populations. Finally, we explore some of the pragmatic implications of these alternative perspectives.

THE TROUBLE WITH THEM IS

A major portion of the encyclopedic social science literature on minority populations is devoted to detailing alleged deficiencies in their cultural repertoires, family life, and personal capacities and to providing explanations for them. We do not propose to review all of this research here, but rather to draw selectively from certain works, all of them acknowledged to be significant contributions to the social science literature. Our object is not to condemn these studies, for there is much of value in each of them, but merely to point out the impact of one intellectual strand among many on characterizations of minority populations.

We have organized the discussion around three levels of analysis accentuated in the literature—culture, the family, and personality. Since the prototype of deficiency is poverty, we focus upon the literature on lower-class populations, bringing in ethnic variations where they have been emphasized by the respective scholars. It has been among the lower classes—the economically marginal members of society—that the Western elite has looked most searchingly for, and found, its "social problems." However, since black Americans have been particularly victimized by deficiency formulations, we have included a special section concerning their characterization in the social science literature.

The "Culture of Poverty"

The basic premises for treating the poor as deficient were clearly articulated by Oscar Lewis in his conceptualization of the "culture of poverty," which he saw as both an adaptation to and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated capitalistic society. He described the major characteristics of the culture of poverty as follows:

> It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society. Indeed, many of the traits of the culture of poverty can be viewed as attempts at local solutions for problems not met by existing institutions and agencies because the people are not eligible for them, cannot afford them, or are ignorant or suspicious of them. (Lewis, 1966, p. xliv)
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> On the family level the major traits of the culture of poverty are the absence of childhood as a specially prolonged and protected stage in the life cycle, early initiation into sex, free unions or consensual marriages, a relatively high incidence of the abandonment of wives and children, a trend toward female- or mother-

centered families and consequently a much greater knowledge of maternal relatives, a strong predisposition to authoritarianism, lack of privacy, verbal emphasis upon family solidarity which is only rarely achieved because of sibling rivalry, and competition for limited goods and maternal affection.

On the level of the individual the major characteristics are a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependence and of inferiority. (Lewis, 1966, p. xlvii)

Other traits include a high incidence of material deprivation, of orality, of weak ego structure, confusion of sexual identification, a lack of impulse control, a strong present time orientation with relatively little ability to defer gratification and to plan for the future, a sense of resignation and fatalism, a widespread belief in male superiority, and a high tolerance for psychological pathology of all sorts. (Lewis, 1966, p. xlviii)

Lewis held that the culture of poverty was perpetuated through the socialization experiences of children:

The culture of poverty is not only an adaptation to a set of objective conditions of the larger society. Once it comes into existence it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on the children. By the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime. (Lewis, 1966, p. xlv)

Nowhere has the basic premise of deficiency formulations been more clearly stated than by Lewis when he wrote that "it would be helpful to think of the subcultures of poverty as the zero point on a continuum which leads to the working class and middle class (Lewis, 1969, p. 190).

Many other accounts of lower-class culture echo Lewis' characterization. In her thorough review of the social science literature on the lower classes in America during the 1960s, Keller notes that researchers describe lower-class culture as involving "a simplification of the experience world" (Keller, 1970, p. 21). She notes that much of the research deplores the presence of certain values, such as traditionalism, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, antiintellectualism, person rather than object orientation, and an excessive love of power, that differ from values held by members of higher classes. Weakly adhered to or entirely absent are said to be the middle-class virtues of "a stress on career, planning one's life into a series of achievable stages, creative self-development, a love of ideas and of possessions" (p. 27). The culture of the lower class is characterized as unintegrated and inconsistent. Keller asserts that "if consistent moral values are necessary for the development of an integrated image of one's self and the world, there is reason to assume that this consistency and the integration it fosters is weak or absent in lower-class environments" (p. 30). She also reports that social scientists bemoan "an aversion to planning and to thinking about the future except with anxiety and fear, a short-range time perspective, a live-for-today attitude, a pervasive suspicion and distrust of the larger world, and a lesser emphasis on self-reliance than dependence on outsiders" (p. 72).

Distinguishing between the upper-lower and lower-lower classes, she reports that economic and educational deprivations among the latter "seem to foster characteristic attitudes of suspicion, distrust, fear of the future, and concern with immediate gratifications not found as extremely in the higher classes" (Keller, 1970, p. 9). Members of the lower-lower class are described as living in a "disordered deprived

environment" in which "every moral epithet in the community is levelled against them as a group—incest, drinking, dirt, vulgarity, laziness, criminality, and lack of desire to better themselves" (Keller, 1970, p. 21; see also Blake, 1955).

The Lower-class Family

Keller remarks that we remain ignorant about lower-class families as a result of too heavy reliance on concepts reflecting real or imagined features of middle-class life. She reminds us that lower-class families are more than just "inadequate versions of the middle class"; instead, they are "fundamentally different in their organization and lifestyles" (Keller, 1970, p. 71). The picture that emerges from Keller's review is almost entirely negative. She reports that lower-class households are described by social scientists as "normless, alienated, chaotic," and as "less stable and cohesive" and "more strife ridden than other classes" (p. 31). She also notes that lower-class families are typically portrayed as being unable to educate their children, cure their ills, provide them with jobs, or effectively control their behavior (p. 5).

The tendency to characterize lower-class family life negatively is particularly evident in research done on two specific areas: relations between the sexes and patterns of child rearing. Relations between the sexes are described as "specialized," "impersonal," and "segmental," with intimacy at a minimum (Keller, 1970, p. 32). The result is said to be "great emotional distance between the sexes" and relations that are "unstable and fraught with mutual recrimination and difficulties" (pp. 32–33). In that part of the lower class termed "rough," husband–wife relations are seen as "filled with suspicion and hostility," the women defensively independent, the men defensively masculine, and sex role differences, at least in their middle-class form, absent. The sexes are described as "going past each other. The men want to be mothered, nurtured, and taken care of but they also want to be free and dominant. The women want to be loved and protected and yet be in control. There is fear, hostility, and rejection as well as need on both sides" (Keller, 1970, p. 35).

Relations between parents and children are described as "distant," stressing only overt, formal aspects of relationship while minimizing affectional and emotional components (Keller, 1970, p. 38). Lower-class parents are described as being unaware of and unconcerned about their children's activities at school and at play and as lacking in appreciation for "the significance of the unique personality and the unique potential of each individual child" (p. 43). Parents are said to rely completely on "negative techniques of child rearing, especially deprivation or pain" (p. 43), while "enjoining proper conduct by means of threats and punishments, and by using physical rather than psychological techniques" (p. 46).

The conclusions drawn from this type of analysis are that the lower-class family is "a poor negative of the ideal-type middle-class family;" that it is "less effective as a transmitter of cultural values [than] the middle-class" family (Keller, 1970, p. 75); and that its "significance for personality development is in doubt" (p. 54).

Lower-class Personality

Descriptions of lower-class people are replete with terms denoting characterologic defects. The poor are described as "authoritarian," "intolerant," "hard," "tough," "cynical," "distrustful," and "preoccupied with material possessions" (Keller, 1970, p. 21). They are also seen as haunted by fear of loneliness, lacking in self-confidence, and tending toward passivity. According to Keller, in such research they emerge as

self-centered; "interested in little outside of their own narrow circle, they have few ideas and are preoccupied with creature comforts" (Keller, 1970, p. 60). One study characterizes them as "reluctant to meet people or to initiate interaction" (Cohen & Hodges, 1963), another as suffering from pervasive anxieties about physical safety, dependable income, and emotional satisfaction (Rainwater, 1960). It is also reported that "pity and preoccupation with the unfortunate are their most readily experienced emotions" (Keller, 1970, p. 34).

Few are spared in the social scientists' search for pathology. Lower-class men are portrayed as feeling inadequate as husbands and fathers, leading Rainwater, for example, to interpret their tendency to bluster and aggression as a cover up for inferior feelings (Rainwater, 1960). It is said that they "want badly to he mothered" and that they are preoccupied by "the powerful temptation to escape the intolerable burden of being only half a man by being a woman" (Keller, 1970, p. 37). Children are seen as exposed to an incoherent and fragmented view of a world governed by opposing principles; as a result, they tend to compartmentalize values and actions, a process deemed to have "dubious merit for moral development" (p. 29).

Banfield succinctly sums up much of the literature on the character of lower class persons when he writes

> The lower-class individual lives from moment to moment. If he has any awareness of the future, it is of something fixed. Impulse governs his behavior, either because he cannot discipline himself to sacrifice a present for a future satisfaction or because he has no sense of the future. He is therefore radically improvident: what he cannot consume immediately he considers valueless. His bodily needs (especially for sex) and his taste for "action" take precedence over everything else —and certainly over any work routine. (Banfield, 1970, p. 53)

The conclusions to which such deficiency formulations inevitably lead are that lower-class culture, social organization, and personality are all problematic. We are asked to think of lower-class culture as "the zero point on a continuum" (Lewis, 1969, p. 190) and are told that in the lower class "the family as such does not exist in its conventional form" (Keller, 1970, p. 75). Lower-class persons, as a result of being subjected to such a putatively vacuous environment, are portrayed as an accumulation of pathologic deficits.

Afro-American Subculture

Of all the ethnic groups that have been subjected to this type of analysis, Afro-Americans have undoubtedly been the most intensive targets. A deeply rooted social science tradition has condemned the majority of them, by implication if not accusation, to an array of categories denoting deviance. As Ladner has eloquently put it,

> Blacks have always been measured against an alien set of norms. As a result they have been considered to be a deviation from the ambiguous white middle-class model, which itself has not always been clearly defined. This inability or refusal to deal with blacks as part and parcel of the varying historical and cultural contributions to the American scene has, perhaps, been the reason sociology has excluded the black perspective from its widely accepted mainstream theories.
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> Mainstream sociology, in this regard, reflects the ideology of the larger society, which has always excluded black lifestyles, values, behavior, attitudes, and so forth from the body of data that is used to define, describe, conceptualize, and theorize about the structure and functions of American society. Sociology has in a similar manner excluded the totality of black existence from its major theories, except

insofar as it *deviated* from the so-called norms. (Ladner, 1973, p. xxiii; italics in original)

Attempts to prove blacks inferior go back to early efforts to justify slavery. Following the Civil War, the racial inferiority of blacks was asserted as an explanation for (and justification of) the squalid conditions under which they lived. Thus John Van Ervie, in a book entitled *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination,* published in 1870, asserted that "the Negro isolated by himself, seems utterly incapable of transmitting anything whatsoever to the succeeding generation" (cited by Jones, 1973, p. 121). Assaults on the integrity of the black family also appeared early in the social science literature. Howard Odom's characterization was typical. He stated that relations between husband and wife often set a poor example for the children, that blacks liked to crowd together and were not content unless several were sleeping in one room, that the interior of the house was not kept in good repair, that disorder and filth were characteristic, that basic supplies and provisions were not purchased, and that there was an absence of literature in the home. He attributed these failings to the inherent inability of most blacks to grasp the basic principles of family and home life (Odom, 1910).

More recent social science accounts of Afro-Americans continue to focus on negative traits but explain them differently, i.e., in terms of oppression. Pettigrew's widely cited synthesis of research on black Americans (Pettigrew, 1964) is a prime example of this tendency. For Pettigrew, the overwhelming fact of life for all black people is oppression, and the key to understanding their behavior is how they react to it. Indeed, it is fair to say that reactions to oppression and black personality are virtually synonymous in his view (see also Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951). He writes, "The socially-stigmatized role of negro is the central feature of having dark skin in the United States. At the personality level, such enforced role adaptation divides the individual negro both from other human beings and from himself" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 4). "Imagine, then, the depth of the effect of having to play a role which has such vast personal and social significance that it influences virtually all aspects of daily living. Indeed, the resulting confusion of self-identity and lowering of self-esteem are two of the most serious 'marks of oppression' upon negro American personality" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 6). He then goes on to describe reactions to the hostile environment such as the "oppression phobia" experienced by many Afro-Americans—an expectation of violent mistreatment combined with a feeling of utter helplessness (from Cayton, 1951, p. 276). He cites McClelland's work to the effect that slavery in all its forms has sharply lowered the need for achievement, and asserts that slavery has vitiated family life. He goes on to state that "being a negro in America is less of a racial identity than a necessity to adjust to subordinate social roles. The effects of playing this 'negro' role are profound and lasting. Evaluating himself by the way others react to him, the negro may grow into a servile role; in time the person and the role become indistinguishable" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 252; see also Brazziel, 1964; Grossack, 1957a, b; Guba, Jackson, & Bidwell, 1959).

Pettigrew attributes the matricentric family pattern reported in the literature to slavery and asserts that both poverty and migration act to perpetuate the pattern. Poverty renders a healthy family life unattainable through dilapidated housing, crowded living conditions, restricted recreational facilities, and direct contact with the most corrupting elements of urban disorganization; it also makes the ideal American pattern of household economics practically impossible. As evidence of family instability he cites the following data:

> Over a third of all non-white mothers with children under six years of age hold jobs as compared with less than a fifth of white mothers with children under six; only three-fourths of all non-white families have both the husband and wife present in the household as compared with nine-tenths of white families; and only two-thirds of non-whites under eighteen years of age live with both of their parents as compared with nine-tenths of such whites. (Pettigrew, 1964, pp. 16–17)

He then goes on to discuss the personality effects on children living under these conditions, that is, living "in a disorganized home without a father" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 17). He cites a study that reveals that 8- and 9-year-old children whose fathers are absent seek immediate gratification far more than children whose fathers are present in the home and then adds, "This hunger for immediate gratification among fatherless children seems to have serious implications. Regardless of race, children manifesting this trait also tend to be less accurate in judging time, less 'socially responsible, less oriented toward achievement and more prone toward delinquency. Indeed psychologists maintain that the inability to delay gratification is a critical factor in immature, criminal and neurotic behavior (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 17; see also Antonovsky & Lerner, 1959, pp. 132–138).[1]

Pettigrew follows with an analysis of sex roles. He cites a finding that 5–14-year-old black youths without fathers experience unusual difficulty in differentiating between male and female roles, and then he reviews a large body of literature concerning the effect of father absence on a young boy's sex identity. Noting that black males scored higher than white males on a measure of femininity in some studies, he concludes that "these findings reflect not only the effects of family disorganization but also the effeminate aspects of the 'negro' role many of these men must play in adult life. Servility is often required, and most low-pay service occupations typically open to unskilled negro males—for example, cook, waiter orderly, dishwasher—generally carry a connotation in American culture of being 'women's work.' Thus, the sex-identity problems created by the fatherless home are perpetuated in adulthood" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 21).

Pettigrew is not alone in painting a negative composite view of the Afro-American lifestyle. Bernard, for example, describes children reared in black families as "humanly destroyed" (Bernard, 1966, p. 144), explaining that "in their world, physical gestures, grunts, facial expressions and tones of voice constitute the major means of communication. These, of course, are inadequate and greatly restrict the child's ability to learn. Socialization under these circumstances is enormously handicapped. Whatever socialization takes place in such circumstances is almost wholly inadequate, even accidental. People react, when they do, on the emotional level; few abstractions enter the relationship" (Bernard, 1966, pp. 143–144). This constitutes a state of deprivation so severe, she claims, that "the mental and emotional capacity [is] irredeemably lost" (Bernard, 1966, p. 144).

An illuminating example of the tendency to focus on personal deficiencies of Afro-Americans is Rohrer and Edmonson's study of southern blacks, *The Eighth Generation Grows Up.* Their research, which involved extensive interviews with a subsample of black adults in New Orleans who, as children, had been subjects in Davis and Dollard's (1940) *Children of Bondage* study, has been widely cited to buttress claims about the devastating consequences oppression and discrimination can have. The subjects of this research, all "ordinary people," employed, living with their families, and in no apparent difficulty with the law, are described almost entirely in terms of weakness and deficits. One subject, for example, is diagnosed as "confused

about his sexual identity," "inadequate in his occupational world," "fearful in his relations with others," and generally prone to "paranoid delusions" (Rohrer & Edmonson, 1960, p. 95). A woman is characterized as having "only a hazy awareness of altruism" and as being dependent on "magical thought processes" (pp. 95, 135). Another is termed "a beaten-down paranoid" who is "passive and submissive," with defenses of "repression, avoidance, denial, pain, dependency and use of rationalization" (pp. 152–153). A young man in their study is labeled a "hedonistic, impulsive man in conflict with a depriving world," unable to understand why the world should not grant his "infantile wishes" (p. 183). About him they write,

> It is clear that [his] behavior is not antisocial so much as it is dyssocial. He has grown up in an environment that has manifest disregard for the usual social code. He has lived all his life in this abnormal moral atmosphere and he has adhered to the values of his predatory and criminal group. He was deprived of any real love in his childhood. The result of this pathological rearing is that [he] has only a stunted capacity for joy, love or hope. It is doubtful that he feels much inner conflict or acceptance, either, since chronic depression is one of his recognizable personality characteristics. Underneath he must feel himself to be a failure even in terms of his own social values and moral codes He is hedonistic, has a poorly developed conscience, and lacks the judgment or ability to learn from experience or from punishment. He is manipulative and extortionistic, and continually uses the primitive techniques of hit and grab. He has violent emotions, and lacks ability to form lasting ties with other people. In his heart of hearts he knows himself to be a failure[,] weak, nameless and criminal, and he is unhappy. (Rohrer & Edmonson, 1960, p. 185)

Another subject, a professional man, is described as "marginal" and "pretty sick," lacking in any apparent need for "acceptance and recognition common to many, perhaps most professional people." The authors add that there is a "regressive quality to this lack" (Rohrer & Edmonson, 1960, p. 271). Their analysis is littered with other terms denoting deficiency and weakness such as "rebellious little hoyden," "fearful passive little girl," "desperate and embattled petty thief," and "fearful isolated old maid" (pp. 295–296).[2]

Explanations for Deficiencies

In most of the studies discussed above, some attempt is made to account for the patterns described. What we find is an unmistakable tendency to find explanations for deficits in one area of life by relating them to deficits in other areas, thereby suggesting that the absence of one attribute accounts for the absence of another. Pettigrew, for example, argues that "employment discrimination has traditionally made it more difficult for the poorly educated negro male to secure employment than the poorly educated negro female [and] when the unskilled negro male does manage to secure a job, he generally assumes an occupation that pays barely enough to support himself—much less a family" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 16). This failure by the men to provide for their families is said to give rise to a number of problems, including family instability, personal pathology on the part of men, heightened conflict between husband and wife, and a failure of the family unit to fulfill its main social functions. Pettigrew is particularly concerned with the effects on children's personality of being reared in a father-absent home. He cites a study showing that 8- and 9-year-old children whose fathers are absent seek immediate gratification far more than children whose fathers are present in the home. This inability to delay

gratification, according to Pettigrew, is in turn correlated with an inability to "judge time, a diminished social responsiveness, diminished orientation toward achievement, proneness to delinquency, and to immature, criminal and neurotic behavior" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 17). He continues, "Family disorganization upsets the normal socializing influence of the home and creates the potential for juvenile delinquency" (p. 21). A person reared under such conditions is "psychologically vulnerable," "crippled by weak ego development," and "more likely to fall prey to mental illness, drug addiction or crime, depending on his particular life history. He has few personality resources to withstand the gale winds of discrimination that strike him full force in adolescence. Thus, segregation has its most fundamental influence on negro personality in the manner in which it affects negro family functioning" (pp. 22–23).[3]

Perhaps the work that stimulated the most controversy over this type of explanation was Daniel Moynihan's essay, "Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro Family," published in 1965. Moynihan held that opportunity for the large mass of black workers in the lower range of training and education has not been improving and that in many ways the circumstances of these workers relative to the white work force had grown worse. This, he maintained, "has led to, or been accompanied by, a serious weakening of the negro social structure, specifically of the negro family" (Moynihan, 1965, p. 747). The cumulative result of unemployment, low income, and excessive dependence upon the income of women created a crisis in the black family, in Moynihan's view, "and raises the serious question of whether or not this crisis is beginning to create conditions which tend to reinforce the cycle that produces it in the first place" (p. 755).

Moynihan's line of reasoning is as follows: Poor families, suffering the strains of marginal incomes and unemployed fathers, are likely to break under the responsibilities imposed by many children, and as a result of diminishing opportunities. Blacks are more likely to find themselves in these circumstances than whites. HEW estimates are that approximately 60 percent of black children in the United States are growing up in poverty-stricken families. The fundamental problem is the position of the husband/father, who is faced with unemployment and/or menial, low-paying jobs. This leads to the break up of the family, an increase in welfare dependency, and the tangle of pathology—the complex of interrelated disabilities and disadvantages that feed on each other and seem to make matters steadily worse for the individuals and communities caught up in it (Moynihan, 1965). The effect of this "pathology" on children is held to be disastrous, since a high proportion begin their lives with no father present and have no stable male figure available as a model. Their mothers have to begin working early and remain employed if they are to stay off welfare, weakening their socializing influences through both absence and diminished educational opportunities. Moynihan concludes that at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of black society is the deterioration of the family (Moynihan, 1965; for an even more extreme view of the presumed pathologic effects of black family structure see the work by Etzkowitz & Shaflander, 1969, p. 14).

The importance of economic deficiencies is also stressed by Keller, who writes that "in the middle class, the existence of economic security does not necessarily make for a happy life, but it does permit the family to exercise the main social functions (of biological reproduction, maintenance, socialization and status placement)," and research on the poor gives the impression that "the absence of economic security leaves lower-class family cohesion to the workings of personal need and affection,

bonds that have generally proved too tenuous to make the institution either very stable or very permanent" (Keller, 1970, p. 5).

Conflict and strife within the lower-class family are likewise traced to economic failures. For example, Cohen and Hodges suggest that a challenge for the lower-class male is to evolve a way of life that will reduce his insecurity and enhance his power in ways that do not depend upon achievement in the labor market. One way to do this is to establish close relationships with kinsmen; another is to participate in high-solidarity friendship groups. The obligations incurred by males in meeting the commitments involved conflict with conjugal obligations, resulting in husband–wife clashes (Cohen & Hodges, 1963). Pettigrew states that "the negro wife can easily become disgusted with her financially-alienated husband, and her rejection of him further alienates the male from the family life" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 16), thereby increasing marital conflict.

Various character defects among lower-class men are traced to economic incompetence as well. Thus Rainwater attributes the "bluster and aggressiveness" of lower-class men to feelings of inadequacy arising from their inability to provide properly for their families (Rainwater, 1960), and Keller states that many feel that this "intolerable burden of being only half a man" generates deep-seated temptations to become a woman. The logic behind this temptation is that "if he were a woman his inadequacies and failures would not exist, for he could escape the tests and trials that beset his life." This temptation to abandon the male role is then cited to explain the "exaggerated emphasis on masculinity, ridicule of homosexuality, the need to prove one's self [sic] a man, to domineer over women, and to be chronically unfaithful" (Keller, 1970, p. 37).

While these examples may be considered extreme by some, the logic behind them is commonplace—poverty causes family disorganization, which in turn causes socialization failures, which cause character defects, which perpetuate poverty. The form of this analysis has structured social scientific accounts of a wide range of minority groups in contemporary societies, including native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Filipino-Americans, Mexican-Americans, the Irish in England, the Maoris in New Zealand, and the Aborigines in Australia, to name but a few. One reason for the widespread acceptance of these premises is that they have an appeal for those social scientists who are committed to a sympathetic explanation for the social problems they see plaguing these groups. Superficially, at least, the blame is placed on poverty and the solution is a redistribution of opportunity and/or access to resources. The implicit assumption is that if conditions were so altered, the behavior patterns of these ethnic groups would coincide with those who constitute the cultural mainstream. The presupposition is that cultural differences between these groups, and between each group and the mainstream, are insignificant. In short, the position implies that the most important behavior patterns among these peoples are those *in reaction to* external contingencies. But this has the effect of denying the validity of each group's unique cultural heritage and the positive ways culture structures behavior. Our central point is that a sound theoretical basis for the study of cross-cultural human development requires just the opposite—that the cultural logic underlying each subculture be placed at the heart of description and explanation. This does not require that external contingencies, including access to resources, be ignored; what it does require is that significant group differences in beliefs, values, and world-view be recognized so that judgments of competence can be made against relevant criteria.[4]

The Question of Evidence

In evaluating the material presented in this section, it is important to examine the empirical evidence upon which some of these claims are based, for when we do this we discover the preoccupations with deficiencies are often so pervasive that almost anything is regarded as indicative of incompetence or pathology. Pettigrew, for example, supports his characterization of black youths as "anxious" and "hyperactive" by citing a study (Caldwell, 1959) indicating that black youths are more likely than whites to give an affirmative answer to the MMPI item "I work under a great deal of tension." As evidence for the split between true self and public role of black, which results in a shy, dependent personality, he cites the finding that black students score *higher* than whites on an MMPI item having to do with "organizing their work and lives systematically," and lower on an item dealing with "interest in the opposite sex" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 301). Nowhere does he indicate the relevance of the items to the conclusions drawn. Elsewhere he interprets as evidence of a strong "anti-white prejudice" a poll (*Newsweek,* 1963, pp. 15–34) that shows 56 percent of low-income blacks agree with the statement, "Most white men are out to keep us down" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 40; also see Cothram, 1951, McDaniel & Babchak, 1960). As evidence for sex role confusion among black males he cites their high score on two items that he interprets as indicative of femininity, "I would like to be a singer," and "I think I feel more intensely than most other people" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 29). Finally, while claiming that blacks drink to excess, he acknowledges that the data of several studies do not support his contention but dismisses this information on the grounds that drinking is a more serious problem among blacks than other groups because "they have, as a group, more from which to escape" (Pettigrew, 1964, p. 53).

Rohrer and Edmonson show the same inclination in their research. In one case history they describe a subject's "antiwhite prejudice" and cite as evidence an episode in which a bus conductor threatened to have a woman moved because she was sitting in front of the screen separating white from black passengers. The subject expressed pleasure over the fact that a policeman refused to support the bus conductor's threat (Rohrer & Edmonson, 1960, p. 118). Another subject was described as showing "rebellious touchiness" because "he told his white boss during an argument 'don't holler at me . Just talk to me like I'm people' " (p. 160). A third subject was said to have a "serious confusion" about racial identity because he had said, "We are perfectly willing to accept the 'desired' and 'forthcoming' integration as negroes. Our fight, however, is for the 'integration of opportunity' and not the complete loss of identity and absorption of a race that we happen to be proud of" (p. 236). Earlier we noted that these authors had described a subject as a "beaten-down paranoid;" the sole evidence for this diagnosis was the fact that a psychiatrist had commented on the possible presence of a paranoid tendency in her Rorschach protocol, yet in the course of numerous interviews with her the investigators encountered no feelings of persecution or rage. This led them to conclude that her paranoia was concealed, hence their characterization of her as a "beaten-down paranoid." The same subject, we are told, resorts to the "use of ritual" as a main mechanism of psychological defense, as evidenced by the fact that "she sleeps with a bible under her pillow and says prayers before she goes to bed" (Rohrer & Edmonson, 1960, pp. 152–153). Another subject is described as "suspicious" and "sullen" because he wanted to know what the researchers planned to do with the tape recordings made of his conversations with them. Still another is cynically described as "unrealistic" because

he claims that "he can obtain anything he wishes to," yet the researchers add that "to be sure, he has obtained many of these things" (p. 203). One feels that they are stretching their generosity when they admit that a mother of six children who, while holding a full-time job, completed a regular 4-year degree in a local college by attending night school "may yet become a winner" (p. 297).

Equally noteworthy is the failure of many social scientists to consider evidence for stability and competence. An example is supplied by Rosow's essay on the elderly in American society, in which he reports that studies show elderly members of ethnic minorities are better off and better adjusted than the middle-class aged (Rosow, 1965). In none of the studies we have cited are findings such as these mentioned.

Findings

It may be instructive to pinpoint more precisely what it is about minorities that elicits the negativism of deficiency formulations. Surely one factor is what might be termed the "objective conditions of poverty" which are endemic to the lower classes. In our opinion observers are correct and justified in pointing out the detrimental consequences of unemployment, poor housing, overcrowding, poor health care, poor schooling, and a multitude of other conditions that stem from abject poverty. These deprivations, we believe, involve real costs to people regardless of their values and cultural preferences, and we have no quarrel with those whose research has centered on this aspect of the situation. But in most of the studies cited above the objective conditions of material deprivation are not the focus of concern. More often the primary interest is in social institutions and personal characteristics that are assumed to result from living in an environment that is considered to be *socially* and *culturally* impoverished. That is, what catches the social scientist's eye are such things as speech behavior, expressions of emotion, and patterns of social interaction. It is from selective judgments of these kinds of data, rather than from economic conditions, that statements are derived concerning instability, disorderliness, and incohesiveness of family life; attitudes indicative of suspicion and distrust of others; disinterest in the future and concern for immediate gratification; a tendency to express emotions, particularly anger and rage, in an uninhibited fashion; lack of sexual restraint; reliance on gesturing rather than words for communication; reliance on punishment, and particularly physical punishment, in rearing children; an absence of a clear division of labor in the family; lack of forceful control of children by parents; disregard for the significance and potential of each individual; pervasive attitudes of traditionalism, authoritarianism, intolerance, ethnocentrism, antiintellectualism, hedonism, self-centeredness, and concern for creature comforts; disregard for self-reliance; lack of altruism; reliance on fantasy and a tendency toward unrealistic life planning; self-pity; lack of self-confidence and a passive approach to life; and a lack of selfhood. Aside from the fact that this partial list of deficiencies attributed to the poor is often contradictory (they are said to be self-centered, yet lacking in a sense of self; the family is said to destroy the humanness of children during socialization at the same time that it is said to have little influence on them; men are described as both passive and overly aggressive), one is struck by the fact that what is being described in the form of character traits, institutional patterns, and behavioral deviations involves little more than modes of conversation, thinking, and behaving that offend the values of middle-class moralists. The point is that the locus of the problem is centered within the poor and their institutions—*they* are regarded as pathologic. Material conditions then become one mechanism by which the pathol-

ogy can be explained. At issue is whether assessments of deficiency and pathology are justified in the first place, or whether a more objective accounting would not cast an entirely different light on the issue.

Theoretical and Methodologic Issues

The deficiencies attributed to minority groups cluster around five basic themes: control and mastery; rationality; orientation toward the future and long-term planning; self-development; and a sense of order based upon clearly bounded, corporate groups. We shall comment on each of these briefly.

Control and Mastery

In the research we have reviewed, people are described pejoratively as being passive, reactive, dependent, submissive, apathetic toward the outside world, insulated from it, fatalistic about their lot in life, and resigned to accepting it. They are called escapists, persons who avoid direct confrontation by letting things slide by. Many are termed "dissociative" or reliant on repression in their affective lives. They are said to feel inferior, helpless, and powerless, to lack self-control, self-reliance, and self-confidence. These characterizations imply an unwillingness or inability on the part of lower-class people to seize the initiative in attacking their "problems." The implicit assumption is that through acts of willpower people *can* control their own destinies, and that it is "normal" to attempt to do so. It is further assumed that the impetus to take control comes from within the individual, or at least from within individuals who have not been damaged by faulty socialization. Lack of concern for control is therefore treated as symptomatic of personal incompetence. Despite the fact that the poor lack resources to exercise realistic control, they are nevertheless viewed as deficient because they often verbally reject the premise involved, which implies, of course, that they are responsible for their own poverty.

Rationality

A second source of concern centers on the place that reason plays in people's lives. This is the value base from which accusations of antiintellectualism are made. The poor are described as exhibiting little concern for ideas, as displaying evidence of cognitive simplification, and as having difficulties in handling abstractions. They are accused of being authoritarian in temperament, intolerant toward others, and reliant upon magical thought processes in their personal lives. It is held that they try to socialize their children by recourse to physical force and that they rely upon such forms of nonverbal communication as grunts and physical gestures to communicate with children. Thus the priority of reason as a basis for action is affirmed as normal; what is problematic is emotionalism. This assumption articulates with the concern for control inasmuch as it is based on the premise that emotion is inherently disruptive and requires strong cerebral checks for an orderly social life to exist.

Future Orientation

A third key value underlying deficiency formulations concerns the absence of an orientation toward the future and long-term planning. Lower-class persons are described as fearing the future, and they are faulted for failing to plan their lives in a series of achievable steps, especially occupationally. They are said to be averse to planning and to have little orientation toward achievement. They are also accused of having a short-range time perspective and of being concerned only with gaining immediate gratification. They are described as focusing on the tangible here-and-now rather than orienting toward abstract goals. What is regarded as remarkable and pathologic is the absence of apparent concern for the future in organizing the

present, a character trait explained as the product of a deficient upbringing. This type of analysis betrays the assumption that it is "normal" for human beings to forgo current gratifications for potential future rewards and that people who choose otherwise are defective. Planning for the future is, of course, instrumental for achieving control over one's life and environment, and to be effective such planning must be related in a utilitarian manner to the goals set forth, i.e., it must be "rational." Thus the value placed on planning for the future is an integral part of a total worldview in which rationality and control are equally significant components (see Horton, 1970, for a discussion of this point).

Self-development

Still another component of this worldview is the value placed on self-development, the idea that people should strive to develop themselves to their "fullest potential." Lower-class persons are described as lacking self-confidence and filled with self-hate or in more clinical terms, as having a poorly differentiated sense of self or as suffering from weak ego structure. Lower-class parents are accused of showing little concern for the development of their children, of being apathetic about education, of using techniques of discipline that are suppressive rather than oriented toward training and development. A crucial aspect of self-development, important because it provides a standard upon which judgments can be based, is self-awareness, particularly the degree to which individuals verbalize images of themselves. Because lower-class persons verbalize their self concepts less completely, less often, and with less assertiveness than middle-class individuals, the degree of their self-development is regarded as suspect.

Corporate Boundaries

All of the values mentioned thus far deal with personal qualities that so-called "normal" individuals are supposed to possess and that members of the lower class, or members of ethnic minorities, are said to lack. When these values are extended to social institutions they call for rationally structured, clearly bounded corporate organizations as the basis for an orderly social life. This is most obvious in studies of the family, which social scientists traditionally regard as the cornerstone of a stable society and the natural unit for socializing children. The great variation in family forms among lower-class groups makes them appear disorganized, unstable, uncoordinated, unintegrated, and inconsistent to those using concepts based upon dominant group values. Lower-class family life is portrayed as uncohesive and unstable, tending toward a chaotic, alienated, normless set of relationships. The composition of the family seems uncertain, its boundaries continually shifting as people come and go, its roles blurred. Parents are seen as having little control over their children, as being inadequate socializers. The presence of caretakers other than parents is often used as evidence to support such an assertion, and the pattern of using older children to care for younger ones may be regarded as tantamount to parental rejection or abandonment. An apparent high level of overt conflict within the nuclear family unit, low levels of communication between family members, and the diversion of resources outside the nuclear unit constitute the types of evidence that support interpretations of the lower-class family as pathologic or deficient.

Middle-class Values and Minority Group Research

Perhaps the most interesting yet disconcerting fact about deficiency formulations is that they appear so frequently in the works of scholars who explicitly caution against adopting middle-class standards and values when doing research with minor-

ity groups.[5] Thus despite an expressed desire to be sympathetic and fair to such groups, many investigators unwittingly lapse into a theoretical stance in which these standards serve as measuring rods against which the behavior of lower-class people is described and explained. That this occurs among researchers who explicitly caution against it should alert us to the likelihood that the problem is more than just a matter of biased attitudes. Indeed, to cast the issue in attitudinal terms implies a false distinction between researchers who presumably misperceive reality because of value biases and those who supposedly are engaging in a value-free social science (and therefore presumably perceive reality correctly). It is our view that many social scientists are led to see lower-class people and institutions as deficient not so much because they are blinded by personal and/or class prejudice but because so much of the conceptual apparatus of social science is infused with the value assumptions discussed above.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss in detail the ways in which the cluster of values we have identified were woven into the assumptive fabric of social scientific paradigms, but the issue is so basic that it requires some exposition. The matter is essentially an historical one; the values at issue played an important role in the industrial revolution and the modernization of the West. Quite obviously, stressing mastery and control, rationality, future time orientation, and a social order based on corporate responsibility are highly serviceable principles in a society undergoing industrialization. For the emerging middle-class entrepreneur, rational long-term planning coupled with new technology helped greatly to create unique opportunities for controlling resources and using them to further specific ends. In this pursuit, self-development became an important motivating force, providing a justification and rationale for personal strivings. It became linked with such pragmatic needs as the acquisition of knowledge through formal education, the application of long-term planning to careers as well as to industry, and the capacity to assert oneself in shaping personal relationships to achieve one's ends. Rational control over self in the interest of future accomplishments became an integral part of the developing cultural paradigm, at the same time that control over one's children's fate as an extension of one's own career led to the sanctification of the nuclear family.

It seems clear that these and associated values implicit in social science have historical roots that run deep in Western culture, and that by the time social scientists began to formulate theories they were widely accepted as part of the natural scheme of things. Consequently, what became problematic were deviations from these accepted standards and not the standards themselves. Indeed, the social problems associated with conditions such as poverty were defined in relation to them.[6] The possibility that there might be alternative values of equal or greater merit, while explicitly entertained by a few social thinkers, never seriously shook these axiomatic underpinnings.

The theoretical consequences of this equation of basic values with a natural social order have been enormous. Identifiable segments of the population, particularly the poor, and especially the ethnic poor, came to be regarded as social problems in that they manifested greater statistical deviations than "normal" from key indicators of these values in the form of divorce, school dropouts, crimes of passion or aggression, and so on. Applied social science then concerned itself largely with identifying the conditions leading to these deviations and attempted to use research findings to formulate programs for correcting them. Rarely was consideration given to patterns of behaving and thinking that were viable but different from the mainstream norms.

As a result, programs were almost invariably "remedial" and practically never constructionist.

The tendency to regard certain social forms as normal and to question deviations from them is well illustrated by work done on the family in American society. Until quite recently most social scientists have assumed that permanent monogamous marriage is natural and proper, or at least highly "functional," within our society. The view derives from the sanctification of the nuclear family and its alleged suitability for carrying out basic tasks in modern industrial society. Indeed, it is often treated as the primary anchor in an otherwise unstable social system—the very basis for stability itself. Therefore divorce and separation are made to appear problematic, while permanent conjugal bonds are taken for granted. The basic question has always been, "Why do couples 'fail' to make their marriages work?"—a question that ignores entirely the difficult problem of understanding how it is possible for two people, who may be of differing backgrounds and undergoing constant change, to live together compatibly for a lifetime. To take a second example, social science perspectives have always regarded attachments within the nuclear family as "naturally" more important than relationships outside of it, even to the extent of labeling them as "primary." If, for example, a man spends his income to maintain friendships at the expense of his family, he is likely to be labeled as "irresponsible," and reasons are sought for his deviation. Yet there are cultures in which this value priority is not accepted, cultures in which peer group ties are recognized as equal in importance to family relationships (see, for example, Howard, 1974). The point we are trying to make here is that what has come to be regarded as problematic in social science research on the family is shaped largely by implicit conceptions of what a normal family is, and that these conceptions are deeply rooted in the specific historical circumstances of industrial development in Western society. Conceptions of what is normal and natural are in fact culture and class specific; minority groups who deviate from them have borne the brunt of labels that make them out to be abnormal and unnatural.

This basic orientation toward groups whose values and lifestyles are at variance with those of the dominant culture are strongly buttressed by certain assumptions of physical science that many social scientists have come to accept as axiomatic. Imputed to social phenomena are the same qualities and characteristics other disciplines impute to the physical universe. Most basic of all is the assumption that the goal of science is to reveal "the truth" about "reality." This assumption fosters the idea of convergent explanation, which holds that when alternative interpretations are provided for a phenomenon it is necessary to clearly choose between them or to synthesize them into a single, "truer" proposition. It is germane to the present discussion because it supports the underlying premise upon which all deficiency formulations rest—namely, that every scientific statement can be placed along a scale of correctness and by virtue of its correctness, of value.[7] When extended to "social reality," this perspective fosters a consensus view of society, the notion that the social fabric is held together by common commitment to a set of shared beliefs and values and that deviations from them are disruptive, disorganizing, and threatening to an orderly social life. In other words, one view of society is accepted as indicative of social reality, and the genuine diversity of perspectives is downplayed or ignored. The presumed consensus is invariably defined in terms of mainstream activities (economic, political, legal) that incorporate such specific value premises as control, rationality, self-development, and corporateness. Observers whose theoretical for-

mulations stem from a consensus viewpoint are thus led to interpret all behavior in terms of universally applied standards derived from but one segment of the population. Minority groups are then placed in the position of being described and evaluated against a set of standards that is to a greater or lesser extent alien to them.

The effects of a commitment to convergent explanation are reflected in many methodologic procedures employed by social scientists, procedures that are effectively recipes for producing deficiency formulations. One example is the procedure of deducing a hypothesis from a theory prior to collecting data. Since few social scientists have had first-hand experience with the daily lives of minority group members, hypotheses have tended to focus on propositions derived from observations of mainstream groups. As a result, the hypotheticodeductive method has served sometimes as a straitjacket, hampering the recognition of alternate perspectives and the development of theories based on the discovery of previously undiscerned patterns.

By defining their task in terms of discovering the nature of social reality, after the model set by the physical sciences, social scientists have frequently been led to give short shrift to their subjects' own perceptions and interpretations of their condition. This tendency to disregard the actor's viewpoint as invalid, naive, and simplistic has had the effect of diverting social scientists from seriously attempting to ascertain the beliefs and values of their subjects except insofar as they diverge from the presumed consensus. As a result, behavior is often portrayed in mechanistic terms, depriving it of the meaning it has for the actor. The emphasis on parsimony in the construction of theory further exaggerates this tendency; the quest to limit explanations to a few "significant" propositions or laws leads naturally to a narrowing of the scope of investigation, on the one hand, and a strong tendency toward simplification, on the other. The natural complexity and diversity of human behavior is thus sacrificed for elegance of theoretical structure.

Finally, the emphasis on quantification, in conjunction with the consensus view of society, has led to an exaggeration of intergroup differences and a failure to give due consideration to intragroup variability. Perhaps the most pernicious effect of this overreliance on central tendency comparisons has been the temptation to treat marginal differences between groups as representative of qualitative difference, despite considerable overlap. Prototypical has been the use (and abuse) of intelligence and aptitude testing in which statistically marginal differences between groups have been interpreted by some as indicative of racial inferiority. The way in which this use of statistics can mislead is illustrated by the data on Afro-American family structure, which, it will be recalled, has been described in terms of disorganization in contrast to the white family. Yet when we examine the data cited by Pettigrew and others as indicative of instability we find that three-quarters of black families are "complete"—they contain both husband and wife. Thus according to this indicator the vast majority are in fact stable; the judgment of instability is made only in relation to white families, of which nine-tenths contained both parents. Thus a difference of approximately 15 percent is translated into a qualitatively different characterization of black family as unstable, white family as stable. If the comparison group had been upper-class families, among which divorce rates are relatively high, the black family would have appeared unremarkable or even relatively stable.

These data regarding the alleged instability of the black family raise a further point indicative of the prejudicial premises from which many social scientific accounts

proceed. The data most often cited in connection with family instability are drawn from studies conducted during the 1950s and 1960s when white families were especially cohesive. This is less true today, as rates of divorce, desertion, and separation have risen sharply. It is interesting to note how social science perspectives have changed in response to this shift. When these rates were substantially higher among poor and black groups, research centered around efforts to discover personality deficiencies that correlate with family "disorganization," implying that there was something wrong with people who formed unstable unions and that their personal deficits were responsible. But when the rates of family dissolution among middle-class whites began to escalate rapidly the basic research question changed to one focusing on whether or not the nuclear family is still a viable social institution, thereby implying that middle-class marital problems are due to institutional breakdown and not the failure of individuals.

Even this brief discussion should make it clear that we are not accusing social scientists of being blindly ethnocentric. Rather, we believe the epistemologic assumptions that underlie most research have made it almost inevitable that poor people, and the ethnic poor in particular, be portrayed as deficient. As a result, even sympathetic, well-intentioned researchers have often been trapped into treating minorities as unfortunate deviations from implicit norms. What is required now is that minority populations be studied with proper attention to their own perceptions of social reality, that their purposes be understood, and that their patterns of behavior be described in terms of what they are rather than what they are not. In essence, we are suggesting that the present emphasis on convergent explanation be supplemented with, if not supplanted by, an emphasis on divergence. This will require a research strategy that encourages the study of minority groups as potentially unique cultural systems. The task would then be to discover the values, organizational principles, and cultural logic that provide the basis for their particular ordering of social reality.

REACTIONS AND CORRECTIVE TENDENCIES

Although we have stressed an apparent preoccupation with deficiencies in social science research on minority groups, there are some notable exceptions. Reactions have come from many quarters—academic, political, and the victims themselves. In this section we discuss some of these responses, particularly those that have direct implications for theory and method and those raising vital issues and questions about possible directions for future research.

One set of reactions has focused on the "culture of poverty" concept. Critics have pointed out that the concept of "culture," as currently used by anthropologists, presumes that human beings are more than passive reactors to environmental contingencies, even though it is recognized that such contingencies can have a powerful patterning effect. That is, it presumes that people develop plans and pursue goals. Therefore to project a people's lifeway as a mere shadow image of middle-class patterns is to abdicate the essence of the scientific task, which is to discover what those goals are, what types of plans are formulated in pursuit of them, and how behavioral patterns relate to them. Only then can the real impact of circumstances imposed upon them from the outside be assessed. Reflecting the behavior of minorities against middle-class norms as the primary way of comprehending it is tantamount to denying the possibility of subcultural variations and has the result of

personalizing the "blame" for economic deprivation. Charles Valentine makes this point in his book *Culture and Poverty:*

> The culture-of-poverty notion and related ideas contradict all important positive aspects of the culture concept. This thesis of contradiction extends not only to the essential meaning of the idea of culture but also to its major implications for theory and method in the human sciences, philosophical issues, public attitudes and public policies. While one assumes that the purposes of the authors involved were quite otherwise, the presentation and particularly the popularization of these notions have had one outstandingly important effect. That is, these formulations support the long-established rationalization of blaming poverty on the poor. Nothing could be further from the meaning, the spirit, or the ideological implications of the original concept of culture. (Valentine, 1968, p. 15)

Another set of reactions against deficiency formulations has come from the Afro-American community. The rise of the Black Power movement in the 1960s spearheaded an increased sense of ethnic awareness and a search for self-definition that could be rooted in valued aspects of one's heritage. Ethnic pride required a comprehension of the uniqueness of black experience, of the strengths of black people and black institutions, and an affirmation of those values and beliefs upon which the achievements of black people were based. This triggered a reassessment among social scientists of existing data on Afro-American behavior patterns and their cultural underpinnings. For example, using the same data base as Moynihan, Robert Hill employed criteria developed from a black perspective and produced a book entitled *The Strengths of Black Families* (Hill, 1972). Hill maintained that black and white norms differ with respect to family structure and that the data should be interpreted in the context of black norms. He identified the following characteristics that he regards as functional for survival in a hostile environment: (1) strong kinship bonds, (2) strong work orientation, (3) adaptibility of family roles, (4) strong achievement orientation, and (5) strong religious orientation. He notes:

> Although these traits can be found among white families, they are manifested differently in the lives of black families because of the unique history of racial oppression experienced by blacks in America. In fact, the particular forms that these characteristics take among black families should be viewed as adaptations necessary for survival and advancement in a hostile environment. (Hill, 1972, p. 4)

One of the realizations this new perspective generated was that accounts of Afro-American institutions were conceptually oversimplified, that the complexities and variations had been overlooked as a result of their being reflected against a limited, stereotypic set of middle-class norms. This realization is reflected in Billingsley's reinterpretation of the black family, in which he explores the sources of strength in black families that have enabled some not only to survive in the face of adversity but to move beyond survival to stability and social achievement (Billingsley, 1968).

A key issue that developed in academic circles in response to black nationalism was whether or not there *is* a distinctive Afro-American culture (see, for example, Berger, 1970; Blauner, 1970; Hannerz, 1970; Schorr, 1963; Seeley, 1959). A number of social scientists held the position that the behavior patterns of blacks could be accounted for almost entirely by social class and involved no distinctive cultural features. It was therefore a challenge to those who believed otherwise to demon-

strate the existence of a unique black culture. The core concept around which the effort was made is "soul," which was first introduced into the social science literature by Charles Keil in *Urban Blues* (Keil, 1966).

Keil asserts that the social definition of blacks—the fact that they have been treated as outcasts—has almost hidden the fact that they have a culture. He argues that social scientists neglected that special domain of black culture wherein black people had proved and preserved their humanity:

> This domain or sphere of interest may be broadly defined as entertainment from the white or public point of view and as ritual, drama, or dialectical catharsis from the Negro or theoretical standpoint. By this I mean that certain Negro performances, called "entertaining" by Negroes and whites alike, have an added but usually unconscious ritual significance for Negroes. The ritualists I have in mind are singers, musicians, preachers, comedians, disc jockeys, some athletes, and perhaps a few Negro novelists as well. These entertainers are the ablest representatives of a long cultural tradition—what might be called the soul tradition—and they are all identity experts, so to speak, specialists in changing the joke and slipping the yoke. An analysis of the Negroes' situation in America today, if it is to be thorough and constructive, must take these strategic figures into account. (Keil, 1966, p. 15)

Keil considers the entertainment component of black culture significant in at least four basic respects. First, it is the one area in black life that was not obliterated by slavery, the rituals having an indisputable West African foundation. Second, unlike other immigrant traditions that have almost completely dissolved in America, the cultural legacy linking black Americans to Africa has not only survived but has thrived on adversity and grown stronger through the years. Third, it is now a full-fledged tradition in its own right. Fourth, and most important, "the entertainers are masters of sound, movement, timing, the spoken word. One can therefore find in their performances the essentials and defining features—the very core in fact—of Negro culture as a whole" (Keil, 1966, p. 16).

Keil goes on to contrast cultural modes of expression in white and Black America:

> The unique and full status of Negro culture is only partly dependent on the basic institutional elements, such as Church and family, that do not fit white American specifications. On another and perhaps more fundamental level, the shared sensibilities and common understandings of the Negro ghetto, its modes of perception and expression, its channels of communication, are predominantly auditory and tactile rather than visual and literate. Sensibilities are of course matters of degree, and the sense ratio or "ratio-nality" of a particular culture can't be measured precisely. Nevertheless, the prominence of aural perception, oral expression, and kinesic codes or body movement in Negro life—its sound and feel—sharply demarcate the culture from the irrational white world outside the ghetto. Negro and white Americans share the same general language (superficially a good argument for those who would relegate the Negro to a subcultural corner in homogenized America), but their attitudes toward that language are polarized. In white America, the printed word—the literary tradition—and its attendant values are revered. In the Negro community, more power resides in the spoken word and oral tradition —good talkers abound and the best gain power and prestige, but good writers are scarce. It is no accident that much of America's slang is provided by Negro culture. Nor is it strange that Negro music and dance have become America's music and dance. (Keil, 1966, pp. 16–17)

Keil particularly takes aim at those psychiatric and social scientific characterizations that interpret the behavior of black males as signifying acute sexual identity problems (deficient masculinity), which presumably derive from being raised in households lacking fathers or other stable male figures. He points out that some patterns interpreted by white students as feminine (e.g., falsetto singing) come directly from Africa, where they are regarded as the very essence of masculine expression. Keil asserts that "any sound analysis of Negro masculinity should first deal with the statements and responses of Negro women, the conscious motives of the men themselves, and the Negro cultural tradition. Applied in this setting, psychological theory may then be able to provide important new insights in place of basic and unfortunate distortions" (Keil, 1966, p. 28).

Keil's contribution was to shift the description of Afro-American behavior away from those aspects that could be construed as deviations from middle-class norms to aspects that are positive affirmations of black culture and identity (see also Liebow, 1967: Ellison, 1964). No longer are black people seen only as inadequate whites; they are now seen as people whose behavior conforms to a cultural logic of their own, as well as to circumstances. As a result they emerge as actors instead of mere reactors, as *persons* actively engaged in living in a culturally rich and complex environment instead of passive vessels who are empty of substance because they are economically and culturally deprived. Keil's "positive" ethnography has helped shift the theoretical focus for social scientists concerned with Afro-Americans. Instead of trying to account for deviations from middle-class norms, the emphasis has changed to one of trying to describe and explain what the patterns of black culture and behavior *are* in other areas of life: What are the variations *within* the Black community, and what structures them? What positive functions are served by Afro-American institutions, given the circumstances of black people? What are the lives of "normal" or "average" blacks like? This refocusing is evident in the work of Ladner (1971), who has studied young black women in a St. Louis slum. She describes the questions that concerned her as follows:

> What is life like in the urban Black community for the "average" girl? How does she define her roles, behaviors, and from whom does she acquire her models for fulfilling what is expected of her? Is there any significant disparity between the resources she has with which to accomplish her goals in life and the stated aspirations? Is the typical world of the teen-ager in American society shared by the Black girl or does she stand somewhat alone in much of her day-to-day existence? (Ladner, 1971, pp. 12–13)

Ladner spent four years interviewing, testing, observing, and "hanging out" with the girls she studied, and she spent a considerable amount of time in their homes with them and their families, at church, parties, dances, in the homes of their friends, shopping, in her own apartment, and in various other situations. The field work carried her into the community at irregular hours and involved her in intensive relationships with her subjects and frequently with their mothers. She used open-ended interviews and took life histories, taping them to ensure accuracy in recording so that she would be able to present their views in their own language. The picture that emerges is infinitely richer than accounts based on survey and census data or on short-term observations. More importantly, it forces a theoretical reorientation toward a wide range of issues associated with the nature of the Afro-American family and its developmental consequences for children.

Two other recent studies of Afro-American families that have taken a substantive approach are Carol Stack's *All Our Kin* (1974) and Joyce Aschenbrenner's *Lifelines* (1975). Both are based on intensive ethnographies and support the viewpoint that there is an identifiable Afro-American culture that structures family life and behavioral patterns. Both emphasize that family life must be understood in a broader context of kin, friendship, and other relationships. From this perspective the various forms of the black family emerge as expressions of value commitments as well as responses to economic and social pressures. When they are seen in this light, and not merely as reactive aberrant forms of the "normal" nuclear family, it becomes possible to ask a set of substantive questions concerning the significance of these patterns for the development of children born into them.

This shift from a deficiency to a substantive framework requires a reformulation of theory and method alike, as illustrated by the work of Howard and Gallimore on a Hawaiian-American community located near Honolulu. The research was stimulated by a report surveying the status of Hawaiian-Americans during the early 1960s (Liliuokalani Trust, 1962). The report stated that this segment of Hawaii's diverse ethnic population was statistically overrepresented in virtually every category of "social problem" and greatly underrepresented on most standard indicators of social and economic success. Before doing fieldwork the researchers sought information from a number of social agencies in order to orient their investigation; predictably they found Hawaiian-Americans portrayed almost entirely in terms of deficit. Families were characterized as disorganized, parents as irresponsible and uninterested in their children's education, students as unmotivated and lacking in self-control, and so forth. All of the jargon in the social science literature on the poor was applied. As with Afro-Americans, it was argued by some and accepted by most that traditional Hawaiian culture had been destroyed years ago and that the behavior of their predominantly mixed-breed offspring could be explained as a reaction to poverty. What the agencies wanted to know was how to break the poverty cycle so as to draw Hawaiian-Americans into the cultural mainstream.

The study began with a year-long ethnographic investigation of a Hawaiian homestead community in rural Oahu called Aina Pumehana (a pseudonym). The researchers found that although almost all the formal, overt trappings of Hawaiian culture had disappeared, including the language, at the level of social interaction traditional Polynesian patterns were very much in evidence. Specifically, they found a strong emphasis on affiliation and a deemphasis of individualized competitive achievement. This pervasive value commitment affected a wide range of structural features and behavior patterns and cast quite a different light on them than had been cast by deficiency formulations.

In the area of family structure, for instance, the observed marginality of husbands/fathers in a large proportion of households (from the middle-class perspective), interpreted as irresponsibility from a deficiency standpoint, could be understood as the positive expression of important affiliative bonds outside the nuclear family. Particularly for men, and more specifically young men, commitments to peers and workmates often superseded those to spouses and perhaps even children. Only if one makes sacred the nuclear family and assumes that it is "natural" for commitments to the family of procreation to take precedence over all others can this pattern be seen as deficient or pathologic. In social relations the key question for understanding Hawaiian-Americans turned out to be, "How do people invest resources, time, and effort in social relations?" rather than "How does poverty affect

the nuclear family?" Significantly, the more income people had at their disposal, the more they invested in social capital by expanding their interpersonal networks (Howard, 1971; 1974). In other words, even those who had the resources tended to pattern their behavior in accordance with the local value of affiliation rather than the middle-class virtue of investing in material accumulation.

Using the ethnographic data as a starting point, Howard and Gallimore began a series of social psychological experiments with school children that resulted in a theoretical shift from a deficiency model toward a substantive one. Working back and forth between the experiments and their ethnographic materials, the researchers found that achievement *behavior* among Hawaiian-American children was associated with need Affiliation rather than need Achievement. By refocusing their methods and theoretical constructs to accommodate this discovery they were able to recast patterns described previously strictly in terms of deficit into a substantive description of the coping strategies employed by Hawaiian-Americans in everyday life (see Howard, 1974; Gallimore, Boggs, & Jordan, 1974; Chapter 21 in this volume). The research strategy employed by Howard and Gallimore illustrates the value of using ethnographic and experimental techniques in tandem when studying developmental processes within minority populations (for another example of this approach, see Levinger, 1965).

N. Graves and Graves (1974), working among the Polynesian Maori minority in New Zealand, have likewise reacted against the deficit model and have employed substantive methods to describe developmental patterns. Careful ethnographic observation of children and adults in schools and play areas led them to conclude that the Maori socialization pattern leads to an interactive style that is "inclusive" (group oriented), while the Pakeha (white) pattern is "exclusive" (individually or dyadically oriented). The individualistic, competitive bias in New Zealand schools generally favors the Pakeha pattern, leading educators to see Maori children as low achievers; however, as the Graves point out, the cooperative-inclusive pattern of problem solving is often more effective when the context allows.

In a subsequent paper N. Graves (1976) uses data acquired from Cook Island Polynesians to challenge the Piagetian notion that sociocentric behavior develops through a "decentering" process out of "adualism," a state of complete self-centeredness. True social communication and cooperation are held by Piaget to require the conceptual differentiation by the child of self from others. Social exchange behavior prior to this decentering process, which is supposedly completed around age 9 years, is considered to be "precooperative" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Graves challenges these formulations and suggests that in Cook Island society the fact that separation of self from others is not culturally encouraged actually hastens true sociocentrism at an early age. "As long as a child is mapped into a functioning, face-to-face system which is socially and economically interdependent, little happens to hinder the growth and development of a basically human sociocentrism" (N. Graves, 1976, p. 12).

Research among Mexican-Americans by Madsen and his associates has also traced deficiency characterization of school children to the cooperative style (Madsen, 1967; Madsen & Shapira, 1970; Kagan & Madsen, 1971). In these studies an experimental reward system was arranged so that competitive behavior was maladaptive, leading to failure. These investigators found that a tendency toward irrational competition appears to develop with age among Anglo-Americans, and to a lesser extent among Mexican-American children. In Mexico they found that rural children and

lower-class urban children behaved in a much more cooperative manner on an experimental task than did urban middle-class children. They infer from these findings that the developmental milieu in the United States, and in middle-class environments in general, rewards competition to such an extent that children generalize it to situations in which it is maladaptive. Their studies show, by the way, how easy it is to reverse deficiency formulations when alternative values are imposed. From the rural Mexican or Polynesian standpoints Anglo-Americans are deficient in their capacity to share and cooperate.

The Mexican-American case differs from both that of Afro-Americans and Hawaiian-Americans in one important way. Whereas the latter groups were seen from a deficiency standpoint as being cultureless, the Mexican-Americans were seen as having a culture, but one that is damaging. As Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) point out:

> The "damaging-culture" assumption as it has been applied to Mexican-Americans has consistently led to the conclusion that the culture of Mexican-Americans socializes individuals to become lazy, resigned, passive, fatalistic, nongoal-oriented, docile, shy, infantile, criminally prone, irrational, emotional, authoritarian, unreliable, limited in cognitive ability, untrustworthy, lax, priest-ridden, and nonachievement-oriented. (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, p. 9)

These authors assert that despite aspirations to objectivity, the damaging-culture assumption has been pervasive in social science studies of Mexican-Americans, and that such studies have contributed to a view of Mexican-American children as products of a culture dominated by values that make learning difficult (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, p. 9). They also point out that the concentration on such variables as economic status and educational achievement has obscured the highly diverse and heterogeneous character of the Mexican-American population in many other important spheres of life, and claim that social scientists have neglected to describe the diversity of child socialization practices in the Mexican-American population and the effects of these practices on personality development and behavior (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, p. 13).

Ramirez and Castaneda trace the presumed learning difficulties of Mexican-American school children to substantive value conflicts:

> Mexican-American children experience difficulty in school because their culture is not given recognition in the classroom and because school personnel are not aware of differences between traditional Mexican-American and mainstream American middle-class cultures. The sociocultural system of traditional Mexican-American culture is composed of four major value clusters: (1) identification with family, community, and ethnic group: (2) personalization of interpersonal relationships: (3) status and role definition in family and community: and (4) Mexican Catholic ideology. Mainstream American middle-class values most often represented in schools can be categorized under the value cluster: (1) sense of separate identity: and (2) individual competitive achievement. (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, p. 56)

Drawing upon a body of research literature that relates cognitive and motivational styles to different cultural values and associated socialization practices (Beman, 1972; Cohen, 1969; Lesser, Fifer, & Clark, 1965; Ramirez, 1973; Ramirez & Price-Williams, 1974; Stodolsky & Lesser, 1967; Witkin, 1967), Ramirez and Castaneda focus their research on field dependence/field independence as a key variable for comprehending the distinction between Mexican-American and middle-class Anglo-

American learning patterns. They find that the traditional Mexican-American value system fosters a field-dependent cognitive style, characterized by a high degree of sensitivity to the interpersonal environment and a relational style responsive to those forms of reward that offer personalized support, recognition, or acceptance. In contrast, the middle-class Anglo-American value system fosters a field-independent cognitive style, characterized by responsiveness to aspects of the impersonal environment and an aggressive, direct, and analytic learning style.

Cultural Deprivation

It was perhaps inevitable that the logic of deficiency formulations would be applied to education. The documentation that the children of the poor, and particularly the ethnic poor—Afro-American, Mexican-American, native American, Puerto Rican, Hawaiian-American, etc.—do poorly in school is extensive and compelling. By virtually every measure of academic achievement, including test scores, grades, and years of schooling completed, children from these backgrounds fall below the norm, increasingly with age. Earlier attempts to explain these "failures" relied on genetic explanations. The poor were less intelligent (otherwise they would not be poor), and they transmitted their inferior genes to their children. The position is not dead, of course, having been resurrected by Arthur Jensen and his associates (Jensen, 1969). The genetic position is unacceptable to most social scientists, but many of them have latched onto the notion that economic deprivation leads to "cultural deprivation," a condition resulting in an inadequate environment for normal development. The idea is that lower-class homes lack books, toys, and other articles that stimulate learning and cognitive development and that lower-class parents speak substandard English, do not verbalize sufficiently, do not encourage educational activities such as reading, and fail to generate motivation to succeed. In extreme cases, it has been hypothesized, these conditions may lead to "sociogenic brain damage" (Montagu, 1972; for a discussion of this issue in relation to minority groups, see the article by C. Valentine & Valentine, 1975).

Thus lower-class children are presumed to arrive at school without the basic cognitive, motivational, and social skills necessary to master the curriculum and with a negative self-image that leads them to give up easily (Deutsch, 1960; 1963; Deutsch et al., 1967; Riessman, 1962; Stott, 1966). However, a number of scholars have pointed out that the concept of "cultural deprivation" serves as a rationalization for failures by educators in dealing with lower-class children (see, for example, Clark, 1965; Mackler & Giddings, 1965). The concept has also been criticized for overgeneralization and oversimplification, for the way in which it encourages the glossing over of individual and group differences. As Clark and Potkin put it, "The hard realities and complexities of analyzing differences in environment are avoided by substituting a global explanatory term, cultural deprivation" (Clark & Plotkin, 1972, p. 66). Closely related to the stereotyping that accompanies the concept is, according to Clark and Plotkin, an almost total lack of measurement of environmental variables. They point out that our catalogue of tests of individual differences is extensive, whereas our measurement of environmental differences is restricted to a few techniques dealing with social class and economic status (Clark & Plotkin, 1972, p. 67). In lieu of the absence of sophisticated measurement techniques, social scientists frequently rely on superficial indices based on middle-class ideals and focus on what is absent (e.g., books) rather than facing the much more complex task of describing what is present.

"Intelligence"

At the heart of the cultural deprivation perspective is the notion that growing up in a lower-class environment reduces, or fails to develop, "intelligence." Since much of the evidence that supports this position comes from intelligence testing, it is important to examine some of the assumptions that lie behind it. Ginsburg, in a book critically reviewing the data on poor children's intellect and education (1972), discusses four "myths" concerning the IQ test and the "intelligence" that it presumably measures.

First is the myth that the IQ Test measures an intelligence which is a unitary mental ability. According to this perspective, individuals differ in the extent to which they possess the entity or ability of intelligence, and the IQ score reflects this difference. But, as Ginsburg points out, performance on an IQ test involves complex acts of perception, comprehension, and memory, all of which must be translated into a response. Thus, although consistent differences between social classes occur on IQ tests, what those differences indicate is not clear.

The second myth is that differences in IQ scores reflect fundamental differences in intellect. The underlying assumption is that the tests measure those abilities that are central to intellect, and that what the tests do not measure is unimportant. However, at least some research has shown the relationship between IQ and various measures of creativity to be questionable (Getzels & Jackson, 1962), and in fact most IQ tests appear to focus on relatively passive, conventional verbal skills, ignoring or glossing over nonverbal aspects of intelligence regarded as central to development in psychological theories such as Piaget's. Furthermore, Ginsburg asserts, IQ testing by its very nature is oriented toward measuring *differences;* it therefore tends to focus on measuring abilities on which children differ rather than on those possibly more fundamental capacities on which they are alike.

The third myth is that IQ tests measure intellectual competence, that a test score reflects the upper limit of a person's mental capabilities. This assumption presumes that those who take the test are motivated to do their best, but we know that children from different backgrounds respond differently to test situations. For some children test situations are routine, for others they are a source of anxiety and apprehension, while others may be indifferent. A study by Hertzig et al. (1968) of Puerto Rican children in New York is revealing of subcultural differences. The researchers kept behavioral records of a sample of working-class Puerto Rican and middle-class Anglo children during IQ test performance. As expected, the middle-class children scored significantly higher. In general, the middle-class children were friendly, interested in the test situation, followed instructions, and worked persistently. The Puerto Rican children were also friendly, but were easily distracted, were somewhat less verbal, did not follow instructions well, and did not focus attention on the task. Even when IQ test scores were equivalent, the Puerto Rican children were less task oriented than the middle-class Anglos. Hertzig et al. interpret their results as a reflection of cultural orientation. They describe Puerto Rican families as sociable and relaxed, not pressuring children toward achievement and not persistently trying to "educate" their children with toys and by other means. They characterize the cultural milieu as "person oriented" rather than " problem oriented." The result is low motivation to perform on impersonal tasks such as intelligence tests. The investigators are careful to point out that their results are indicative of different lifestyles rather than any deficiency on the part of Puerto Rican culture (although note that their description focuses on the way Puerto Rican parents do *not* behave).

The fourth myth is that the IQ test measures an innate ability which is relatively unaffected by experience. This assumption, Ginsburg clearly shows, is contradicted by a wealth of empirical evidence showing that IQ scores are not constant throughout the lifespan and that they are responsive to environmental events and emotional experiences.

Ginsburg acknowledges that IQ scores are moderately accurate predictors of academic achievement but holds that the reason for this is not necessarily that the tests measure "intelligence" or profound intellectual abilities. Instead, he conjectures, it may be because both schools and IQ tests emphasize verbal skills, mental drudgery, and a certain docility of character. Also, teachers may develop expectancies concerning student performance based on IQ scores and may act in ways unintentionally calculated to bring reality in line with prophecy. After reviewing all the data regarding class differences in relation to intelligence, Ginsburg draws three conclusions:

> First, social-class differences in IQ should not be taken too seriously. The numerical difference is relatively small—10 or 20 points—and does not necessarily indicate fundamental intellectual differences between middle-class and lower-class children, or between blacks and whites.
>
> At most, the IQ test may indicate that poor children possess to a lesser degree than do middle-class children certain intellectual and motivation skills which current schools approve and reward.
>
> Second, the IQ test fails to teach us much of a positive nature about the intellect of poor children. It indicates that they are slightly deficient in skills that middle-class children possess and current schools favor. But what are the unique capabilities of the poor? What intellectual skills have they developed to cope with their environment? The IQ test is not designed to discover the answer to such questions.
>
> Third, the relatively high correlation between IQ and academic achievement is not immutable. The correlation shows that poor children's skills are not well matched with the demands of schools *as currently constituted.* But drastic reform of the schools could change the situation. If schools nurtured, encouraged, and utilized the skills which poor children possess, then the IQ might be irrelevant for predicting academic achievement. (Ginsburg, 1972, p. 57; emphasis in original)

Language and Cognition

Another critical area implicated by the concept of cultural deprivation is language. The basic position held by deprivation theorists is that because poor children are not exposed to elaborated language forms during their formative years their intellectual abilities are impaired. The grounds for this viewpoint were spelled out by Bernstein (1961), whose work among English populations led him to distinguish between "elaborated codes" utilized by middle-class parents and "restricted codes" employed by the poor. Characteristically, the restricted codes of the poor were described in deficiency terms. Their main features were said to be short, simple sentences which are often incomplete and syntactically weak; simple and repetitive use of conjunctions such as "so," "then," "and," "because;" few subordinate clauses; limited and repetitive use of adjectives and adverbs; and confusion of reason and conclusions so as to produce categoric statements. These features render restricted codes a poor vehicle for thought in Bernstein's view, leading to further deficiencies. They are held to be incapable of communicating complex ideas or

relationships, of not being able to deal with logical implication in other than a crude way, in being so limited in generalization and abstraction that thought is forced into stereotyped channels, and so on. Bernstein's formulation elaborated and documented what many educators had already taken for granted, that the children of the poor spoke substandard dialects and that their speech patterns were essentially an accumulation of errors or deviations from Standard English.

Critics of this perspective have pointed out that the notion of error obscures the richness and complexity of speech patterns employed by various groups. Some have shown, for example, that certain dialects elaborate connotative codes far more than Standard English (Howard, 1970). Others, such as Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis (1968), have demonstrated that dialects such as those spoken by black ghetto children are systematic and can be described in terms of their own rules rather than as mere deviations from the norms of Standard English. The task, according to these critics, is to accurately describe and understand the language patterns in use among various minority populations. Only then can comparisons be made.

Another proposition advanced by cultural deprivation theorists is that the conceptual abilities of poor children are impaired by the environments in which they are raised. Ironically, as Ginsburg points out, one view holds that the homes of poor children lack sufficient stimulation to facilitate conceptual learning, while another asserts that such environments contain too much stimulation for proper learning to occur. After criticizing both positions on the grounds that they lack any convincing supporting evidence, Ginsburg queries the basic premises underlying the notion of conceptual retardation:

> After all, what kind of environment does a child—any child—need for normal intellectual development? What sort of raw material does he require for the construction of knowledge? The answer depends on the kind of knowledge involved. In the case of language, what a child needs is to hear other people speak, and every poor family does that. In the case of form perception, what the child needs is shapes to see and to explore. Would anyone maintain that the poor child's world is formless? In the case of object permanence, what the child needs is an environment containing things which continue to exist even when unobserved. Surely the poor child's world is no different from ours in this respect. In the case of the "concepts" *up, down, behind, in front of,* and all the rest, what the child needs is again a world of real things, and there can be no doubt that he has it.
>
> I maintain, in short, that the poor child's environment is in many respects adequate for intellectual development. He is active and wants to make sense of the world. He lives in a rich and stimulating environment, not in an institution. And the interaction between the active child and his world inevitably produces knowledge—the cognitive universals. (Ginsburg, 1972, pp. 184–185)

The reason that poor children do poorly in school, according to Ginsburg, is that they often lack certain *specific* cognitive skills, such as reading and writing, but to postulate a general conceptual retardation is unwarranted.

The research reviewed in this section is a small but representative sample of recent work by social scientists who are endeavoring to supplant deficiency formulations with more meaningful analyses of the social life of minority groups and its implications for child development. Although such research is increasing in quantity and quality, a great deal more work needs to be done on minority populations before social scientists will legitimately be in a position to claim a special understanding of

them. In concluding our discussion of this research we wish to reiterate a point stated earlier—that the impetus for deficiency formulations derives less from prejudiced attitudes on the part of social scientists than from the epistemologic underpinnings that have informed their research.

DEFICIENCY VERSUS SUBSTANCE: CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter we have described two different approaches to social science research on minority groups—deficiency formulations that derive from comparisons with mainstream groups and substantive accounts that are the product of naturalistic observations of behavior in its cultural context. We now discuss some key contrasts between them in the hope that by clarifying them we may help to alert future researchers to the pitfalls that have ensnared otherwise sympathetic researchers into portraying culturally distinctive minorities as incompetent versions of mainstream groups.

Descriptions of Behavior

A main purpose of description is to provide content for analysis. Whenever we describe the characteristics of events or persons, we inevitably utilize labels and categories to specify what we perceive as distinctive about them. In deficiency formulations, concepts are typically constructed by reference to a prescribed configuration of traits or significant features. Observations are then made in terms of the presence or absence of these defining features, or their relative strength. The concept of "self-control" provides an example. Persons are labeled as "having self-control" if they react calmly to frustration and provocation, if they choose to maximize long-term interests rather than short-term gains, if they persist at designated tasks no matter how boring they are, and so on. Such concepts imply the existence of a scale from "all defining characteristics present, and in full strength" to "all defining characteristics absent." Contrasts are made along such a scale, with the degree of differentiation dependent on the purposes of the person doing the describing. Concepts of this type lead us to search for order (which is the essence of the scientific task) by looking for a high density of the defining characteristics and, where they are of low density, to discover apparent disorder. For example, if the concept of "family" requires certain behavioral patterns from husbands and wives, the absence of these patterns is an indication of chaos, or "disorganization."

There are a number of advantages to employing such "ideal-type" definitions that have made them attractive to social scientists. Ideal types provide a basis for abstraction and hence comparison, thereby facilitating the formulation of universally applicable theory (which always involves comparison). They also lend themselves to quantification, allowing precise operations to be performed on their informational content. However, these very capabilities can lead to disembodied descriptions of people, transforming them into objects composed of bundles of traits in greater or lesser degree. Those with a high density of the defining characteristics can be described substantively, but those with a low density emerge as vacuous, shadow figures whose outlines are prescribed by the characteristics of others. Deficiency formulations thrive on such conceptualizations, and when strong positive value loadings are placed on the defining characteristics and the sense of order they imply, people who do not possess them are inevitably portrayed as social pariahs.[8]

When a naturalistic approach is adopted, concepts are derived differently. The commitment of naturalism is to remain as true as possible to phenomena and their nature. Its loyalty is to the experiential world (Matza, 1969, pp. 1–10). The aim of naturalistic accounts is to describe a phenomenon in a manner that maintains the phenomenon's integrity rather than the integrity of a particular theoretical viewpoint. A basic assumption of the naturalistic approach is that human behavior is purposeful, and that persons participate in defining social reality in an active way. For this reason humans are seen as transcending the physical realm in which conceptions of cause, force, and mechanical reactivity are readily applicable. When approaching the study of humans, therefore, naturalism compels the adoption of a subjective view and consequently requires supplementing more rigorous scientific methods with the distinctive tools of humanism—personal experience, intuition, and empathy. The descriptive aim of naturalism is a faithful rendition of human activity, even though only an approximation of that ideal is ever actually possible.

Naturalistically oriented social scientists attempt to learn how characteristics cluster together empirically through the development of substantive accounts. They assume that order exists and define their task as that of identifying the characteristics and distinguishing features that are the basis of that order. Concepts are then generated out of the various ways in which these distinguishing features are observed to combine in ordinary circumstances or under experimental conditions. The previously discussed polarity "field independent/field dependent" used by Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) provides a simple example. Each concept describes a set of perceptual habits that contrast with one another. As additional correlated perceptual or behavioral characteristics are observed in natural or experimental settings, the concepts can be given additional substance so that each contains a high density of information. Neither is defined in terms of the absence of features characterizing the other.

Social scientists are able to generate concepts with a high density of information about the people they are describing through efforts to reconstruct social reality from the perspective of the actors who are their subjects. One obvious way is to employ concepts used by the people themselves. An example is Rodman's study of lower-class family life in Trinidad, in which he employs the local terms "friending" (a quasimarital relationship in which the couple resides separately) and "living" (a relationship based on common residence without legal marriage) as a means of describing patterns of male–female alliances rather than relying on vacuous and uninformative statements about deviations from legal marital norms (Rodman, 1971). Keil's exploration of the term "soul" in the black community is another example (Keil, 1966).

Whether or not they utilize terms employed by the people they describe, social scientists with substantive concerns require a good deal of input from their subjects before arriving at descriptive categories. Their concern is that the categories contain a high density of information, rich in meaning for the people being studied. To be suitable vessels for describing how people manage their lives, such concepts must necessarily take into account the principles by which those persons organize the information they acquire about the world in which they live. It is important for the naturalist to know what contrasts in the overall stream of events are meaningful to those being described, so that an excessive amount of information is not lost at conceptual boundaries. To do this requires intensive interaction with the subjects

of study, the use of open-ended questions, and opportunities to observe people in natural settings.

Naturalistic accounts require a relaxation of the rules of scientific method as these have traditionally been applied in the physical sciences. Where substantive knowledge is unavailable about a minority group, or a specific segment of it, it is necessary to arrive at a description that can serve as a source of hypotheses for further research; to do so requires free reign for intuition and interpretation of qualitative data and the freedom to manipulate quantitative data to check the credibility of emerging understandings. That is, the goal of such research is to generate grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or, ethnographically, to develop a theory of the culture being studied (Goodenough, 1957). This contrasts with the hypothesis-testing emphasis in the physical science model of inquiry, where a body of substantive knowledge informs theory construction and data collection. As Howard and Gallimore have shown, there is a role for experimentation in substantive research with minority groups (Howard, 1974; Gallimore et al., 1974; see also Bronfenbrenner, 1976), but it is used more for generating hypotheses than for testing them. By planning experiments on the basis of extensive substantive accounts, researchers are able to distinguish usual from unusual behavior during experiments. The research done by Cole and associates among the Kpelle in Africa provides an excellent example of the value of experimentation in conjunction with ethnography for researching cognition in a culturally different group (Cole, Gay, Glick, & Sharp, 1971). Their approach would serve well as a model for research among minority populations in complex societies.

Deficiency formulations stem from a tradition that emphasizes generality and attempts to explain behavior by recourse to abstracted forms. Naturalistic accounts, in contrast, are as much concerned with the context of behavior as with its forms. There are two main reasons for this. First, the meaning of behavior to people cannot be ascertained without taking into account the circumstances under which it occurs, since context partly determines the meaning actions have for individuals. Second, the naturalists' commitment to treating people as subjects (actors) rather than objects (reactors) requires that their purposes and goals be understood, a task that necessitates relating behavior to the circumstances in which it occurs. To ignore context, as deficiency formulations are prone to do, has the effect of treating behavior as the product of mechanical forces and of reducing individuals to the status of physical objects. They are thereby deprived of their humanity, inadvertently justifying manipulative intervention in their lives without serious consideration being given to their wants, leading to a situation in which social scientific information is used *against* the poor rather than *for* them, as Hampden-Turner persuasively argues (Hampden-Turner, 1974).

A related characteristic of deficiency formulations, which further dehumanizes those who are studied, is the tendency to focus on intragroup regularities and intergroup contrasts, thereby leading to the development of stereotypic images. By contrast, the naturalistic approach includes a manifest concern for intragroup variability. Social scientists of this persuasion attempt to identify significant social and economic differences within a minority group, as well as variant patterns on subcultural themes that may not be shared with the mainstream groups. The theoretical importance of paying attention to intragroup variation is illustrated by the research of Howard and Gallimore, which showed that intragroup differences in achievement behavior among Hawaiian-Americans are accounted for by different variables than those that explain between group differences (Howard, 1974; Gallimore et al., 1974).

There are two aspects of context that should be of particular concern for students of human development researching minority groups in complex societies. One is the context of developing capabilities, the other the context of performance. We have emphasized the importance of the family literature precisely because the family provides such an important part of the context of human development. When the family is conceived as disorganized and malfunctioning, researchers are almost invariably led to look for pathology in development. When family life is looked upon as healthy and constructive, the tendency is to see development in similar terms. For this reason it is important to have substantive descriptions of family structure and functioning among the groups we study. To take the issue still further, the context of family life within the broader ethnic community is necessary to assess the impact of the family as an institution on human development. Where extensive affiliation is valued among kin, the boundaries of the nuclear family may be porous and socialization functions diffused. To call families disorganized under such conditions because individuals spend much of their time and resources away from "home" is to look for organization at the wrong level, in the wrong place. Among groups that stress even broader affiliative values—inclusive of neighbors, peers, and workmates—the travesty is even greater. Thus an appreciation of the organizational principles that do in fact operate in people's lives is necessary for comprehending the context of development. Likewise, grasping the significance of an individual's performance, whether under experimental or "natural" conditions, requires an appreciation for the way in which those conditions fit into the broader context of an individual's experience. Substantive ethnographic knowledge of a group's sociocultural system is a minimum necessity for making a relevant assessment.

Lest the naturalist viewpoint be mistaken for one of extreme cultural relativism, we wish to make it clear that we are not advocating descriptions that are so highly individualized that comparisons are impossible or that portray everyone, everywhere, as paragons of virtue. To insist that content as well as form is required for adequate description, and that context is necessary for understanding behavior, is not to deny the importance of comparison. It is, however, a position that makes comparison more complex and more difficult; this we perceive as a challenge to be met rather than as a deterrent. The important point is that the types of oversimplification resulting from deficiency formulations have led to inadequate description and have therefore retarded productive comparisons. Likewise, the highly pejorative descriptions that characterized deficiency accounts have had a pernicious effect on our understanding of developmental processes by narrowing the focus of research concerns to limited and, from some standpoints, trivial questions. For example, such questions as, How much intelligence do people have? Who has more and who has less? How much intelligence is normal? and so on are far less interesting from a substantivist viewpoint than how people use the intelligence they have, what conditions pattern perception and cognition, and so on. From this latter point of view, the idea that people lack motivation is incomprehensible. Just to stay alive requires motivation; the questions of importance concern what types of motivation exist and how they are patterned. While it is true that such a perspective tends to reduce the value judgments implicit in deficiency research, it does not obviate the possibility of evaluation. What it does do is open the door to a wider range of premises for making evaluative judgments. Whereas deficient intelligence is a "problem" vis-à-vis high intelligence, the question of whether achievement or affiliation is a superior motive, or whether field independence is a more suitable cognitive mode than field dependence, leaves greater room for debate.

Explanation

One of the most frequent objections to deficiency research is that it implies that the problem lies *within* the group or the individuals who compose it. Thus the Moynihan Report implies that something is wrong with the black family; so too the concepts of "cultural deprivation" and "culture of poverty" have the effect of blaming the victim. Although the ultimate explanation may be sought in economic deprivation, racism, or some other sociocultural condition, the immediate cause of the presumed deficiency is the failure of the family to perform its designated functions satisfactorily, particularly socialization. It is the family that needs to be changed if the deficits are to be removed. As critics have pointed out, this not only adds insult to injury, it creates a charter for intervention into the lives of people, often against their will. The overall paradigm parallels the medical model. Behavioral "symptoms" indicate the presence of "pathology," which indicates a defect within the organism that must be corrected to restore "health." While some critics have turned this around, locating pathology within the dominant group or power elite (providing a charter for revolutionary change), we would argue that a more satisfactory explanatory position is that behavior can be meaningfully regarded as pathologic only in the context of a system of relations. From this perspective, pathology must be located in the *relationships* that generate and support the behavior patterns involved, not within individual actors or groups of actors (Bateson et al., 1956). Pathology from this standpoint is best conceived as an ailment of the (social) system, not of the component subsystems or individual components, except in extreme cases, i.e., cases in which no possible reorganization would adaptively integrate the components involved.

When we adopt such a position it obliges us to portray culturally distinctive populations from a perspective that treats the values of the dominant group as problematic, rather than accepting them as "normal." To the extent that these values contribute to the genesis and maintenance of relationships that are maladaptive for component subsystems (such as ethnic groups), they are part of, and significant causes of, the pathology. To imply that *people* are pathologic because they deviate from such values is, from this standpoint, a paradoxic absurdity.

Finally, deficiency formulations have a built-in limitation that at best results in weak theory. Thus the basic form of deficiency formulations relies on propositions that distinguish *A* from *not A* (normal from not normal). The burden of explanation is to identify conditions (e.g., economic differences) that differentiate one from the other, but since *not A* may be a class that contains an enormous amount of internal variation, a wide range of additional variables may be at work that can be ignored. Substantive theory, in contrast, requires a form that distinguishes *A* from *B, C, D, E,* The burden of such theory is to explain the manner in which each group is alike and different from each other group in a contrastive set. It is therefore more genuinely comparative and better suited for the generation of a cross-cultural theory of human development—one that will take into account significant variation within complex social systems as well as between them.

CONCLUSION

Quite clearly, deficiency theory and substantive theory have very different implications for action programs aimed at improving the lot of minority groups and at reducing inequality within modern societies. The implications of deficiency theory

are quite clearcut. The current macrosystem is taken for granted, mainstream norms are accepted as valid, and the solution suggested is to generate conditions that will make it possible for minority populations to assimilate in the sense of achieving a reasonable level of economic success and social respectability. The strategies called for are remedial, involving the removal of deficits by correcting inappropriate organizational patterns, attitudes, and behaviors. Appropriate cognitive skills and motives are to be instilled so that performance levels can be raised to acceptable standards. The tactics called for vary, depending on the specific deficits at issue and their presumed causes as well as upon pragmatic assumptions concerning what is practicable, but the goals are inherent in the perspective itself.

From a substantive viewpoint the issues are far more complex. The current structure of the macrosystem and its mainstream norms are regarded as problematic. Indeed, the perspective calls into question the viability of such a system over the long run, and at least one significant issue it poses concerns alternative macrosystemic structures that would reduce inequality and nurture cultural pluralism. Many believe such a radical restructuring to be prerequisite to any lasting solution to the problem of minority groups, although there is considerable difference of opinion as to what a viable structure would be like, and how it could be evolved.

But even if the current system is accepted as given, the substantivist position entails a different view of the issues and is suggestive of a different set of strategies and tactics. Whereas failure to perform adequately according to mainstream norms is interpreted as an indication of general incompetence from a deficiency standpoint, from the substantivist point of view it is evidence, at most, of an inability or unwillingness to perform under specific conditions. From the latter perspective, general statements concerning competence can be inferred only after performance has been examined in a range of contexts that duplicates the variety of circumstances in which people ordinarily behave. This means taking into account an actor's subculture and the way it defines situations and standards for determining the adequacy of performance. In other words, poor performance in one cultural milieu does not necessarily preclude the possibility of competence—the ability to produce adequate performances—in another. This view presumes that complex societies are multicultural by nature and that minority group members are likely to be bicultural (or multicultural) in at least some senses.

If we accept the proposition that competence in the dominant culture is desirable for everyone, on the grounds that failures in the public domain are costly for the individuals involved as well as for society at large, then the strategy suggested by the substantivist perspective calls for identifying those areas of competence people have developed in their subcultures and building upon them. Instead of dwelling upon deficits, this calls for focusing upon their strengths. The assumption is that it is easier to build upon existing competencies and motives—e.g., interpersonal sensitivities, affiliative motives, etc.—than it is to deny them or attempt to eradicate them.

Perhaps the ultimate conclusion to which one is drawn is that the deficiency perspective, by labeling people as incompetent, tends to generate remedial structures that perpetuate powerlessness and dependence, thereby validating the initial judgments. It is hoped that the developing substantivist perspective will lead to structural arrangements that will not only recognize but actively reinforce alternate competencies and, by so doing, optimize conditions in which all parties can increase the scope of their adaptive repertoires.

NOTES

1. For other studies reporting this view, see Lott and Lott, 1963; Rosen, 1959.

2. For similar statements about black culture, see Glazer and Moynihan, 1963, as cited in Blauner, 1970, p. 132; and Frazier, 1957, p. 301.

3. Clark echoes this view, stating, "The child without a secure family is often forced either into aggression and delinquency or into apathy and despair" (Clark, 1965, p. 47). Moynihan (1965) makes essentially the same argument.

4. An interesting variation on deficiency explanations is provided by Gans in his study of lower-class Italian-Americans. He describes his subjects as "operating without a self-image" (Gans, 1962, p. 98). They "develop a deficient 'me' with a different type of 'generalized other' [leading to] a lack of inner self" (Gans, 1962, p. 98). He explains this as a consequence of person-oriented values: "The person-oriented type develops a monastic self, which makes it difficult for the individual to differentiate between his own and others' view[s] of him. The lack of a clear self-image encourages and requires display. Thus the communication process between the 'I' and other people is limited as much as possible to routine behavior among intimately known people. When the process is disturbed, the individual becomes selfish (p. 101). At the same time Gans explains their custom of bringing gifts of food when visiting as a result of their lack of self-image: "While they give of themselves as freely as other people, they cannot conceive of themselves doing so. The West Ender cannot conceive of the self that he gives. Therefore he brings gifts when he goes visiting" (p. 99; see also Miller & Swanson, 1960).

5. See Keller's admonitions concerning descriptions of lower-class families (Keller, 1970, p. 71), noted in the opening pages of this chapter. Also see Jessie Bernard, who writes that her "deliberate and purposive exclusion of control data on the white population is based on the assumption that such comparisons usually turn out to be studies of the white population with emphasis on nonwhite data as representing deviations from a white norm" (Bernard, 1966, p. vii), and Oscar Lewis, who states in his introduction to *La Vida* that "in writing about multiproblem families social scientists often stress the instability, the lack of organization, lack of direction and lack of order. Certainly there are many contradictory attitudes and inconsistencies expressed in these autobiographies. Nevertheless, it seems to me that their behavior is clearly patterned and reasonably predictable. Indeed, one is often struck by the inexorable repetition and the iron entrenchment of these behavior patterns" (Lewis, 1966, p. xxviii). He advises that "middle class people, and this would certainly include some social scientists, tend to concentrate on the negative aspects of the culture of poverty. They tend to assign negative values to such traits as present-time orientation and concrete versus abstract orientation. Yet some of the positive aspects which may flow from these traits must not be overlooked" (Lewis, 1966, p. li).

6. For a discussion of this point, see Mills, 1943.

7. The idea of a singular, universal truth is a basic element that pervades Western thought. Perhaps the most fundamental manifestation of this idea is monotheistic belief in a single, omniscient, omnipotent God.

8. See Glaser and Strauss, 1967, for a discussion of this point. For an excellent discussion of this problem as it relates to social science research on deviant behavior, see Matza, 1969.

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