

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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CULTURE OF POVERTY, SYSTEMIC

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Abstract Approved: —

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This study describes Extension field staff orientations toward poverty. Expressions on origins, solutions and definitions of poverty were elicited from informants. Responses were then classified by categories, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Interactive Programming System (SIPS). Orientations were then measured by identifying modal categories. A category was identified as modal if it held either a plurality or majority of responses per informant. Consistency measures were also made to determine percent of responses by modal category.

A spectrum of three orientations were discovered to be extant among Extension field staff. About one-third the staff view poverty as a function of personal or cultural characteristics. Another third view poverty as a function of personal and cultural characteristics also, except that these characteristics are adaptations to depreciative situational factors. Within this orientation, poverty is "a way of life." The other third Extension staff perceive poverty as a function of political, social and economic systems.

Conclusions of the study call into question some common conceptions. Female staff, for example, tend to view poverty as a function of personal or cultural traits. Men, however, lean slightly toward the view that poverty is a function of political, social and economic realities. Moreover, field staff in the 40's who were trained in agriculture and had agricultural responsibilities also tend to hold this view.

Extension Orientations Toward Poverty:
Bootstrap, Culture of Poverty, Systemic.
An Empirical Study

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EXTENSION ORIENTATIONS TOWARD POVERTY:
BOOTSTRAP, CULTURE OF POVERTY, SYSTEMIC

Chapter I

Rationale

Introduction

Poverty is a paradox. It exists in the wake of wealth. Poverty is real, salient and continuing.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, I will investigate the poverty phenomenon by presenting a theoretical framework which runs counter to many extant inquiries. My theoretical approach to poverty is interdisciplinary. I will capitalize on insights from three fields: resource economics, political science thought on community power structures and cultural anthropology. This holistic examination demands syntheses of ideas from separate fields to form new and alternative insights.

Culture is the conceptual mortar by which this three dimensional study is held together. I consider culture to be that "organization of experiences" (Goodenough:1962, 259) within a community which includes perceptions, judgments, values and actions. This does not necessarily contradict Ernst Cassirer's broader definition: "Human culture (is) an organic whole . . . (a) collect of human nature . . . the breadth of human life" (1944:222). The former, in the light of the latter, reminds us that culture is a pluralistic concept, i.e. smaller "organizations of experience" exist within the "organic whole." We are a culturally plural society.

Cultural values are manifested in part through political and economic institutions. Moreover, those institutions have reciprocal influence on culture. This relationship of reciprocal influence can be called transaction.¹ The meaning here is simply that culture and political and economic institutions may each be shaped by the other depending on the intensity and direction of the transaction. It is from such cultural phenomena that dominant values function to the benefit of some and to the dis-benefit of others. It is logically consistent, therefore, to identify poverty: cultural, political and economic perspectives.

The second purpose of the study is to describe Oregon State University Extension field staff orientations toward poverty. The theoretical ground laid in this chapter gives rise to three models which, it will be shown, are useful in identifying extant perceptions of poverty. A research design is then developed to ascertain the extent to which those views are extant among Extension Service field staff.

Poverty Conceptualized: Problems and Alternatives

Any consideration of poverty must begin by defining the problem. Moreover, any definition of poverty is subject to debate since one can by definition limit or increase the scope of the problem.

The official treatment of poverty is to consider it in what I would call absolute terms. The United States government has identified

¹The term is borrowed from Dewey and Bentley (1949:259). The authors suggest that two social entities are so shaped when they encounter each other that one may be viewed as the product of the other.

levels of income below which it says a basic standard of living cannot be maintained. The poverty index developed by the Social Security Administration is based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's measure of food costs for household of various sizes. This cost for low-budgeted diets is then multiplied by three to reflect the fact that food "typically represents one-third of the expenses of a low-income family" (Marmor:1971, 3). This figure is then adjusted for region, family size and other variables. Therefore, in 1968, a nonfarm family which had an annual income of less than \$3553 was officially classified as being in poverty; for a farm family, the poverty line was \$3034. Those with income above designated amounts were not in poverty. (See Table 1)

TABLE 1
1968 POVERTY THRESHOLDS FOR NONFARM
AND FARM FAMILIES BY FAMILY SIZE

| Family Size | Nonfarm | Farm |
|-------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | \$1748 | \$1487 |
| 2 | 2262 | 1904 |
| 3 | 2274 | 2352 |
| 4 | 3553 | 3034 |
| 5 | 4188 | 3577 |
| 6 | 4706 | 4021 |
| 7 or more | 5789 | 4916 |

(Source, Marmor:1971, 5)

There are some inherent problems to such an absolute definition. Two disadvantages are examined below. The postulate central to these

arguments is that the condition of poverty is relative, not absolute.

The first problem is pointed to by Ted Robert Gurr in his book, Why Men Rebel (1970). Gurr does not address himself to the problem of poverty per se, but directs his thoughts to the potential for and magnitude of collective political violence (See Chapter 1, especially pp 3-12). He generates a number of hypotheses dealing with three aspects of political violence about which he is concerned (Ibid., 360-367): its source, magnitude and forms. What follows is generally an interpolation of Gurr, my alteration of his ideas which reinforce the argument for a relative definition of poverty.

Gurr's central contribution to my conceptualization of poverty is the notion, "relative deprivation." The impact of this insight on me is that poverty is not so much a matter of how I, a non-poverty person -- or the government, a non-poverty institution -- perceive the nature of the problem and so define it, but how that individual or group perceives their own situation.

Gurr defines "relative deprivation" as the perceived discrepancy between peoples' value expectations (ve) and their value capabilities (vc).² He points out that a divergence in either ve or vc without a corresponding similar directional shift in the other will raise the level of discontent.

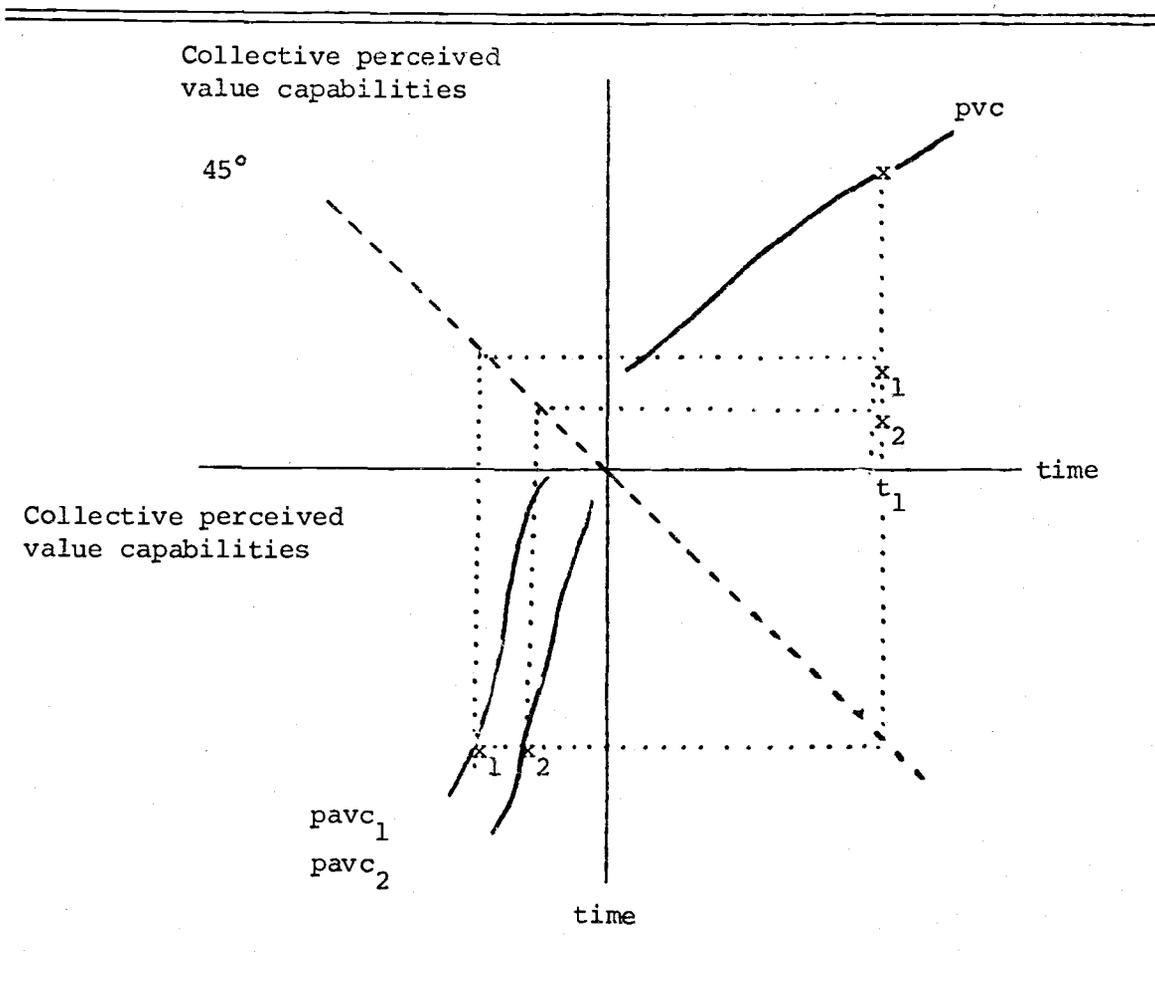
Within the context of this society, composed as it is of many sub-cultures, it is also useful to think of one's group's capabilities. I

²Gurr defines values in psychological terms. They are the "goal objects of human motivation" (25) which are derived from basic needs and/or instincts.

have in mind, for example, those emerging poverty groups trying to achieve some sense of self-determination. I would call this phenomenon perceived disparity (pd). Without getting lost in a web of complexities, one group's value expectations (ve) may be a function of their perception of a more affluent group's value capabilities. Figure 1, for example, presents hypothetically the collective perceived value capabilities for two groups in Oregon.

FIGURE 1

Relationship of Perceived Actual Value Capabilities to Perceived Value Capabilities of Two Hypothetical Marginal Groups in Oregon



The diagram is quite simple. The axes of the upper right-hand quadrant are identical to the axes in the lower left-hand quadrant. That is, the collective perceived value capabilities (pvc) axis and the time axis were duplicated by flipping them diagonally at the point of intersection. Said another way, the time axis was duplicated by rotating it 90 degrees clockwise; the pvc axis was duplicated by rotating it 90 degrees counter-clockwise. Such a presentation will let us more clearly conceptualize pd as a function of the difference between the perceived actual capabilities (pavc) of certain marginal groups, and their perceptions of another group's value capabilities (pvc). That is to say that pvc is a function of two groups' perceptions in the lower quadrant, and which, I submit, become the value expectations (ve) for such marginal groups.³

So the upper right-hand quadrant represents the growth of collective pvc of a hypothetical affluent group over time as perceived by two less affluent groups (pavc₁ and pavc₂) represented in the lower left-hand quadrant. The degree of pd at time t₁ can be plotted by using the transformation line which cuts a 45 degree angle of the pivot axis, left to right. Thus, if x represents pvc at t₁, a given point in time, the difference between x and x₁ or x₂ represents the difference between each group's perceived actual capabilities and what they perceive as the value capabilities of the more affluent group. In

³The pvc of pavc₁ and pavc₂ will probably be different to some degree. For simplicity only one pvc is presented in Figure 1.

Gurr's terms, pvc and ve are one in the same.⁴ The point of this illustration is that one group's perception of disparity between their capabilities and another group's capabilities reflect levels of discontent. The Chicano and Indian Study Center of Oregon at Adair, Centro Chicano Cultural at Woodburn, Compensios Unidos in Southeastern Oregon, Oregon Poor Peoples Council, inner city riots in the late 1960's are all to a significant degree responses to perceived disparities between social groups. I am talking about one group's perception of their capabilities for getting their share of the pie compared to another group's capabilities for getting their share. The greater the disparity, the greater the frustration and potential for aggression.

Both models, Gurr's "relative deprivation" and my minor adaptation, perceived disparity, may be useful in measuring social unrest, and could have implications for policy-makers. In the past, for example, the government has tended to react to conditions of social unrest such as disturbances in the 1930's (a product of "relative deprivation") and inner city riots of the 1960's (a product of perceived dis-

⁴It would be possible, I think, and an interesting study to empirically measure pd. If one could elicit tangible expressions of pvc and pavc from given people who represent given groups, the degree of pd could be easily calculated. Using Figure 1, for example, $pd = x - x_1$ or x_2 / x . A person, therefore, who experiences low level employment and has low income and no prospects for higher income because he is crowded out by reason of race, socio-economic status, poor health, etc., may experience the maximum possible degree of pd, 1.00.

parity) after the fact.⁵ "Relative deprivation" and perceived disparity models could be of use to a government sensitive to the needs of her people.⁶

The central point I borrow from Gurr is that an absolute definition of poverty tends to deny the importance of how a group feels about its situation rather than what its situation "really" is. Therefore, it isn't what one's condition is that is important, but what one thinks his condition is.

The second disadvantage to an absolute definition of poverty is related to the first but is couched in the context of economics. Theodore Marmor in 1971 wrote, "The postwar period has witnessed a remarkable improvement in the material welfare of most Americans . . . We have taken justifiable satisfaction in the reduction of poverty from 22 percent of the population in 1959 to 13 percent in 1968" (1971:3). Within the framework of an absolute definition Marmor is quite correct. Such a conceptualization, however, denies the consequences of perceptions. The 1967 President's National Advisory Commission Report on Rural Poverty, The People Left Behind, hints at the discrepancy between

⁵The response of the government to civil unrest caused by "relative deprivation" and perceived disparity is quite another matter. Styles of relief programs according to Piven and Cloward (1971) suggest that behavior and attitude are shaped by economic reward and that relief arrangements are in fact initiated to quell civil unrest. This is done not only by giving aid to the displaced poor, but by granting aid on the condition that the poor behave in certain prescribed ways. Behavioral psychologicals would call this operant conditioning (e.g. Anderson:1973).

⁶Predictability of unrest, of course, raises a number of ethical questions regarding governmental control and manipulation. The distinction must necessarily be made between positive and negative controls.

an absolute poverty line and the consequences of poverty without really tacking it down: "Adequate income levels are important in escaping poverty . . . but poverty is much more."

Victor Fuchs suggests that poverty be redefined. He is opposed to a fixed standard and suggests instead that the poor be defined "as any family whose income is less than one-half the median family income" (1967:89). He favors this approach because it offers contemporary standards which will soon be out of date but are subject to annual revision (See Table 2).

Fuchs' conceptualization of an adjustable poverty line is a significant improvement over the SSA definition. It also provides for an interesting comparison between an absolute and median-income approach. Rather than a decrease in poverty Fuchs shows that the "fraction of families with less than half the median income has remained constant . . . throughout the postwar period" (Ibid., 89). He still stresses, however, "actual" as opposed to "perceived" economic realities.

Ackerman, et al, however, reinforces my perceived disparity concept by arguing that poverty is simply not having the capabilities of having as much as one's neighbor (Ackerman, et al:1971). This is more clearly relative poverty.

Table 3 is central to the author's argument. Income relationships have not changed significantly since 1947, a 25 year period during which, according to Marmor, so much has been done for the poor. The point the authors hammer home is that the lowest fifth income class are just as poor compared to everyone else as they ever were in 1947. Said

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. FAMILIES CLASSIFIED POOR BY CHANGING
AND FIXED STANDARDS, 1947 - 1965 (in 1965 dollars)

| Year | Median Income | Percentage of families with income less than . . . | | |
|------|------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Less than one-half median ^a | Less than \$3000 | Less than \$2000 |
| 1947 | \$4275 | 18.9 | 30.0 | 17.2 |
| 1948 | 4178 | 19.1 | 31.2 | 18.1 |
| 1949 | 4116 | 20.2 | 32.3 | 19.5 |
| 1950 | 4351 | 20.0 | 29.9 | 18.1 |
| 1951 | 4507 | 18.9 | 27.8 | 16.3 |
| 1952 | 4625 | 18.9 | 26.3 | 15.8 |
| 1953 | 5002 | 19.8 | 24.6 | 15.4 |
| 1954 | 4889 | 20.9 | 26.2 | 16.7 |
| 1955 | 5223 | 20.0 | 23.6 | 14.6 |
| 1956 | 5561 | 19.6 | 21.5 | 13.0 |
| 1957 | 5554 | 19.7 | 21.7 | 16.0 |
| 1958 | 5543 | 19.8 | 21.8 | 12.8 |
| 1959 | 5856 | 20.0 | 20.6 | 12.1 |
| 1960 | 5991 | 20.3 | 20.6 | 12.1 |
| 1961 | 6054 | 20.3 | 20.1 | 11.9 |
| 1962 | 6220 | 19.8 | 18.9 | 10.9 |
| 1963 | 6444 | 19.9 | 18.0 | 10.2 |
| 1964 | 6676 | 19.9 | 17.1 | 9.2 |
| 1965 | 6882 | 20.0 | 16.5 | 9.1 |

(Source, Fuchs:1967, 90)

^aEstimated by interpolation.

TABLE 3
 PERCENT OF AGGREGATE INCOME RECEIVED BY EACH FIFTH
 AND TOP FIVE PERCENT OF FAMILIES
 SELECTED YEARS, 1947 - 1969

| Income classes | 1969 | 1968 | 1964 | 1960 | 1956 | 1950 | 1947 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Lowest fifth | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
| Second fifth | 12.3 | 12.4 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 12.4 | 12.0 | 11.8 |
| Middle fifth | 17.6 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 17.6 | 17.8 | 17.4 | 17.0 |
| Fourth fifth | 23.4 | 23.7 | 24.0 | 23.6 | 23.7 | 23.5 | 23.1 |
| Highest fifth | 41.0 | 40.6 | 41.1 | 42.0 | 41.2 | 42.6 | 43.0 |
| Top 5% | 14.7 | 14.0 | 15.7 | 16.8 | 16.3 | 17.0 | 17.2 |

(Source, Ackerman, et al:1971, 22)

slightly differently, while the central tendencies of the United States' income distribution have risen, its shape or dispersion has remained relatively constant. Poverty then will continue so long as there are people who live substantially cleaner, healthier, wealthier, safer lives.

An absolute definition of poverty masks the hard realities of perceived disparities between qualities of life, and until a more relative conceptualization is adopted remedial programs will tend to be reactionary and non-creative.⁷ Now, an examination of poverty.

⁷Again, please note: it is my belief that perceptions of the way things are are the "hard realities."

Poverty and Culture

It has been convenient--and necessary, I believe--to count those in poverty as a cultural entity. Most of today's poor who strive for self-determination prefer that identification because as poverty sub-groups they find a sense of developing pride in a hitherto hidden heritage. The dominant society also prefers that identification because "culture" allows for stereotyped categorization, and thus, explanation. Moreover, Padfield and Martin found that their data on farmworkers in Arizona consistently revolved around ethnic lines. "Because all groups are immigrant or migrant populations, staying together as a group is a necessity in work location and community . . . Mexican-Americans (associate) with Mexican-Americans, Negroes with Negroes, and White alcoholics with White alcoholics" (Padfield and Martin:1965, 179). Other writers effectively demonstrate that acute poverty is associated with Indian-ness (Steiner:1968, 202-203) and Black-ness (Liebow:1967, 4). That is to say, the condition of poverty is a cultural phenomenon traceable along racial lines.⁸

Consideration of poverty in cultural terms has led, generally, to two schools of thought. A very popular explanation, with a longer his-

⁸In short, I argue that acute, chronic poverty is a condition more specifically consigned to ethnic groups whose physical characteristics are different from White European lineages. While poor whites are numerically larger, Marmor points out that in 1970 "40 percent of the much smaller nonwhite population is poor" (18), compared to 12 percent of the white population. This chapter does not deal explicitly with Racism as a factor in poverty, but it is implicit throughout. In fact, Baran and Sweezy contend that the existence of a lower class is an inevitable consequence of a mature capitalist system (Baran and Sweezy: 1966, especially pp. 265-266).

tory in this country, explains poverty as resulting from cultural characteristics which are considered pathological and perjorative; that is, there are certain depreciative characteristics which lead people and/or groups to a state of poverty. The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, a U. S. Department of Labor report authored by Daniel P. Moynihan and published through the Office of Policy and Planning and Research is an excellent example. Published in March, 1965, and privately circulated to Washington policy-makers, the report identifies the fundamental problem of Blacks in the United States as that of a crumbling family structure, "the deterioration of the Negro family" ("The Moynihan Report" as in Rainwater and Yancey:1967, 5). Citing psychoanalytic theory and early influences on the lives of children, Moynihan says that children of "deteriorating" Black families are destined to a poverty heritage because "adult conduct in society is learned as a child" (Ibid., 5). At the root of the problem, Moynihan argues, is the history of slavery and reconstruction as working "against the emergence of a strong father figure" (Ibid., 16). Other variables which contribute to his "tangle of pathology" are urbanization, unemployment, the wage system, etc. "Nonetheless, at the center of the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure" (Ibid., 30).

The theme of Moynihan's report is founded in great part on Frazier's 1938 book, The Negro Family, an explanation of Black plight which has given rise to the kind of disparaging explanation promulgated by Moynihan. Moynihan quotes heavily from Frazier's chapter, "In The City of Destruction," a chapter which equates urbanization with instability and is founded on an older sociological thesis that the loss

of rurality equals the loss of stability. Frazier's thesis is that the Negro matriarchy is an outgrowth of slavery and reconstruction.

Moynihan concludes with a call for "National Action." "In a word, a national effort towards the problem of Negro Americans must be directed towards the question of family structure" (Ibid., 47).

President Johnson's now famous speech at the June 4, 1965 Howard University commencement emphasized the self-entrapped state of Black poverty. Calling on the Moynihan rendition he said, "when the family collapses, it is the children that are usually damaged. When it happens on a massive scale, the community itself is crippled" (as quoted in *Rainwater and Yancy*, p. 2). "The Howard University speech gave a public face to a then confidential report" (Ibid., 3) and the Moynihan Report became the backdrop to national policy toward the poor.

The paradigm of Black culture as propounded by Moynihan inevitably leading to poverty is one sample of cultural determinism in its worst form: "At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world" ("The Moynihan Report," 47). This style of argument places the burden of responsibility on the Black person, and it serves to perpetuate his condition as self-fulfilling prophecy. Or said another way, a poverty person will continue to be poor because he possesses cultural traits which are judged as pathological and irrational. I tag this the Bootstrap theory.

A different theory of explanation received attention in the 1960's. I refer to the "culture of poverty" argument proposed by Oscar Lewis. Lewis suggests that to be raised in a poor family is to acquire at a

very early age all those characteristics which will ultimately lead to a life of poverty. Lack of education, inadequate diets, low-quality health care, parent frustration, effects of unemployment, life in the fields, urban and rural ghetto squalor--all are assumed by this theory to guarantee that a poverty-person's child will also be poor. Additionally, "the culture of poverty is not just a matter of deprivation . . . a term signifying the absence of something. It is culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, with a ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function" (Lewis:1966, 19).

Poverty gives rise, then, to certain cultural characteristics. These characteristics do not necessarily differ from those identified by the bootstrap view. The significant differences between "culture of poverty" and bootstrap are two: "culture of poverty" behavior patterns are adaptations to situational or environmental factors and are not implicit in the individual or group. "Culture of poverty" characteristics may also be viewed positively rather than negatively. The "culture of poverty" theory has become a theory of urban and rural slum conditions by which the personal characteristics of the poor are seen as a result of their living in poor neighborhoods. One simply does not acquire the habits of punctuality, competition, neatness, or deferred gratification if one has been raised in extreme poverty.

In general, both the bootstrap and "culture of poverty" theories have influenced governmental poverty policy. There are basically

three kinds of programs:⁹ the first kind is aimed at destroying the culture of poverty through programs such as Model Cities, Community Action Agencies and urban renewal; the second kind of program tries to alter the personal characteristics of poor, by day care, Head Start, Manpower Development, school busing, Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Programs; and finally, there are programs aimed at reducing racial discrimination at both private and public arenas, such as the Philadelphia Plan, National Alliance of Business, Affirmative Action, etc. These kinds of programs follow quite logically from the bootstrap and "culture of poverty" orientation and their implied assumption that absolute poverty can be ended, or at least minimized, by changing the personal characteristics of the poor--by changing either their abilities or the immediate environments in which they live, work or go to school.

A product of these kinds of cultural theorizing about poverty is best summarized in a Jules Feiffer sketch. One of his drawings shows a decrepit old man sitting in a straight-backed chair and musing:

I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was needy. Then they told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy, I was underprivileged. Then they told me underprivileged was overused, I was disadvantaged.

In the final panel the old man says, "I still don't have a dime." That is, we are long on descriptions and explanations, but short on causes and viable remedy. Both explanations give no thought to poverty as

⁹Rainwater and Yancey provide a good analysis of the rationale behind national poverty programs during the Johnson administration. For another excellent analysis, see Piven and Cloward:1971, 250-339.

having systemic origins.

Poverty and Community Power Structures

My concern about poverty is grounded in local realities; specifically, the condition of the Chicano seasonal farmworker, the reservation and urban Indian, and the urban Black. All share in poverty. They also share in individual and collective attempts to achieve self-determination. They represent social movements. For this reason, an indepth look at community power structures is necessary. The Chicano and Indian Study Center of Oregon at Adair, Centro Chicano Cultural at Woodburn, Urban Indian Coalition at Portland, locally controlled Model Cities in Portland's Albina, and others--all seek self-determination at the "grassroots" level. A common denominator to all such groups in Oregon, however, is that they cannot find effective access to local decision-making structures.

Two basic schools of thought are identifiable among students of community power structure. One argues that local decisions are in the hands of a few;¹⁰ the other contends that, generally, people involve themselves in decision-making processes by identifying with issues

¹⁰ Hunter's Community Power Structure is considered to be a classic. His focus of study was Atlanta, Georgia, and he found that a small, powerful, decision-making group exists which works through a large understructure. The former are "men of independent decision"; the latter are "executors of policy" (1953:65). This leadership is stable in the sense it is ongoing, and they usually try to function discreetly by using front-men (Figs. 9 and 10 describe "second" and "third rate" men, pages 96-97). Hunter's analytical approach is reputational and suggests oligarchy.

relevant to them.¹¹ That is to say, the political stratum for each issue is potentially different, is open to public access, and is responsive to public pressure. This latter, more "democratic" approach appears to be the more widely accepted within the discipline of political science.

Bachrach and Baratz increased the turbidity of community power structure water by suggesting there are "two faces of power": the initiators and decision-makers on the one hand; those who through non-involvement and passivity and silence prevent potentially dangerous issues from being raised, on the other hand (1970:16). This the authors call the power of non-decision, or silence. Or said another way, to the extent that a person or group consciously or unconsciously reinforces barriers to public examination of issues, that person or group has power.

Clark's (1968) first five chapters provide an excellent synthesis of the foregoing by carefully delineating dimensions of vertical and horizontal decision-making stratification, exchange theories and resource requirements necessary to influence decisions. Adequate understanding of the local decision-making process, however, cannot be

¹¹ Dahl's Who Governs? is an analysis of decision-making, and flies in the face of Hunter's reputational approach. Dahl traces the routes of decisions by carefully analyzing the issues of political nominations and urban development in New Haven, Connecticut. He assumes a pluralistic society and he struggles to demonstrate a relationship between leaders and the rank-and-file in this kind of system. He contends that while a leader stratum does exist, it is not a closed group, there is no semblance of the unanimity implied in Hunter, there are divergent interests, and reciprocity exists between leaders and citizens.

understood unless one comprehends the dimensions of stratification systems.

It is an implicit assumption, and an accurate one, I believe, in all community power structure thought that issues which affect the life of local groups and individuals cannot be affected unless one comprehends and creatively functions within the community decision-making structure. It is painfully obvious, moreover, that those in poverty have little chance to take charge of their own destiny by utilizing local power structures.¹² Clark unwittingly points to the hopelessness of a poverty group's ambitions for self-determination when he identifies in general terms the resources needed for effective bargaining:

(1) Money and credit; (2) Control over jobs; (3) Control of mass media; (4) High social status; (5) Knowledge and specialized technical skills; (6) Popularity and esteemed personal qualities; (7) Legality; (8) Sub-system solidarity; (9) The right to vote; (10) Social access to community leaders; (11) Commitments of followers; (12) Manpower and control of organizations; (13) Control over the interpretation of values (57 and 58).

It would appear that a poverty group is delegated continued disfranchisement because the very resources he does not have are those necessary to effectively determine his own destiny.

An implicit assumption in much community power structure thought is the requirement of certain resources as the stuff by which power is realized. Hunter tries to deny that as explicit reality (1953:30) by

¹²This in spite of Clark's reasonable contention that "the more diverse the economic structures within a community, the more decentralized the decision-making structure" (102).

listing "social prestige" as a requisite to power. That is a meaningless distinction because in our society when "social prestige" is juxtaposed to wealth the two are complimentary and not mutually exclusive.¹³ Clark approaches the question of resources by dealing with the abstract concept of "reciprocity" (1968:52-53). Since he emphasizes a dyadic approach to power (power is relational), he argues that "inputs" must equal "outputs." Where disparity exists, however, in a power relationship--as certainly it exists between the wealthy and the poor--"altruistic" norms by one group augment the deficiency of the other. Even in the situation of "altruism," however, Clark shows that "reciprocity" is expected (Ibid., 52) in one form or another. How can the poor reciprocate to "altruism"? By submission, perhaps.

In summary, an analysis of community power structure thought demonstrates that the absence of resources, or poorness, does not provide a launching pad for entry into local decision-making processes, and given the existing requirements for power (resources necessary to influence decisions) the poverty-person is wanting.

Poverty and Economics

It seems to be a universal that the availableness of resources in order to influence decisions is a measurement of power. Robbins Burling in his article, "Maximization Theories and the Study of Economic Anthropology," appropriately points out that economic considerations

¹³Hunter does admit to an implicit causal relationship, but he obscures that observation with vagueness.

are inclusive and not limited to monetary or material goods. He says that the "relationship" between "ends," or goals, and "means," or resources, is an economic consideration. As such, then, the economist is interested in the most efficient "possible way of achieving certain ends, given the means" (1962:8). Central to all such considerations is situational behavior¹⁴ if goal satisfaction, or decisional influence, and its resource costs are to be correctly understood.¹⁵ But what of the poverty person whose resources are severely limited? How do they achieve power within a system where resources to them are so scarce that primary attention must necessarily be given to meeting basic needs?

Human capital theorists such as Schultz (1971), Becker (1964) and Kiker (1971) suggests that people's earnings are related to their investments in themselves. These investments may be such factors as formal or informal education, on the job training, improved health, and migration. The value of the investment is generally estimated by calculating the estimated return over the investment. Implicit, I believe, in human capital theory is the assertion that the difference between what a person is earning, and what he could be earning, is a systemic loss. The solution, then, for persons in poverty is more education, better training, the capacity to migrate. Where are the

¹⁴Burling employs the term "purposive behavior" as central to maximization theories and economics is therefore justified in dealing with aspects (not types) of behavior.

¹⁵Kenneth Boulding equates maximization with "rational behavior" (1958:27). He also employs a more inclusive concept of economics (Ibid., 9 and 10).

resources for investment, however? And if the investment is possible, can a greater return on that investment be guaranteed? And what of such systemic variables as sex, age, race/ethnic origins?

Other economists, such as Burton Weisbrod, see resource distribution as central to the condition of poverty and a redistribution of resources as an essential step to greater parity.¹⁶

A common denominator to most economic explanations is the scarcity of resources to segments of our population. Program proposals such as negative income tax, increased social security benefits, guaranteed comprehensive health care, and other income maintenance programs have been suggested and a few implemented. As Piven and Cloward point out, however, our social work-ethic requires explicit work incentives (1971: 22 and 172). Former President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan is a legislative expression of work incentives. To wit, "I propose a new approach that will make it more attractive to go to work than to go on welfare" (as quoted in Marmor:1971, 78).

For another economic explanation of poverty, I turn to Edward Banfield, a political scientist. I mention him because of his close proximity to former President Nixon and his position of influence. Banfield's approach to poverty is detailed within the urban context. He explains poverty in terms of what he calls the "logic of metropolitan development" (1970:22-44). These urban poor have, like all their

¹⁶ For a very interesting look at some economists' thinking which is having some influence on policy-makers, see The Analysis and Evaluation of Public Expenditures: The PPD System, V. 1-3. Weisbrod's article, "Collective Action and the Distribution of Income" appears in V. 1.

counterparts, gone to the city only to find a place in line. Many of these poor have taken with them markedly lower-class behavior patterns which are passed on to their children, and which are inconsistent with the urban labor markets. Banfield discusses at length, and with some enthusiasm I might add, the habits of abandon and shiftlessness (see especially chapter 9, "Rioting Mainly for Fun and Profit"). He argues that the poor will end their poverty only when they change their habits into something other than lower class.¹⁷ It is obvious that he offers nothing new and compliments, I believe, the bootstrap cultural theorists.¹⁸ The root of poverty lies in the characteristics of the poor.

At another level of abstraction there is the economic explanation by an economic statistician, Lester Thurow. In his book, Poverty and Discrimination, he explains the flow of income to an individual as determined by that individual's productivity in labor markets. The implication is that an individual's holding of human capital--his training and educational experience--determines in large part, his income. To hypothesize that a Black man, with six years education, who lives in a low-wage industrial area, just off the farm, is likely to be poor, and then to test that hypothesis against observed data gives precision to the obvious. Even though the variables are precisely identi-

¹⁷ Banfield's chapter, "The Future of the Lower Class" carries this theme. See especially pages 210 and 211.

¹⁸ Banfield demonstrates superb insight in one area which runs counter to most bootstrap explanations. He recognizes, thanks to the influence of Elliot Liebow, that lower-class behavior is "rational" behavior. ". . . (Poor) people by and large (italics dropped) tend to act rationally in the sense of making choices that promise to give them more rather than less of whatever it is they want . . ." (1970: 219).

fied, however, he doesn't ask why the important variables are what they are. He doesn't ponder, for example, why a bright man with eight years education will get a job after a dull man with a high school degree. He fails to tell us why a black man or woman gets less income for the same job than does a white man. Thurow explains what happens in the labor market but he fails to seriously consider the system in which the market functions.

Summary Critique

A major failure central to the poverty explanations just reviewed is the refusal to see poverty as being a product of, and springing from within, our cultural-political-economic system. Howard Wachtell (1971) clearly points us in the appropriate direction when he says,

"Social science research has mirrored our social ideology. Virtually all the past and contemporary social science research has concentrated on the characteristics of individuals who are defined as poor...Being poor is associated with a set of individual characteristics: sex, age, education, marital status, etc. But these are not the causes of poverty...Studies merely associate the causes of poverty with a particular set of individual characteristics. For example, if you are poor and have low levels of education, it does not necessarily follow that low levels of education are a cause of poverty since education itself is endogenous to the system. The causes of inequality in education and their impact on incomes must be analyzed by examining social class, the role of the state, and the way in which educational markets function.

"...A proper formulation of the problem would start with poverty as a result of the normal functioning of the societal institutions in a capitalist economy..."
(2).

His critique is crucial. I will explain what I think he means by

a few examples. To observe that a seasonal farmworker receives lower wages because he is a seasonal farmworker begs the question--unless you accept as given the history of agriculture and its demand for cheap labor. Chicano-ness, moreover, is a cause of his lower income, given a social system which has forced him into jobs defined as befitting a Chicano.¹⁹ Similarly, the poverty of the American Indian cannot be explained by the Indian's lack of education, unless one assumes as given the social system which has confined him to reservation marginality, and the historical causes of that confinement.²⁰ The point is, that behind all these theories of poverty is a set of institutionalized forces, which makes it tough, no matter what courage a poverty person may display, for him to get out of poverty. Poverty is the result of a cultural-economic-political system which requires his presence. To quote our friend Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

If one can wade through the rhetoric of frustration found in Angus

¹⁹Included in London and Anderson (1971) is an excellent analysis of the bracero program as a means to provide cheap labor for which others would accept only appreciably higher wages (e.g. 84-85). Chicano-ness is equated with cheap farm labor.

²⁰"Reservation marginality" is imposed marginality. I have a friend who is a Hoopa Indian. A group of people were discussing the need to support our Southeast Asia foreign policy so that communism can be contained. Pat listened for a time, and then said, "You are right. We must stop communism because if we don't they will take away our land, put our kids in schools controlled by them, dole out our food and clothing, and generally control every moment of our lives." Several people nodded in agreement. Others were stunned. He was not describing some vague, theoretical possibility; he was describing the reality of his own existence and that of every other reservation Indian.

Black's, A New Radical's Guide to Economic Reality (1970),²¹ one quickly identifies his underlying assumption: our economic system is dependent on a poverty understructure. Herbert Gans in his article, "The Positive Functions of Poverty" founds his thesis on the same assumption. I submit that as an advanced capitalist society, economic forces are designed to serve the needs of its population in proportion to the income they receive. Resources are a requisite to power, and are used to the disadvantage of others less wealthy.

Can one deny, for example, that our educational system stratifies a class structure by providing educational facilities and funds in a balanced proportion to the income of their parents? Or, how can one explain the fact that I, a county 4-H Extension agent, who spends his time in no apparent service to the cause of increasing the GNP am paid the same amount as the man who services my septic tank and keeps the sewage from enveloping my home?²² My salary reflects certain prejudices about my status in society, my role in keeping it all going and, above all, an artificially restricted labor supply. Or, take the professional baseball pitcher who receives \$45,000 because he can throw a ball with speed and precision. Within our economic system, his wage is explained in terms of the demand for that pitcher's services, measured

²¹Note his paragraph, "We have a representative government. It represents the rich oil man, the rich cattle raiser, the rich wheat grower, the rich steel producer, the rich doctor, the rich dentist, and the rich lawyer. If you ever got anything good out of your government, you can be sure some rich sonofabitch got even more by letting you get yours" (111-112).

²²Unless, of course, one considers GNP also in terms of social well-being.

by the number of fans who come out to see him, and the supply of people who possess his particular skill. However, this does not explain the cause of his wage, unless we accept as given all those institutions which legitimize a pitcher's behavior and the way he is paid for it. In other words, the pitcher's productivity and worth is measured in terms of the way society is organized. It cannot be otherwise.

Conclusion

Hope for the poverty scene is dismal. Generally, where poverty is seen as a condition of individuals and a function or result of individual and group attributes, be they viewed from a cultural, political or economic perspective, we are led to a certain set of policy prescriptions which are aimed at destroying "poverty characteristics." I consider these prescriptions to be depreciative, perpetuating, and ultimately dehumanizing. I have instead suggested that the condition of poverty has systemic origins. Policy implications, however, when poverty is viewed as a consequence of the social order, threatens the very fiber of our structure. If we are to creatively deal with poverty, we must then creatively deal with the system. Hope for the poverty scene is dismal, then, because it logically follows that critical self analysis followed by structural change is requisite to the elimination of poverty. The systemic cost appears too high a price. But how high a price are we now paying for "remedial" programs? And how does the systemic cost compare to our total social costs?

Chapter II

The Research Design

A Conceptual Model

The assumption central to this thesis is that poverty groups exist as a result of systemic conditions which serve to perpetuate their situation. They are situationally distinct from all other groups. Two antithetical, and more popular notions are that poverty groups exist because (a) they possess peculiar characteristics which inevitably lead to a life of poverty, or (b) poverty generates adaptive characteristics which perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

The condition of poverty has as its source the structures and processes of the whole social system. These "structures and processes" have been shown to be mediated culturally, politically and economically. Said a little differently, they have been shown to be mediated institutionally. The social behavior of people in and through our social structures, then, furthers the position of the poor.

Elimination or alteration of the systemic factors a priori to poverty is therefore requisite to the elimination of poverty. The elimination of poverty threatens the very fiber of our social structure since it logically follows that to eliminate poverty is to significantly alter the system. The status quo is maintained by default, willful intent or ignorance. Those who "default" because the problem is so overwhelmingly immense tend to slip into the "culture of poverty" orientation. Charles Valentine, an urban anthropologist, has the following to say about such slippage. He points out that the "culture of poverty"

"...enables Americans to evade the hard questions about changes in the distribution of resources and the structure of society needed to resolve the problem of inequality which is the essence of the poverty crisis. It is used not only to silence radical critiques of our social system, but also to calm the doubts of liberals or others that the system may not be working as it is supposed to. Faith in the status quo can be kept intact with no more than minor adjustment in national priorities. At the same time, slogans like 'culture of poverty' confer a gratifying feeling that a fresh understanding or a lingering difficulty has been achieved..." (as quoted in Leacock:1971, 216).

This study is an attempt to deal with some of the hard questions. Society is culture institutionalized and an institutional introspection is consistent with a systemic analysis.

Area of Study

The Cooperative Extension Service is Oregon State University's extended educational arm to the people of Oregon. It functions to meet individual and group needs in six major program areas: Agriculture, Forestry, Family Living, 4-H and Youth, Community Development and Marine Science. Funded by the federal government through the United States Department of Agriculture, the State of Oregon through the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and Oregon counties through each of their respective governing bodies, the Extension Service exists as a result of a very unique, challenging and sometimes awkward relationship between three levels of government.²³ Grounded as the organi-

²³The Cooperative Extension Service is a function of each land-grant university in the United States and the Service reaches almost every county in the United States. While funding relationships differ from state to state, a three-way tie between federal, state and county exists in each state.

zation is in the local county (there are offices in each Oregon county, city of Portland and the Warm Springs Indian Reservation) there is historical preference for developing programs which address local needs and opportunities.

The Cooperative Extension Service has a social consciousness that reaches back to its origins. A major function of the Cooperative Extension Service as stated in the 1914 Smith-Lever Act is

"...to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of same..."

The organization was born out of a need to improve the condition of rural America. Through the land-grant system created under the provisions of the Smith-Lever Act, and subsequent related legislation, an educational and problem-solving delivery system was implemented. Backbone to the delivery system were to be agents-of-change who, according to Mr. Lever of the House Committee (December 8, 1913) prior to passage of the Act, were to be personnel who "must give leadership and direction along all lines of rural activity--social, economic and financial . . ." (As quoted in "A People and A Spirit":1968, 18).

In 1968 the report of the Joint United States Department of Agriculture-National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges Study Committee on Cooperative Extension was published. Entitled "A People and A Spirit" the report was evaluative in nature and was intended "to project the future scope, direction, and redirection of the Cooperative Extension Service in order that it may make the maximum contribution to local, state and national goals and needs of the

people it serves" (1968, IV). Two points about the report are important here: (1) the document stands as a clear call for expanded efforts in improving the "quality of life" among the "disadvantaged and alienated" (Ibid., 92) and, (2) "the Committee recommends that Extension evolve its future programs on a basis of public need rather than upon artificial geographic boundaries . . . There should be increasing commitment in urban areas in the years ahead" (Ibid., 53). The Joint Study Committee was moved to identify the following as "highest priority concerns . . . The American community, domestic peace, unequal opportunity, crime, stable and balanced economic growth, blending traditional values and institutions with new concepts . . . (Ibid., 7).

Because the Cooperative Extension Service is the organization to which my professional strings are tied, because it is an institution trying to serve the poor through educational processes, because I believe the organization to be philosophically receptive and institutionally flexible, and because it is founded on social values which will provide framework for the testing of hypotheses generated from the rationale in Chapter I, the area of study will be Extension field staff orientations toward the condition of poverty.

Objective of Study

The objective of this study is to test the following alternative hypotheses:

Hypothesis one: Extension staff orientation toward the poor is

one wherein poverty people are considered trapped in their state because they possess what might be called abnormal characteristics and which lead inevitably to a life of poverty (Bootstrap explanation).²⁴

Hypothesis two: Extension staff orientation toward the poor is one wherein the poor are credited with their own structure and rationale, a way of life handed down to future generations, where depreciative behavior patterns are viewed as adaptations to environmental factors ("culture of poverty" explanation).²⁵

Hypothesis three: Extension staff orientation toward the poor is characterized by heterogeneity, where cultural characteristics are evident but are seen as positive and functional; where a latticework of systemic forces are seen as a priori to poverty (systemic-revisionist explanation).²⁶

The central purpose of this research is to describe explanations of poverty held by Oregon Extension field staff. How do they explain the phenomenon, and what do they suggest be done to limit or eliminate the problem? Field staff explanations are expected to fit into one of the above three hypothesized orientations to which these first two chapters have been addressed.

An in-depth interview design was used on the assumption that a person's views on origins of poverty and his proposed solutions to pov-

²⁴ See pp. 12-14; 36-42.

²⁵ See pp. 14-15; 33-36; 42-46.

²⁶ See pp. 24-27; 46-50.

erty are indicators of poverty orientation. Questions directed at the respondents were designed to elicit their views on the origins of poverty and solutions they believe to be best.

Concepts Explained and Operationalized

In order to understand the concepts, hypotheses one and two will be considered concurrently. They can be set apart and considered separately; however, since distinction between the two concepts appear vague at first glance, the line of separation will be made clearer if they are considered together. I will begin with the concept behind the second hypothesis.

"Culture of poverty" orientation:

This concept implies that people will explain poverty in terms of the poverty condition in which people are found. Moreover, it implies that their consequent life modes are developed to deal with their physical and/or social environment. The concept is grounded heavily, though not totally, in Lewis' (1966a) "culture of poverty" theory.

Lewis argues that the marginal position of the poor in our cultural-political-economic system has given rise to identifiable patterns of behavior that can be recognized as cultural traits. These traits allow the poor "to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair that arise from the realization by the members of the marginal communities . . . of the improbability of their achieving success in terms of the prevailing values and goals" (Ibid., 21). In other words, the condition of poverty has produced a sub-culture, the values and attitudes of

which support the actions of members in dealing with their milieu.

Persons with this particular orientation see these attitudes and values as personified in specific characteristics resulting from poverty. The following characterizations of the poor illustrate "culture of poverty."

Poor people from marginal sub-cultural groups are often characterized as people with high material transfer. By that I mean there is a high incidence of pawning, borrowing among neighbors, a propensity to secure loans at outrageous rates of interest, the purchase of low-quality and second-hand housewares and clothing. These patterns of behavior are linked to the economic realities of a marginal economy, such as chronic unemployment and underemployment, welfare and the consequent shortage of cash.

Poor people are often characterized as isolationists. That is, they rarely belong to groups or organizations such as labor unions, credit unions, political parties; participation in service or community action groups is infrequent. Institutional involvement of the poor is usually limited to welfare, noncareer military activity²⁷ or law enforcement, the courts and penal systems--none of which sport a credible record of stemming the "culture of poverty" tide.

Poor people are often characterized as living only for the present. The concept of deferred gratification is seen as beyond their reach because future expectations are limited to the social and economic parameters of the present. The poor are now-oriented with an often-times stereotyped flair for spontaneity.

²⁷The reader may argue that the military has been one of the few avenues available for upward social mobility to the poor.

Poverty sub-cultural attitudes and values are implicit in the tendency for non-formal marriages. If men do not have jobs, nor prospects for jobs; if they are forced to live in the present only and cannot afford the luxury of a formal marriage with its consequent commitment as provider, informal marriages may result. These keep the responsibilities of each partner to the other at tolerable limits. Women are also advantaged by such unions because the non-legal status of husbands limits husbands' claims on children and property and allows women to entertain a semblance of "freedom" the men enjoy.

The characteristic of informal marriages reaffirms the tendency of some poverty sub-cultures to be mother-centered and tied more closely to the mother's extended family.²⁸ Men may be viewed as lazy, irresponsible, or more appropriately, the victims of circumstances over which they have no control. Moreover, families tend to be mother-centered with a high rate of "illegitimacy."

The condition of poverty gives rise to lethargy and social sluggishness. If people are relegated marginality, and such marginality remains despite repeated attempts by the poor to eliminate the condition, lethargy results. Such conditions might well result in a sense of fatalism, dependence and/or inferiority. The poor may also be marked by cynicism toward institutions whose function it is to maintain the existing order of things.

And so it goes! Poverty elicits many responses which if reinforced within or outside the group comes to be identified as character-

²⁸Frazier, Moynihan and others claim that matrifocality is more unique to urban and rural black than to other ethnic minorities.

istic patterns of behavior indicative of particular attitudes and values. And, as Lewis suggests, "Once the culture of poverty has come into existence it tends to perpetuate itself (1966a:21).

Bootstrap orientation:

Whereas the "culture of poverty" explanation puts poverty a priori to the kinds of behavior patterns (cultural characteristics) described above, the bootstrap explanation puts those very characteristics a priori to poverty. That is to say, a bootstrapper argues that a person or group possesses certain inherent characteristics which inevitably lead that person or group to a life of poverty. The two explanations are juxtaposed by that central distinction.

There are at least two reasons--as implied in Chapter I--why the "culture of poverty" and bootstrap explanations could be considered as one. Both lead to culturally deterministic attitudes toward the poor, i.e., they both place the burden of poverty-responsibility on the shoulders of the poor. This cultural determinism leads to the idea that poverty groups perpetuate their own condition without outside assistance. Second, both explanations ultimately emphasize the characteristics of the poor as the focus for remedial action. Much of public policy has thus been aimed at those characteristics.

The bootstrap and "culture of poverty" explanations, however, must necessarily be given separate consideration. Not only are the explanations positionally distinct (i.e., they are relationally opposite), their *raison d'etre* is significantly different, as are the suggested remedial programs associated with each.

There are two kinds of bootstrappers evidenced in two kinds of

explanations. There is, on one hand, the bootstrap response identified by its individualistic, socio-psychological orientation. Here, the explanation is usually negative²⁹ and marked by ethnocentrism. If we draw on some of the characteristics sampled above and give them a negative connotation, the following statements serve as examples:

"That man is poor because he can't plan for tomorrow."

"That man is poor because he's lazy, can't hold a job."

A person is therefore poor because he possesses certain socio-psychological traits, usually negative, which inevitably lead to poverty. Remedial action most often suggested by this bootstrapper is unsympathetic and takes one of two forms: the poverty person must assume responsibility for pulling himself out of poverty,³⁰ or those patterns of behavior that are judged as perpetuating marginality must be dealt with directly. Thus, the bootstrapper may sometimes support remedial education programs, especially those programs designed to inculcate middle-class values that will help the poor out of poverty; or, he may support programs that will lift the marginal person from poverty, but always on the condition that his patterns of behavior and/or values change. Most often, however, this bootstrapper views the poverty person from a strong work-ethic framework and reasons that if a person

²⁹ Negative in the sense that patterns of behavior are looked down on, are viewed as pathogenic or irrational; are seen as characteristics to be avoided.

³⁰ It is from this example that the term used to describe this concept was derived. This person is the classical bootstrapper. In the 1968 KGW, channel 8 documentary, "Albina: Ghetto of the Mind," narrator Dick Ross asks this leading question of Beverly Nicholson, a KGW black employee: "Would you agree that the black man of Albina must pick himself up by his bootstraps if he is to better his own condition?"

is "worth his salt" he will take charge of his own destiny and remedy his own condition. "After all, we had to do it during the depression!" Or, the bootstrap person may simply write off the poverty problem by viewing the marginalized person as unsalvageable--especially those who refuse the work ethic.

On the other hand, there is the bootstrap explanation which stems from a socio-cultural orientation and is more broadly group oriented rather than individualistic. It too is usually negative and poverty groups also tend to be identified ethnically. For example, Jamie Whitten, democratic congressman from Mississippi, and the most powerful person in agricultural policy-making by virtue of his position as chairman of the agriculture subcommittee to the House Appropriations Committee is characterized by Kotz as follows: "His (Whitten's) belief in the basic laziness, indifference, and unworthiness of the black poor is as strong as his belief in the virtues of a way of life that for three centuries has denied these same black poor any avenues of pursuing ambition, self-respect, or a better future for their children."³¹ Kotz gives Whitten's socio-cultural orientation an ethnic bent by claiming that the Congressman's attitudes toward this group of poor is founded on color--or, more appropriately, ethnicity. A central message of this approach to the poor is that only after they have become conventionally respectable can they hope for a chance to leave the poverty scene.

³¹ An article by Nick Kotz, "Jamie Whitten: The Permanent Secretary of Agriculture," p. 19. The article was excerpted from his book, Let Them Eat Promises.

The bootstrap socio-cultural orientation, then, suggests that poverty results from certain inherent characteristics that reside within certain groups. These patterns of behavior are usually viewed as pathological or irrational and such explanations often carry ethnic overtones.

The socio-cultural bootstrap orientation may be more sophisticated than the socio-psychological bootstrap orientation. Consequently, the socio-cultural orientation may be difficult to separate from the "culture of poverty" orientation. Any one of the following keys, however, will separate the two: (1) if socio-cultural characteristics are judged as causal to poverty, or (2) if the suggested remedial action calls for a group's self-extrication from marginality, or (3) if the suggested action demands the inculcation of middle-class values and attitudes in the poor as requisite to their extrication, or (4) if the action calls for changes in patterns of behavior that are considered pathological or irrational and consistent with number one above, then the poverty orientation is bootstrap, socio-cultural.

Application of the criteria can be illustrated using a difficult case, the poverty theory expressed in the Moynihan report.³² Careful study of the report nets these three observations, any one of which places Moynihan among the bootstrappers with a socio-cultural tilt: (1) he identified the root of black poverty in this country as resulting from a number of negative behaviors (characteristics) he calls "the tangle of pathology" (e.g., Rainwater and Yancey, in "The Moynihan

³² See previous chapter, pp. 13 and 14.

Report," p. 30), but (2) he sees the central problem in black society residing in the black family and its matrifocality ("The Deterioration of the Negro Family," p. 5). Finally, (3) he calls for national action that must "be directed towards the question of family structure" (Ibid., 47). That is, his policy rests on the central characteristic he sees as a priori to poverty.

Bootstrap Operationalized:

Therefore, a person's explanation will be inferred to be evidence of a bootstrap orientation if the origin of poverty is seen in certain key individual and/or group characteristics and behavior patterns that are generally judged as negative. Lethargy, laziness, inability to get and hold a job, matrifocality, isolationist tendencies, instant gratification, high fertility rates, illegitimacy, informal marriages, irresponsibility, ethnicity, and other traits are representative of the kinds of traits which lead a person or group to poverty. These characteristics will usually be considered pathological and irrational. Attitudes toward poverty then are usually negative. "They can't help themselves" may be another frequent response, but one which, nevertheless, places the burden of responsibility on the characteristics of the poor. The following statements reflect a bootstrap orientation because the presence or absence of certain traits are perceived to predispose people to poverty.

- (a) A person can get a job and earn enough money to comfortably support himself or his family if he really wants to.
- (b) A person who lives in poverty has no one to blame but himself.
- (c) Those poor people. They don't know any better.

- (d) The high rate of informal (non-legal) marriages among poverty groups is a great disadvantage to children because they do not learn respect for authority and the merits of hard work.
- (e) They're sick!
- (f) On the basis of intellectual tests, Blacks are definitely genetically inferior. That explains the very high incidence of poverty in that group.

Where bootstrap explanations find expression in the third person singular and the conversation implicitly or explicitly denies or avoids poverty in group terms, the bootstrap explanation will be classified as socio-psychological. That is to say, when the respondent replies within an individualized framework and he doesn't explicitly say so, I will surmise that he sees poverty as an individual problem based on individual characteristics. Statements (a) and (b) above taken alone and at face value reflect a bootstrap socio-psychological orientation.

Statements (c), (d), (e) and (f), offer explanations within the context of groups, or one large group (i.e., some respondents may identify all poverty as one universe). When this occurs, I will judge this bootstrap orientation to be socio-cultural.

The bootstrap orientation will also be identified by respondents' expressions on poverty solutions. When field staff suggest that a person's or group's extrication from poverty is contingent on self-help, the orientation is bootstrap (note the implications of statements (a) and (b)). Or, the bootstrap person may suggest remedial programs that are grounded in psychiatric treatment (see statement (e)), or he may suggest education programs that are designed to inculcate values related to a strong work-motif, and other values related to self-reli-

ance and independence.³³ Those with a bootstrap view may support certain public programs constructed to help lift people from poverty if that extrication depends on a priori or at least concomitant change in behavioral patterns and characteristics.

"Culture of Poverty" re-visited:

The "culture of poverty" also has two subsets that must be distinguished: one marked by its universal orientation, the other by relativity. The universal explanation is recognized by its sweeping generalizations, and is recognized by a person's attempt to place all poverty groups under one, general cultural umbrella. "For example, a high incidence of common law marriage and of households headed by women was thought to be distinctive of Negro family life in this country and has been attributed to the Negro's historical experience of slavery. In actuality, it turns out that such households express essential traits of the culture of poverty and are found among many diverse groups in many parts of the world and among peoples that have had no history of slavery" (Lewis:1966a, 20). Lewis asserts that such broad generalizations are justified, but does admit that there is "still much to be learned from this difficult and affecting subject" (Ibid.). Nevertheless, "this style of life ("culture of poverty") transcends national boundaries and regional and rural-urban differences

³³ Frances Hsu in his article, "American Core Value and National Character" (1972) argues that the core value in this country is self-reliance and independence. The fear of dependence has therefore become a corollary value. He argues against the more popular tradition that the superiority of Western man is based on religion (e.g., Christianity) and romanticism. It is instead based on self-reliance and competition.

within nations" (Ibid., 19).

A "culture of poverty" orientation, on the other hand, may be marked by cultural relativity and rests on the idea of cultural pluralism. A person with this orientation would argue that particular patterns of behavior are developed by a given poverty group and may not reflect the behaviors of other poverty groups. Said another way, certain designs for living, for coping with the realities of poverty, may be unique to such groups. Ethnicity may be implicit in this orientation and it may or may not be ethnocentric. The point is that poorness is extant in many sub-cultures. That fact attests to cultural uniquenesses.

Remedial programs from each sub-orientation take essentially the same form, except that universalism allows for broader policy application and need not be particularistic. A person with a "culture of poverty" orientation may suggest psychiatric treatment, or the inculcation of middle-class values and attitudes on the poor. He may encourage programs that provide the poor with some sense of hope or suggest they be organized to effect self-determination. It may be that marginal group solidarity is seen as requisite to organization. This person will look with favor on a variety of educational programs designed to eliminate poverty characteristics judged to be depreciative. One might even find among these programs a call for resource distribution to increase employment mobility and/or retraining. In any event, he will identify remedial programs that address the characteristics of the poor.

"Culture of Poverty" operationalized:

A person's explanation of poverty will be classed as "culture of poverty," therefore, when poverty, or other situational factors, is explained as a priori to the kinds of behavior and characteristics reflected, in part, in the bootstrap orientation. The condition of poverty will be explained in terms of groups, i.e., in cultural-social terms, and will be viewed as pejorative.³⁴ In other words, poverty will be seen as the cause, not the result of, certain cultural-social characteristics. Once those characteristics are established within a group, then poverty is perpetuated by the group itself. Further, the cultural characteristics will be viewed as leading to group disintegration, personal and group disorganization, resignation, fatalism, and, generally, the absence of purposeful action. On the level of individual, major characteristics leading to perpetuation of poverty are a

"strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, and of inferiority...weak ego structure, confusion of sexual identification, lack of impulse control...little ability to defer gratification and to plan for the future...resignation and fatalism ...belief in male superiority...tolerance for psychological pathology...provincially and locally oriented...very little sense of history" (Lewis: 1966b, xlvii-xlviii).

The following statements reflect a "culture of poverty" orientation.

- (a) Little wonder poverty persists. If I had to live in those conditions, I think I might become resigned and fatalistic too.

³⁴Pejorative as implied in 'Lewis': Poverty leads to group traits (ways of coping with their environment) which are depreciative and which tend, once established, to perpetuate themselves without outside assistance.

- (b) I don't know how to explain poverty. All I know is it's a vicious circle and people can't break out of it.
- (c) The poverty people I know have no sense of identity. I mean, how can anyone develop any kind of favorable identity in that kind of squalor.
- (d) Poverty has become a way of life to them. That's why they act the way they do.

Note that they differ from the bootstrap statements on pages 40-41 in that patterns of behavior (characteristics) are not explicitly or implicitly causal to the original condition of poverty. The characteristics may be described in a disparaging way, but they do not cause themselves nor the initial poverty. Behavior patterns are instead developed to adapt to the condition of poverty. This is to say that while some respondents may refer to poverty characteristics negatively, it is equally possible that poverty behavior patterns will be seen as realistic adaptations to a very difficult socio-economic condition.

As previously indicated, I expect to be able to divide the "culture of poverty" orientation into two sub-orientations: universal and relativistic. Simply stated, field staff who make no distinction between poverty groups, but who instead see one sub-society in poverty, will be categorized as a "culture of poverty" universalist.

On the other hand, where poverty groups are distinguished by particular behavioral or ethnic traits, the orientation will be categorized as relativistic. The difference between "If you've seen one slum, you've seen them all," and "poverty is particularly acute among Indians and Blacks," or "certain groups seem to develop different responses to poverty" spells the essential difference between "culture of poverty" universalistic and relativistic orientation.

Identification of the "culture of poverty" orientation is also grounded in suggested solutions. Sample statements follow:

- (a) "I think the best thing we can do is to educate them. Teach them solid values that will help motivate them. Kind of like Head Start."
- (b) "Some of these OEO programs are real useful. At least the poor may find some hope. But they've got to help themselves too."
- (c) "I believe that some kind of minimum income level ought to be set, but it shouldn't be a gift. They need to learn the value of work."
- (d) "It's not going to do any good at all to fund programs if we can't treat them at the same time. I mean, some of them can't even take care of themselves, or their families."

A central concern to such suggestions is the elimination of depressive characteristics through some kind of treatment, such as, education or psychiatric treatment as inferred in statements (a) and (d). Help is offered, and there will be general approval of extant poverty policy, so long as there is some guarantee to inculcate more acceptable values and there is evidence the poor are willing to become self-sufficient and/or change culturally.

Systemic orientation:

Hypothesis three I expect to least likely characterize Extension field staff explanations of poverty. This orientation is distinguished by a holistic approach and usually suggests a latticework of socio-cultural, political and economic forces within society that predispose people to lives of marginality. In short, the disadvantaged position of the poor is created and maintained by a dominant society which tends to act in its own interests. This orientation likewise sees distinctive patterns of behavior in marginal sub-groups which are not so much

characterized as pathogenic, but are quite often seen as healthy, positive patterns which demonstrate creative adjustments to conditions of deprivation.

This person will probably see benefits in help-oriented remedial programs if they are utilized by the poor, but will criticize them as erroneously based and directed at symptoms only, not causes. The systemic revisionist will call for restructuring of society through such means as resource redistribution (i.e., they cannot effect their own lives until they have the necessary resources), revisions in our economic system that demand a greater social consciousness³⁵ and changes in some sub-cultural patterns that work to the poverty groups' disbenefit. Most students consider the first two suggestions as politically disastrous. The most likely source for these kinds of changes may be seen instead within the framework of social, cultural, political, or economic movements which draws initially on the limited strength of the poor. Ultimate success, however, is seen in society's involvement in such movements. These movements will be seen as invigorating the poor (self-determination); there will be expressions of reliance on

³⁵ I have suggested, for example, that material and monetary wealth is distributed in relation to a person's or group's existing holdings so that those who have more receive more and those who have less receive less. While this is economically cogent, it gives rise to social disparity. For further consideration of problems related to income redistribution, see Bronfenbrenner (1971:26-30) and Weisbrod (pp. 184-185). The following quatrain by Kenneth Boulding when discussing the California water plan gives further evidence for resource distribution problems (as quoted in Weisbrod, 185):

"It would be well to be quite sure
Just who are the deserving poor,
Or else the state-supported ditch
May serve the underserving rich."

such forces as persuasion and powers implicit in solidarity of purpose; education and a sweeping away of those cultural patterns that serve only as adjustments to poverty, and a more efficient use of available resources to the poor in order to increase their economic gain will be in some area of program emphasis. Conventional efforts are seen as not reaching causes and the call will be for self-determination of the poor through grassroots movements. Prototypes to such efforts could well be the American civil rights movement, the American Indian Movement, etc. "Freedom," writes Freire, "must be pursued constantly and responsibly" (Freire:1973, 31) because it isn't going to be given to them. The poor are characterized as showing the way because "the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanized others, is unable to lead in this struggle" (Ibid., 32).

Other systemic revisionists may see the possibility for social revision through institutional change. Institutions meter, monitor, and serve society. They can be either instruments of change or the status quo; in any event, they are potentially viable and subject to more significant influence than the broader society in which institutions find their existence. Some systemic revisionists may be revolutionary and militant.³⁶ They may express the need to tear the social fabric asunder and rebuild with new thread.

I expect to identify two types of systemic revisionists--if any exist at all. One group will see cultural uniformity among the poor.

³⁶All systemic revisionists may be considered revolutionary. The degree of proposed change, however, may range from incremental to total. The rate of change will likewise vary.

This is the more Marxist orientation and marginality will be seen as among the "masses," the "lumpenproletariat." The other group will be identified as recognizing cultural heterogeneity, they will identify the poor as pluralistic sub-groups that require more particularistic approaches.

Systemic Operationalized:

A field staff person will be classified as holding a systemic origin when societal forces are seen as primarily responsible for a group's poverty condition. The respondent may cite certain economic conditions (such as industrial closure, maldistribution of income, etc.), institutional rigidity (arguing, for example, that institutions of power tend to maintain the status quo of those in power), a non-responsive political system (suggesting perhaps as I did in chapter one that poor people cannot utilize political machinery because they do not have the resources necessary for reciprocity), the functions of public welfare, or perhaps the forces of ethnocentrism. The explanation will likely be expressed behaviorally or in terms of group; however, the behavior will be understood as a realistic adaptation to environments created in large part by the broader society. Following are statements on the origins of poverty which reflect a systemic orientation:

- (a) "I think our economic system is structured in such a way that poverty is an inevitable by-product. My economic success, for example, is a cost to someone else."
- (b) "The answer is simple. Our socio-economic system depends on poverty for its very existence."
- (c) "I don't believe people are poor because they want to be. I believe there are forces that tend to create poorness such as industrial closures or relocation, certain market failures, etc."

- (d) "You think they're poor because they want to be poor? They're poor because we've said a certain level of unemployment and poverty is good for our economy."
- (e) "I think the problem is one of racism. Most of the real poor are Blacks or Indians or Chicanos."

The systemic orientation will also be identified by proposed solutions. As stated in the last section, certain extant programs will be seen as useful if they are extended to and used by the poor. All suggestions, however, will call for (1) systemic revision and/or (2) invigoration of the poor. Some will argue that the poor will have to invigorate themselves because they will get no help from the large society (e.g., statement (c) below). Statements reflecting systemic-revisionist suggestions follow:

- (a) "An essential step toward the elimination of poverty is income redistribution, at least to the point where the poor have a better chance to cut their own road."
- (b) "What starts out as a great war on poverty ends up as an army of highly paid self-righteous bureaucrats. Resources need to be guaranteed direct distribution to those in need."
- (c) "Look! We're the cause of their poverty. So it's logical not to expect us to lead them out. The psychic and economy costs are too high. The poor have got to lead in the struggle. Then maybe we will come around."
- (d) "It's not their fault they are poor. We need to give them resources to improve their situation. At the same time, we must help them get rid of those behavior patterns which work against their own welfare."
- (e) "All the poor share one thing in common--misery and powerlessness. Well, there's power in numbers and solidarity. I think they ought to unite and shake us off their backs and demand a more equitable share."

Figure 2 (page 51) presents a brief schema of the three poverty concepts.

Figure 2

Conceptual Schema of the Three Poverty Concepts

| CATEGORY: BOOTSTRAP | | CATEGORY: CULTURE OF POVERTY | | CATEGORY: SYSTEMIC | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Characteristics a priori to poverty | | Poverty a priori to characteristics | | Poverty has origins in the system | |
| Subset: Socio-psychological explanation | Subset: Socio-cultural explanation | Subset: Universal | Subset: Relativistic | Subset: Uniformity | Subset: Heterogeneity |
| Individual | Group | Cultural transcendence | Group uniquenesses | "Mass" lumpenproletariat | Pluralism cultural sensitivity |
| ethnocentric negative | | ± ethnocentric ± negative | | positive | |
| Remedial Programs | | Remedial Programs | | Revisionist Programs | |
| Individualized | Group | General | Particularistic | Broad | Particular |
| self-extrication lift from poverty value inculcation | | assist self-sufficiency value inculcation treat depreciative behavior | | revise society redistribute resources change negative sub-cultural behavior | |

The Sample: Procedures and Description

The sample was drawn on May 4, 1974. At that time there were 159 Extension field staff members. Of these 73 percent were men and 27 percent were women. There are Extension staff located in every Oregon county, city of Portland and the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. Some agents have multi-county responsibilities but because they are usually stationed in a county office, area-county distinctions were not made. Each county office is administered by a staff chairman. Their functions are several, but central to their responsibilities is the coordination and leadership to over-all county programs. Age of field staff ranges from the youngest, 23, to the oldest, 60. Length of service with the organization runs from one to 33 years. Just over 50 percent of all field staff have seven years or less of service with the organization.

A 20 percent unrestricted random sample was drawn.³⁷ From a list of staff, beginning at a randomly selected point, staff members were drawn without replacement using a table of uniform random numbers until a sample size of 32 was achieved. Of those drawn, 71 percent were men and 29 percent were women. Twenty-six percent of the agents in the sample are in their 20's, 29 percent in their 30's, 19 percent in their 40's and 26 percent in their 50's. Forty-eight percent of the sample have seven years or less of service with the organization. Forty-two percent of the agents have agriculture as their major program area of responsibility. Thirty-two percent are primarily responsible for the

³⁷ An unrestricted random sample was drawn in order to achieve representativeness of the whole field staff universe.

4-H and youth program, and 16 percent are responsible for family living programs. The remaining ten percent are community resource development agents. Sixteen percent of the sample also function as staff chairmen.

Employment with the Extension Service in Oregon demands a bachelor's degree as the minimum educational criterion. Forty-two percent of the field staff drawn have only a bachelor's degree; 51 percent have their master's and seven percent have their doctorate. Forty-five percent of the sample received their degree in some agricultural field, 23 percent in home economics, 19 percent in education and 13 percent in the humanities or liberal arts.

The sample was distributed throughout the state. Thirty-five percent have as their work location a Northwestern Oregon county; 23 percent each are located in Central and Eastern Oregon counties; 19 percent are located in Southwestern Oregon.³⁸

Respondent Contact

Initial contact with the Extension field staff sample was made by Extension Service Director, Joe Cox. He provided a letter--addressed and mailed by me in order to insure respondent anonymity--which gave a brief explanation of the research project, encouraged staff cooperation and assured them that non-participation was non-retributive. Six days

³⁸ Northwest Oregon is composed of Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Lincoln, Polk, Yamhill, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas, Marion, Linn and Benton counties. Southwest Oregon is composed of Lane, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine, Jackson and Klamath counties. Central Oregon consists of Lake, Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Wasco, Hood River, Sherman and Gilliam counties. Eastern Oregon equals Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Malheur and Harney counties.

later I sent my letter.³⁹ It gave a broader explanation of the research project, solicited their cooperation, assured their anonymity and called for a response via an enclosed, stamped postcard. In their responses, the informants were asked to select days within a two-week period, June 3 through June 14, 1974, they would be available for an interview. All 32 members of the sample responded affirmatively. Cards were in my hands by May 29.

Each informant was then contacted by telephone on May 29, 30 or 31. An interview schedule was arranged in such a way that all informants were interviewed once in their counties over an 18 day period, between June 3 and June 28. Thirty-one of the 32 respondents were ultimately interviewed. One informant was unavoidably detained which precluded his participation. Three days prior to each interview I mailed a postcard reminding the informant of our agreed meeting time. This contact immediately before the meetings saved at least four interviews from late starts and thus subsequent delays in my over-all travel schedule.

The Interview

An indepth interview was used to elicit informants' expressions on origins and solutions of poverty. This procedure was selected because it kept open the door of discovery, a door not available through a close-ended questionnaire. Moreover, a close-ended questionnaire was judged to influence responses from this more sophisticated audience.

³⁹ Copies of letters and card, Appendix IV.

Each interview began with an exchange of amenities and a general review of my research objectives. It was explained that my general purpose was to discover the nature of poverty in Oregon as seen by Extension field staff. Moreover, in keeping with research practices suggested by the Oregon State University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, respondents were reassured that their anonymity is guaranteed. This reassurance often included a description of procedures used to uphold that guarantee.

It was essential that rapport with the informant be established quickly. A factor in my immediate favor is professional association with the informants. As almost any Oregon Extension person will testify, "wherever two or three" agents "are gathered together" conversation is almost always candid. That seems to be a universal trait of the Oregon organization.

The original interview design called for initial questions about extant evidence of poverty in the agents' work location: "What evidence is there that poverty exists in ---- county? Where does it exist?" The intent was to get the informant thinking about the poverty problem. During the pre-test, however, a counter-question was consistently asked by participant: "What do you mean by poverty?"⁴⁰ As a result the interview design was changed slightly so that the conversation was conducted within the conceptual framework of the informant. Therefore, after amenities were exchanged, I would say, "One of the

⁴⁰ The pre-test was conducted with five high school teachers and four Extension staff not part of the sample.

things I am trying to do is nail down a definition of poverty that reflects a variety of views. It's obvious that we don't all see the problem the same way. For purposes of our conversation can we operate within your conceptual framework? Okay?" Responses were all unanimous: "Fine. Shoot." I then asked, "How do you define poverty? What is it? Who is in poverty and who is not?" The question elicited five to 15 minutes of response in which the informant described his perceptions of the poverty phenomenon. Periodic probes were made by the interviewer to clarify certain points. Throughout this portion of the interview notetaking was kept at a minimum. Only those statements which captured the general flavor of perceptions were noted. A central purpose of this portion of the interview was to demonstrate sincere interest in what the informant was saying and to give evidence that what he was saying was significant and useful. Mutual confidence grew out of that initial exchange, and it seemed to encourage greater explicitness from the respondent and greater rapport.

My next question got to the meat of the interview and was designed to elicit comments on origins. "Okay, so what you are saying is . . . Correct? It seems to me then that if we are going to speak to the problem of poverty we have got to understand root causes. Now, what do you see as the major cause of poverty as you understand the problem?" The informant was usually quite comfortable at this point of the interview. He was operating in his ball park, within his conceptual framework. Respondents, with only one exception, took 10 to 30 minutes to outline in some detail origins of poverty. Slight probes by the interviewer

kept conversations on track.

When the informant had exhausted expressions on causes I would paraphrase my notations to make sure I had captured the context of his statements. As soon as the respondent had reacted to my comments, we moved on with this question: "Okay now, you are saying such-and-so are root factors in the cause of poverty. Let me now ask you a difficult and unfair question. Okay?" In every instance, the informant was ready and willing to field the inquiry. "It's one of those darn 'What if' questions. What if you were not John Doe, Extension agent, but you were instead John Doe, poverty policy-maker and what if you had unlimited financial resources at your disposal, legislative support and broad-based public support to solve the poverty problem. What kinds of programs would you want to implement? I'm not concerned about the nuts-and-bolts of your programs. I'm more concerned about the type of programs. What would you do as poverty policy-maker to deal effectively with the problem?" This usually caused a long pause, a "whew" or a couple of clarifying questions. Responses took 10 to 30 minutes and conversations were kept on course by directive questions. The more formal part of the interview was then concluded with the question: "How widespread do you see the poverty problem? Do you see it as decreasing, increasing or remaining the same?"

Closing amenities included subtle inquiries into the informant's personal history. Oftentimes these were subsequent to inquiries by the respondent into my own personal history. Pre-test experiences among four of the nine participants when questions on personal origins were

directly put was subject to some suspicion. Such information was therefore sought indirectly, and consequently not always obtained.

Interview time averaged one-and-one-half hours. Enough appreciation about field staff cooperation cannot be expressed. Informants were responsive, interested, candid and very helpful. Their enthusiasm for discussing poverty was in fact a bit overwhelming in lieu of a tight interview schedule.

Data Recording

Notations were made during the interview for the respondents' statements that had anything to do with origins, solutions, definitions or pervasiveness of poverty. Care was taken to capture each comment precisely, without losing the flow or context of the conversation. Immediately following the meeting I debriefed myself on tape. The purpose of this debriefing was twofold: to record the subtleties and nuances of the conversation, but more important, to place each quotation within the context of the conversation. This was crucial for later analysis, i.e., the placement of statements within data categories. After the data were put on tape the materials were sent to the Western Rural Development Center where secretarial staff transcribed the tapes into typed editions.

In keeping with the need to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere during the interview all secondary data, such as, highest degree attained, degree area, major area of responsibility, field position, and-so-on, were obtained from public Oregon State University files.

Most of the data were gleaned from the University's catalog.

Raw Data Tables

Attention is called to the Raw Data Tables. A listing of all statements on origins and solutions is presented by data sub-categories in Appendices I and II. There is also a list of all responses on definitions (Appendix III). Definitions are likewise listed by sub-categories but were not analyzed at that level of aggregation. Total responses were too few. Most responses stand alone and justification of their placement is implicit in the response itself. Others may appear to be out of place and meaningless. This occurs because statements were categorized within the context of conversations and are listed out of context. Length of the tables precludes qualifying statements.

Method of Analysis

The data analysis involved four steps: data transition; data sorting, data coding, data programming and transformation; and analysis.

Data Transition:

Subsequent to the interviews and tape transcriptions all quotes were pulled from each interview and placed on numerically identified three by five index cards. Statements were pulled and cataloged by context, i.e., all statements dealing with origins, solutions, definitions and pervasiveness were so cataloged.

Data Sorting:

Statements on origins or causes of poverty were then sorted into the three major categories based on the meaning of each statement within the context of each conversation. Then statements were sifted into subsets, and then into sub-categories.⁴¹ The same process was repeated for expressions on solutions to poverty. Poverty definitions were sorted into two major groups: those expressing an absolute conceptualization (i.e., where definitions placed parameters on poverty so that monetary or environmental minimums serve as thresholds between poverty and non-poverty conditions); those expressing relative conceptualizations (i.e., poverty as an attitude state and/or contingent on perceptions). Expressions on the pervasiveness of poverty were sorted into four categories: poverty viewed as increasing, decreasing, remaining the same or "don't know."

Data Coding, Data Programming, and Data Transformation:

Once the responses were sorted into sub-categories, the numbers of

⁴¹For purposes of analysis, "category" and "orientation" are used interchangeably. Both refer to all bootstrap, "culture of poverty" or systemic responses. A "subset" refers to one of the two category components. For example, bootstrap socio-psychological and bootstrap socio-cultural are the two bootstrap subsets, i.e., major category components. "Sub-categories" are sub-groupings of responses within subsets. Analysis, then, at the first level of aggregation will involve sub-categories; at the second level of aggregation analysis will involve subsets; at the third level of aggregation analysis will involve categories. The following schema as used in data cataloging and analysis may help the reader conceptualize "category," "subset," and "sub-category" as "levels" of aggregation:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| CATEGORY, LEVEL 3 | : <u>BOOTSTRAP</u> | |
| SUBSET, LEVEL 2 | : <u>Socio-Psychological</u> | <u>Socio-Cultural</u> |
| SUB-CATEGORY, LEVEL 1: | General | General |
| | Psychological | Immediate gratification |
| | Mental-physical | Family deprivation |
| | Work-ambition | Poor by choice |

responses in each sub-category for origins, solutions, definitions and pervasiveness were tallied for each respondent. For example, responses on origins were tallied by sub-categories within subsets.

A codebook was created which listed all possible variables at their most definitive level of aggregation. Secondary, or background, data included sex, age, years of service, roots, program area of responsibility, field position, geographic location, etc. All variable tally totals were then coded on an IBM standard sheet form by column-variables. I then key-punched all raw data and delivered it to the Oregon State University Computer Center for initial processing. Subsequent to this initial processing a raw data list was printed and checked for keypunch errors. Two corrections were made and the raw data was stored in Core.

Professor Bruce Shepard directed the student in computer analysis and assisted in transforming the data (see section below). All data on origins and solutions were so organized as to allow for analysis at the three levels of aggregation (See footnote 41). Transformed data was then drawn into the Statistical Programming Interactive System (SIPS) for univariate and bivariate analyses. SIPS is an interactive system which allows for great latitude in statistical computation and provides more time for interpretation of data and less time on computation.

Modal Categories and Consistency Measures

The raw data were transformed so that measurements of informant orientations toward poverty could be made. This involved data trans-

formation so that analyses could be made at the various levels of aggregation. Two basic measurements on responses were asked of SIPS. The first measured response distribution. This was done by instructing the computer to identify the modal categories and second-most modal categories at the different levels of aggregation (See footnote 41). A modal category is a category into which a plurality of an informant's responses are found at a given level of aggregation. A second-most modal category is that category which received the second-highest set of responses by a respondent. Therefore, if informants had a plurality of responses on causes of poverty in the bootstrap work-incentive sub-category at the first level of aggregation, then the bootstrap work-incentive sub-category is their modal orientation at that level. Moreover, if informants have a plurality of responses in the bootstrap category at the third level of aggregation, it can then be said that on the basis of expressed orientations on origins of poverty, Extension field staff have a modal orientation of bootstrap.

A second measure determines consistency of responses. Such a measure answers the very important question: What percent of an informant's responses are in the modal category? Thirty percent? Fifty percent? Eighty percent? This measure was computed for each informant at all levels of aggregation for origins, solutions and definitions.

Chapter III

A Description of Extension Field Staff Comments
on The Origins of Poverty

It was anticipated that informants' statements on causes of poverty could be placed into the spectrum of categories reflecting a bootstrap, "culture of poverty" or systemic orientation. It was further anticipated that statements could be broken down into two subsets within each of the three major categories: bootstrap socio-psychological, bootstrap socio-cultural, "culture of poverty" universal, "culture of poverty" relativistic, systemic uniformity, or systemic heterogeneity. With one unique and significant exception--to be addressed later in this section--these categories were appropriate sorting devices.

It is significant, moreover, that sub-categories within subsets were created because of certain similarities in responses (See footnote 41). Some of these sub-categories are only slightly different and will occasionally result in some overlapping and ambiguities regarding classification. However, these more definitive sub-category distinctions serve a major research purpose: they help distinguish variants in orientations toward poverty. Moreover, such classifications are efficient. A detailed description of the full range of all responses would be very redundant. Closely similar sub-categories will be combined in later analysis so that response distribution measurements can be made at three separate levels of aggregation.

Four sub-categories were developed under the bootstrap, socio-psychological subset, five sub-categories under the bootstrap, socio-

cultural subset, two under "culture of poverty" universal, and-so-on. Additionally, similarities in certain responses resulted in a new subset, negative systemic. Suffice it to say here that negative systemic responses were not explicitly anticipated by the author, but as will be seen they are significant and add a new dimension to my theoretical framework. Table 4 (page 65) lists these sub-categories as developed from interview responses.

It is the purpose of this chapter to report only the range and substance of Extension field staff expressions on the origins of poverty. Discussions on the frequency and predominance of particular orientations are reserved for chapter five. The reader may want to refer to the raw data table on origins, Appendix I, as he peruses this chapter.

Bootstrap Subset: Socio-Psychological

In Chapter II, I said that there is an orientation which explains the condition of poverty in socio-psychological terms. These are statements which generally place an individual's implicit inabilities as causing poverty. Such explanations would be recognized as being individualistic and usually negative, i.e., a person is poor because he lacks the "manual and mental skills" to function adequately, or "he is lazy." Eighty-four percent of the respondents had at least one response fall into bootstrap category. There were, however, enough variety in responses to warrant additional classifications. For example, bootstrap socio-cultural responses which placed emphasis on the absence of values contributing to deferred gratification were grouped in a sub-category titled, "now orientation." Responses in the bootstrap socio-psycholog-

TABLE 4

BOOTSTRAP, CULTURE OF POVERTY AND SYSTEMIC
SUB-CATEGORIES DEVELOPED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES
BY CATEGORY SUBSETS

| Category Subsets | Sub-categories developed from interview responses |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Bootstrap, socio-psychological | General socio-psychological Psychological Mental-physical limitations Work-ambition-incentive |
| Bootstrap, socio-cultural | General socio-cultural Immediate gratification Family deprivation/characteristics Fatalism Poor by choice |
| "Culture of poverty" universal | General As "a way of life" |
| "Culture of poverty" relativistic | |
| Negative systemic | General Specialization By definition Welfare |
| Systemic uniformity | General function of the system Oppression Value re-prioritization Economic forces and functions |
| Systemic heterogeneity | |
| Unclassified ^a | Physical and natural disasters Poor nutrition |

^aThese are statements which fall outside the data categories.

ical subset which emphasized the absence of work-ethic values and self-reliance were sub-categorized as "work-ambition-incentive."

Sub-Category: General Socio-Psychological

The first sub-category under the bootstrap socio-psychological subset I classified as general socio-psychological responses. These are statements which, in the context of the interview, the respondent clearly laid the blame for poverty on the poor person himself. These expressions on origins suggest that some inherent social, psychological or genetic trait is implicitly in one's make-up and thus give rise to the condition of poverty.

In some instances respondents took a Darwinian approach by saying that a person may be poor because of certain "natural" incapacities. One informant used the phrase "survival of the fittest" to make his point, This was complemented by another respondent who said, "dominant trees outgrow inferior trees . . . this is the same with people."

Other respondents offered such explanations as "poverty . . . is due to poor planning on the part of most people. They don't plan ahead." Other informants placed the burden on poverty responsibility clearly on dysgenic fears. One person, for example, said "inbreeding may be a part of the problem, where dominant and recessive genes become predominant within a community, where the bad traits become the norm rather than the good traits." In that same vein another agent suggests that "our (i.e., white) population decline may have a negative effect because the smart ones don't breed and the dumb ones do." With great concern the informant asks, "So who reproduces and who becomes

the larger group?" At least one respondent sees poverty as being grounded in race: "Niggers are always poor."

Central to the theme in this sub-category is the argument that a person is poor because he possesses some innate socio-psychological-genetic trait which leads to a higher incidence of poverty within this group than among more "normal" people. Poverty is being incompetent based on inherited socio-psychological-genetic factors.

Sub-Category: Psychological

The distinguishing characteristic to responses in this bootstrap sub-category is that poverty results from implicit and explicit psychological forces working within the individual which preclude his ability to cope. This inability to cope leads to a poverty condition.

There is a unique similarity between several responses in this category and a subsequent "culture of poverty" universal category. In both instances there is explicit reference made to attitudinal poverty as leading to a strong feeling of being rapped. In this category, however, the respondent affirms what he considers to be a psychological reality implicit in the individual, something over which the person has no or little control. In the subsequent "culture of poverty" category, however, the psychological state of entrapment is induced by a poverty environment. Responses in this sub-category generally make the point that there are people who by nature are not mentally healthy. This condition increases the possibility such a person will live in poverty. Again, certain psychological traits are said to be a priori to poverty.

One respondent leveled a charge at "mental blocks." When stating

his own deep frustrations in trying to "reach these people" because "they have a mental block to help that is offered them" he seemed to place ultimate blame on "some kind of psychological quirk . . . they just give up." Said in a slightly different way by another informant, people in poverty are there because "they are attitudinally poor, not necessarily economically poor." Five of the eleven respondents who had statements in this sub-category used the phrase "state of mind" in specific reference to poverty as resulting from attitudinal-psychological factors. Poverty, then, is caused by certain psychological characteristics which predispose such people to poverty.

Sub-Category: Mental-Physical Limitations

The third sub-category to the bootstrap socio-psychological subset is one in which responses place emphasis on mental and physical abilities, or inabilities. People are in poverty because they "don't have thinking and physical skills." As another informant put it, "they lack understanding, they can't think things through." According to this orientation, the poverty person is "without the mental and physical facilities to function normally."

A scan of the raw data tables on origins of poverty (Appendix I) will reveal other references to the absence of "skills." These other references are either in a bootstrap socio-cultural sub-category or a "culture of poverty" sub-category. The central distinction here is that the absence of mental or physical skills is causal to poverty; in the other two categories it is either a cultural phenomenon in that such characteristics are implicit in a poverty group (therefore, of the

bootstrap socio-cultural subset) or, the environment of poverty precludes the possibility of mental/physical skills development. One respondent specifically referred to this kind of cause as "mental retardation." It is argued, then, by some that mental and/or physical deficiencies predispose people to a life of poverty. "People are poor because they lack the natural ability to cope in society." Poverty, then, is being "naturally" unable.

Sub-Category: Work-Ambition-Incentive

The final sub-category to the bootstrap socio-psychological subset is composed of responses which indicate the absence of work values as leading a person to poverty. Values specifically mentioned include "work," "ambition," "self-reliance," "motivation" and some others. Statements by two informants provide the common denominator to this sub-category of expressions. One said, "they are people who don't know how to pick themselves up." Another said essentially the same: "they are people who can't pick themselves up by their bootstrings."

Simply put, this view states that a person is poor because he is lethargic. "Anyone can get a job if he wants to" reaffirms our society's traditional conviction that "hard work" coupled with "motivation" will, in the final analysis, see anyone through economic and social difficulties. So, according to many of these respondents "lack of the willingness to work" is the poverty person's central problem. They lack "self-reliance," that desire to stand on their own feet. One informant's caustic comment was grounded in his cynicism toward those

whose self-reliance appears to have been replaced by dependency. The agent said of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) recipients, "most of the ADC mothers are of sound body; they just lay on their backs too long for too many men." Another spoke of his own self-reliance: "I don't think I could take welfare if I were fired tomorrow because it would have such a drastic effect on me personally. I am convinced that I could find some kind of work, and I am convinced that people on welfare could too."

"Ambition," "incentive," "aggression," "motivation," and "independence" are viewed as key factors which lead to success. Conversely, the absence of such traits can lead to poverty. Evidence that such characteristics are missing seem to be associated with the assertion, "they simply won't get their asses into gear." Being poor then is being "lazy."

Bootstrap Socio-Psychological Sub-Categories: Summary

People are poor, according to these responses, because of socio-psychological-genetic deficiencies which are a priori to poverty. The responses were by and large negatively oriented toward the poor and in many instances antagonistic.

Bootstrap Subset: Socio-Cultural

The other major subset to the bootstrap orientation is socio-cultural. It was anticipated that certain bootstrap responses would use certain groups as reference points, where characteristics a priori to poverty would be implicit within groups instead of, or in addition

to, individuals. The distinction is significant because, basically, it transfers poverty responsibility from an individual orientation to a group orientation. This is to say that some respondents would suggest certain socio-cultural factors as causal to poverty.

Sub-Category: General Socio-Cultural

The general socio-cultural sub-category contains responses which have as their general common denominator some kind of socio-cultural phenomenon which is credited with leading people into a state of poverty. For example, one respondent whose proximity to Chicano communities has prompted Extension education directed at this group, complained about the size of Chicano families. Family size was attributed to a socio-cultural phenomenon: "Mexican men like to keep their women pregnant because it is a sign of their virility, and they think a pregnant woman is beautiful." Another agent, referring to the same group suggested that "their skill levels are low because of language and environmental circumstances."

Within this sub-category the reader will find references to "different value systems that do not let them integrate into our social . . . fabric," group ignorance ("ignorance of these people . . ."), low self-group esteem, prolificness ("ADC groups are raising their second . . . third generations . . . because they are so prolific"), cultural non-conformity, social structure (" . . . their social structure won't allow" for change), and the loss of culture. Poverty, then, is being a part of a group whose patterns of social interactions are

not conducive to success in "our society."

Sub-Category: Immediate Gratification

A few socio-cultural responses logically fell into a grouping which identifies "those people" as lacking any concept of deferred gratification within their social milieu. They are thus unable to meet the requirements of tomorrow because of some, vague, group need to respond spontaneously and/or lethargically to today. So, respondents were wont to lay blame for poverty on a group's propensity to over-indulge: ". . . too much booze." Another way to put it is to say that groups are poor because "they live for the present only"; there is something about their cultural psyche which demands a "now" orientation. On the other hand, the reverse may be true. Some groups may be poor because they cannot live in either the present or future. That is, there are some people who hold a procrastinating philosophy: ". . . put off until tomorrow what could have been done today." Poverty, then, is being poor because the group with which one identifies harbors a "now" orientation which precludes the possibility for economic or social success.

Sub-Category: Depreciative Family Characteristics

A number of the responses were classified among socio-cultural responses because they dealt with that basic social unit, the family. Most of the responses pointed to some depreciative characteristic in family life which significantly increased the possibility that members of the families will be poor. While most respondents used phrases like

"those people" when referring to families within groups, a few respondents spoke about disparaging characteristics within families as a priori to poverty.

One respondent submits that one's proximity to "home" is a central factor in poverty: "people get into trouble when they get away from home . . . you know that feeling of lost-ness." Some other respondents see the family as the central medium for transference of attitudes: "because parents have handicapped attitudes the children are not motivated toward independence." That groups tend to identify on an intra-level is, according to at least one agent, evidenced in the tendency of "(poor) people . . . to marry their own kind." So poverty is accentuated by the institution of marriage. Two respondents see instead the absence of a father as crucial in the poverty question. For example, "when the father is absent, it often causes the mother to behave in unacceptable ways" which has a negative impact on the "children in the family." It is also presumed that the incentive to work is lost in many families because "those kinds of families (i.e., poor) never see an adult in a working situation." Additionally, "lack of parental guidance" and family size are perceived as deteriorating factors in family life. Poverty, therefore, is being in a "certain type" of family.

Sub-Category: Fatalism

A few socio-cultural responses assumed the aura of fatalism by using a mixture of historical and/or theological rationales. According to one respondent poverty is couched in history and a pseudo-Calvinistic

theology: "Society has always had a top place and a bottom place, and each gets larger as a society gets older. As a society gets older the extremes get more pronounced." Some attribute one's propensity toward poverty to chance, e.g., circumstances of birth: "poverty is due to the place and time you were born." And there are those who simply feel that some peoples "are destined to this kind of life." While the evidence is not solid, this writer came away from these sets of responses with a strong, intuitive hunch that these responses reflected a, What's the use? Statements like, ". . . there will always be these two or three percent who can't . . . do any better," or "we are always going to have poverty . . . because we will always have it with us." Poverty therefore is a function of fatalism. "What will be will be" because it will be.

Sub-Category: Choice

According to several respondents some of "these people" are poor "by choice." References were made to "self-imposed poverty" in several ways. "Poverty is a life style people would rather have." One agent suggested, "they are content, if not happy, with their situation." Some groups are poor because they "would rather be in poverty than work." Another seconded that last assertion by saying, "these people are happy with their lot and they are a drag on our system." One respondent even proposed that "many of these self-imposed poor are idea men who never could deal with reality." So within the context of this grouping, certain collects of people are poor because that's "their goal."

Bootstrap Sub-Categories: Summary

According to these bootstrap responses, then, people are poor because of some individualized socio-psychological, or some vague, socio-cultural factors which give rise to behavior patterns a priori to poverty. Responses were by and large negatively oriented and in several instances antagonistic toward the poor. There were, however, several sympathetic bootstrap responses, usually prefaced with, "those poor people."

"Culture of Poverty"

It was further anticipated that responses could be classified as depicting a "culture of poverty" orientation. As pointed out in the previous chapters, such explanations submit that environmental or situational factors foster patterns of behavior that are considered instrumental in perpetuating poverty. In other words, depreciative environmental forces are identified as the cause of behavior patterns developed to deal with that condition. Once these behavior patterns are established within a group then poverty is perpetuated by the group itself. Moreover, in most instances, respondents identified these characteristics as leading to disorganization and the general absence of purposeful action. Characteristics described by bootstrap and "culture of poverty" responses were often synonymous but with this central distinction: the described characteristics among "culture of poverty" responses are clearly seen as resulting from, albeit a sometimes vague notion of, cultural conditions. Bootstrappers, on the

other hand, saw such characteristics as a priori to poverty.

It was also anticipated that "culture of poverty" responses could be grouped according to two schools. One I have identified as "universal" wherein respondents made no distinction between poverty groups, wherein the Agnewian "if you've seen one slum you've seen them all" approach to the poverty question prevailed. A "culture of poverty" universalist is a position where no distinction between poverty groups is made. On the other hand, it was anticipated that some informants would identify some or all poverty groups as holding particular ethnic traits which an informant might judge as "characteristic" or "typical" of such-and-such group. I call this subset "culture of poverty" relativistic. As the reader can see in Appendix I, responses could be easily sorted into the two subsets. Consistencies and differences between responses demanded fewer sub-categories than bootstrap.

Culture of Poverty Universalist

"Culture of poverty" universal responses were those which made no distinction between poverty groups but tended to identify poor people synonymously. The statements, moreover, identified environments as a priori to the development of behavioral traits which lead to and perpetuate poverty. Such responses were placed in two sub-categories.

Sub-Category: General

The largest percentage of "culture of poverty" responses referred to a variety of environmental/situational factors as causal to both the initiation and continuation of poverty. Several respondents, for ex-

ample saw certain perjorative characteristics as "learned behavior" in that "poor environments produce poor attitudes." This orientation was clearly complemented by others who reaffirmed the former position. They argued that limited environments limit a person's or group's vision of alternative possibilities. Those who are in poverty, for example, "cannot visualize themselves in any other kind of circumstance." Another put it in slightly different jargon when he said, "one reason for poverty is the lack of challenge and the lack of new things in the lives of people." The implication, of course, is that restricted environments restrict possibilities for "challenge" and "new things" which are seen by some respondents as precursors to "success." To some respondents environmental limitations create a "feeling of helplessness (which) causes poverty." One agent encountered an 'aha!' experience and exclaimed, "yes, that's it! They are caught in something they cannot escape from!" Another informant asserted that "a lot of them have given up, saying, 'What the hell!' 'What's the point!' They can't see anyway to break loose." Among this group of responses were a few which referred to the absence of incentive, but they clearly laid blame on limited exposures: "I don't think people are necessarily lazy; they don't know any better because they have never done anything different."

Within this general sub-category, then, conditions leading to poverty are simply factors that have "just been passed on to the individuals, their habitat, where they have grown up, what they've seen." One respondent seemed to summarize the general nuance of this grouping when he said, "a person is not born with bad traits. A person is the

sum total of his experiences." Poverty, therefore, is being caught in environmental circumstances which deplete possibilities for positive possibilities in positive human development.

Sub-Category: Way of Life

The second set of responses appear to be in the Oscar Lewis tradition. Respondents generally depict the poor as being caught in a life style from which they have difficulty escaping. Poverty is viewed as self-defeating and self-perpetuating. In spite of the overlap between this sub-category and the previous one, responses in this sub-category were grouped together because poverty is conceptualized as "a way of life."

"Poverty breeds poverty," "cycle of poverty," "vicious circle," "deprivation breeds deprivation," are phrases recorded time and again. Poverty is a "culture" or a "sub-culture" by which poor people are identified and through which they exist. So there is no crucial distinction between this and the previous category except the repetitiveness of phrases which explicitly state that poverty is a cultural phenomenon which can be culturally explained. "Deprivation breeds deprivation."

Culture of Poverty Relativistic

"Culture of poverty" relativistic responses were not sub-grouped. I expected such responses to be more sophisticated than they were because I assumed relativism to presume cultural pluralism; such was not the case, however. What I got was a set of responses which delegated

attention to specific sets of people: "kids," "women" and the "urban poor." Responses were grouped here because, generally, environmental circumstances were judged by respondents as a priori to poverty, and specific (relativistic) groups of people were addressed. Two exceptions exist, however. One respondent places some blame for Mexican-American poverty on cultural factors such as language. Another spoke of the "culturally isolated," those who are culturally distinct because of geographic and demographic circumstances: "geographic differences and geographic limitations have generally put people in environments where choices are limited."

Two respondents expressed concern about women in poverty. One made the very unique point that "women are in poverty because of male chauvinism." The agent went on to clarify by saying that "male attitudes toward women forces the women to stay in the home environment." In other words, "if housework is all that you are faced with, and you have nothing other than that to look forward to, just think how depressing that is."

The urban poor exist "because of their environment." They are in situational circumstances which exhaust any possibility for alternative life styles or alternative lives. Poverty, then is being poor by reason of youth, sex or geographic location.

Systemic

It was also anticipated that responses could be classified as holding a systemic origin when societal forces are seen as the principal cause for a group's poverty condition. The feature unique to this

orientation is that the burden of poverty responsibility falls on one or more functions of our socio-economic structure. Numerous responses, certainly many more than I anticipated, fell into this general category.

Negative Systemic Subset

First, however, there is an anomaly! A very significant number of respondents offered systemic explanations of poverty which placed initial blame for poverty on two or three functions of the system and the poor at the same time. This set of responses was not anticipated, but in retrospect no real surprise. Classification, however, presented a critical problem: do I rank these responses among the bootstrappers or systemic revisionists? In all instances a significant amount of animosity is expressed towards the poor and blame for their poverty condition rests securely on the poors' shoulders. At the same time, however, the system gives rise to poverty because, as will be seen shortly, certain aspects of our social system create conditions whereby society makes poverty comfortable.

Negative systemic responses fell logically into four groupings. Three are small, but tightly knit. The last one bears the majority of responses.

Sub-Category: General

All negative systemic general statements were couched in emotionalism and appeared to present a negative attitude toward those social values which seem to be precursors to success and failure. Responses like, "it's not what you know, it's who you know," and "it is easier

to pay taxes and give money to the poor than . . . to work with the poor in order to get them to work," within the context of the conversations lay blame at once and the same time on the poor and the system. "Those who get ahead are those who know the tricks . . . Christ, if they can't learn the 'tricks' it's not my fault" hammers home the ambivalence of dual causes.

Sub-Category: Specialization

One respondent devoted so much attention to one aspect of the system as a priori to poverty that it warranted separate consideration. "Specialization" within job markets and "educational" systems have not allowed the "less able" to succeed. Moreover, "we have bred more poverty because 'specialization' in society is so important that if a person loses a job to which she or he has been accustomed, they are unwilling or unable to adjust to some other kind of work." There are several reasons for this propensity to specialize. Most significant are "educational" emphases and "unions." Due to specialization there is "a lot of latent labor . . . but they refuse to work."

Sub-Category: By Definition

Informants with responses in this category argue that "we"⁴² create poverty by defining artificial boundaries, and that poverty results from a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: "once they are told . . . they are poor, then they begin to think of themselves as poor."

⁴²Usually in reference to poverty agencies.

Therefore, "we may induce poverty by defining it the way we do."

Sub-Category: Welfare and Agency Institutionalism⁴³

The bulk of negative systemic responses were grouped into this category. Most argued that poverty is a function of our social welfare system, but in a derogatory sense. "Our social welfare system creates dependency" which lets those for whom "it is easier to live off society than to work in it" get the free ride "they want." Additionally, once a person "gets on welfare" it becomes "costlier to work" because benefits are generous. This, according to informants, encourages people to "keep quality of housing down in order to stay on welfare," have more "children . . . in order to get more money," and it develops an attitude which says, "'I've got it made now, I'm on welfare!'"

Other respondents within this group registered some interesting criticisms against poverty agencies, but within an emotional bed of anger against those who capitalize on poverty benefits. A criticism found intriguing was the notion that "agencies want people to depend on them because it protects their jobs." As another respondent put it, "agencies helping the poor in the county have made the picture as dark as possible in order to get funds."

At least three respondents saw poverty as a function of "convenience" as created by the welfare system, a function of "paying taxes." That is, people usurp the welfare system because they want to benefit

⁴³ Institutionalism in this context refers to the idea that poverty institutions actually perpetuate poverty in order to guarantee their continued existence.

from their tax "inputs."

Generally, however, respondents in the sub-category felt as this one did: "we have gone so far out of the way to help these people . . . There have always been poor and there will always be poor. So what are we concerned about?" One, however, considered people on welfare to be making a rational choice: "a person would have to be a complete idiot not to go on welfare if he is eligible."

Systemic Uniformity

Anticipated systemic uniformity responses took several forms which allowed for groupings into sub-categories. Combined, the statements provide a holistic approach to poverty wherein primary blame for the problem is placed on the "system." Considered separately, however, within the context of conversation, considerations of systemic uniformity causes were quite uni-dimensional in their approach. Here, poverty is some function of the system. No clear distinction is made between poverty sub-groups.

Sub-Category: General Function of the System

Responses in this sub-category clearly laid the blame for poverty on some function of the system. Sometimes a respondent, rather than specifically identifying some construct of society, used a vaguer notion of the editorial "we": "we don't see the needs of the poor as important." A few other respondents referred to vague "forces over which those people have no control." In most instances, however, responses were specific. One respondent, for example, heavily criticized

Christianity because its theological orientation de-emphasizes the needs of the poor: "the poor will always be poor because they are considered worthless . . . most of society sees the poor in this light based on Biblical foundations." That same respondent also argued that the "poor have no or low political impact . . . because we make sure they don't."

Several interesting systemic faults were pointed to. Three agents suggested that social expectations of people give rise to a higher incidence of poverty through the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy; for example, "if we expect a person to behave in a certain way, then pretty soon he is going to behave in that way." Another respondent spoke about "job esteem" and the "relationship between the esteem level of a job and a person's willingness to perform that job." That is to say, if a person can expect nothing more than menial work for menial pay then one quickly loses the propensity for that kind of effort. Another laid blame on "poor education" because "society does not distribute educational opportunities equally." Other criticism ranged against the "work-ethic" ("we have become work-a-holics"), to institutions, to some general notion of the system. "Poverty is the result of a system which creates poverty."

Sub-Category: Oppression

Several responses were grouped together because poverty is viewed as resulting from an oppressive society. "The capitalist system works," for example, "because it relies on exploitation." Another person put it a little different: "fortunes have been amassed always at the

expense of the poor." One agent who said he was "politically conservative" offered, "I criticize a system which structures itself in such a way as to declare elements within the system as poor."⁴⁴

Poverty exists, then, "because the poor are excluded."

Sub-Category: Value Re-prioritization

Responses in this sub-category place responsibility for poverty on the larger society's value orientation. "Poverty is a function of our value system" is the common denominator to responses which were placed here. For instance, "by placing less important values higher on our priority scale we increase the differences between ourselves and other groups." Or, said differently, "we have become a waste oriented society. We have become a society more concerned with meeting extraneous needs." Responses therefore indicate that a rearrangement of values related to what some informants call "secondary needs"--i.e., the placement of "lower values in higher places"--widen the poverty gap. So poverty is a function of value rearrangement.

Sub-Category: Economic Forces and Functions

The majority of systemic uniformity responses were grouped into a sub-category which places emphasis on poverty as a function of economics.⁴⁵ Responses ranged from low wages ("low wages are the prostitu-

⁴⁴He made that same point in a slightly different vein when talking about "value systems": "our own value systems are imposed on others by determining what is good."

⁴⁵Any reference to "economics" is used in the broadest sense: the availability and/or administration of any number of resources to meet certain ends.

tion of the poor"), to "loss of employment," to "agitation forces" which deny economic opportunity to many because they are caught in the struggle "between competing forces seeking wealth." All statements, taken in aggregation clearly place functions of the economic system as causal to poverty. Poverty, then, is being poor because the "economic tail eludes them."

Systemic Heterogeneity

A number of respondents had responses in what I have tagged the systemic heterogeneity subset. It is an important category in that statements reflect a pluralistic social conception. That is, society is composed of many mini-groups who may well be victimized by larger social forces, and who may by virtue of their own position influence or victimize other groups. Responses were generally random but their points are clear.

One respondent, for example, suggested that the "White Anglo protestant ethic is highly individualistic and competitive" and inevitably leads to progress at the expense of others. The informant also came down hard on Christianity because "Christian education causes poverty, that is, the Jews, Blacks and others have been persecuted because Christianity teaches them to do it." This informant saw a tightly knit relationship between social constructs of the larger society and Christianity.

Another agent, whose views came as a surprise because of his expressed conservatism, hit hard at "our" culturalcentrism. He said, for example, that we "Whites operate on a non-reciprocal basis. We relate

to each other on our own terms only." At another point he said, "they (Whites) want to impose their values (on other people)." He concluded by suggesting that "the poor are really the Whites because they want to operate within their culture and they want others to . . . They don't accept other cultures." Other informants struck the same cultural-centric theme. One argued that a lot of these people have been given that kind of life because "society is intolerant of their cultural uniqueness." Others base poverty on racism: ". . . discrimination . . . we deprive certain people of the opportunity to get ahead."

Poverty, then, is a function of institutions, religions, social structures and cultural phenomena. In a central sense, however, "ethnic groups with cultural differences are not tolerated by society." Poverty is being poor by reason of ethnic origins or social position.

Unclassified Responses on Origins

A very small number of responses did not lend themselves to the above categories. Four responses suggested that nutrition could be a priori to poverty; eight responses laid blame on natural and physical disorders.

Chapter IV

A Description of Extension Field Staff Expressions on
Solutions and Definitions of PovertySolutions

A second major means for measuring informants' orientations toward poverty is to identify their expressions on poverty solutions. It was anticipated that solutions responses would fall into a bootstrap, "culture of poverty" or systemic grouping. Two subsets for each of these groupings were proposed. In the bootstrap category there were those responses classified as "individualized" and "group" remedial programs. "Culture of poverty" was divided into "general" remedial and "relativistic" remedial programs. Systemic responses on solutions were divided into "broad" revisionist and "particular" revisionist programs.

The purpose of this chapter is, like the previous one on origins, to describe the range and substance of Extension field staff expressions on solutions to poverty and their definitions of poverty. Responses did not fall into as many sub-categories as did statements on causes, but several groupings within subsets were identified. There will be some ambiguities and overlap in the sub-category level; however, such distinctions are useful in identifying variants within subsets and major categories. The following description of Extension staff responses, then, will be given at the sub-category level. Table 5 (page 89) lists both the subsets and sub-categories on solutions.

TABLE 5

SOLUTIONS BY SUB-CATEGORY:
 BOOTSTRAP, CULTURE OF POVERTY, SYSTEMIC

| Subset | Responses by sub-category as developed from informant responses |
|---|---|
| | Sub-Category |
| Bootstrap Individualized | To hell with them Self reliance and pride |
| Bootstrap Group | |
| "Culture of Poverty" Universal | Situational change Education |
| "Culture of Poverty" Relativistic | Situational response Education One-to-one |
| Systemic Revisionist Broad | General Self-determination Institutional |
| Systemic Revisionist Particular | |
| <u>Bootstrap Individualized Remedial Programs</u> | |

Expressions on solutions were grouped into this subset if they demanded the inculcation of values associated with self-reliance and a high degree of self-help. Particularly noticeable were those responses which reflect a "they could do it if they really tried" attitude.

Such statements separated into two sub-categories: One, I call "to hell with them," and the other "self-reliance and pride."

Sub-Category: To Hell With Them

Central to many of the statements placed in this category is the notion that some poor should not be given any attention because they are beyond help. Implicit and explicit in the arguments is that nothing is going to work with "these people," so why try? One agent offered, "you cannot move them out of their present situation into a new situation because they will just return to their old way of life." The informant was criticizing low-income housing and urban renewal programs as a waste of time because transitions to more desirable physical settings are useless since there is not a concomitant change in attitudes. Two other respondents, fearing dysgenics, suggested more drastic action: "sterilize all (poor) parents and take away their kids . . . youth would then have a chance." Another proposed that "mandatory sterilization" be used to reduce poor peoples' propensity to have more children "in order to get more money." One informant summed up the theme of these statements this way: "when all else fails then kick them out and let them ride the rails . . ." Society has no responsibility to those who refuse to "help themselves." The agent concluded by saying, "there will always be that two or three percent who can't do any better. To hell with them."

Sub-Category: Self-Reliance and Pride

The majority of expressions on solutions within the bootstrap

individualized subset were sub-categorized "self-reliance and pride." The common denominator here is the demand for a work orientation coupled with re-training, if the poor will take advantage and utilize newly acquired skills. "You give a man a fish and he'll starve to death, teach him to fish and he'll never starve" reflects a central idea in this grouping. Remedial programs should be designed to make the poor "less reliant on others and more self-reliant."

Several agents spoke about proposed solutions in the context of critiques against current poverty relief programs, especially welfare. Comments ranged from a re-orientation and return to buried New Deal programs ("we ought to bring back the old CCC concept"), to vaguer notions that "current welfare programs are more hindrance than help" because we need "to make people self-sufficient." Said differently by yet another informant, "outputs of any welfare system must equal the inputs." An underlying criticism to most welfare programs is, they are "ill advised because they discourage work"; therefore, "we should make them all work for their welfare payments."

Some respondents suggested behavioral treatment. "We must change their behavior patterns, we must rehabilitate them. But once that is done they must carry the load on their own." Some agents considered depreciative behavior patterns to be a result of "the absence of motivation" which precludes the desire to work. When that occurs, some say, then "we need to provide at least a subsistence living, but beyond that people should be encouraged to work." Most of the respondents with expressions on solutions in this sub-category, however, seemed to suggest that society would be better off "if we canned all

help programs . . . I'll bet a lot of asses would get into gear quick."

Bootstrap Particularistic Remedial Solutions

Responses on solutions in this subset were quite specific in aiming attention at particular groups of people. Greatest emphasis was directed at families and "kids," and the absence of erstwhile values common "to our nation's origins." One respondent bemoaned poor families' irresponsibility because they tend to "pawn" each other "off on the public." Instead, "we should go back to the idea of families assuming responsibility for each other . . . children for parents and parents for children." Another was especially critical of husbands who "abandon" their families. "Spend more money finding husbands who abandon their families and make them support their own."

One agent, frustrated over the suggested tendency of poverty people to reproduce at a high rate, said that what we need is "a more programmed society where tests are given before marriage, before the conception of children" in order to control their prolificness.⁴⁶ Most others, however, simply recognized the presence of poor "kids" and a typical suggestion went, "somehow we must motivate poor families to motivate their kids." Another agent suggested that 4-H makes it easy

⁴⁶I was interested in the concern of several respondents over the presumed prolificness of the poor. A recent United Press International story which appeared in the June 19, 1974 issue of Capital Journal, Salem, Oregon, titled, "The Rate's Abating," cites two studies which argue that birth rates for minority and low-income families is "taking a steeper dive than for other families." The studies will appear in a forthcoming issue of Family Planning Perspectives, the technical quarterly of Planned Parenthood's Center for Family Planning Program Development.

for poverty parents to abdicate their responsibility to their children. The informant concluded that "it is not fair to parents to lead their kids for them. Poor parents should assume responsibility for their own 4-H clubs." One respondent, obviously frustrated over the extent of poverty and the nonremedial nature of "current programs," finally proposed that "the way to solve the problem of poverty is to forget about it." This was seconded by another agent who pointed out that "as long as he (the poor person) is enjoying life . . . let him stay there . . . he is happy."

"Culture of Poverty" Remedial Programs

It was anticipated that responses on remedies would fall into a "culture of poverty" grouping where emphases are placed on changing certain depreciative characteristics which tend to perpetuate the problem of poverty. Factors such as education, psychiatric treatment and other remedial efforts which address the characteristics of the poor and their environment are generally designed to encourage self-sufficiency. "Culture of poverty" remedial programs are divided into two major subsets, "universal" remedial programs, and "particularistic" remedial programs.

"Culture of Poverty" Universal Remedial Programs

Informants' expressions on solutions which fell into this category tended to treat poverty as a universal, broad, social problem. That is to say, solutions are offered in broad, sweeping strokes without regard for unique sub-group or individual differences. Most responses, more-

over, place ultimate responsibility for extrication from poverty on the poor themselves. Two sub-categories were created to accommodate two groups of similar solutions within the "culture of poverty" universal subset.

Sub-Category: Situational Change

A number of expressed solutions to poverty, as an examination of the raw data tables (Appendix II) will show, called for changes in those environmental and/or situational factors which force people to behave in unacceptable ways. Some of the responses appear systemic. They are not so categorized for two reasons: they address situational factors not explicitly considered a function of the "system" and, like many bootstrap solutions, they put ultimate responsibility for poverty solutions on the shoulders of the poor. One person put it this way: "when you've got an environment that limits you, you must be given other visions, you must be incited to move up." Another said essentially the same thing when the informant suggested that "until they (the poor) see alternative environments they won't want to change." But how does a poverty policy-maker⁴⁷ change such situational factors? One agent proposed that we give the poor "leadership opportunities and experiences." Several others said that a value re-orientation is a necessary precursor to environmental change and subsequent changes in the lives of people. "The value systems of the poverty group must

⁴⁷ Recall that the key interview question on solutions was, "What if you were charged with poverty policy-making decisions? How would you address the poverty problem?"

change . . . If we want to change those people we have to start with their value systems." At least one agent suggested that the best way to deal with situational factors is to "make people feel useful."

Whatever society does to help poverty people, programs must be inclusive in the sense that they are offered to everyone without regard to ethnic, geographic or demographic needs. "Current programs are stratified by race. That is a mistake. They should be broader in approach," i.e., programs are aimed at specific groups or areas. Another was as specific when the agent said that programs should be "broad" in scope and all inclusive. "These programs should be pretty much the same since the problems are universal." The underlying theme to all proposed solutions in this sub-category is the notion that environmental factors tightly delimit peoples' opportunities for a wide variety of experiences. Such limitations preclude possibilities for getting people out of poverty. "The equalizer in this situation is exposure to other experiences outside their environment." Some of these poor, because of their environment, have even "become freaked out and are in need of psychiatric help."

Sub-Category: Education

The majority of "culture of poverty" universal remedial programs were put in a sub-classification which placed emphasis on different types of education. These various education programs were seen as benefiting any poverty person and they seemed to have universal application in that they speak to all poor. This is a crucial distinction between "culture of poverty" universal education sub-category and the

subsequent "culture of poverty" relativistic education sub-category. They both have a common denominator in that they propose education to eliminate poverty. This class, however, as a perusal of the raw data tables will demonstrate, suggests some kind of educational program without reference to specific groups of people. The relativistic education sub-category, on the other hand, contains responses which are quite specific in identifying target audiences.

One respondent presents the theme of expressions on solutions in this grouping when he says, "it is hard to break out of poverty but it can be done . . . Knowledge is the primary ingredient." The statements, moreover, were offered in the context of the environment. "Yes, education is the key, coupled with environmental improvements." The kind of knowledge needed to defeat poverty, however, varies from informant to informant. One agent suggested that we "need fast moving programs in vocational training" in order to keep abreast of rapid "technological change." Another agent insisted on giving all poverty-fighting resources to the Extension Service because it is that organization's philosophy to "help people help themselves, (and they involve people) in the decision-making process." Still other agents saw homemaking skills and consumer education as needed educational emphases. Such learning experiences, however, are not ultimately successful unless education includes an "integrated . . . psycho-social approach (to meet) social, cultural and psychological needs."

"Culture of Poverty" Relativistic Remedial Programs

The second major subset to "culture of poverty" remedial programs

contains responses on solutions that are aimed at specific groups of people. Solutions are relative to those groups. Here solutions are likewise aimed at depreciative personal characteristics and counter-productive environments. Poverty groups may have commonality in their poorness, but many of their problems are unique to their situation. Many solutions responses propose a highly individualized approach, such as those calling for "one-to-one" remedial programs. Responses were placed in three groupings.

Sub-Category: Situational Response

Several respondents suggested a type of solution I have chosen to call "situational response." These are statements which take a relative approach to situational/environmental factors and the depreciative characteristics which evolve from such a milieu. A point central to this orientation is that remedial programs cannot, if they are to be effective, start where we are; they must instead "start where they (the poor) are." As one informant put it, "we try to mold people, but instead we should try to accentuate their talents, their values" if we are to effectively work with them in their setting. Don't confuse this sub-category of responses with systemic heterogeneity. The systemic group of responses is likewise relativistic, but the poor are always approached on their terms, and the intent of a systemic revisionist heterogeneic solution is to empower the poverty group and/or to guarantee cultural heterogeneity, i.e., cultural uniquenesses. That is not the case with situational responses. The point here is to change the environment and the characteristics of the poor if "we" are going

to "make them a useful part of this society." Therefore, questions like "what excites you? What turns you on?" are intended to remedy "bad behavior patterns." The questions are intended to orient "us" to the context of their situations. "This is the only way we can make them . . . useful."

Sub-Category: Education

A second set of responses were grouped as an education sub-category. Responses here differ from the "culture of poverty" universal education sub-category because statements in this group deal with particular groups, especially youth. The central identifying key is education. Types of educational thrusts range from "career training" to literary training. At least two respondents saw a need to concentrate on the first few grades in school. "If I had the money I would put it into the schools, especially the first few grades. I would pay these teachers the highest salaries."

One informant argued that special needs arising from cultural phenomena require special attention. "A Chicano (I know) did better both in school and early adulthood because the school system went out of its way to help him." Another informant framed his comments in vocational training needs for all groups of poor, young and old, but "these programs should fit specific job needs . . . by geographic region."

Solutions then should be aimed at relative needs and problems with the ultimate goal of achieving some form of self-sufficiency. Concomitant with this is the need to change depreciative patterns of

behavior.

Sub-Category: One-to-One

Some responses were placed in an interesting sub-grouping that emphasized "individualized and individualistic programs" whose commonality was frequently grounded in the phrase, "one-to-one." Informants were saying that through "time consuming" and costly, remedial programs which stressed close proximity of the helped to the helpers would net the greatest benefits. "People need people they can trust--and I don't think the poor can trust us, nor do we trust the poor." Two respondents suggested the best way to effect such one-to-one programs is through people from the "target audience" such as "para-professionals." The "Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program" could serve as a model, say some.

Any solution, then should be "continuing . . . indepth . . . progressive (and) it must be one-to-one."

Systemic Revisionist Programs

It has been suggested that responses on solutions would fall into a systemic category. Proposals which called for the invigoration of the poor and self-determination I consider to be the epitomy of a systemic solution. Invigoration of the poor or self-determination is not related to a bootstrap or "culture of poverty" concept of "self-sufficiency" or "self-help." Invigoration of the poor is the empowerment of the poor. This carries with it a concomitant requirement for some systemic revision which allows people to take charge of their own

lives rather than serve as victims of a system which disallows such possibilities. It was also expected that proposed solutions would call for revisions in the system which would not carry a parallel call for self-determination. Not all systemic responses fit so neat a conceptual frame, as a review of the raw data tables on solutions will show, but all did call for some kind of social, economic or institutional revision in order to address the needs of people in poverty.

Two systemic revisionist subsets were expected: one with expressions on solutions without reference to uniqueness of specific groups of people, the other with emphasis on socio-cultural uniqueness.

Systemic Revisionist Broad Programs

Expressions on revisionist solutions which were aimed at all poverty people without reference to specific unique groups were grouped in three sub-categories.

Sub-Category: General

The first grouping contains a variety of miscellaneous statements that lay responsibility for resolving the poverty problem on socio-economic values and structures of the larger system. There were some indictments of the whole system, but they were few. Most responses were aimed at some part(s) of the system. No distinctions were made between poverty groups.

Some respondents suggested that "employment opportunities" and the "esteem" of jobs "need to be upgraded" in order to allow more poor people entry into the system. Along this line another proposed that

the responsibility for increased "employment opportunities" should be assumed by "business and industry" to a greater degree. His point is that government cannot carry the entire load.

Other informants conversed in vague, social terms. "We as a society lack altruism, the desire to help the deprived." Another suggested that "we must think in terms of human rights, not civil rights." Others simply yielded to the immensity of the problem "poverty is a slow and painful process to resolve because it involves so much of society." A couple of the informants talked in terms of a "value revolution in our society" that would somehow de-emphasize the more degrading aspects of the social implications of self-reliance and independence. "We need a revision of our value system."

A very few respondents saw a need to re-order our concepts of work and implications therein: "the pie is only so large . . . we can no longer think in terms of full employment for everybody. It's just impossible." At least one agent saw need to suggest "economic education" among the poor in addition to "economic revision."

Sub-Category: Self-Determination

A few responses were grouped together because they called for self-determination and sweeping social change. One respondent in particular argued for both as requisites to a healthy society. "The poor must become a powerful social force," and the concomitant "need for social change" dominated the informants' responses on solutions. Moreover, unique to some solutions was the conviction that poverty people will have to articulate their own cause because the larger society is not

going to alter its stance under its own power. "It boils down to the needy versus the greedy." The poor, therefore, must rise up and assume initial responsibility if they are to shed the yoke of oppression.

Sub-Category: Institutional

Many of the systemic revisionist programs were placed in a grouping which called for institutional revision, especially those dealing with the poor, and some kind of resource distribution program which would more equitably divide the economic pie. One respondent, for example, criticizing some existing poverty programs, suggested that the resource "distribution patterns" be changed. "Take the money away from the administrators and give it to the poor." Under existing structures, he says, "current programs only pacify the poor." More than one agent, moreover, saw need to "reallocate money that is aimed at the poor" because "less and less money (is) reaching the poor directly."

Other informants argued for a "guaranteed annual income," "cut tax loopholes," cut "red tape in our bureaucratic system," "consolidation and coordination of agency effort for those in poverty," and more "health care." Many respondents spoke in a context which says that lives of adequacy are "a basic human right." Solutions, then, call for implementation of poor within the socio-economic system through institutions. Programs need to go beyond pacification.

Systemic Revisionist Particular Programs

These portions of responses view society as pluralistic, each with its own set of uniquenesses which complement the whole. Relationships

are established only when groups meet each other half way. One respondent referred to the Canadian government's attempt to help a Provincial tribe: "the system was insensitive to cultural uniquenesses and consequently the helping programs were an absolute bust. The message is clear enough for us."

In most instances responses in this subset related to specific poverty groups, especially those in acute poverty. Our social system, for example, was criticized for being insensitive to sub-cultural uniquenesses: "we need to operate in their value system, not ours." One respondent went so far as to suggest that "we (can) learn from each other and capture the best of both in order to benefit as a total society."

Systemic revisionist particular programs emphasize reciprocity and are non-paternalistic. "It is necessary to identify with the people who are saying they are poverty stricken. We must equate with them."

Levels of Aggregation

For the purpose of later analysis, as with origins, response sub-categories are collapsable into subsets, and finally into major orientations, bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic.

Definitions

It became clear early in the pre-test that for interviews to have greater integrity, conversations must be held within the conceptual framework of the informant. This was done by asking respondents about

their perceptions of poverty, how they view poverty, define it. Such an approach had the added benefit of providing useful insights into perceptual frameworks. Statements were recorded the same as for origins and solutions, then grouped into categories according to similarities.

The responses were originally broken down into refined sub-categories and then collapsed into two major sets of responses. My data analysis, for practical reasons, covers only those two sets of responses. So the reader may capture the flavor of respondents' comments, a description is given by sub-categories.

Absolute Definitions

A majority of the responses were of an absolute nature in two senses: one specific, the other non-specific. The first three sub-categories to be described place parameters on their conception of poverty. That is, they identify mean levels or minimum resources needed to meet basic needs. Another group of responses identify people in poverty as adhering to "a way of life" which place visible parameters on available opportunities. Such responses are also, for purposes of this analysis, considered absolute because parameters do exist, are reasonably solid.

The first set of responses (see raw data tables on definitions, Appendix III) are absolute in the purest sense. The three responses placed in this category are categorical in their approach to poverty: "maximum poverty is that minimum set by poverty." Therefore, anyone

"who is above society's minimum standard for poverty, who claims to be in poverty, is not . . ." Within that next group, some simply accepted public assistance guidelines as the logical determinants of poverty. Another set of responses referred to the absence of resources. These may be "financial limitations," the "material necessities of life," or "situational poverty" whereas "normal opportunities are not available, such as credit, housing, education, money."⁴⁸

Three respondents argue that poverty exists because we define it into existence by arbitrarily defining "artificial standards of living."

Finally, a group of respondents defined poverty in cultural terms. Admittedly, the placement of this set of statements under absolute is subject to some debate. Responses like "poverty is a way of life," "poverty exists within the state of family relationships," and "poverty exists more in urban areas than rural areas" appear at first glance to be quite relative. However, within the context of the conversations it was clear that rigid lines exist which set off "a way of life" as unique in and of itself. The statement, for example, "it (poverty) includes other things (like money) such as general knowledge, knowing how to exist in a satisfactory manner . . . how to vote, how to act, etc.," while broadening the scope of conceptualization, clearly maintains absolute parameters.

Relative Definitions

A number of responses reflected a more relative concept of poverty.

⁴⁸One respondent took the interesting position that "an overabundance of money" may induce a poverty condition.

The substance of these statements in this general category is noticeably more qualitative than the more absolute responses. That is, they deal with feelings and attitudes of those whom we identify as being poor. More important, responses are framed within the perceptions of the poverty person. Poverty, then, is not categorized by an income level or environmental parameter only; poverty is contingent on one's perceptions of one's condition, how one feels about one's placement in the socio-economic schema. The reader may argue that some of the statements should have been classified absolute because of their categorical nature. The context of the conversations from which those statements are pulled, however, demand a relative placement. "The burden of the (poverty) definition is on the individual (who may or may not be in poverty)" summarizes the denominator to these responses.

The first group of statements generally conceive poverty as a mind state. "Poverty is more a state of mind . . . a lot of people who don't make much money don't consider themselves poor" and "poverty is more attitude than financial" make poverty dependent on the perceptual frames of the individual. Note the distinction that absolute definitions are generally imposed, i.e. poverty parameters are scientifically or arbitrarily set; relative definitions are relative to individuals.

The second group of relative definitions can be summed up in the response, "poverty as awareness." These responses are more explicit in their perceptual orientation. Time and again statements smack of Gurr's "relative deprivation" concept: "how one feels about his particular situation," "people feel they are being left out," and "poverty

is related to felt needs and expressed needs" serve as examples.

Given this description of Extension field staff responses in Chapter III and IV the reader will be able to hang bags and patches of meat to the bones of the three subsequent chapters.

Chapter V

A Description of Extension Field Staff Orientations Based
on Expressions on Origins and Solutions of Poverty

In keeping with the descriptive nature of this study, the purpose of this chapter is to present distributions of respondents classified by their responses on origins of and solutions to poverty. Findings will be discussed at the lowest level, second and third levels of aggregation, in that order. Consistency measurements are also presented for each level. The chapter concludes with a brief description of respondents classified by poverty definitions.

Modal Categories for Causes at First Level of Aggregation

Table 6 reports the percent of respondents whose modal categories for causes are classified as bootstrap. The first four sub-categories belong to the bootstrap subset, socio-psychological. The broken line separates the remaining five sub-categories which belong to the socio-cultural subset. The distinction between the two types of expressions on causes of poverty is, as explained in chapters two and three, that socio-psychological explanations place primary responsibility for poverty on individual, innate socio-psychological traits. A bootstrap, socio-cultural orientation, on the other hand, places the blame on implicit group characteristics and/or patterns of behavior which give rise to conditions of poverty.

Forty-two percent, or 13, of the sample have as their modal category one of the nine bootstrap sub-categories. Of those in this orien-

TABLE 6

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES ON CAUSE
ARE BOOTSTRAP AT THE FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| | | % of respondents in bootstrap sub-category | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Bootstrap socio- psychological | General socio- psychological | 7.7 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Psychological | 7.7 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Mental-physical limitations | 23.1 | 9.7 | 3 |
| | Work-ambition- incentive | 23.1 | 9.7 | 3 |
| ----- | | | | |
| Bootstrap, socio- cultural | General socio- cultural | 7.7 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Now orientation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| | Family characteristics | 15.3 | 6.5 | 2 |
| | Historical, pre- destination, chance | 7.7 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | By choice | 7.7 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 41.9 | 13 |

tation, 62 percent, or six, fall into the socio-psychological subset; the other 38 percent, or five, are classified as socio-cultural.

Expressions on causes which place emphasis on the absence of ambition,

incentive or motivation, and innate physical or mental limitations as a priori to poverty represent 46 percent, or six, of those agents whose modal categories fall into the bootstrap orientation at this first level of aggregation. Among those with a plurality of responses in the bootstrap socio-cultural subset, 15 percent, or two, saw certain depreciative family characteristics as a factor in the cause of poverty.⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that no respondents had as their modal category, immediate gratification.⁵⁰

At so low a level of aggregation where responses are scattered one cannot place much weight on the importance of individual sub-categories as a modal category. Suffice it to say here that a fairly even distribution of respondents between bootstrap sub-categories suggests significant dispersion of perceptions at this level. Viewed as an aggregation of the socio-cultural subsets, however, at this first level of analysis, well over one-third of Extension field staff perceive poorness as resulting from certain key depreciative individual or group characteristics.

Table 7 gives information about modal categories in the "culture of poverty" orientation. Recall that "culture of poverty" views place

⁴⁹ Sixty-one percent of the respondents had as their second-most modal category one of the nine bootstrap sub-categories. Of the 19 informants whose second-most modal responses were so placed, 58 percent were socio-psychological, 42 percent were socio-cultural.

⁵⁰ The limited sample size, the reader may argue, makes analysis at this low level of aggregation illusory. I would agree, especially if one tries to attach statistical significance to the data. Recall that the purpose here is descriptive. The absence of respondents in a modal category, therefore, may be as significant as the presence of respondents in a modal category.

certain situational factors, such as one's environment, a priori to the development of adaptive patterns of behavior. These behavior patterns tend to perpetuate poverty once they are established.

TABLE 7
PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
ON CAUSES ARE CULTURE OF POVERTY AT
THE FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------|--------------|
| | | % of respondents in "culture of poverty" sub-category | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| "Culture of Poverty" universal | Universal, general | 57.1 | 12.9 | 4 |
| | Way of life | 28.6 | 6.5 | 2 |
| ----- | | | | |
| "Culture of Poverty" relativistic | | 14.3 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 22.6 | 7 |

At this first level of aggregation, 23 percent, or seven, of the sample had as their modal category one of the three "culture of poverty" sub-categories. Eighty-six percent of the informants, or six agents, who appear in these sub-categories are in the socio-psychological subset. The dotted line separates the "universal" from the "relativistic" subset. Only one agent sees poverty as extant within specific groups of people. The large majority of respondents, then,

are in the first two sub-categories.

The next category to be considered is negative systemic. Table 8 shows that three informants have this as their modal category. Two of these people (67 percent) lay primary blame on poverty programs which foster dependency, especially the welfare system. One agent had "specialization" as his modal category. That is, poverty results from society's demand for specialization and the trap of job compartmentalization. No one had as their modal category responses of a general negative systemic nature or responses which argued poverty as a creation of definition.⁵¹

Systemic responses place responsibility for poverty on some function of the "system." Those functions may be social, economic, political or cultural. Table 9 reports that 26 percent of the respondents, or eight informants, have as their modal category at this first level aggregation a systemic sub-category. Of these respondents, 63 percent, or five, see poverty as the result of "oppression," "value re-prioritization" and "economic forces and functions."

The broken line separates the systemic uniformity subset from systemic heterogeneity. Thirty-eight percent, or three informants, see poverty as resulting from socio-economic-political interplays between different groups. These interplays are often one sided in

⁵¹Thirteen percent, or four, of the respondents had "welfare" their second-most modal category. No one appeared in either of the other three negative systemic sub-categories.

TABLE 8
 PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
 ON CAUSE ARE NEGATIVE SYSTEMIC AT THE
 FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Negative systemic sub-categories | % of respondents in negative systemic sub-category | MODAL | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------|
| | | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Negative systemic, general | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| Negative systemic, specialization | 33.3 | 3.2 | 1 |
| Negative systemic, definition | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| Negative systemic, welfare | 66.7 | 6.5 | 2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 9.7 | 3 |

TABLE 9

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
ON CAUSE ARE SYSTEMIC AT THE
FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| | | % of responses in systemic sub-category | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Systemic uniformity | General function of the system | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| | Oppression | 12.5 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Value re- prioritization | 12.5 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Economic forces and functions | 37.5 | 9.7 | 3 |
| ----- | | | | |
| Systemic heterogeneity | | 37.5 | 9.7 | 3 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 25.8 | 8 |

terms of power and influence.⁵²

In summary, all respondents at the lowest level of aggregation had statements dispersed among several sub-categories. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents, for example, had between 19 and 50 percent of their statements in the modal sub-category. Such a low consistency rate precludes definitive conclusions at this level of aggregation and points

⁵²Ten percent of all informants, or three, had as their second-most modal category the first three systemic uniformity sub-categories, with one respondent each.

to heterogeneous composition in responses. Totals within the four orientations, however, demonstrate a heavy plurality of respondents in one of the nine bootstrap sub-categories.

Modal Categories on Cause at the Second Level of Aggregation

For purposes of analysis at the next level of aggregation, responses are collapsed into the major subsets: bootstrap socio-psychological, bootstrap socio-cultural, negative systemic, "culture of poverty" uniformity, "culture of poverty" relativistic, systemic uniformity and systemic heterogeneity. Table 10 presents the distribution of respondents by modal category in bootstrap socio-psychological and socio-cultural. Thirty-two percent of the sample have as their modal category one of the two subsets. Fifty percent, or five agents, of those in the bootstrap category had a plurality of responses in the

TABLE 10

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
ON CAUSE ARE BOOTSTRAP AT THE
SECOND LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Bootstrap subset | MODAL | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | % of respondents in subset | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Socio- psychological | 50.0 | 16.1 | 5 |
| Socio- cultural | 50.0 | 16.1 | 5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 32.2 | 10 |

socio-psychological subset, and 50 percent had as their modal category the socio-cultural subset.⁵³

Those respondents with negative systemic as their modal category represented 16 percent of all the informants. It is important to note that I am considering negative systemic immediately subsequent to the bootstrap subsets. To consider negative systemic responses as a subset to systemic is inconsistent with the tenor of the systemic orientation. Even though respondents generally see welfare programs as perpetuating poverty because such programs "foster dependency," it is clear the informants lay equal blame on those who capitalize on public assistance programs. Respondents expressed less than positive feelings about welfare recipients. The notion that one "can hustle" and get off public assistance if "he wants to" negates the response as being truly systemic.

Thirty-two percent of the respondents had one of the two "culture of poverty" subsets as their modal category (Table 11). Eighty percent of these respondents see poverty as belonging to a broad sub-culture which for many has become a "way of life." The remaining twenty percent are relativistic; that is, poverty is seen as extended through a group's environment. Moreover, transmission of values and attitudes to and within those groups in turn perpetuates poverty.⁵⁴

⁵³ Fifty-two percent of all informants, moreover, had as their second-most modal category one of the two bootstrap subsets.

⁵⁴ Twenty-three percent of the informants had the two "culture of poverty" subsets as their second-most modal category.

TABLE 11

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
ON CAUSE ARE CULTURE OF POVERTY AT THE
SECOND LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| "Culture of poverty" subset | MODAL | | No. of cases |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | % of respondents in subset | % of total sample | |
| Uniformity | 80.0 | 25.8 | 8 |
| Relativistic | 20.0 | 6.5 | 2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 32.3 | 10 |

According to Table 12, 19 percent, or six, of the respondents had as their modal category one of the systemic subsets. Of those in the systemic groupings, 67 percent, or four, had heterogeneity as their modal category. A majority of respondents in the systemic mode at this

TABLE 12

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES ON CAUSE
ARE SYSTEMIC AT THE SECOND LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Systemic subsets | MODAL | | No. of cases |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | % of respondents in subset | % of total sample | |
| Uniformity | 33.3 | 6.5 | 2 |
| Heterogeneity | 66.7 | 12.9 | 4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 19.4 | 6 |

level of aggregation, then, view poverty as resulting from the victimization of groups by larger social and economic groups.⁵⁵

Responses at this second level of aggregation still show wide dispersion. That is to say, informants demonstrate multi-dimensional approach to the problem of poverty and cannot be tightly categorized. Not a single respondent had more than three-fourths of his responses in a modal category. As can be seen in Table 13 the majority of respondents had between 30 and 50 percent of the responses in their modal category.

TABLE 13

PERCENT RESPONSES IN MODAL CATEGORY AT SECOND
LEVEL OF AGGREGATION BY PERCENT RESPONDENTS

| Percent responses in modal category | Percent total respondents | Number of cases |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 20 - 30 | 19.4 | 6 |
| 30 - 50 | 54.8 | 17 |
| 50 - 75 | 25.8 | 8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 31 |

Modal Categories on Cause at Third Level of Aggregation

The third and final level of aggregation involves collapsing sub-

⁵⁵Ten percent, or three, of the informants had one of the systemic subsets as their second-most modal category. Of these, 67 percent, or two, were in the uniformity subset.

sets into major poverty orientations. Such an aggregation is consistent with the three major sets of explanations. Those whose modal category is bootstrap have a plurality of responses which tend to see individualized or group traits as a priori to poverty. Those whose modal category is "culture of poverty" have a plurality of responses which generally argue that situational factors create adaptive, human responses which cause and/or perpetuate poverty. Those whose modal category is systemic are saying that poverty is some function of the system.

It is necessary to explain the placement of negative systemic responses at this level of aggregation.⁵⁶ For purposes of this portion of Extension field staff description, negative systemic is collapsed into the bootstrap category. Such an aggregation is consistent because (1) negative systemic responses register animosity toward the poor and, (2) the poor are generally blamed for taking advantage of public assistance programs, i.e., there is something about their character which predisposes them to use public assistance. It is true that responses place blame on certain aspects of the social structure. To include negative systemic with systemic responses, though, would serve only to negate the tenor of systemic orientations.

Table 14 shows the distribution of respondents at this highest level of aggregation. Thirty-nine percent have bootstrap as their modal response category, 32 percent have "culture of poverty" and 29 percent have systemic. The distribution, then, leans slightly to the "culture

⁵⁶ See chapter seven for an evaluation of the modal, and placement of the negative systemic orientation.

TABLE 14

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES ON CAUSE
ARE BOOTSTRAP, CULTURE OF POVERTY AND SYSTEMIC
AT THE THIRD LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Causes of poverty | MODAL | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Percent in orientation | Number of cases |
| Bootstrap | 39.7 | 12 ^a |
| "Culture of poverty" | 32.3 | 10 |
| Systemic | 29.0 | 9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 31 |

^a Five of the 12 cases are negative systemic, 16 percent of the total.

of poverty" and bootstrap orientations. The striking point to note, however, is the relatively even distribution of respondents. Extension field staff cannot be rigidly classified as holding one orientation over another according to responses on the origins of poverty.

A measure of consistency at this level of aggregation shows a significant degree of dispersion in responses (Table 15). What does this dispersion mean? Analysis of consistency scores within the major orientations may help. The mean consistency score on responses for informants whose modal category is bootstrap with negative systemic excluded was 61. That is, on the average, 61 percent of the responses of informants in the bootstrap category were classed as bootstrap. The remaining statements fall into one or more of the remaining three cate-

TABLE 15

PERCENT RESPONSES IN MODAL CATEGORY AT THIRD LEVEL
OF AGGREGATION BY PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS

| Percent responses in modal category | Percent total respondents | Number of cases |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 30 - 49 | 25.8 | 8 |
| 50 - 70 | 54.8 | 17 |
| 71 - 86 | 19.4 | 6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 31 |

gories: negative systemic, "culture of poverty," or systemic. The mean consistency score for the five agents classified as negative systemic is 66. Both bootstrap and negative systemic respondents have far and away the highest scores of the four categories. "Culture of poverty" informants had a mean consistency score of 50; the systemic score was 47. These rather low consistency scores raise an interesting question. Where did the rest of their responses fall? A partial answer to this question can be found by examining relationships between respondents' modal categories and second-most modal categories. Table 16 shows that relationship. Respondents whose modal category is systemic had the lowest mean consistency score on responses. Sixty-seven percent, or six informants, had "culture of poverty" as their second-most modal category; 33 percent, or three, had bootstrap. It is assumed, then, that many of the remaining responses fell into these

TABLE 16

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RESPONDENTS IN MODAL CATEGORIES ON CAUSES
AND RESPONDENTS IN SECOND-MOST MODAL CATEGORIES ON CAUSES
AT THE THIRD LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Second- most modal category | MODAL CATEGORIES | | | | marginal % |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| | % of respondents in bootstrap | % of respondents in negative systemic | % of respondents in "culture of poverty" | % of respondents in systemic | |
| Bootstrap | | 80.0 | 90.0 | 33.3 | 50.8 |
| Negative systemic | 14.3 | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.6 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 57.1 | 20.0 | | 66.7 | 36.0 |
| Systemic | 28.6 | 0.0 | 10.0 | | 9.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 7 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 31 |

two categories. Those with a "culture of poverty" orientation also had a low consistency score of 50. Ninety percent of the agents classified as "culture of poverty" had bootstrap as their next most modal response category; 10 percent were systemic. Those with a bootstrap orientation had a higher mean consistency score. Note the dispersion of respondents by second-most modal orientation: "culture of poverty," systemic and negative systemic in that order. There is also added justification for collapsing negative systemic into the bootstrap group: four of the five informants who had this as their modal category had bootstrap as their second-most modal category.

This dispersion of respondents implies a corresponding dispersion of responses. What does it mean? I am not sure it is appropriate to conclude that Extension field staff were merely inconsistent in their responses on the causes of poverty. It would certainly be more hopeful to postulate that informants simply attacked the problem from several perspectives, each one important and consistent within the respondents' conceptualizations. Table 16, however, shows a slight tendency for bootstrap to be the next most modal category regardless of the respondents' modal categorization. This tendency is most dramatic for negative systemic and "culture of poverty," and less so for systemic. The central point, however, is the marked heterogeneous composition of Extension field staff. They are dispersed over the board.

Modal Categories for Solutions at the First Level of Aggregation

Bootstrap remedial responses were divided into three sub-categories: "to hell with them," "self reliance and pride," and "group." Table 17 depicts the percent and numbers of respondents whose modal and second-most modal categories are found in this grouping. Note the dotted line separates the individualized remedial subset from the group subset.

Thirty-nine percent, or 12 of the respondents had as their modal categories one of the bootstrap sub-categories. Of these 75 percent, or nine informants, were placed in the self reliance and pride sub-category, with the balance going in the group subset. That is, three-fourths of the respondents at this first level of aggregation had a plurality of responses which generally called for the inculcation of

TABLE 17

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES
FOR SOLUTIONS ARE BOOTSTRAP REMEDIAL
AT THE FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Bootstrap subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | % of responses in sub-category | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Individualized | To hell with them | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| | Self-reliance and pride | 75.0 | 29.0 | 9 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Group | | 25.0 | 9.7 | 3 |
| Total | | 100.0 | 38.7 | 12 |

values and behavior patterns which instill "motivation" and require that "outputs . . . equal inputs." The remaining one-fourth directed attention at particular groups of people, such as, "kids," Aid to Dependent Children recipients, etc. No one had as their modal category, "to hell with them."⁵⁷

Of the 29 percent, or nine respondents, whose modal category was a "culture of poverty" "universal" or "relativistic" sub-category (see Table 18), almost two-thirds had a plurality of responses which suggest general changes and improvements in educational thrusts, and changes in environmental and situational factors. Twenty-two percent, or two in-

⁵⁷ Forty-five percent of the respondents had one of each bootstrap sub-category on solutions as their second-most modal category.

TABLE 18

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL FOR SOLUTIONS
ARE CULTURE OF POVERTY REMEDIAL AT THE
FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| "Culture of poverty" subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | No. of cases |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | | % of responses in sub-category | % of total sample | |
| Universal | Situational change | 22.2 | 6.5 | 2 |
| | Education | 44.4 | 12.9 | 4 |
| ----- | | | | |
| Relativistic | Situational response | 11.2 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Education | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 |
| | One-to-one | 22.2 | 6.5 | 2 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 29.1 | 9 |

formants, would take a much more relativistic approach and relate to the poor on a one-to-one basis.⁵⁸

Systemic revisionist solutions were more numerous than expected. According to Table 19, just under one-third of the informants had as their modal category one of the systemic revisionist sub-categories. One might assume this higher rate may be due to classification of certain negative responses into the institutional sub-category. Several of the respondents who voiced negative systemic expression on origins

⁵⁸ Thirty-five percent, or 11, of the respondents had a "culture of poverty" remedial sub-category as their second-most modal category.

TABLE 19

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES FOR SOLUTIONS
ARE SYSTEMIC REVISIONIST AT THE
FIRST LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Systemic subset | Sub-category | MODAL | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| | | % of respondents in sub-category | % of total sample | No. of cases |
| Broad revisionist | General | 30.0 | 9.7 | 3 |
| | Self- determination | 10.0 | 3.2 | 1 |
| | Institutional | 30.0 | 9.7 | 3 |
| ----- | | | | |
| Particular revisionists | | 30.0 | 9.7 | 3 |
| Total | | 100.0 | 32.3 | 10 |

of poverty, for example, contrary to what one might assume without asking them for proposed solutions,⁵⁹ may have called instead for institutional/agency revision and re-organization. A study of the Raw Data Table on Solutions (Appendix II) by respondents shows that not to be the case.

Sixty percent of the respondents who were classified in a systemic revisionist sub-category offered broad general and institutional revisionist

⁵⁹That is to say, if I had not asked for proposed solutions to the problem of poverty, I would have assumed--based on negative systemic welfare statements on origins--that the respondents would generally call for an end to public assistance programs which "foster dependency."

sionist solutions respectively. Only one informant had self-determination as his modal category. Another 30 percent, or three, moreover, had a revisionist orientation on solutions that was particularistic.⁶⁰

Modal Categories for Solutions at the Second Level of Aggregation

At the second level of aggregation all sub-categories on solutions are collapsed into the major subsets: bootstrap individualized remedial and group remedial solutions, "culture of poverty" universal remedial and relativistic remedial, systemic revisionist broad and revisionist particular solutions.

Table 20 presents the distribution of modal categories for each of the three major categories by subset. The two broken lines separate "culture of poverty" from bootstrap and systemic.

Well over a third of the respondents had bootstrap individualized or group expressions on solutions as their modal category. Half of these respondents fell evenly into the two subsets.

Just under one-third were "culture of poverty." Sixty percent or six, of these informants had a plurality of responses calling for general, remedial education. The balance had a plurality of responses which voice a more relativistic approach.

Twenty-nine percent, or nine respondents, had as their modal category one of the two systemic revisionist subsets. A majority at

⁶⁰Consistency measures at this first level of aggregation, as with consistency measures on causes have little use except to show trends. Forty-five percent of the respondents had between 22 and 45 percent of their responses in the modal category. Fifty-five percent of the informants, on the other hand had between 50 and 83 percent of their responses in their modal category.

TABLE 20

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES FOR SOLUTIONS
ARE BOOTSTRAP REMEDIAL, CULTURE OF POVERTY REMEDIAL AND
SYSTEMIC REVISIONIST AT THE SECOND LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Category | Subsets | MODAL | | No. of cases |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | | % of respondents in subset | % of total sample | |
| Bootstrap | Individualized remedial | 50.0 | 19.4 | 6 |
| | Group remedial | 50.0 | 19.4 | 6 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 38.8 | 12 |
| "Culture of poverty" | Universal remedial | 60.0 | 19.4 | 6 |
| | Relativistic remedial | 40.0 | 12.9 | 4 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 32.3 | 10 |
| Systemic | Revisionist broad | 55.6 | 16.0 | 5 |
| | Revisionist particular | 44.4 | 12.9 | 4 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 28.9 | 9 |

this second level of aggregation had a plurality of responses voicing broad systemic changes and self determination. The rest, 44 percent, or four agents, took differences between groups into account and suggested particularistic approaches to the problem of poverty.

Comparatively, respondents whose second-most modal category is

one of the bootstrap and "culture of poverty" subsets, each was greater than those whose modal categories fell into those areas; significantly fewer are found in one of the systemic subsets, less than 20 percent.

An inspection of Table 21 shows that respondents' distribution by major orientations are equally divided between bootstrap and systemic at the third level of aggregation. A plurality of respondents appear in the "culture of poverty" category. This suggests a heterogeneous character to the composition of Extension field responses and orientations toward poverty according to their expressions on solutions. Analysis of consistency may speak to this heterogeneity.

TABLE 21

PERCENT RESPONDENTS WHOSE MODAL CATEGORIES FOR SOLUTIONS
ARE BOOTSTRAP REMEDIAL, CULTURE OF POVERTY REMEDIAL AND
SYSTEMIC REVISIONIST AT THE THIRD LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Categories | MODAL | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| | % of respondents in category | No. of Cases |
| Bootstrap remedial | 32.3 | 10 |
| "Culture of poverty" remedial | 35.4 | 11 |
| Systemic revisionist | 32.3 | 10 |
| Total | 100.0 | 31 |

TABLE 22

PERCENT RESPONSES IN MODAL CATEGORY ON SOLUTIONS AT
THIRD LEVEL OF AGGREGATION BY PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS

| Percent responses in modal category | Percent total respondents | Number of cases |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 33 - 49 | 12.9 | (4) |
| 50 - 79 | 61.3 | (19) |
| 80 - 100 | 25.8 | (8) |
| Total | 100.0 | (31) |

As Table 22 shows, consistency of responses ran higher than consistencies on origins.⁶¹ Eighty-seven percent of the respondents, for example, have 50 percent or more of their responses in the modal category.

If we look at the mean consistency scores of respondents by major categories at this third level of aggregation, they are somewhat higher than consistency scores on origins. Those with a bootstrap orientation on solutions have the highest mean consistency score: 79 percent of the statements by respondents in this category were bootstrap responses. The mean consistency score for those with a "culture of poverty" orientation on solutions was a much lower 58. Systemic revisionists were lowest with a mean score of 54. Where did the rest of the responses fall, especially for the last two categories? An examination of the

⁶¹ Compare Table 22 to Table 15, page 121.

solutions and their second-most modal categories on solutions will shed some light on the question.

TABLE 23

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONDENTS IN MODAL CATEGORIES ON SOLUTIONS AND RESPONDENTS IN SECOND-MOST MODAL CATEGORIES ON SOLUTIONS AT THE THIRD LEVEL OF AGGREGATION

| Second-most modal category | MODAL CATEGORIES | | | Marginal % |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| | % responses in bootstrap | % responses in "culture of poverty" | % responses in systemic | |
| No category ^a | 20.0 | 9.1 | 10.0 | 13.0 |
| Bootstrap | | 63.6 | 30.0 | 31.2 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 60.0 | | 60.0 | 40.0 |
| Systemic | 20.0 | 27.3 | | 15.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 10 | 11 | 10 | 31 |

^aThese are respondents who do not have a second-most modal category because all responses fell into the modal category.

Table 23 shows the relationship between informants in their modal category of response on solutions and their second-most modal category of response. Note the distribution of the next-highest category for those who are classified as having a systemic orientation; of the ten in the systemic category, six have "culture of poverty" as their second-most mode, and three are bootstrap. Observe too that one re-

spondent does not have a second-most modal category because all his statements are in the modal category. For those whose modal category is "culture of poverty," 63 percent, or six informants, have bootstrap as their second-most modal group, and 27 percent, or three, have systemic as their next highest mode. Of those who hold a bootstrap orientation, six informants have "culture of poverty" as their next highest modal category and two have systemic revisionist. Two of these respondents had all their statements in their modal category.

While consistency of responses are considerably higher for solutions than for origins, it remains clear that composition of expressions on solutions is heterogeneous. Table 23 shows a slight tendency for "culture of poverty" to be the next-most modal category for respondents with a bootstrap or systemic orientation on solutions. Agents with a "culture of poverty" orientation on solutions tend to have bootstrap as the next-highest mode.

Modal Definitions of Poverty

Sixty-five percent of the respondents had absolute responses as their modal definition. This is not to say that these informants defined poverty in hard, threshold terms. They did, however, establish parameters which serve as boundaries to the problem. The remaining 35 percent took a much more relative approach to poverty by identifying poverty according to perceptions and states of mind.

Chapter VI

A Description of Relationships Between Poverty Orientations, and Between Poverty Orientations and Extension Field Staff Characteristics

The last chapter presented a description of Extension field staff orientation toward poverty as indicated by their expressions on origins of and solutions to poverty. The most striking thing discovered about the sample according to the modal employed, is their heterogeneous composition and the apparent heterogeneity of their responses.

It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate relationships between respondents' views on origins, solutions and definitions. Such an inquiry is necessary in determining whether these three sets of responses hang together. Then I shall examine a number of background characteristics of Extension field staff, and the relationship of these characteristics to Extension field staff orientations on poverty. All inquiries into these relationships will involve orientations based on origins and solutions at the third level of aggregation.

Orientations Toward Poverty: Origins, Solutions, Definitions

How tightly do orientations toward poverty based on informants' views on origins relate to orientations toward poverty based on expressed solutions? One would expect a fairly strong correlation between their views on causes and solutions. As expected, reasonably strong relationships do exist between the major orientations. Table 24 shows that of the respondents with a bootstrap orientation, 57 percent were also classified bootstrap based on solutions. Of the informants classi-

TABLE 24

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORIENTATIONS TO POVERTY BASED ON
CAUSES AND ORIENTATIONS TO POVERTY BASED ON SOLUTIONS

| Orientations based on solutions | ORIENTATIONS BASED ON CAUSES | | | | Marginal % |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|---------------|
| | % | % | % | % | |
| | respondents in boot- strap | respondents in "culture of poverty" | respondents in systemic | respondents in negative systemic | |
| Bootstrap | 57.1 | 30.0 | 22.2 | 20.0 | 32.3 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 28.6 | 50.0 | 22.2 | 40.0 | 35.2 |
| Systemic | 14.3 | 20.0 | 55.6 | 40.0 | 32.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 7 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 31 |

fied as "culture of poverty" at this level of aggregation, 50 percent also had a modal "culture of poverty" category for solutions. Of those with a systemic orientation, 56 percent were systemic based on solutions. Thus, if an informant is classified as holding one orientation on causes, he will likely hold a similar orientation based on solutions.

This information suggests that there is little difference between respondents' views on origins and respondents' views on solutions. The table, of course, does portray some variance. It is most striking, however, for the five agents whose modal category on causes was negative systemic. They are scattered up and down the table. One informant, for example, whose modal category was negative systemic was classified as bootstrap on solutions. Two were classified as "culture of poverty" on

solutions and two had a systemic orientation. One can only speculate why this phenomenon exists. In the previous chapter we found that agents who were classified as negative systemic had a strong tendency to be classified as bootstrap when measured at the next-highest frequency of responses. That is, if an agent was given a negative systemic orientation on causes, his secondary orientation was quite likely bootstrap. Well then, given the relatively tight relationship between orientations on causes and solutions and my tendency to collapse the negative systemic category into bootstrap, one would suspect that respondents classified as negative systemic on origins would be likely to have a bootstrap orientation on solutions. As is seen, that is not the case; almost the reverse is true. Four of the five people holding a negative systemic orientation give "culture of poverty" or systemic solutions.

Definitions of poverty:

Agents conceptualized poverty in a variety of ways, but they generally presented one of two kinds of definitions: absolute or relative. Sixty-five percent of the sample were classified as having absolute concepts of poverty. A look at the relationship between respondents' views on poverty based on causes and their concept of poverty is necessary to determine how conceptualizations fit together with orientations. I strongly suspect that agents who view poverty in more absolute terms will tend to be bootstrap and agents who define poverty in more relative terms will lean toward a systemic orientation.

Table 25 shows the relationships. All informants in the bootstrap

TABLE 25

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORIENTATIONS ON POVERTY
BASED ON CAUSES AND DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

| Definitions of poverty | ORIENTATIONS BASED ON CAUSES | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| | % respondents in boot- strap | % respondents in "culture of poverty" | % respondents in systemic | % respondents in negative systemic | Marginal % |
| Absolute | 100.0 | 60.0 | 33.3 | 80.0 | 68.3 |
| Relative | | 40.0 | 66.7 | 20.0 | 31.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 7 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 31 |

category conceive of poverty in absolute terms. Almost two-thirds of the respondents in "culture of poverty" hold absolute definitions. On the other hand, clearly two-thirds of the agents who have a systemic orientation conceptualize poverty in relative terms. There is, then, a striking relationship between bootstrap orientations and absolute definitions, and a striking relationship between those who hold a systemic orientation and those who conceptualize poverty in relative terms. Said differently, if one has a systemic orientation toward poverty, one's perception of poverty is likely to be relative; if one has a bootstrap orientation, one's view of poverty will likely be absolute. Note too the association that exists between absolute and negative systemic. That, I would think, is to be expected.

When relationships are viewed between orientations based on solu-

tions and concepts of poverty a similar correlation exists between bootstrap and absolute. However, of the ten agents with a systemic orientation toward poverty based on solutions, 60 percent, or six, perceive poverty in absolute terms.⁶² It would appear that if one holds a systemic orientation toward poverty based on solutions, one's perceptions of poverty may well be absolute.

Relationships Between Orientations Toward Poverty and Extension Field Staff Background Characteristics

The purpose of this section is to find out who hold a bootstrap, "culture of poverty" or systemic orientation based on selected field staff characteristics.

Sex and age:

Twenty-nine percent of the sample, or nine people, are women; 71 percent are men. Age of informants range from early 20's to 60 years. Of the eight informants between 20 and 29 years of age, half are men and half are women. Of the nine people in their 30's, five (or 56 percent) are men. The six people in their 40's are men and of the eight respondents in their 50's there is one woman and seven men. I would anticipate that women would lean more to a systemic orientation than men, and I would also expect that as Extension field staff age, convention and tradition would lead staff to more bootstrap orientations.

⁶² Frequencies for those holding absolute concepts are bootstrap, seven; "culture of poverty," four; systemic, six. Frequencies for those holding relative concepts are bootstrap, three; "culture of poverty," four; systemic, four.

If we examine the associations between orientations of Extension field staff based on causes and sex of informants one finds my expectations regarding sex and orientations toward poverty shattered by alternative evidence. Table 26 presents the relationships. It is

TABLE 26

FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD POVERTY
BASED ON CAUSE BY SEX OF INFORMANT
(in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | SEX OF INFORMANT | | Marginal % |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | % Male | % Female | |
| Bootstrap | 13.6 | 44.4 | 29.0 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 31.8 | 33.3 | 32.5 |
| Systemic | 36.4 | 11.1 | 23.8 |
| Negative Systemic | 18.2 | 11.1 | 14.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 22 | 9 | 31 |

immediately evident that there are proportionately more women in the sample who hold a bootstrap orientation than men, and proportionately fewer women for systemic and negative systemic. Conversely, many more men hold a systemic orientation than women. The ratio for the systemic orientation is eight men to one woman.⁶³ An examination of

⁶³ If, on the other hand, negative systemic is collapsed into bootstrap, the proportions change, but not enough to alter the tendency for proportionately more women to be bootstrap than men.

the relationship between origins based on solutions, however, is not so striking. Both sexes are fairly evenly distributed between the three categories--bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic.⁶⁴

An examination of associations between orientations based on cause and age of the respondent tends also to call my expectations into question. I would expect recent graduates in their 20's to lean more toward a systemic view than bootstrap. Conversely, I would expect older agents to lean more toward bootstrap than systemic. This is not necessarily the case. Table 27 presents the frequency of different

TABLE 27

FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD POVERTY
BASED ON CAUSE BY AGE OF EXTENSION FIELD STAFF
(in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | AGE OF FIELD STAFF BY DECADES | | | | Marginal % |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | % in 20's | % in 30's | % in 40's | % in 50's | |
| Bootstrap | 37.5 | 22.2 | | 25.0 | 21.2 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 50.0 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 12.5 | 32.3 |
| Systemic | 12.5 | 33.3 | 50.0 | 25.0 | 30.2 |
| Negative systemic | | 11.1 | 16.7 | 37.5 | 16.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 8 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 31 |

⁶⁴Frequencies for men in the bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic categories are eight, seven and seven respectively. For women, frequencies by categories are two, four and three, in that order from bootstrap to systemic.

orientations based on cause by ages. One-half the agents in their 20's hold a "culture of poverty" orientation, and a third of them hold a bootstrap orientation. None are negative systemic. Field staff in their 30's are fairly evenly distributed between the three major orientations. One is negative systemic; one-third are systemic. Of those in their 40's clearly one-half have a systemic orientation. Two agents are "culture of poverty" and one has a negative systemic orientation. None are bootstrap. Those staff in their 50's tilt toward negative systemic and bootstrap. One-quarter of this group, however, holds a systemic orientation. It is evident, then, from this table that field staff members in their 20's will likely be "culture of poverty" or bootstrap. On the other hand, agents in their 40's will more likely be systemic. If negative systemic and bootstrap are collapsed the picture does not change significantly except that one quickly sees interesting similarities between the youngest and the oldest agents: eighty-eight percent of the youngest agents hold a bootstrap or "culture of poverty" orientation; three-fourths of the oldest agents hold similar orientations. Except for the oldest agents, my expectations are not met.

There are, then, these curiosities: agents who are female tend to be bootstrap when measured by respondents' views on cause and men will lean slightly to a systemic orientation. Additionally, youngest and oldest (i.e., those in their 20's and 50's) will lean more heavily toward bootstrap, negative systemic or "culture of poverty," while agents in their 40's will have a strong tendency to be systemic.

Years of service:

I have dichotomized field staff by length of service. On the basis of my own experience in the organization and the length of time it has taken me to "adapt" to the institution's operating and philosophical values it appears reasonable to break staff at seven and eight years of service, i.e., to check relationships between orientations based on cause and those who have seven years or less and eight years or more of service. Of the 31 agents who were part of the sample 45 percent, or 15, have been on staff seven years or less. The remaining 55 percent have been with the Extension Service eight or more years. One would assume that the more service a person has with the organization, the more one accepts the conventions and values of the institution. However, given the previous evidence on "age," and recognition that length of service is also a function of age, I would instead suspect that younger staff will lean slightly toward a "culture of poverty" and bootstrap orientation and older staff to be more evenly dispersed between the orientations.

Table 28 presents the distribution of orientations by years of service in the organization. There are apparent similarities between this set of relationships and the previous one on age. Agents who have seven years or less in the Extension Service lean slightly toward a "culture of poverty" orientation. Field staff with greater lengths of service lean slightly toward negative systemic. In fact, none of the "younger" staff hold a negative systemic orientation. This explains why there are proportionately more "younger" staff in each of three major

TABLE 28

FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD POVERTY
 BASED ON CAUSE BY YEARS OF SERVICE IN EXTENSION
 (in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | LENGTH OF SERVICE BY YEARS | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| | % with seven years or less | % with eight years or less | Marginal % |
| Bootstrap | 26.7 | 18.8 | 22.7 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 40.0 | 25.0 | 32.5 |
| Systemic | 33.3 | 25.0 | 29.2 |
| Negative systemic | | 31.2 | 15.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 15 | 16 | 31 |

orientations than there are "older" staff. My expectations, then seem to be borne out by the table. However, the tendency for staff with fewer years of service to lean slightly more toward the systemic orientation when compared to bootstrap is not necessarily denied. On the other hand, proportionately fewer "older" agents are bootstrap, an interesting anomaly to initial expectations.

When the relationship is assessed on the basis of informants' views on solutions, a similar picture emerges.⁶⁵ There are propor-

⁶⁵ Frequencies for agents who have seven years or less Extension experience are four, seven and four in bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic categories respectively. Frequencies for informants who have eight or more years experience are six, four and six in the three respective categories, bootstrap to systemic.

tionately the same number of agents who hold a bootstrap and systemic orientation for both groups: eight of the 15 agents with seven years or less service are evenly distributed between bootstrap and systemic, 12 of the 16 agents with longer service are evenly distributed between the two orientations. However, almost a majority of the "younger" staff hold a "culture of poverty" orientation. "Older" agents, on the other hand, have almost a 50-50 chance of being either bootstrap or systemic.

Educational background:

The Extension Service requires a bachelor's degree as the minimum education criterion for employment. Our purpose now is to inquire about relationships between levels of higher education and orientations to poverty. I would expect orientations toward poverty to lean slightly toward systemic as the level of academic degrees become more advanced.

Of the 31 informants in the sample, 13 hold a bachelor's degree, 16 hold a master's degree and two hold doctorates. Table 29 presents the distribution of orientations by level of degree held. One is immediately struck by the even distribution of those holding bachelors' degrees between the three orientations: bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic. One of this group holds a negative systemic orientation. There is a slight tendency for those holding a master's degree to move more toward "culture of poverty" than the other orientations. While five of the agents with advanced degrees are systemic, the

TABLE 29

FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS BASED ON CAUSE
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE HELD (in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | DEGREE HELD | | Marginal % |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--|---------------|
| | % with bachelors | % with masters or doctorate ^a | |
| Bootstrap | 30.8 | 16.7 | 23.7 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 30.8 | 33.3 | 32.1 |
| Systemic | 30.8 | 27.8 | 29.3 |
| Negative systemic | 7.6 | 22.2 | 14.9 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 13 | 18 | 31 |

^aIn the interests of anonymity the two doctorates are collapsed into the masters' level.

orientation is not as strong as I had expected.⁶⁶ It may be that more younger staff hold advanced degrees than do older staff--this would help explain the tendency for those holding advanced degrees to lean slightly toward "culture of poverty."

Area of academic training:

We turn now to an examination of the relationship between area of academic training and orientations toward poverty. Forty-five percent

⁶⁶Note what happens if negative systemic is collapsed into bootstrap. Both groups then lean toward bootstrap, and the proportionate difference between both groups holding the bootstrap orientation is just over one percent.

of the sample (14 agents) hold their degree in agriculture, 23 percent, or seven agents, hold their degree in home economics, six agents (or 19 percent) hold it in education, and the balance hold degrees in such fields as economics, political science, geography, etc. One would expect that those who hold degrees in agriculture would tend to be bootstrap, while those holding degrees in home economics, education or "other" would lean a little more toward systemic. Table 30 presents a curious phenomenon. Of those informants who hold degrees in agriculture a slight plurality have a systemic orientation. Of those holding

TABLE 30

FREQUENCY OF ORIENTATIONS TOWARD POVERTY BASED ON CAUSE
BY AREA OF ACADEMIC TRAINING (in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | AREA OF ACADEMIC TRAINING | | | | Marginal % |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| | % Agriculture | % Home Economics | % Education | % Other ^a | |
| Bootstrap | 21.4 | 57.1 | | | 19.6 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 28.6 | 14.3 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 35.7 |
| Systemic | 35.7 | 14.3 | 16.7 | 50.0 | 29.2 |
| Negative systemic | 14.3 | 14.3 | 33.3 | | 15.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 14 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 31 |

^aIncludes political science, geography, etc.

a degree in home economics, a clear majority, or 57 percent, hold a bootstrap orientation.⁶⁷ Extension agents whose degrees lie in the field of education lean sharply toward a "culture of poverty" orientation: three of six staff members. Of the four people who were in some other field, usually liberal arts, half are "culture of poverty" and half are systemic.

It is clear, then, that contrary to expectations there is a very slight tendency for those holding degrees in agriculture to have a systemic orientation. On the other hand, those who hold a home economics degree tend to be bootstrap.⁶⁸ Expectations for those with education degrees are as expected, although I anticipated some evidence of bootstrap orientations. There are none. I also expected agents holding "other" degrees to lean more heavily toward systemic than they do.

Field position:

Extension field staff perform basically two functions. One is an educational function, the other is administration of county programs. For purposes of inquiry I will dichotomize Extension field staff into two groups by function: field staff and staff chairpersons. Staff chairpersons perform the same educational role as field staff, except that they coordinate and lead overall county program. Staff chair-

⁶⁷This finding correlates with the tendency for female staff to be bootstrap.

⁶⁸If negative systemic is collapsed into bootstrap, those with agriculture degrees then become evenly distributed between bootstrap and systemic.

persons are therefore key people in administration of county programs.

There were only five chairpersons in the sample (16 percent). Their orientations toward poverty are important, however, since they have significant influence on all local Extension programs. Of the five chairpersons, four hold a negative systemic orientation based on causes at the third level of aggregation. That is to say, 80 percent of the Extension staff chairpersons suggest, generally, that poverty is a result of systems which foster dependency. Blame is also laid on the poverty person because they choose to take advantage of such assistance systems.

Geographic location:

The sample was divided by geographic areas within the state (see footnote for description of geographic areas, page 53) in order to find the distribution of orientations by area location. One might assume that the rural nature of the state would indicate a tendency toward bootstrap on the part of staff located in Southwest, Central and Eastern Oregon with less of a tendency toward bootstrap for staff located in Northwestern Oregon.

Table 31 presents the frequency of different orientations based on cause by geographic location. Of the six field staff located in the Southwestern part of the state one-third each are bootstrap and "culture of poverty." One is classified as having a systemic orientation and another as being negative systemic. Agents in the Northwest quadrant of the state appear to lean slightly toward a "culture of poverty" orientation: 46 percent of these agents are so classified.

TABLE 31

FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS BASED ON CAUSE
BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA (in percentages)

| Orientations based on cause | GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION | | | | Marginal % |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | % Southwest Oregon | % Northwest Oregon | % Central Oregon | % Eastern Oregon | |
| Bootstrap | 33.3 | 18.2 | 14.3 | 28.6 | 23.6 |
| "Culture of poverty" | 33.3 | 45.5 | 42.8 | | 30.4 |
| Systemic | 16.7 | 27.2 | 28.6 | 42.8 | 28.8 |
| Negative systemic | 16.7 | 9.1 | 14.3 | 28.6 | 17.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Cases | 6 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 31 |

Note the marked similarities in orientations between Northwest and Central Oregon staff. Of the seven agents interviewed in Eastern Oregon a plurality hold a systemic orientation. Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from this information except that there is not a clear tendency toward bootstrap in any area; stronger inclinations in each area, save Southwest Oregon, are toward "culture of poverty" or systemic. As heterogeneity seems to characterize Extension staff orientations, so too the heterogeneous composition of Extension staff is reflected by location. Still, it is curious anomaly, looking at the table, that as one moves from Southwest Oregon to Northwest to Central to Eastern Oregon one sees a movement toward a systemic orientation.

This contradicts expectations.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

This study has been primarily concerned with a description of Extension field staff orientations toward poverty based on their views of origins and solutions. No claims have been made for statistical significance; the sample was too small. However, it has been possible to talk about "likelihoods," "tendencies" and "probabilities," to describe in general terms orientations toward poverty.

Extension Staff Heterogeneity

One can't help but be struck by the heterogeneous composition of field staff. Within the Oregon State University system, Extension field staff are frequently viewed by colleagues on campus as very conservative and caught up in the conventions and traditions of the communities in which they work.⁶⁹ I had expected to find the bootstrap orientation as predominant. Instead, orientations by bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic are each represented by about one-third of the staff.

Implications for program acceptance:

As suggested in Chapter 1, orientations toward poverty predispose

⁶⁹One ingredient to effectiveness in relating to public needs, and thus capitalizing on educational opportunities, is proximity to the audience. There are dangers that Extension agents, "catalysts for change," become personifications of the communities to which they are relating. The danger, however, is no greater than that for resident teaching and research staff whose potential isolation from Oregon communities within the confines of four, cozy, academic walls preclude possibilities for appreciation of problems and opportunities in Oregon's hinterland.

people to support, tolerate or reject given poverty programs. The Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), for example, receives substantial support from the staff I talked to. The program is designed to teach poor families how to utilize limited nutritional resources to best advantage. Paraprofessionals are hired from the target audience and trained to give both in-home and group nutrition training. This Extension program is "helping people help themselves." Support for this educational program may indeed come from the majority of people who hold a bootstrap or "culture of poverty" orientation. The program is remedial, educational, often one-to-one and addresses those depreciative characteristics of the poor which lead to nutritional problems in the home.

Reach Independence and Security Through Employment (RISE) is a program designed to train women in basic job and job-seeking skills.⁷⁰ It also receives general agent support, although it is considered a bane to at least one person who bemoaned RISE "because women were asked to participate and (we) had to provide everything to the participants . . . transportation, babysitting, etc. I didn't think we had to go that far." Again, support for this program probably comes from bootstrap and "culture of poverty" orientations who see remedial education as a means of inculcating erstwhile values which are perceived as essential in getting people "to help themselves."

There is some support for attempts by poverty groups to "get their

⁷⁰ It is my understanding that a few men have participated in RISE. According to agents with whom I talked, most RISE participants were Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) recipients.

share of the pie." National social movements and revolutionary groups, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) were cited as examples.⁷¹ While the study was not designed to explicitly elicit evaluations of extant poverty programs, the existence of a systemic orientation among one-third of the sample suggests there may be general staff support for Extension involvement with poverty groups in order to expedite some kinds of community organization, the goal of which would be empowerment of the poor through collective social, economic and political action. The heterogeneous composition of Extension field staff, suggests at least vocal readiness for a broader range of both remedial and revisionist programs. The evidence lies not only in staff orientations but also in consistency of responses in "culture of poverty" and systemic, those with "culture of poverty" also had responses in bootstrap and systemic, and those with systemic orientations had responses in the other categories. This relatively high dispersion of responses as suggested by consistency scores further reinforces the notion that Extension staff will lend support to a broader range of remedial and revisionist programs.

On the other hand, heterogeneity may be a two-edged sword and instead indicate resistance to revisionist programs in particular. One third of Extension staff, for example, may support programs which

⁷¹I was intrigued by responses sympathetic to those social problems which gave rise to groups like the SLA. No one condoned the method or tactics employed by such groups, but there was a clear appreciation for, and understanding of, the frustrations which cause certain people to react so violently.

emphasize self-determination, yet two-thirds of the staff may stand in opposition. Consistency scores were highest for those holding a bootstrap orientation and therein may lie the strongest objections to systemic solutions.

Consistency and Model

I would have expected consistency scores to run higher than they did. It is true that origins, solutions and definitions hung together as predicted; still, at the highest level of aggregation almost one-half the responses were in one or two of the other orientations. Were the informants merely inconsistent in their thinking? Do they think so little about the problem that they were caught unawares? I doubt it. The fault may lie in the model. It may well be that the distinction between bootstrap and "culture of poverty" is a moot one. Obviously it is a heuristic curiosity that some people might consider socio-psychological, genetic or cultural traits as endogenous rather than as evolving from environmental or situational factors. The fact that bootstrap responses on origins were the second-most frequent responses for both "culture of poverty" and negative systemic orientations suggests that at any given time, in other conversations, responses might indicate an alternative bootstrap or "culture of poverty" classification from the current classification. The common and truly significant denominator to both sets of responses is that they are concerned about the depreciative characteristics of the poor and remedial programs must correct those characteristics. I'm not sure the intellectual distinction made by the researcher in this case serves a functional pur-

pose. Perhaps it is more appropriate, then, to conceive of only two categories: a combined bootstrap and "culture of poverty" category and systemic category.

Such a restructuring of the model would give that anomaly to the current model--negative systemic--a more consistent rationale. As it is now, those with a negative systemic orientation stand outside the model or are collapsed into bootstrap, depending on the convenience of manipulation and relationship to other findings. Perhaps we can only talk about bootstrap, negative systemic and systemic.⁷² Negative systemic then is a transitional or bridge category between the two more antithetical orientations. It is in this group that root problems of poverty are seen as once and same time a function of particular parts of the system and certain depreciation personal characteristics.

Origins and Solutions

One must, of course, look at the relationship between orientations based on origins and orientations based on solutions. As was seen in chapter six, they hang together with reasonable tightness. There is nevertheless, some variance between the two. Moreover, as was seen in the bivariate measurements between orientations and background characteristics in the second section of chapter six, orientations based on origins were frequently inconsistent with orientations based on

⁷² If I were to collapse bootstrap and "culture of poverty" the orientation might still be called bootstrap or "behavioral" since the characteristics of the poor are ultimately what perpetuates the problem.

solutions. For example, orientations by sex of informant when related to cause showed women to lean more heavily toward bootstrap than men. However, when the sex of the informant was related to orientations on solutions, there were proportionately fewer women in each orientation than men, and women were fairly evenly represented in each of the three orientations. This is a curious anomaly: on the whole orientations based on origins meshed rather well with orientations based on solutions. On the other hand, smaller component measurements relating certain characteristics of staff to orientations frequently showed inconsistencies. Without further measurements, this phenomenon evades reasonable explanation by me.

Shattered Stereotypes?

It is commonplace for some people to perceive of agriculturally oriented people as conservative, steeped in convention and strongly independent. When Francis Hsu (1972:241-262) describes "self-reliance" as the "american core value" and the concomitant values of independence and hard-work as requisites to success in this society, when one witnesses the agricultural communities' forceful reaction to farm labor organizing, especially among migrant workers, when one observes the political and economic conservatism of many such communities, one would expect these communities to hold a relatively strong bootstrap orientation toward poverty. In addition, because many Extension field staff work directly with agriculture, and are both sympathetic and emphathetic to the needs of agricultural, rural, communities, one would expect those with agricultural training and responsibilities to lean

toward a bootstrap orientation. Based on evidence collected in this study there is a very slight tendency for agents with agricultural training to hold a systemic orientation. Why? I don't know. I can only speculate.

There may be a correlation between age and area of training not evident in the data. Only in recent years has there been an increased tendency by Extension to hire people with training in the social sciences. Most, if not all, the older agents, then, hold degrees in agriculture. If we recall that some older agents especially those in their 40's contrary to expectations lean toward a systemic orientation one then recognizes the possibility for a positive correlation between age and area of academic training.

Age connotes depth of experiences. Perhaps as agents age, encounter more and varied experiences, their perceptions of poverty are de-mythologized and they assume more holistic views. These views are cluttered by professional exposures which call into question more provincial perceptions. Many of the younger agents, on the other hand, lack those experiential sensitivities and may be under the influence of their family origins. This may serve to explain the tendency for some older agents with areas of academic training in agriculture to hold a systemic orientation. Sixty-eight percent of the sample have as their place of origin rural farm and non-farm communities. Younger agents on staff may therefore lean toward a "culture of poverty" and bootstrap orientation because they have not yet shed the influence of home nor gained sufficient professional experience to perceive the

social scene as a multi-dimensional complex.

Orientations held by women on the staff also came as a surprise to me. I would expect women to hold a more systemic orientation than men. Again, this was not the case. Orientations based on cause show that proportionately more women hold a bootstrap orientation than men do. There may also be a positive correlation between women and their area of academic training. Of the nine women in the sample, seven hold degrees in home economics. If you recall, there was a high correlation between those with home economics degrees and a bootstrap orientation. Moreover, age of the women compared to men is much lower. Of the nine women, four are in their 20's and four are in their 30's. It would have been interesting to measure a larger sample where distribution of women by age would have allowed for orientation measurements by age.

Staff chairpersons are key people in the planning and conduct of county programs. They are instrumental leaders. It is encouraging to note that of the five chairpersons in the sample, none hold a bootstrap orientation. One would expect this. Leaders of county programs would be expected to approach problems with a more holistic view. It is curious, however, to note that four of the five hold a negative systemic orientation. How do we account for this? Again, one can only speculate.

In chapter six when we compared next-most modal categories to major orientations based on cause we found that 90 percent of the responses by those holding a negative systemic orientation were in fact

bootstrap. This information further legitimized collapsing negative systemic into bootstrap. Subsequent analyses, however, yielded significant information when negative systemics were separated from bootstrap.

Going back to a previous argument in this chapter, perhaps the negative systemic orientation is an intermediate orientation between bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic. If the model is restructured as suggested, then negative systemic as a transitional orientation (transitional in two directions) makes sense. It might then be suggested that county chairpersons are negative systemic because conventions of their staff function require at least the facade of greater sophistication. It is unconventional for a person in an Extension leader role, for example, to say "people are poor because they won't get their asses into gear." This implies that poor people are naturally lazy. It is more acceptable to lay blame on certain functions, perhaps the system, which "foster dependency." Then, poor people "won't get their asses into gear" because some form of the system has made them lazy. Professional and community position, then, coupled with experience, may negate the more blatantly negative orientations.

The study calls several stereotypes into question. This not only registers dangers in stereotyping groups of people, but it may also suggest greater potential for attitude changes in Extension field staff by increasing the demand for a professionalism that is characterized by growth through an eclectic synthesis of experiences encountered over time. Some Extension administrators and field staff, myself included,

are wont to see the future of the organization as contingent on the vigor and unconventionality of the younger staff. That vigor and unconventionality, however, may find expression in great part because the "deans" of the organization are responsive and flexible.

Methodology

The reader must keep in mind that the sample size is small and does not readily lend itself to drawing definitive conclusions. Care has been taken not to overstate the findings. A 20 percent sample, however, is adequate for the principal task of this research: to describe Extension field staff orientations toward poverty.

Caution is also given regarding the handling of informants' responses. It is difficult to categorize open-ended responses. Another interviewer using the same theoretical structure would undoubtedly have captured other statements and might interpret the nuances of each conversation differently. Moreover, another researcher might well have understood the context of each conversation differently. This would necessarily lead to alternative classifications of responses within categories. This is why I felt compelled to categorize responses at their most definitive level. I believe it ameliorated the study.

It may be, therefore, that some will question the "scientific objectivity" of this study. Emery Castle (1968:vol. 50, No. 4, p. 809) writes,

"According to Popper, scientific objectivity consists of the freedom and responsibility of the researcher (1) to pose refutable hypotheses, (2) to test these

hypotheses with relevant evidence, and (3) to state the results in an unambiguous fashion... If these requirements are met, scientists can replicate one another's work and expect to come to the same conclusion."

This study can be replicated and my intellectual instincts tell me the conclusions would be similar, even given the influence of different individual preferences in this non-parametric study.

Heterogeneity -- So What?

Even though Extension field staff orientations toward poverty are fairly evenly represented by bootstrap, "culture of poverty" and systemic, the fact remains that clearly two-thirds of the staff view poverty in terms of the personal, social and cultural characteristics of the poor, as evidenced by those who hold bootstrap and "culture of poverty" orientations. Such orientations lead to program prescriptions aimed at ameliorating those characteristics. I consider such programs to be at best paternalistic, and pejorative at worst.

Moreover, a review of the Raw Data Tables on Origins (Appendix I) will show that Extension field staff were generally uni-dimensional in their approach to the poverty problem--including those statements classified in the systemic sub-categories. Very few responses reflect holistic or multi-dimensional perceptions of the problem. Uni-dimensional perceptions lead to uni-dimensional programs which are patchwork and may in fact perpetuate poverty by conditioning people to their

state of existence.⁷³

It is my contention that poverty is a multi-dimensional problem and demands a holistic approach. I agree, for example, that poverty is a cultural phenomenon in that it is a condition, a state of existence, and in the Lewis tradition, "a way of life." More important, however, as I have suggested in the first chapter, poverty is a function of culture because the larger and/or more powerful segments of society deny, ignore or do not tolerate cultural pluralism. As one agent offered, "maybe the melting pot dream is a myth." On another hand, poverty is a function of political exclusion at the hands of our economic system. That is to say, the poor are unable to break in on community decision-making processes because they are denied the resources necessary to influence the very processes which ultimately affect them. The poor become more concerned with the "minimization" of resources rather than "maximization" of resources and thereby unable to compete. Said another way, the very constructs necessary for a satisfactory existence.

Such multi-dimensional perceptions of poverty reflect a systemic orientation--and until such perceptions become predominant, truly viable and ameliorating poverty programs will not be developed. The reader might legitimately ask, So what? I would suggest that degrees of perceived disparity and "relative deprivation" will continue to increase, and thus the potential for social unrest and upheaval. Policy-makers,

⁷³ It might be suggested, for example, that the Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is uni-dimensional. It does not necessarily extricate their poverty, but may instead condition people to a state of poorness by helping them utilize--and thus become satisfied with--very limited nutritional resources.

administrators and concerned citizens can debate at length the root causes and affects of poverty, but such debate has little relevancy unless it takes into consideration the poors' perception of their situations which appear better but out of reach to the perceiver.

It is at this point that I believe the Extension Service can be particularly useful in dealing with poverty. Extension education is radical, grassroots pedagogy. That is, its central strength is the involvement of local people in need identification and program development to meet those needs. The Extension Service can, if it will devote significant resources to the quest, work with the poor--as it worked with rural America--in their struggle for a far more equitable seat in the socio-economic scheme of things.

I express this confidence in Extension because I believe Extension education is Power and as such has two components: politics and economics. That is to say, Extension education is designed to empower people by encouraging and teaching them to become involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives, and by teaching them to maximize limited resources. Such educational thrusts have been backbone to rural efforts. Again, Extension education is radical, grassroots pedagogy.

Traditional Extension clientele have come to expect this style of education. A strange paradox exists, however, because when that same style is taken seriously with the poor, education then becomes subversive. It is then that Extension education is called upon to be neutral. Extension education, however, can never be neutral because, at its best, it is existential and geared to the needs of people the organization

exists to serve. The pedagogy of Extension is the pedagogy of people in search of greater political, social and economic equity. That's how it was in 1914. That's how it is now.

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APPENDICES I - IV

APPENDIX I

STATEMENT BY INFORMANTS ON ORIGINS
OF POVERTY CLASSIFIED BY SUB-CATEGORIES

Response
Sub-Category

Response

Bootstrap,
general
socio-
psychological-
genetic

"Poverty in this area is due to poor planning on the part of most people. They don't plan ahead."

"They see things naturally. They live close to nature so why muddy the water with a bunch of non-essentials."

"...will to survive economically has been broken."

"They are argumentative."

"The poor are generally obstinant and will not take advice."

"Survival of the fittest."

"They are poor achievers."

"You know, inbreeding may be a part of the problem, where dominant or recessive genes become predominant within a community, where the bad traits become the norm rather than the good traits."

"I am sure too that personal characteristics are a part of the problem too."

"There are some, I don't know how many, who could not change their situation if they wanted to."

"Hard core poverty may be inherited."

"They all smoke like fiends."

"I'm sure that all these women do is lay around and screw, because they have so many babies. In fact, I am really concerned about our (i.e., Whites') reduction in population increase on the part of us who are intelligent, and the increase in children among poverty People." (i.e., who are less intelligent)

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--|--|
| general socio- psychological genetic (cont.) | <p>"ADC mothers are terribly immature. To achieve maturity by having babies, which is what most of them try to do, these women demonstrate their immaturity because they can't afford them."</p> <p>"Those women screw for entertainment, and that's all they do it for."</p> <p>"...niggers are always poor."</p> <p>"...Mexicans...one of those drunken Indians...White trash."</p> <p>"Dominant trees outgrow inferior trees...this is the same with people."</p> <p>"Our population decline may have a negative effect because the smart ones don't breed and the dumb ones do. So who reproduces and who becomes the larger group?"</p> <p>"People are poor because they lack a natural ability to cope in society."</p> <p>"Those who stay off welfare and try to make ends meet are proud."</p> |
| Bootstrap, psychological | <p>"Within the context of welfare, poverty is a cop-out!"</p> <p>"...lack of confidence"</p> <p>"Some people have some kind of psychological quirk" whereby they become easily disillusioned by "economic failure...they just give up."</p> <p>"they have a mental block to help that is offered them."</p> <p>"Some of these people were successful in the 1940's and 50's because money came easy to them (referring to agriculture) but when times got tough they couldn't hack it, because of some psychological quirk."</p> <p>"...attitudinally poor, not necessarily economically poor"</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--|--|
| Bootstrap, psychological (cont.) | <p>"A mind state... 'I can't release myself, I can't go forward'"</p> <p>"Poverty may be a state of mind in that it is psychologically induced."</p> <p>"There is something about the inner self that determines our response to crises situations."</p> <p>"The world is presented with more and more crises situations. Some people can cope others cannot."</p> <p>"We have the aggressive ones in our society and we have the meek ones as well as the middle-of-the-roaders. There are those psychological things in humans, as there are in animals, and some will succeed and some will fail."</p> <p>"Poverty is a state of mind and one who is healthy mentally would not let the confusion in choice bother him."</p> <p>"If a person is mentally healthy he can do almost anything he sets his mind to."</p> <p>"Some people are freaked out and are in need of psychiatric help."</p> <p>"There are certain attitudes they don't have. This makes it difficult for them to succeed in society."</p> <p>"Poverty is an attitude condition."</p> <p>"Feelings of individual worth are directly related to one's ability to function. I am talking about self-reliance, the kind that helps you feel good about yourself."</p> <p>"Poverty has a lot to do with self-image."</p> <p>"Poverty is a state of mind."</p> <p>"...due to psychological...circumstances"</p> <p>"Poverty is something like an illness."</p> |

psychological
(cont.) "...state of mind...some people have a healthy frame of mind, other's don't. It's those 'others' who give us the problems."

Bootstrap,
physical-
mental
limitations

"People don't have thinking and physical skills."

"...they lack understanding, they can't think things through."

"The poor will not heed professional advice...because they are ignorant, I guess."

"They just won't pay any attention to me."

"They don't take advantage of the resources available to them, due to ignorance."

"do not know how to manage their resources"

"They don't know the work attitude...they don't have it, some of them"

"They don't have jobs, don't know how to get jobs, they don't know how to hold jobs, therefore, they have no money, they can't get money."

"...without the mental facilities to function normally."

"One's inability (because of mental deficiencies)"

"mental retardation"

"People do not use the resources they do have efficiently because they don't know how to."

"They don't have the skills necessary to do the job."

"Kid's can't function in school because their abilities are limited."

"...general intelligence level, especially for Anglos."

"...poor management of resources because they don't know how to use their resources."

"They don't know any better."

"...lack of manual and mental skills."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|---|---|
| physical- mental limitations (cont.) | "...don't have certain skills...manual and mental skills," |
| | "...inability to function on their own." |
| | "I think in terms of natural poverty. People are poor because they lack the natural ability to cope in society." |
| | "...inability to manage money and resources." |
| | "...mismanagement of resources because they don't have those thinking skills." |
| | "...are poor because of certain characteristics and the lack of abilities." |
| | "...limited skills" |
| | "...they don't know how to manage their money." |
| | "There are other circumstances such as poor education and low skills...poor education because they just can't learn." |
| | "...perhaps it could be related back to their abilities." |
| Bootstrap, ambition- drive- work | "...lack of sense of pride, desire to do better and the sense of independence." |
| | "...unequal education because they're not motivated." |
| | "They are on public assistance because they are lazy, don't work and expect something for nothing." |
| | "Most of these ADC mothers are of sound body; they just lay on their backs too long for too many men." |
| | "Let's fact it. Most of these guys are irresponsible." |
| | "These people are lazy." |
| | "They lack incentive because they are lazy." |
| | "Anyone can get a job if he wants to." |
| | "...and there is no motivation for education." |

Response
Sub-Category

Response

ambition-
drive-
work
(cont.)

"...lack of the willingness to work may be a part of the problem."

"...lack of the willingness to work is the problem."

"The poor are lazy."

"The people just refuse (i.e. can't, won't) to do the work necessary to get the job done."

"They are slothful."

"...won't hustle to get the goods they need."

"They simply don't get their asses into gear."

"If they really tried, they could control this situation of deprivation."

"In a few of our training programs there are a few who are really turned on, but most others are not really motivated even though they may be physically and mentally able."

"Those who react negatively to tough situations will fail and fall into poverty because they don't have motivation or self-reliance."

"People on public assistance are probably people who lack incentive, who are not self-reliant, and welfare provides a kind of false hope, and people become bound up in that situation, and become trapped, but in a different kind of spiral."

"The poor don't have incentive to escape their environment."

"People are poor because they lack either the willingness or ability to function with that they have."

"They're people who don't know how to pick themselves up."

"I don't think I could take welfare if I were fired tomorrow because it would have such a drastic affect on me personally. I am convinced that I could find some kind of work, and I am convinced that people on welfare could too."

Response
Sub-Category

Response

ambition-
drive-
work
(cont.)

"In many cases they are people who can't pick themselves up by their bootstrings."

"Motivation is a factor, but I don't know how to pinpoint it."

"But the primary thing that really hurts our country is not having the will to work."

"...work ethic"

"Our society is getting sick; it's deteriorating from within; work is important and we have lost the value of work."

"They don't have the drive nor the ability to pick themselves up by their bootstrings."

"Fifty percent of the kids in --- don't graduate from high school which indicates a lack of motivation."

"Work is important and I know it's important. I don't know how to get around this one, because if everyone worked we couldn't swing it in society."

"If a person has any ability or drive at all, dammit, there is a world of resources available to him."

"They don't pursue other means of employment."

"...in some cases is the result of people having suffered a setback and then they give up...and they give up so easily because they are not aggressive."

"Without motivation people will not be aggressive or be incentive oriented."

"...is probably due to the lack of motivation...it is originally absent and then it continues through their children."

"...they don't stick to one thing, and when they are unemployed they don't pursue any other options."

"They could get out and work if they would simply do it."

"Some of these people plain lack ambition."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--|---|
| ambition- drive- work (cont.) | "People will take advantage of welfare because they have no individual motivation." "It's all a lack of motivation...they are not ambitious." |
| Bootstrap, general soio- cultural | "ADC groups are raising their second and frequently third generations primarily because they are so prolific." "They fail to fit into our cultural norms." "Causes of poverty have to do with attitude. A non-functional attitude is already there." "...has to do with group attitudes." "Many of these parents, for a number of reasons, are tied down with kids... Well, I guess because they just like to have kids, which gives them trouble later on." "Poverty is associated with the ability to function socially, to get along in society." "They are poor doers, they cannot keep up with the times." "Some of them have the ability if they are willing to work for it but they relate to each other which reinforces their dislike for work." "They could change their situation if they wanted to but their social structure won't allow it." "I've seen a lot of agricultural fruit tramps." "Mexican men like to keep their women pregnant because it is a sign of their virility, and they think a pregnant woman is beautiful." "Their skill levels are low because of language and environmental circumstances." "...lack of educational training." |

Response
Sub-Category

Response

general
socio-
cultural
(cont.)

"As we emphasize their poverty we degrade their pride
...they are proud...happy."

"...patterns of behavior lead to poverty."

"...diminishing possibilities for family enterprises.
The family grocery store, for example, has all but
disappeared, the family farm is disappearing, family
businesses are disappearing. I think that's unfortu-
nate."

"...a different value system...certain groups within
our society have different value systems that do not
let them integrate into our social and economic fabric."

"I'm not sure they know how to get out of poverty...
ignorance of these people is obviously a factor."

"These groups have no sense of worth. They don't feel
good about themselves. And why should they?"

Bootstrap,
immediate
gratification

"Those people want physical luxuries and they get
them; luxuries like cars, TV sets, furniture - and they
usually don't work for them."

"...put off until tomorrow what could have been done
today."

"...indulgences...too many horses, too much booze."

"...extravagance"

"Both groups (i.e. Japanese Americans and Mexican-
Americans) like material things. Mexican Americans like
to buy cars to get them from one place to another. They
like to purchase portable TV sets. The Japanese Ameri-
cans, on the other hand, like to improve the appearance
of their homes. They have really beautiful homes. The
Japanese Americans have succeeded, the Mexican-Americans
have not..."

"...through the bottle, over-indulgence..."

"...are generally poor because they spend their money
on other things besides the essentials. They spend
money on material things such as TV sets and cars."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|---|---|
| Bootstrap, depreciative family charac- teristics | "They lack family ties...They will not assume responsibility for each other." |
| | "Because parents have handicapped attitudes the children are not motivated toward independence." |
| | "People get into trouble when they get away from home... they don't have a place they can call their own...you know that feeling of lost-ness." |
| | "Husbands in poverty families usually don't work. They have low skills and he usually blames his troubles on other things than himself." |
| | "People tend to marry their own kind. Poor people stick to poor people, etc." |
| | "Probably a major cause of poverty is the loss of father identification. The lack of the father image is disastrous because it gives boys in the family no example, and it gives no opportunity to see their mother relate to a man." |
| | "When the father is absent, it often causes the mother to behave in unacceptable ways." |
| | "Work is the basis of our life and kids within those kinds of families never see an adult in a working situation." |
| | "Children lack direct parental supervision and what little guidance they do receive they get second-hand." |
| | "...state of family relationships." |
| | "...results from parents being more concerned about themselves, about <u>getting</u> , for example, rather than about the kids." |
| | "...lack of parental guidance." |
| "The larger the family, the harder it is to maintain adequate standards of living." | |
| "...size of family. A lot of them wouldn't be poor if they did not have such large families." | |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------------|--|
| family charac- teristics | <p>"This is very critical. Parents don't have skills, they don't know how to do the kinds of things that they need to do to succeed, and they don't teach their kids. So the kids continue on in poverty too."</p> <p>"...broken homes."</p> <p>"There is a kind of lack of motivation which is due to the parent's view. And this view of their parent's contributes to the poverty of their children."</p> <p>"...the family structure where parents do not take an active interest in the kids."</p> |
| Bootstrap, fatalism | <p>"...there will always be that two or three percent who can't, no matter what, do any better."</p> <p>"They just are not in the right place at the right time."</p> <p>"They have a strong feeling that they are destined to this kind of life."</p> <p>"We are always going to have poverty. I am not alarmed by our poverty level because we will always have it with us."</p> <p>"Poverty is the result of tradition. Big business leads to control, control leads to the absence of free will, and so on. As the country gets older the extremes get greater and greater."</p> <p>"Society has always had a top place and a bottom place, and each gets larger as society gets older. As a society gets older the extremes get more pronounced."</p> <p>"...due to the place and time you were born."</p> <p>"...place and time determines, initially, how successful you will be."</p> <p>"Opportunities today are not the same as they were yesterday."</p> <p>"There has always been poverty...there will always be poverty."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|----------------------------|--|
| Bootstrap, by choice | <p>"Poverty may be self-imposed because of some kind of behavioral problem."</p> <p>"Poverty is a life style people would rather have."</p> <p>"like the new generation of the poor, their poverty it sort of self-imposed."</p> <p>"It's their choice."</p> <p>"It's a self-imposed life style."</p> <p>"To a whole lot of these people poverty is not a problem."</p> <p>"They are content, if not happy, with their situation."</p> <p>"Self-imposed poverty is not to be poor."</p> <p>"For some people poverty is the easiest way to go."</p> <p>"People would rather be in poverty than work."</p> <p>"People are poor by choice. Each individual has his own goals, and if it is his goal to be in poverty then he is going to be in poverty."</p> <p>"Poverty may be due to a lack of options that may be self-imposed."</p> <p>"Because of freedom of choice. We live in a democracy and if people want to live with a TV set rather than food or clothing, then that's their choice. They should be allowed to do that."</p> <p>"Many of these self-imposed poor are idea men who never could deal with reality."</p> <p>"These people are happy with their lot and they are a drag on our system."</p> <p>"As long as he is enjoying life...why not let him stay in that state of happiness."</p> <p>"...he is satisfied."</p> <p>"...they may be comfortable in their situation. They may have become more accustomed to it, and if they don't</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|---|---|
| choice (cont.) | know they are poor then they have no desire to pursue anything better." |
| "Culture of Poverty" universalist, general | <p>"...is learned behavior."</p> <p>"The poor are unable to live within our time demands." "...lack of exposure to outside things." "...may be a social or attitude condition. The nature of the problem depends on their social and psychological development. That is, poor environments produce poor attitudes." Those who are in real poverty "cannot visualize themselves in any other kind of circumstance." "They are, in a sense, defeatists...they feel trapped in a desperate situation (because of their environment)." "do not know where they are going because they do not know where they have been" "Poverty is a rat trap...an environmental problem." "Environment is not the cause but is the result of poverty." "One reason for poverty is the lack of challenge and the lack of new things in the lives of people." "The feeling of helplessness causes poverty. Yes, that's it! They are caught in something they can't escape from." "Conditions (i.e. environmental) people live in cause poverty." "People feel hopeless because they are in a certain state of things." "Perhaps 'hopelessness' and 'living conditions' weave together to form a giant cause." "It's an environmental problem."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------|--|
| general (cont.) | <p>"These people may be active in some way, like involved in 4-H, but they just can't escape."</p> <p>"A state of mind which is induced by their living conditions, their environment."</p> <p>"They feel deprived because of their state of mind."</p> <p>"They're just low class people."</p> <p>"Poverty as a state of mind may be economically and environmentally caused."</p> <p>"...who because of various environmental reasons have no skills."</p> <p>"They are in a situation they can't get out of through their own efforts."</p> <p>"A lot of them are trapped. They may say, 'I want to change my life style but there is no way I can do it, no way I can go'."</p> <p>"...loss of structure within our social system...and this has contributed to a kind of disorientation that takes away reference points from people within society."</p> <p>"A person is not born with bad traits. A person is the sum total of his experiences."</p> <p>"A lot of them have grown up saying, 'What the hell!' 'What's the point!' ...they can't see anyway to break loose."</p> <p>"...the educational deficit between most of these people ...This deficit is probably circumstantial in the sense that a person's parents are not able to help or encourage the right kinds of education...and why should they if all they know is what's around them?"</p> <p>"It has just been passed on to the individuals, their habitat, where they have grown up, what they've seen."</p> <p>"I'm a part of that school which thinks that there are not any inherent, psychological characteristics at work here. It's more the environment."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------|---|
| general (cont.) | <p>"We inherit so many things. I'm sure we inherit intelligence too. But environment has the greater influence."</p> <p>"I don't think people are necessarily lazy; they don't know any better because they have never done anything different."</p> <p>"There may be a kind of security within poor communities that makes people there comfortable."</p> <p>"...lack of exposure to constructive work habits."</p> <p>"...poor management and/or mismanagement of resources because they are in an environment that does not emphasize resource management."</p> <p>"They have such low self-esteem, no special skills, no job seeking skills, poor nutrition, so they are not particularly healthy. They don't have people they can pattern their lives after, so it is hard to get away from poverty."</p> <p>"...the communities' environments, such as housing, and-so-on"</p> <p>"In cities, circumstances are different...there are fewer opportunities than in rural areas and all they have are each other...no other references..."</p> <p>"If I lived in a place with the same level of income that I enjoy now, and yet had to share my home with rats, I's think of myself as poor."</p> <p>"...credit"</p> <p>"...lack of money."</p> <p>"...a result of income levels."</p> <p>"...poor housing and education."</p> |

Response
Sub-Category

Response

"Culture of
Poverty,"
a way of
life

"People raised into that kind of living experience tend to continue in that life style."

"Poverty breeds poverty."

"cycle of poverty"

"They cannot break that pattern of behavior."

"Real poverty is a vicious circle."

"There is nothing more depressing than being trapped, knowing you are trapped; so why try to escape?"

"culture"

"They are a subculture... They cannot break the pattern."

"Deprivation breeds deprivation."

"Deprivation tends to perpetuate itself."

"Cycle of deprivation runs from father to son."

"Poverty is like a whirlpool pulling one down into the pit."

"Poverty breeds poverty."

"Poverty is a vicious circle."

"Poverty is a kind of way of life."

"...a way of life."

"People are caught in it and they can't see any way out."

"We have a poverty culture."

"if this is all they have known then life is normal and natural to them."

"Their poverty is something of a way of life and they don't see anything else."

"Poverty may be all that they know."

Response
Sub-Category

Response

way of
life (cont.)

"People get locked into a life situation."

"It is a way of life."

"They see no way they can break out of it because it's a way of life."

"Poverty begets poverty."

"...a way of life."

"It is not only natural, but it's a way of life too."

"...is a vicious circle."

"Culture of
Poverty,"
relativistic

"Parents tend to make poverty a way of life through their kids. So kids have no real vision beyond themselves."

"You can almost pick out a kid who won't make it by identifying his parents."

"Younger kids marry early - like 14 and 15 years of age - which indicates their dissatisfaction with their home environment."

"Poverty women are trapped in an environment from which they cannot escape."

"This group is really one subculture of our society."

"Women are in poverty because of male chauvinism." i.e.
"Male attitudes toward women forces the woman to stay in the home environment...if housework is all that you are faced with, and you have nothing other than that to look forward to, just think how depressing that is."

"(Regarding urban poverty) those people are little more than animals in my opinion because they are caught in an environment that forces them into what I consider to be non-human relationships, and they perform non-human functions."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|----------------------------------|--|
| relativistic (cont.) | <p>"We have an immobile population of these poor kids. Some 50 percent of our NYC kids have never been out of the county."</p> <p>"The urban poor may feel much more depressed" because of their environment."</p> <p>"In the city they can't be lifted out of poverty as easily because of their environment."</p> <p>"We are animals who 'learn by doing'. The kids in poverty situations learn what not to do."</p> <p>"The language barrier makes it difficult for them to move up."</p> <p>"It is absence of roots."</p> <p>"With respect to poor youth, the child may become more comfortable here with the system than somewhere else where the choices are wider, because they are not accustomed to wide choices."</p> <p>"Some are behind the times because they are geographically, socially and culturally isolated."</p> <p>"Poverty people are in a trap, not because they are afraid to work, but simply because it is more comfortable to them."</p> <p>"...cultural isolation."</p> <p>"Poverty also results from the absence of the desire to experience... Geographical differences and geographical limitations have generally put people in environments where choices are limited. All they know is their little community."</p> |
| Negative Systemic, general | <p>"Our larger society is too 'me' oriented. Look at the dregs we've created."</p> <p>"Those who get ahead are those who know the tricks... Christ, if they can't learn the 'tricks' it's not my fault."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|---|--|
| general (cont.) | <p>"Our affluence has let us do things by proxy... It is easier to pay taxes and give money to the poor than it is to work with the poor in order to get them to work."</p> <p>"It's not what you know, it's who you know."</p> <p>"You can't tell me that people of power and position are not there because they didn't know the right people."</p> |
| Negative Systemic, specialization | <p>"The educational system has caused specialization too so we are not satisfied with other forms of employment."</p> <p>"We have therefore bred poverty, and I think we have bred more poverty because we specialize so much in our society than if a person loses a job to which he or she has been accustomed, they are unwilling or unable to adjust to some other kind of work."</p> <p>"Education has not provided the benefits we thought" (because it has caused people not to adjust to alternative forms of employment.)</p> <p>"Unions have dictated specialization."</p> <p>"So poverty is the result of a latent labor force that refuses to work because it was not trained in that area."</p> <p>"There are fewer and fewer specialized holes into which people can fit and there are more and more people trying to fit into those holes. So there are greater frustrations."</p> <p>"There is a lot of latent labor in this county. But they refuse to work. If it wasn't for wetbacks we couldn't get the harvest in, because those who are available and could work won't work." (i.e. because of specialization)</p> |
| Negative Systemic by definition | <p>"We may induce poverty by defining it the way we do."</p> <p>"We stratify people in such a way that we create differences."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|----------------------------------|--|
| by definition (cont.) | <p>"This is a social and political structure which creates by definition the problems they are designed to address themselves to."</p> <p>"We create poverty by setting artificial standards of living."</p> <p>"Poverty is being in such a way that we may be creating the problem by definition. By defining poverty to include people, for instance, who do not consider themselves poor, and once they are told that by our standards they are poor, then they begin to think, of themselves as poor."</p> <p>"A man may not think he is poor until we tell him that he is poor."</p> <p>"...poverty as a social function" (by society defining poverty thereby delegating certain segments of society to poverty)</p> |
| Negative Systemic, welfare | <p>"Our social welfare system creates dependency."</p> <p>"Our social welfare system makes them dependent."</p> <p>"It is easier to live off society than to work in it."</p> <p>"Because of the public welfare system, for many people it is costlier to work than to stay on welfare."</p> <p>"The government role is far too strong, they control too much of our lives. Initiative is stifled by so many regulations."</p> <p>"Level of support to ADC mothers has encouraged men to leave their families."</p> <p>"People tend to keep quality of housing down in order to stay on welfare."</p> <p>"The welfare system supports poverty. For example, unskilled get more on welfare than when they work. So why work?"</p> <p>"People on public assistance have something going for them, namely, security and the assurance of at least</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------|---|
| welfare (cont.) | <p>a subsistence standard of living."</p> <p>"Current programs cause behavior that looks like dependency to me."</p> <p>"Existing poverty programs seem to promote poverty because they have helped the poor meet secondary needs and not basic kinds of needs."</p> <p>"Welfare programs are abused."</p> <p>"They take the system for all they can. All of them are on welfare."</p> <p>"Children are added to families in order to get more money."</p> <p>"Public assistance programs lead to poverty because they require dependency and they force people to behave in ways that lead to poverty."</p> <p>"We contribute to the dependency of the poor by making them more dependent on us. The --- Indians, for example, suffer from alcoholism because they have become dependent on us."</p> <p>"Give away programs are really presenting us with some problems."</p> <p>"Welfare provides security..."</p> <p>"Once they receive a little training their expectations raise too much. They get frustrated."</p> <p>"Agency people have developed a very possessive attitude."</p> <p>"Some of the families are beginning to feel that the community owes them something."</p> <p>"Some of the programs (i.e. poverty programs) have hurt rather than help. They have developed a gimme type of attitude."</p> <p>"Agencies want people to depend on them because it protects their jobs."</p> |

Response
Sub-Category

Response

welfare
(cont.)

"Poverty programs here convince people they are poor when they don't really believe they are poor. OEO Community Action people, for instance, by going out and measuring standards of living and then informing the people they do meet poverty minimums is a negative function."

"Agencies helping the poor in the county have made the picture as dark as possible in order to get funds."

"Agency people are possessive of the people with whom they work, they won't let them go."

"For some people poverty may be a function of convenience...It is more convenient for them to put themselves on welfare than it is to seek some kind of alternative employment."

"If a person within the agency can't handle the problem, he will just ignore it because he is so specialized. He won't refer it."

"The use of welfare may result from peoples' inputs... that is, it is a function of paying taxes."

"Some people are poor because they find welfare more convenient."

"There are now fifth and sixth generation people on welfare. It's perpetuating poverty."

"It's the old thing about building an empire...We have gone so far out of the way to help these people. Look at our welfare system. There have always been poor, and there will always be poor, so what are we so concerned about?"

"If you are on welfare, then in strictly an economic sense people lose money by going to work."

"Welfare dole programs take away all incentive."

"I overheard an ADC mother talking to one of her friends just the other day, and her friend was so pleased with herself. She said, 'Well, I've got it made now, I'm on welfare!'"

Response
Sub-Category

Response

welfare
(cont.)

"Our welfare dole system is too easy and it makes people lazy."

"People depend on welfare and they can't break loose."

"I think as far as welfare is concerned, we are simply making people dependent on us. How can they improve? Why should they? How can they get better if we encourage them to take handouts from us?"

"A person would have to be a complete idiot not to go on welfare if he is eligible. He's making a rational choice. Once on, what motivation is there to get off?"

"By improving the situation of one type of poverty you may well increase the other type of poverty."

Systemic
Uniformity,
general
function of
the system

"There are circumstances over which they have little control."

"The poor are social failures in the eyes of the larger society...self-fulfilling phrophecy."

"We don't see the needs of the poor as important."

"Poor have no or low political impact...because we make sure they don't have any."

"The poor will always be poor because they are considered worthless...most of society sees the poor in this light based on Biblical foundations."

"Choices are at a minimum because we limit their choices for them."

"Poverty may well result from a cluttered society... there are too many alternatives, too many choices."

"The System"

"Society is the cause of poverty. We are payed on the basis of output, we have a built-in competetive structure, and all people cannot compete."

"A lot of people are locked into jobs that don't let a person adjust to new possibilities."

Response
Sub-Category

Response

function of
the system
(cont.)

"Business and industry modernization means reduction in the number of jobs available."

"If we expect a person to behave in a certain way, then pretty soon he is going to behave in that way."

"There are obviously forces over which those people have no control."

"Don't we always have a low income group in our society?"

"The system has too many obstacles. There is a lot of stuff, for example, to go through just to hire these people. Do you think a low-income person is going to wait around that long? The applications were sent in in December and we are still waiting for word. This is very frustrating to the person seeking employment."

"...as a result of technological advancement."

"Poverty may be maintained by refusing to help because of red tape."

"Poverty is related to job esteem. There is a relationship between the esteem level of a job and a person's willingness to perform that job."

"A lot have become militant because they can see other things, especially things that they can't get because we haven't shared with them."

"Poverty is the result of a system which creates poverty."

"...a poor education excludes the possibility for better jobs."

"The work ethic has made us 'work-a-holics...maybe there are other concepts of work we should be thinking about."

"...money intended for the poor gets bound up in institutions."

Systemic,
by oppression

"Deprivation is a verb in the sense that we deprive them."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Systemic, by oppression (cont.) | "Because they are deprived, alternatives or choices become fewer and fewer." |
| | "They can't get hold because they are so frustrated... by being deprived." |
| | "Society has no conscience. What they do they do for political expediency." |
| | "The poor are oppressed." |
| | "Those who are wealthy tend to push the less wealthy backwards." |
| | "Capitalist system works because it relies on exploitation." |
| | "The poor are excluded." |
| | "Poverty may be imposed." |
| | "Our own value systems are imposed on others by determining what is good." |
| | "I criticize a system which structures itself in such a way as to declare elements within that system as poor." |
| | "What are the Symbionese Liberation Army and the Hearst experience telling us about our society and what we are doing to people?" |
| | "Fortunes have been amassed always at the expense of other people." |
| | "People whom we see as 'lazy,' 'no good,' etc., are simply displaced people." |
| | "Poverty could also be due to a lack of options which may be imposed." |
| | "Our national goals have urged us to use people in order to develop our resources, and it has not let us consider people as a resource." |
| | "Poverty is not something one chooses to be in...people are generally forced into it." |

Response
Sub-Category

Response

oppression
(cont.)

"A lot of these people have been beaten down and they just can't make it on their own."

Systemic,
value
re-prior-
itization

"...larger society's priority of values."

"Poverty is a function of our value system. By placing less important values higher on our priority scale we increase the differences between ourselves and other groups. This may explain why a poverty person lives in the present."

"With these factors coupled with very rapid inflation and the inability to meet rising secondary needs, more and more people are beginning to think they are poor."

"We have become a waste oriented society. We have become a society more concerned with meeting extraneous needs."

"Poverty is a result of driving up secondary needs into a high priority area."

"Our social system is so concerned with meeting secondary needs, a kind of warped attitude toward what is important and what is unimportant has developed."

"Our luxury society has driven up the level of our needs."

"Secondary needs have become priority needs."

"...the placement of certain lower values in higher places...the propensity for the poor to fill secondary needs before basic needs."

Systemic,
economic
forces and
functions

"The economic system has become too tight."

"Everyone just can't make top dollar."

"What good will it do to try harder, there's not enough money to go around anyway."

Response
Sub-Category

Response

economic
forces and
functions
(cont.)

"Too much money is going into business and industry profits...With that much money they ought to be able to funnel more into human development."

"They just can't get hold of the economic tail...it eludes them."

"Deprivation does have an economic aspect...because the economic tail constantly eludes them."

"Economic forces leave them behind and they cannot tie into them."

"Low wages are the prostitution of the poor."

"People can also become trapped by economic circumstances."

"loss of employment"

"The present economic situation may be causing two things: despondency, which leads to poverty, and challenges and opportunity."

"It also results from an agitation force...agitation force is the struggle between competing forces seeking wealth."

"...because they don't have the resources, they have slow social ability."

"...due to...social and economic circumstances."

Attributed poverty "to basically economic circumstances."

"economic forces...economic ignorance...over-indulgence."

"Poverty is a negative gain economic situation."

"...over-abundance of money."

"...inflation..."

"...income..."

"...easy credit."

Response
Sub-Category

Response

economic
forces and
functions
(cont.)

"Poverty is a function of where you are both economically and socially."

"...economic fluctuations."

"There are limited numbers of pieces of the economic and social pie. The pie is only so large and it can be cut only so many ways."

"...not having enough resources to meet basic needs and not having enough resources to grow and develop" because they have been denied.

"Poverty is the absence of functional adequacy...what it takes to exist...there are limited numbers of pieces of the economic pie."

"If you have more you get more. If you have less you get less."

"Economic circumstances of today, such as the tendency toward big business, governmental controls of and all kinds of strictures that control business movement, precludes the possibility of raising yourself out of poverty."

"...in some ways economic circumstances cause poverty."

Systemic
Heterogeneity

"Our system...demands a willingness to work so that if he won't or can't work he will not be able to reap the benefits from the system."

"These are people who through no fault of their own are poor."

"...some kind of natural disaster or physical disaster or old age, and because society excludes them from their share of the pie."

"Because of race many have simply not had the necessary resources for generations."

Characterized by "immobility because other (i.e. outside) circumstances preclude upward mobility."

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------|---|
| Heterogeneity (cont.) | <p data-bbox="446 346 1356 409">"...lack of education...education is not available to a lot of minorities."</p> <p data-bbox="446 441 1356 514">"Churches are the most segregated institutions...and segregation causes poverty."</p> <p data-bbox="446 546 847 577">"This is a caste system."</p> <p data-bbox="446 609 1356 703">"Christian education causes poverty, that is, the Jews, Blacks and others, have been persecuted because Christianity teaches them to do it..."</p> <p data-bbox="446 735 1356 808">"Poor lack social mobility...usually because of race or who they are."</p> <p data-bbox="446 840 1356 913">"White Anglo Protestant ethic is highly individualistic and competitive."</p> <p data-bbox="446 945 1232 976">"Hippy cults may be a revolt against the system."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1008 1356 1081">"They (i.e. Whites) want to impose their values (on other people), and that's sick."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1113 1356 1228">"The poor are really the Whites because the Whites want to operate in their culture and they want others to function within their culture, and they don't accept other cultures."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1260 1356 1333">"Hippies are living a kind of self-imposed poverty and they may be trying to say something to us."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1365 1356 1438">"Whites operate on a non-reciprocal basis. We relate to other people on our terms only."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1470 1356 1543">"Rural poverty exists because a lot of farmers have been willing to support an itinerate population."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1575 1047 1606">"...because they are senior citizens."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1638 1278 1669">"Senior citizens are poor because of fixed incomes."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1701 1356 1774">"Farming here is a hobby enterprise and in many instances is becoming a poverty enterprise."</p> <p data-bbox="446 1806 1356 1887">"A lot of people are wage earners who are trying to do nominal farming at a negative profit. This has driven them into a kind of poverty."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|--------------------------|--|
| Heterogeneity (cont.) | <p>"Maybe the melting pot dream is a myth."</p> <p>"A lot of these people have been given that kind of life because society is intolerant of their cultural uniquenesses."</p> <p>"...discrimination...We deprive certain people of the opportunity to get ahead."</p> <p>"Racism is a factor too."</p> <p>"Sex is certainly a factor."</p> <p>"...because of cultural misunderstandings between groups."</p> <p>"Ethnic groups with cultural differences are not tolerated by society."</p> <p>"...fixed income."</p> <p>"...old age and fixed income."</p> <p>"Technological requirements for agricultural production is instrumental in labor reductions so a skill previously valued is no longer valued."</p> <p>"Cultural circumstances (of the poor) are inconsistent with standards set by a predominant society."</p> <p>"Society is not empathetic culturally...There is little cultural sensitivity to differences between groups."</p> <p>"Society is insensitive to the problems of those groups."</p> <p>"Our social system has moved ahead and has judged groups within itself on its own terms."</p> <p>"The development and utilization of resources has unfortunately forced us to manipulate people in the management of those resources. We have generally not considered those very people as a resource in and of themselves."</p> <p>"Society is very pluralistic...There is no melting pot ...all groups are not making it."</p> |

| Response Sub-Category | Response |
|----------------------------|--|
| Heterogeneity (cont.) | <p>"Revolutionary groups may reflect how some of these people are feeling caught and frustrated. Maybe the system is not working as it should."</p> <p>"Disparity between one group and another group may lead to frustrations."</p> <p>"...smaller farms are under-financed and nobody wants to take them on. They are high risk."</p> <p>"...older people on limited incomes."</p> |
| Unclassified statements | <p>"Nutrition affects your psychological bearing."</p> <p>"Nutrition can cause lower IQs."</p> <p>"problem of attitudinal poverty is nutritional."</p> <p>"Nutrition is important to success in life, and if you don't eat right you won't live right."</p> <p>"There are those who are poor because of circumstances beyond their control, say for instance, due to poor health..."</p> <p>"poor health"</p> <p>"...victims of circumstance."</p> <p>"...misfortune...circumstantial kinds of things that happen from time to time."</p> <p>"Others are there because of circumstances like illness or accident."</p> <p>"...natural types of disasters, like weather, illness, and so on."</p> <p>"...hard luck, natural disaster, sickness and so on."</p> <p>"Some people are forced into poverty because of health conditions."</p> |

APPENDIX II

STATEMENTS BY INFORMANTS ON SOLUTIONS TO
POVERTY CLASSIFIED BY SUB-CATEGORIES

Response
Sub-Category

Response

Bootstrap,
to hell with
them

"We have over-protected people through public assistance programs."

"When all else fails then kick them out and let them ride the rails. There will always be that two or three percent who can't do any better. To hell with them."

"How do you get to these people?" (because they) "won't heed" his "advice," are "argumentative," etc.

"Sterilize all (poor) parents and take away their kids so we could change them...Youth would then have an even chance...But I suppose we really couldn't do that."

"You cannot move them out of their present situation into a new situation because they will just return to their old way of life."

"We are going to have to exclude the very poor because we must design our programs to reach the mean (in statistical sense) group."

"This thing can be broken out of by higher intelligent kids."

"They need to feel good about themselves, so they can help themselves rather than expecting help all the time."

"...mandatory sterilization."

"Poverty is something like an illness and they need treatment."

"Health programs create too much dependency...The state of Oregon, for example, provides all medical care and that is security that many people on welfare do not want to give up."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--|--|
| to hell with them (cont.) | <p>"We try too hard to include the poor in these programs ...I mean, they're just going to be that way no matter what we do."</p> <p>"People will live in poverty all their lives, but there is not much we can do about that."</p> <p>"...money doesn't answer the problem...more the mismanagement of money...For example, Indians in this country have sold their land and have received large sums of money. And yet the Indians continue to live in poverty."</p> |
| Bootstrap, self-reliance and pride | <p>"It would be interesting to see what would happen if we canned all help programs except for those who are physically disabled or too old and see what would happen. I'll bet a lot of asses would get into gear quick."</p> <p>"We should make them work."</p> <p>"Anyone requiring public assistance should receive only two minimum essentials: adequate food and adequate shelter. Beyond this they must work for what they get."</p> <p>"Our system works because it is competitive, and this demands a willingness to work."</p> <p>"...pride is a good sign."</p> <p>"Retraining programs are in order for these people. They will accept help if it isn't a dole (i.e., the truly impoverished)."</p> <p>"Programs will benefit them if they are designed to help those who help themselves."</p> <p>"These people have pride and willingness to improve if we give them the opportunities."</p> <p>"We should provide training if they want it or will use it."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

self-reliance
and pride
(cont.)

"I'd get rid of all those goddamn laws that prohibit people from working, like that most recent 'fair labor law'."

"The welfare system must be changed. It creates too much dependency...they need to learn the value of work."

"...programs should be designed to teach them confidence since that is what they lack...that, and the ability to work."

"I think the churches' way of solving the problem is no good because it's a give-away program."

"I've had too much contact with these people and have been frustrated too much to be involved in some kind of give-away program."

Use "all lawful and moral teeth to make people work."

"They need pride."

"They need to assume responsibility."

"The only way you are going to get something is to do it yourself, but they need encouragement."

"We need to establish rewards thereby inducing motivation" to work.

"A person who is mentally healthy can do almost anything he wants to."

"Training is essential to make them self-reliant and self-supporting."

"You give a man a fish and he'll starve to death. Teach him to fish and he'll never starve."

"We must have a return of the old pioneer spirit."

"Re-orient policy to emphasize self-determination." (In the sense that "the pioneer spirit" needs to be regenerated.)

"We should provide more help for child care so parents can work."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| self-reliance and pride (cont.) | <p>"Poverty has a lot to do with self-image. So we need to help them see that they can improve their state of mind if they let us, and if they realize that they have the ability if they are willing to work at it."</p> <p>"I suppose we need to continue to provide them with subsistence money, but they sure need to work!"</p> <p>"Financial assistance should be accompanied by counseling to make them less reliant on others and more self-reliant."</p> <p>"The people in ----- county think that if a person is physically able to work, then there is work to be found in the county and they should do that."</p> <p>"We are on the verge of new opportunities by current situations forcing on us alternative life styles which may be a return to a traditional way of life that has been removed further and further from our existence."</p> <p>"We ought to bring back the old CCC concept, where everyone had the chance to work, and they did things for the community too."</p> <p>"It takes a lot of extra effort."</p> <p>"I'd like to encourage the kind of hustling I knew when I was a kid."</p> <p>"Education seems to be the answer, but it is such a slow process. We need to be more vocationally oriented in the schools. A lot of kids are not motivated toward college, and our educational system needs to recognize that and accommodate that."</p> <p>"Change the reason for the resentment many middle-class people have toward the poor because of abuses in the welfare program...get them to work for their welfare."</p> <p>"Self-reliance is a very important value leading to self-sufficiency."</p> <p>"The outputs of any welfare system must equal the inputs."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

self-reliance
and pride
(cont.)

"...work ethic...Current welfare programs are more hindrance than help...These programs need to make people self-sufficient, they should work for their assistance if they are able to. We have got to abolish the dole."

"Our objective should be to not let anyone go on public welfare" since one should only get from a situation what they put into it. These giveaways are not helping."

"Even if a recipient of some welfare program is 90 years old, if they are able to perform the job, no matter how small, they are required to do it in order to receive welfare goods."

"If the dole was abolished and people were put in a situation where they had to work for what they get, society would be much better off."

"Work is accomplishment and should be re-emphasized."

"...re-enthroned work as a motivating force."

"Some of the public assistance programs are reasonably good, but ill advised because they discourage work."

"...work experience programs."

"We should make them all work for their welfare payments."

"The welfare dole system is too easy. I would make them all go out and dig a ditch for their benefits...I would make them work for what they get from the government."

"I would go back to the old CC and WPA programs because they make a man proud...There is pride in work. Doesn't the Bible teach that?"

"We should be helping people help themselves, just like we are supposed to be doing in the Extension Service. We've got to quit doing everything for them."

"They need to see they can do better with what they have if they simply try."

Response
sub-category

Response

self-reliance
and pride
(cont.)

"We must change their behavior patterns, we must re-habilitate them. But once that is done they must carry the load on their own."

"...help the poor apply for jobs."

"Existing programs such as welfare, ADC and RISE can be more viable than they are. We don't need a give-away system where people can count on getting something for nothing."

"Any helping program must be of a self-help nature. I have never solved a person's problem for him, and I don't think I ever could. He's got to do it for himself."

"The poor need to feel they are making a contribution, even though that contribution may not be in some production line."

"They've got to have moxy. They've got to have the drive to identify their problem."

"We'll help those who help themselves...If you give a man a fish he'll eat for a day; if you teach him to fish, he'll feed himself all the time."

"These people are not going to let us forget they are being left out. But they need to put something into the system."

"...and in the absence of motivation we need to provide at least a subsistence living, but beyond that people should be encouraged to work."

"Work plus a welfare stipend, to help out, may beat sitting on his butt and being totally unproductive."

"No matter what we do nothing will help some of these people. They are just not able to do it, that is, pull themselves out."

"Money should not be given without some contribution in return."

"...he is trying to pull himself up."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| self-reliance and pride (cont.) | <p>"How do you motivate these people? I don't know, unless you could show them how to do it. It is very frustrating to try and show people what they need to do to better their own situation."</p> <p>"The Extension role is perhaps to get people motivated to use the resources they do have."</p> <p>"She has been able to pull herself out of poverty. If she could, then I know others can do it."</p> <p>"What we need is the return of the WPA program...I don't think anyone should get something for nothing."</p> |
| Bootstrap, particular- istic | <p>"We should go back to the idea of families assuming responsibility for each other...children for parents and parents for children."</p> <p>"Spend more money finding husbands who abandon their families and make them support their own."</p> <p>"Don't pawn them off on the public. Let their own family support them."</p> <p>"Somehow we must motivate the poor families to motivate their kids."</p> <p>"It is not fair to parents to lead their kids for them. Poor parents should assume responsibility for their own 4-H clubs."</p> <p>"Concentrate on the younger people" in order to break the "cycle of poverty."</p> <p>"Programs should be designed to work with parents. Parents in a deprived condition abuse their kids because parents are uptight, and if you can deal psychiatrically with that uptightness you will be helping the youth."</p> <p>"Kids are important. They may not consider that there is anything that they can really do about it."</p> <p>"I like the Job Corps program. Every youngster needs the opportunity for that kind of experience."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

particular-
istic (cont.)

"We are going to have to come up with some way to give children at least a good family experience...May have to go to an artificial family experience. I'm sure we can't take the kids from their parents, but we have to do something...I wonder if the day will ever come when in order to have a child a couple must first meet specific requirements."

RISE was criticized "because women were asked to participate" as opposed to taking their own initiative "and we had to provide everything to the participants in terms of transportation, babysitting, etc. I didn't think we had to go that far to help them."

"Food stamps are bad because the programs are demoralizing to people who really need them (he referred, e.g., to hostilities those on food stamps feel from store patrons)."

"I am optimistic about our society because we are on the verge of a new kind of frontier. Perhaps we can become a more programmed society where tests are given before marriage, before the conception of children."

"The way to solve the problem of poverty is to forget about it."

If offered the job of setting poverty policy, "I would refuse the job" because poverty is predestined to be.

"...as long as he is enjoying life...he is happy...Let him stay there."

"The whole key is motivation. We somehow need to motivate people to get out of poverty. I think we need to aim at younger kids. Older people are pretty much set in their ways."

"Culture of
poverty"
universal,
situational
change

"We must open some gates and help them go through them as we can."

"Some people become freaked out and are in need of psychiatric help."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|----------------------------------|--|
| situational change (cont.) | "Provide them with leadership opportunities and experiences." |
| | "When you've got an environment that limits you, you must be given other visions, you must be incited to move up." |
| | "People are not going to change until they want to change, and until they see alternative environments, they won't want to change." |
| | "Get them to assume responsibility. Get them involved in planning. Get them to assume leadership...Hopefully, they can then break out of their environment." |
| | "The equalizer in this situation is exposure to other experiences outside their environment." |
| | "...expand their perceptions of their environment." |
| | "Current poverty programs are stratified by race. That is a mistake. They should be broader in approach." |
| | "The main key, I believe, is to make people feel useful, to make them feel a part of things." |
| | "We need some universal values that will help a person move from one community to another without too much difficulty." |
| | "We must work through existing structures, we should work through the system. We should try to work to get these people into the system." |
| | "I would initiate...a program with broad coverage of a general nature. These would be programs dealing with acute poverty and can be dealt with more generally. These programs should be pretty much the same since the problems are universal." |
| | "The value system of the poverty group must change...If we want to change those people we have to start with their value systems." |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---|---|
| "Culture of poverty" universal, education | "If people have an equal opportunity to succeed they will succeed, but they may need some help in learning how to go about getting what it is they need." |
| | "consumer protection...consumer education." |
| | "Provide sewing classes...Household skills development." |
| | "That people be given basic nutrition education in order to make the best of what they have." |
| | "I'd give all poverty money to the Extension Service and use the Extension philosophy...help those who help themselves...involve in the decision making process." |
| | "Education seems to be the key." |
| | "The function of the Extension Service is to be a catalyst." |
| | "Provide training programs to improve vocational and social skills." |
| | "Increase employability." |
| | "Schools have made many mistakes such as limiting vocational skills. That needs to be changed." |
| | "We need to develop (vocational) skills on the part of these people." |
| | "It is hard to break out of poverty but it can be done...Knowledge is the primary ingredient." |
| | "Educational completion requirements should be standardized." |
| | "If I had the resources I'd tend to go toward the education side with emphasis on teaching skills." |
| | "...increase homemaking skills." |
| | "Different skills are required today, and retraining programs are not in tune with technological change." |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--------------------------|---|
| education (cont.) | <p>"We need fast moving educational programs in vocational training."</p> <p>"Yes, education is the key, coupled with environmental improvements. How can you do one without the other?"</p> <p>"I guess we can't really improve the physical environment. Urban renewal, for instance, has demonstrated that poor habits continue regardless of new housing. In just a couple of years new housing is run down. We've got to educate them."</p> <p>"People do not have the facts as to how to get out of poverty, and so we need to educate them."</p> <p>"...Extension way and 4-H way are very important, and the methods that we use here have applicability in dealing with poverty."</p> <p>"...programs of an educational nature."</p> <p>"I also think we need more educational programs where we can tool people up to get out on their own."</p> <p>"Informational meetings on opportunities and helps available to the poor would be very useful."</p> <p>"Resource management is a very important educational need."</p> <p>"Any vocational skills program should use an integrated approach...that is, vocational educators need to be skilled also in sociological areas, so that vocational training programs carry with them a concomitant educational program with speaks to individual, social and cultural and psychological needs."</p> <p>"Any kind of trade program must be accompanied by other educational programs (which deal with psych-social problems) and it must be an integrated approach."</p> <p>"...more important we need people within the program to implement the kinds of educational programs I'm talking about...that is, an integrated psych-social approach."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---|---|
| "Culture of poverty" relativistic, situational response | "...perhaps we could get some good programs if we could get rid of these conservative people. It's really bad!" |
| | 'Diversity of interests is important for some people in stemming poverty.' |
| | "What excites you? What appeals to you? To eliminate poverty we are going to have to find something that turns them on." |
| | "We must help people find their nich in society and be content with that. Keeping up with the Joneses leads only to frustration." |
| | "Any program should be considered in the context of the group, family, or person. The people in question must be involved...That is the only way we can make them a useful part of this society." |
| | "We must draw the best from the bad that we can and we must do it in their situation." |
| | "You have to start where they are." |
| | "We try to mold people, but instead we should try to accentuate their talents, their values. We can both contribute to and learn from these people." |
| | "The Rural Development Act could do some good if monies were released to help stop the migration to the cities." |
| | "Maybe we need a kind of Agricultural Corps." |
| | "There ought to be some way to funnel kids into solving the problems confronting our society; activities and experiences that turn them on." |
| | "We should spend more money on the youth. This may be a hopeful key to breaking the cycle of poverty." |
| | "We need experienced people to head our poverty program, people sensitive to the problems of the poverty groups, and responsive." |
| | "Decisions about poverty have been made without consulting those in poverty." |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---|--|
| "Culture of poverty" relativistic, education | "I would try to get youth into career training programs in order to give them broader exposure to possibilities outside their small environment." |
| | "Some basic educational programs should be introduced into the school system." |
| | "A Chicano did better both in school and early adulthood because the local school system went out of its way to help him." |
| | "I would concentrate on the Peace Corps concept in this country." |
| | "You should help the youth see how other people live. Kids might then be motivated." |
| | "I criticize schools for not having vocational training..." |
| | "The Headstart program is the best federal program we have." |
| | "If I had the money I would put it into the schools, especially the first few grades. I would pay these teachers the highest salaries." |
| | "...education of the youth and young mothers especially." |
| | "It is essential to get at the children in these cases (education)." |
| "Another type of program policy should deal with specific vocational areas by geographic region. These programs should fit specific job needs so that the training would be most useful." | |
| "Culture of poverty" relativistic, one-to-one | "One-to-one relationship with those in poverty will provide them with the opportunity to capture a vision beyond their environment...such as, the Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)." |
| | "The deprived are the people who need special attention." |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--------------------------|---|
| one-to-one (cont.) | <p>A program "can't be here today and gone tomorrow. The program must be continuing; it must be in-depth; it must be progressive; it must be one-to-one."</p> <p>"...individualized and individualistic programs."</p> <p>"...one-to-one framework is highly time consuming, but it is apt to reap the greatest rewards."</p> <p>"We must have human-ness (i.e., personal-ness) as a part of these programs."</p> <p>"Maybe we should design a policy which would ask people to go in there (poverty areas), who were once poor themselves, to relate to them on a one-to-one basis."</p> <p>"By going in on a one-to-one basis we can give them a vision beyond their own little situation."</p> <p>"People need people they can trust--and I don't think the poor can trust us, nor do we trust the poor."</p> <p>"Relate to them on a one-to-one basis."</p> <p>"We need to work with them on a one-to-one basis to develop more positive attitudes and skills, and to increase their understanding and use of resources."</p> <p>"...four steps. Each successive step happens only after the previous step fails. First, treat the individual on a one-to-one basis (counseling); next, involve the whole family in some kind of fruitful enterprise. The recipient reciprocates by working and contributing to the welfare function of the...Third, we call on a quorum, a group of people who work with them, try to straighten things out. Finally, as a last resort, we use the welfare services program. The needs are met, but every able-bodied person is required to work for what they get."</p> <p>"I believe in para-professionals...people hired from the target audience...especially part time para-professionals."</p> <p>"Poverty must be assessed and responded to on a one-to-one basis."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

one-to-one
(cont.)

"Conditions are best affected by people like ----- who go out and work with the poor on a one-to-one basis."

"We need to identify people from that strata to train them and let them teach the others how to help themselves...like EFNEP."

Systemic
revisionist
broad,
general

"Encourage business and industry to take an active role in providing jobs, in providing social opportunities, in providing encouragement...they need help in changing their environment."

"We as a society lack altruism, the desire to help the deprived."

"We need to provide services that will be taken advantage of."

"We must think in terms of human rights, not civil rights."

"Success may be possible if they are given an opportunity...we as a society have not been too responsive."

"Poverty is a slow and painful process to resolve because it involves so much of society."

"We must do more with less so others can share..."

"I am talking about a value revolution in our society."
(regarding value-needs re-orientation)

"Increase employment opportunities."

"We need a revision of our value system."

"It's obvious we need some kind of work role value re-orientation. This specialization of jobs is really causing problems."

"What we need is economic education so that people are aware of the economic forces at work at the same time as any economic revision. They need to know how to take advantage of and how to guard against certain things."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--|--|
| general (cont.) | <p>"This economic educational process should take place in the grade school system."</p> <p>"...educational facility equalization in both qualitative and physical facility capabilities."</p> <p>"We need to upgrade the esteem of many jobs...make jobs available."</p> <p>"...develop new job opportunities...everyone can't have a production job but we could develop jobs that would make them feel useful."</p> <p>"For people who need welfare, I'm all for it."</p> <p>"I accept welfare programs, I think, as necessary."</p> <p>"We can't think of work in a production sense only, but society should provide other means of self-expression."</p> <p>"The pie is only so large...we can no longer think in terms of full employment for everybody. It's just impossible."</p> <p>"Feelings of self worth may be shorn up when they are given a chance to express their own abilities...which is to say they need opportunities for work."</p> <p>"Somehow we must increase employment opportunities."</p> |
| Systemic revisionist broad, self- determination | <p>"There is need for social change."</p> <p>"The poor must become unified."</p> <p>"If people could come together they could become a powerful social force."</p> <p>"If poor people could get together they could get more."</p> <p>"It boils down to the needy versus the greedy."</p> <p>"self-determination"</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

self-
determination
(cont.)

"There's a lot of militancy today. Maybe that can be channeled into constructive enterprises. But they are really suspicious of us and getting rapport would be a difficult but necessary first step."

Systemic
revisionist
broad,
institutional

"I would evaluate programs on how they help the poor and not on how the money was spent."

"Change the distribution patterns. Take the money away from the administrators and give it to the poor."

"Current programs only pacify the poor."

"Why don't poor agencies distribute resources direct so we can make more efficient use of them."

"Reallocate money that is aimed at the poor. Most monies are now going to administrative services, with less and less money reaching the poor directly."

"People have a right to expect a little of life that society can provide."

"Perhaps we would not need welfare if we had some kind of a guaranteed annual income."

"We might be able to increase equality by cutting tax loopholes."

"The welfare system should be changed. For example, when a youth goes to work the money they earn is deducted from the family welfare check. Usually that youngster ends up turning over a great part of his check to the family, and that is expensive in terms of frustration to the youngster."

"We need to involve business and industry rather than government in providing jobs."

"As it is now the money for the poor is pumped into the organization, more so than toward the people."

"If you can resolve the problem of agency cooperation it would be great in helping those in poverty live a more comfortable life."

Response
sub-category

Response

institutional
(cont.)

"We need to re-orient our poverty programs, but I certainly wouldn't add any new agencies. Coordinate existing agency work and make it more efficient."

"The red tape in our bureaucratic system limits help."

"Existing help programs are somewhat restrictive because of the compartmentalization of the agencies with which I work. We need a consolidation and coordination of agency effort for those in poverty."

"There is need for greater emphasis on public health. Health care is also a basic human right."

"I think a guaranteed annual income is essential. We need to send the money directly to the poor."

"We need a minimum income because it doesn't seem right for such a small segment of society to have so much money and others to have so little."

"A welfare system is justified because people are not paid according to their abilities in society. For example, a farmer who works 16 hours a day is terribly underpaid compared to an attorney, who in terms of physical effort--and sometimes mental effort--is highly overpaid."

"A welfare system must provide essential needs because that is a basic human right."

"Income redistribution doesn't work because the money goes to people who already have money and not to those who need the money because our institutional and social structures are such that this is the normal flow route."

"The situation can be changed easiest by altering the flow of money rather than how the money is used. I think it would be easier to pump more money into the situation than to rearrange the money that is already there."

"We need to pour a lot of federal money into those areas in order to affect their levels of income because income is really the core problem."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--|--|
| Systemic revisionist, particular | <p>"Improve job levels. This is hard to do if all you can do is get the lowest form of work." (Within the context of the acutely poor, those who are identifiable by ethnic origin.)</p> |
| | <p>"Teach them skills but employ them at the same time." (Within the context of the acutely poor, those who are identifiable by ethnic origin.)</p> |
| | <p>"Somehow we need to relate to the poor at their level. I doubt that they can relate to us."</p> |
| | <p>"We are payed on the basis of out-put, we have a built-in competitive structure and all people cannot compete. We need instead self-competition, self-motivation."</p> |
| | <p>"We need to operate within their value system, not ours."</p> |
| | <p>"They can, and should be allowed to, create their own jobs."</p> |
| | <p>"Let them identify their solutions within their abilities and their talents."</p> |
| | <p>"We need to learn from each other and capture the best of both in order to benefit as a total society."</p> |
| | <p>"We cannot evaluate people from the other side of the wall."</p> |
| | <p>"It is necessary to identify with the people who are saying they are poverty stricken. We must equate with them."</p> |
| | <p>"I really can't set up a poverty program because I don't know what they want, what they think, what their needs are."</p> |
| | <p>"The worst thing you can do is put into effect a program without the knowledge of the people affected by it."</p> |
| | <p>"Let people do their own thing and we will help them as constructively as possible to do the things that they consider valuable."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

particular
(cont.)

"Kids are really generous, who are poor, and we need to learn from that. In fact, it may be that we can learn from each other, and that may be part of both problem and solution."

"Let me walk a mile in my brothers moccasins before I criticize him."

"We should determine social uniquenesses within groups before we help them...We are very inefficient at this point because we spend money without knowing what problems we are attacking."

"The social system was insensitive to cultural uniquenesses and consequently the helping programs were an absolute bust. (Referring to Canadian government's attempt to help a British Columbia provincial tribe.) The message is clear enough for us."

"We must deal with it (poverty) from the framework of their perceptions."

"Man should be strong and soft at the same time." (i.e., he should assert his individualism but at the same time be sensitive to individual and group differences)

"Each community should set their own goals."

"Each community should look at itself. Programs should be geared to the individual needs and opportunities of those communities. Each community should achieve a humanistic sense."

"Every living being is a manager of resources and himself as a resource. We need an ethical system consistent with that concept."

"Many communities existing within larger communities is important. That kind of living together is really beneficial. We can learn from each other."

"What we need to do is identify personal goals."

Response
sub-category

Response

particular
(cont.)

"But should we really attempt to change their value systems? This is a social question. We consider the country to be a melting pot. Maybe we shouldn't try to mold them into one pot."

"The agent working with a poverty group must realize that he is the most ignorant one of the group because he does not understand that group's problems. For those problems to be understood that group will have to express them."

APPENDIX III

STATEMENTS BY INFORMANTS ON DEFINITIONS OF
POVERTY CLASSIFIED BY SUB-CATEGORIES

| Response sub-category | Response |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Absolute | <p>"A person who is above society's minimum standard for poverty, who claims to be in poverty, is not in poverty."</p> <p>"Maximum poverty is that minimum set by society."</p> <p>"I tend to view the poor as a little lower than the standard definition." (i.e., thinks the current standard may be too high)</p> |
| Absolute, a la welfare | <p>"All those who live on public assistance are those who don't work, are lazy and who expect something for nothing. Those people are really not poor because welfare gives them everything they need."</p> <p>"The really poor are those who cannot exist without outside assistance. They people are in a situation they can't get out of through their own efforts."</p> <p>"Those people on public assistance don't know what real poverty is, they are not poor at all."</p> <p>"There is a difference between people who are naturally poor and those on public assistance. People on welfare have become secure and comfortable in that situation."</p> <p>"...those who are on welfare."</p> |
| Absolute a la basic necessities | <p>"Poverty is a social and economic condition." "Each feeds on the other so that people are deprived those basic essentials for an adequate life."</p> <p>"Someone in poverty is someone without good health, without the necessities of life, without the mental facilities to function properly."</p> |

Response
sub-category

Response

a la basic
necessities
(cont.)

"A man is in poverty if he does not have what he considers to be the basic needs, like food, shelter and clothing."

"Poverty is substandard housing, improper diet and inadequate clothing."

"Real poverty is the absence of food to provide basic nourishment."

"Poverty is being in a situation where you cannot meet your basic needs."

"And there is poverty of the body."

"Poverty is not having enough to meet the basic needs, and not having enough resources to grow and develop."

"Poverty is more a physical thing in that basic needs are not being met."

Absolute,
a la
economics

"Poverty is both an economic and social problem."

"Poverty is not having the resources, or money, necessary to maintain an adequate standard of living."

"Low income people."

"Those who are economically poor:" "have a great deal of pride and are willing to manage the resources they have or are given to them," "have a positive attitude," "have a sense of pride and are willing to work," "economically disadvantaged," "willing to make do with what they have," "they seek alternatives," "will help their youngsters as opposed to real poverty who won't," "able to break out of poverty eventually," "hold same values as middle-class society, i.e., independence, self-reliance," "higher sense of motivation."

"Poverty is deprivation."

"Deprivation came in a flash...I understand deprivation in both economic and in terms of mind."

"There is economic poverty."

| Response sub-category | Response |
|------------------------------|---|
| a la economics (cont.) | <p>"I do not see poverty necessarily in dollars and cents I see it in terms of resources."</p> <p>"Many senior citizens represent one kind of poverty because they live on fixed incomes. However, most of these people do not see themselves as being in poverty."</p> <p>"People can be poor with an over-abundance of money."</p> <p>"Income is part of the problem, but it is more. It is lack of education."</p> <p>"...where people actually need subsistence support."</p> <p>"Poverty is a position where people have insufficient resources to function adequately in society."</p> <p>"Poverty is an aspect of the lives of individuals and families that meet the necessary income to meet the average needs for a subsistence standard of living. Poverty may be defined as the absence of such resources that result from a lack of the educational ability to use resources. I'm talking about the mismanagement of resources; those who don't know how to use resources or who spend money foolishly, or who squander their money."</p> <p>"Poverty is more a financial limitation."</p> <p>"Poverty is the absence of functional adequacy...what it takes to exist." (i.e., is monetary, extra-physical things)</p> <p>"...is more of financial limitation."</p> <p>"So poverty is not having the necessary resources."</p> <p>"...although money is necessary for the material necessities of life."</p> <p>"...monetary standards."</p> <p>"The absence of money by which people can reach an adequate standard of living."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|----------------------------|---|
| a la economics (cont.) | <p>"There is situational poverty: those to whom normal oppo tunities are not available, such as, credit, housing, education, money, etc. Situational poverty is visible through their physical setting."</p> <p>"...older people on limited incomes."</p> |
| Absolute, by definition | <p>"Poverty may be a problem of definition. We may induce poverty by simply defining it."</p> <p>"We create poverty by setting artificial standards of living."</p> <p>"...poverty as a social function. That is, poverty is a result of definition by the larger society."</p> |
| Absolute, as a way of life | <p>"Poverty is a way of life, a life style."</p> <p>"Poverty is very ambiguous...it is having a low income, but more important, it is living conditions."</p> <p>"The urban poor are little more than animals."</p> <p>"Poverty is a kind of way of life."</p> <p>"Then there is the new generation of the poor. These are poeple who have opted for this kind of life. It is their choice."</p> <p>"There are also those to whom poverty is a way of life, like the migrant workers."</p> <p>"And there is the counter-culture which makes up about 15 percent of the total poor in the area. This is self-imposed poverty, which really isn't being poor at all."</p> <p>"Poverty exists within the state of family relationships."</p> <p>"It is the absence of roots."</p> <p>"...a way of life."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|----------------------------|---|
| way of life (cont.) | <p>"...acute, chronic poverty...people in that situation have no perception of options beyond their own environment."</p> <p>"The disadvantaged are a little different. I see these as people who are not taking advantage of the resources that they do have, and they are not growing due to situational factors."</p> <p>"Acute poverty is being stuck in that position because they can't or don't know how to get out."</p> <p>"We usually think of poverty in terms of money, but it includes other things such as general knowledge, knowing how to exist in a satisfying manner, knowledge of the community and state, how to vote, how to act, etc."</p> <p>"Poverty exists more in urban areas and Southeastern United States."</p> |
| Relative, state of mind | <p>"Poverty may be a social or attitude condition."</p> <p>"real poverty"</p> <p>"the attitude poor"</p> <p>"When help is given they generally refuse to participate."</p> <p>"plagued by a defeatist attitude": "What good will it do to try harder?"</p> <p>"Poverty is a state of mind. It is the feeling of hopelessness."</p> <p>"Those who are poor because of attitudes, who feel hopeless."</p> <p>"There is attitudinal poverty."</p> <p>"Poverty is more a state of mind. A lot of people who don't make much money don't consider themselves poor."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|----------------------------------|---|
| state of mind (cont.) | <p>"There is a poverty of the mind...A poverty mine-set which may fail to acknowledge people, or allows people to take advantage of other people or the system."</p> <p>"...social, psychological and mental condition of living."</p> <p>"Most people connect poverty with financial things, but I connect it with a state of mind."</p> <p>"...poverty is more attitude than financial."</p> <p>"Then there is what I'd call 'ideal' poverty. This is poverty that is all in a person's head. 'Ideal' poverty deals more with the relationship between a person's need levels and what he thinks his ability is to meet those needs."</p> <p>"It isn't necessarily a dollar level of income." (i.e., state of mind)</p> <p>"Poverty may be a state of mind, certainly more so than income level."</p> |
| Relative, a la perceptions | <p>"Poverty as defined by the welfare organizations is not adequate since it fails to cover the full scope of the problem."</p> <p>"Poverty is pretty difficult to define because many people don't know they are in poverty."</p> <p>"A hermit, on the other hand, who may have inadequate shelter, who may have little food and poor clothing, may not be in poverty if he can take care of himself."</p> <p>"Poverty is a relative kind of thing."</p> <p>"The question of poverty is difficult because poverty is relative to people."</p> <p>"How you define poverty depends on your perceptions."</p> <p>"A person who has a low income may not feel poor while a person who has a high income may feel despair."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--------------------------------|--|
| a la perceptions (cont.) | <p>"A person is poor only if he determines that he is poor."</p> <p>"The rural poor often do not consider themselves poor because they are self-reliant and ingenious."</p> <p>"One may be monetarily poor but not feel poor if his needs are being met."</p> <p>"Poverty is related to felt needs and expressed needs."</p> <p>"People who earn lots of money may feel deprived because of a state of mind, whereas some people with few financial resources may not consider themselves poor."</p> <p>"Poverty spans a much broader area than the government definition allows."</p> <p>"Poverty as officially defined is not really poverty."</p> <p>"...more and more people are beginning to think they are poor."</p> <p>"Poverty can be understood only in relation to the way people think and act. For example, I know kids who have everything and yet who are deprived."</p> <p>"It may be as hard for middle income class families who are caught in this inflationary spiral and who are really feeling the pinch as much as anybody else."</p> <p>"During my younger days in the depression I never knew I was poor. Nobody ever told me."</p> <p>"I do not agree with the official classification of poverty...Any consideration of poverty must include a minimum standard set by the individual."</p> <p>"Poverty as awareness"</p> <p>"How one feels about his particular situation."</p> <p>"Poverty may take several forms in different communities, each in a sense unique to that particular situation."</p> |

| Response sub-category | Response |
|--------------------------------|--|
| a la perceptions (cont.) | <p>"People can be in poverty who are above the official poverty threshold because they mismanage their resources.</p> <p>"Someone above or below the official poverty line may or may not in fact be in poverty."</p> <p>"What is poverty? Compared to what? We live in a comparative world, Rog, and I don't know how to relate to that question."</p> <p>"Do people feel they are being left out?"</p> <p>"The burden of the definition is on the individual."</p> <p>"If a person falls below the poverty line but doesn't think he is poor, then is he poor? I don't think so. If he falls above the poverty live, but thinks that he is poor, then is he poor? I think maybe he is."</p> <p>"If a person is relatively satisfied with his situation then he can't be poor."</p> <p>"A person with \$4000 annual income may be quite happy and doesn't want to change."</p> <p>"Our perception of poverty differed very much from the perception of those we thought were in poverty. They didn't think they were poor."</p> |

APPENDIX IV



May 18, 1974

John Doe
Oregon Extension Agent
County Courthouse
Oregon 97000

Dear John:

You will receive a letter within one week from Roger Fletcher, Extension Agent currently on sabbatical leave. He will solicit your cooperation in his research on the nature of poverty in Oregon. Roger will be asking you for an hour of your time to obtain information on the topic.

I support this research program. You are under no obligation to participate. I am convinced, however, that staff contributions to this research will be useful. Roger is addressing this letter on my behalf to insure your anonymity.

Sincerely,

Joe Cox
Director

skn

cc: Staff Chairman
District Supervisors



P.O. Box 506
Dallas, Oregon 97338
May 24, 1974

John Doe
Oregon Extension Agent
County Courthouse
Oregon 97331

Dear John:

As Joe Cox indicated in his letter to you a few days ago, I want to visit with you for an uninterrupted hour or so to gain from your insights about the nature of poverty in Oregon. Time is a premium to you and I know you are busy. Your inputs, however, will enhance my study. Ideally, I would like to visit with all extension staff, but the absence of resources does not permit such a large undertaking. Therefore, I have randomly chosen a smaller group of people, of which you are one.

Would you please complete the enclosed card and return it to me today? I plan to be on the road the first two weeks in June and will plan my itinerary according to your response. I will verify our meeting by telephone a few days after I receive the enclosed card from you.

If you choose not to visit with me, that decision will remain confidential. If you choose to participate, your insights will probably be reported in the results of my research. Any reference I make, however, to your ideas will be made without reference to you. In other words, your anonymity is assured.

If you have any questions, state them on the card. Thanking you in advance for your help, I am

Cordially yours,

Roger Fletcher

cp

FACSIMILE

PLEASE RETURN TODAYNo. 25

Check () one:

 Yes, I will participate Perhaps, see following comment: _____ Sorry, I will not participate

If "yes," circle dates you would be available for one hour

| | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| June 3 | June 4 | June 5 | June 6 | June 7 | June 10 | June 11 |
| June 12 | June 13 | June 14 | | | | |

Other dates in June open to you: _____

Will you be in Corvallis at all in June? () Yes; () No. If "yes,"
 would you be willing to meet at that time? When? _____

Your name _____ Date _____