



## The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 4  
Issue 1 *September*

Article 11

September 1976

# Towards the Development of Theory: Cultural Pluralism Redefined

Antonia Pantoja  
*San Diego State University*

Wilhelmina Perry  
*San Diego State University*

Barbara Blourock  
*Southwestern Community College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), [Social Work Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Pantoja, Antonia; Perry, Wilhelmina; and Blourock, Barbara (1976) "Towards the Development of Theory: Cultural Pluralism Redefined," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 11.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol4/iss1/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEORY:  
CULTURAL PLURALISM REDEFINED

By: DR. ANTONIA PANTOJA  
Director Undergraduate Program  
School of Social Work  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, California

DR. WILHELMINA PERRY  
Associate Professor  
School of Social Work  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, California

DR. BARBARA BLOUROCK  
Director of Guidance  
Southwestern Community College  
Chula Vista, California

ABSTRACT

The authors are attempting to move beyond the descriptive position, evidenced in the current writing, towards a theoretical approach to cultural pluralism. A series of definitions are presented concluding with the authors' definition of cultural pluralism - redefined. The new definition is discussed, as an operational concept, emanating from participants in the new cultural pluralism movement.

The current societal conditions that impede the realization of cultural pluralism are discussed in relation to a conceptual model, Criteria for Assigning Preferred or Unpreferred Status, that is used to explain our society's idealization of certain personal, social, and economic characteristics.

The authors conclude the article by presenting some considerations and directions for social scientists and human service workers who are committed to the realization of cultural pluralism for our society.

INTRODUCTION

At this particular moment of our nation's historical development, when slogans of ethnic purity are used interchangeably with cultural pluralism, a conceptual article dealing with cultural pluralism is urgently needed. The deceit of such confusion, whether intentional

or naive, destroys the serious efforts to develop a human relations value position that can enhance the growth and development of each of the nation's different cultural communities. It also destroys the efforts that could simultaneously build a strong humane democratic society. Both proponents and critics of cultural pluralism recognize and accept the existence of a growing, developing movement of cultural pluralism, but a critical observation has been lacking. Significant among the advocates of cultural pluralism are ethnics of color, white ethnics, women, homosexuals, senior citizens, disabled persons, religious communities, and groups of alternative life styles.

Notwithstanding the current efforts to confuse the meaning of this movement, the cultural pluralism movement has, at its core, the aspiration and value to create a new society, where culturally different groups that exist within our country can fully experience both the positive and distinctive attributes of their given and ascribed differences without the penalties of loss of status, educational, social or political disenfranchisement.

The authors of this article are attempting to move beyond the descriptive positions, evidenced in the current writings, teaching, and curriculum materials, towards a theoretical approach to cultural pluralism. It is our opinion that the most effective way to communicate with a wide and diverse group of readers is to adopt a direct, simple and logical writing style that declares, at the beginning, the philosophical and value base of the statement.

Utilizing our experience and reflections in the areas of writing, teaching, the review of literature, the development of course materials, consultations and institution building, we have engaged ourselves in a process of examining and clarifying our thinking regarding the development of a culturally pluralistic society.

Our current attempt to organize knowledge about cultural pluralism has developed through our life experience of membership in three ethnic communities, Black, Jewish and Puerto Rican, coupled with membership in one sex-based community - women, filtered and tested through the prism of formal education and our disciplined efforts to develop the conceptual capacities of the mind. This article represents a continuous search for explanations, arrangements of reality and effective action strategies for persons who have been subjected to denials of the necessary life sustaining/enhancing resources.

Towards the development of a theory of cultural pluralism, we wish to engage our readers in our efforts to:

- (1) present a definition of cultural pluralism  
(cultural pluralism redefined)

- (2) identify and discuss certain aspects of the current society's socializing, distributive and allocative processes that sustain a system of cultural homogeneity into a preferred cultural model.
- (3) the cultural pluralism movement: the redefiners (membership, goals and objectives.)
- (4) our understanding of the societal objectives and conditions necessary for cultural pluralism to be realized; and
- (5) finally, some considerations for social scientists, and human service practitioners.

It will be clear to the readers that the authors have arrived at a value position that supports the reshaping of our nation and its resources in such a manner that equal opportunities are made available for each member within the context of his/her given and chosen cultural communities.

#### SOME DEFINITIONS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

The concept of cultural pluralism has been with us for approximately sixty years. During this time, many efforts have been made to seriously analyze the status of intergroup relations in our society and to offer an alternative societal model to the existing one. Significant among the writers in this subject area have been Horace M. Kallen, Gunnar Myrdal, Tamotse Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, Milton M. Gordon, Robert Blauner, Albert Memmi, and numerous others.<sup>1/</sup>

For the purpose of pointing at the evolution of the concept, we have selected to include those definitions that we think most approximate our position and understanding of cultural pluralism. Since these definitions were written, many significant events have occurred that have shaped a new social movement of cultural pluralism. An increasing number of cultural communities are appearing in the United States. These new groups, whose unifying base has not been ethnicity or race, are demanding the right and opportunity to function as distinctive communities, within our society. The definitions which follow do not reflect these changes.

The definition of cultural pluralism as set forth by Horace M. Kallen in 1915 (the first person to use the term) envisioned a nation of European multi-ethnic nations residing within an "American Civilization" and utilizing the English language as a common language. Kallen's desired objective is set forth:

. . . the outlines of a possible great and truly democratic commonwealth become discernible. Its form would be that of the federal republic; its substance a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously through common institutions in the enterprise of self-realization through the perfection of men according to their kind.<sup>2/</sup>

Anthropologist Peggy R. Sanday distinguishes cultural pluralism and structural pluralism. She describes cultural pluralism:

. . . defined as existing in any society where there is more than one style dimension, where there is more than one set of cultural themes, information components, and behavior styles sanctioned in a society. Sub-cultural systems are open systems. Because of the mechanism of intra cultural diffusion the members of these systems are in differing degrees articulated to the mainstream culture and hence can share elements in the culture. Depending on the barriers to diffusion, sub-cultural systems definable at one point in time on the basis of certain unique characteristics may over time become assumed into the mainstream culture.<sup>3/</sup>

The Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers set forth a societal value and goal that is consistent with cultural diversity:

Redefining Cultural Pluralism requires renaming it cultural-socio-economic pluralism. The result is a society where individuals, groups and communities can function successfully in one, two or more languages and cultural styles; where individuals, groups and communities can abide by and function successfully practising different customs, religions, class and sexual life styles than those practised by the majority group. It would be the situation in a society where no one race, sex, culture or class is preferred over another.<sup>4/</sup>

Bruce Gaarder, a linguist from the United States Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, defines the concept:

Cultural Pluralism (on the other hand) implies social justice, but goes far beyond. It means the co-existence, preferably in a status of mutual respect and encouragement within the same state or nation, of two or more cultures which are significantly distinct one from the other in their patterns of belief and behavior including, as the case may be, different languages. Cultural Pluralism is not an assimilated posture; it is a negation of assimilation. It is a posture which maintains that there is more than one legitimate way of being human without paying the penalties of second-class citizenship, and that this pluralism would enrich and strengthen the nation.<sup>5/</sup>

Frank Bonilla, a sociologist on the faculty of the City University of New York, contends that:

Within a national setting like the United States, Cultural Pluralism would seem to mean sharing economic and political institutions and maintaining different cultures. There is, of course, some question whether this is a historical possibility; most social theory would seem to run counter to the viability of such an institutional configuration. What is clear is that pluralism grounded in such a design would be meaningless for groups outside the mainstream unless anchored in institutions with the requisite resource and power base to make secure a framework for a rounded group life and the long term maintenance of the cultural foundations of groupness for such collectivities. Thus in the U.S. case we are talking about defining real goals as regards the sharing and/or maintenance of parallel, relatively autonomous institutions and lifeways for groups having political aspirations grounded in the idea of nation.<sup>6/</sup>

William R. Hazard and Madelon Stent, professional educators, attempt to clarify the confusion between cultural pluralism as a current reality and as a societal goal:

Cultural Pluralism is both a fact and a concept (goal) which has not been given due recognition. The fact that the United States includes citizens of diverse cultures cannot be challenged. The extent to which the non-White

cultures have been disenfranchised or made invisible varies but their existence is a fact. Treated as bare fact, Cultural Pluralism means very little. Moving from fact to concept (goal) however, opens the door to useful examination.

#### AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM - CULTURAL PLURALISM REDEFINED

It is important that any writing, done at this moment, include an analysis of the existing definitions and move beyond their limitations to a redefinition. A redefinition is necessary because the current definitions are limited in that they are primarily dealing with white ethnics and ethnics of color. Existing definitions also evolve from a deficit model. The existing definitions state goals but they are philosophical in nature and do not deal with the functions of the society, the needs of people and the operationalization of cultural pluralism. The definitions fall short of integrating the components of a complete definition, such as description of desired goals including operational directives, identification of the significant concepts and their relationship to each other, and the placing of the definition in the context of current reality. The definition that we are offering is the basis for this article. This redefinition represents a synthesis of our reflection upon writings on culture, community and cultural pluralism. Our redefinition acknowledges the existence of emerging cultural communities while providing the reader with a frame of reference for future observation and analysis.

Cultural pluralism is the condition in a society in which individuals, on the basis of ascribed or attained characteristics, are able to form and develop communities along the differences of race, age, sex, religion, language and cultural life styles. These communities are open systems and members can select to belong to one or more communities at the same time. This condition can only exist in a society where there are two or more culturally diverse functioning communities, and where these communities adhere to a universal value that promotes the use of the resources of the society to fulfill the needs of all of its members. This condition is considered realized in a society where culturally different communities exist, are recognized and permitted to participate and to control those functions and resources which they consider vital to their community's functioning. Cultural pluralism can not exist in a society where culturally different communities exist in isolation from each other or/and in competition

under unequal conditions for the life sustaining/  
enhancing resources that the society produces.

To provide the reader with clarity in understanding cultural pluralism redefined, we will further define and discuss the concepts of culture, community, and life enhancing resources.

We are using the concept, culture, in the sociological and anthropological sense. The definitions offered below provide a broad perspective of a concept which is usually understood in a limited way.  
Culture

. . . refers to quality and content of behavior in a given social system; structure of the parts and their interrelationships and function; the way (adequacy) in which parts of behaviors maintain the total system or any subsystem within a given range (stipulated effectiveness) . . .<sup>8/</sup>

Expressed more concretely, culture refers to:

. . . The basic social habits, emotions and values of any group of people. From the point of view of the individual, culture may be objectively defined as all that behavior which he has learned in conformity with the standards of some group. This group may be his family, his play associates, his colleagues in work, his same-sex companions, his religious sect, his political party, or all of these groups together.<sup>9/</sup>

Understood in this perspective, culture, includes the expressive, communicative, core and material components of a given community's way of being and functioning. All these components form a comprehensive and cohesive way of life for a group of people. Ralph Linton, the anthropologist, classifies these various components into two general categories: covert and overt culture.

. . . the concept (culture) includes the phenomena of at least three different orders: material, that is, products of industry; kinetic, that is overt behavior (since this necessarily involves movement); and psychological, that is the knowledge, attitudes and values shared by the members of a society....<sup>10/</sup>

In fact, Linton states that:



The real culture of any society consist of the actual behavior, and so on, of its members. It includes a vast number of elements, no two of which are identical. No two persons ever react to a given stimulus in exactly the same way, and even the same person will react to such a stimulus differently at different times.<sup>11/</sup>

In order to provide the boundaries for observing the emerging social units, we are also presenting our definition of a community. A community is a group of people who come together in order that they create the processes, the institutions and relationships that function to meet their needs as they define them. The binding elements may include the locality, the biological and social characteristics; or the felt and experienced social needs and circumstances.

Using a structural analysis as a method, we can say that the functions that communities may meet for their members include the activities of (1) production-distribution-and consumption, the main economic activities, (2) socialization, (3) social control, (4) social participation and social integration, (5) mutual support and (6) defense.<sup>12/</sup> If one studies and analyzes the community as a social system, the six functions described above can be identified as social processes. This method of analysis uncovers three additional processes: communication, boundary maintenance, and systemic linkage. Roland Warren describes these three processes in the following manner:

communication - the process by which information, decisions and directives are transmitted among actors and ways in which knowledge, opinions and attitudes are formed or modified by interaction.

boundary maintenance - the process whereby the identity of a social system is preserved and the characteristic interaction patterns maintained.

systemic linkage - the process whereby one or more elements of at least two systems is articulated in such a manner that the two systems in some ways and on some occasions may be viewed as a single unit.<sup>13/</sup>

In less complex societies than the one in which we now live, these six functions are assigned to specific social institutions which were invented by the members of that society in accordance with their needs and desires. In fact, communities create culture.

In as much as several cultural communities may exist within the

context of a total society, the multiple needs of individuals may be met in one or several communities. Needs that cannot be met in primary or small units may be met through the social institutions and processes that are utilized by all members of a given society.

In this definition of cultural pluralism, we are using the term, life sustaining and enhancing resources, with purpose and intention to identify the full scope of goods and services that meet the needs of people. We differentiate this term, life sustaining and enhancing resources, from the term, social services, generally used by policy makers and professionals to identify the services needed by the poor and the dependent.

It is our conviction that the poor, the dependent and all the citizens of our society are entitled to life sustaining and enhancing resources. These necessary resources are both material and concrete, as well as non-material and intangible. We identify the material needs as food, clean air and water, shelter and body covering. These needs emanate from peoples' biological and physical nature.

The non-material needs are related to peoples' spiritual (aesthetic), psychological, intellectual, social, historical, cultural and political nature. These include a need for dignity, love, belonging, security, expression, fulfillment; the need for finding and establishing causal relationships for problem solving; the need for relationships with others; the need to place oneself in time, location and context; the need for the exertion of power to meet needs and to attain desired goals.

Society was the invention of people to fulfill both of these types of needs. However, racism, sexism, economic exploitation and unplanned technological growth, have destroyed the effectiveness of the social institutions originally designed to meet these needs. The resulting sense of alienation, powerlessness, social and economic abandonment have become the foundation for newly forming communities.

#### PLURALISM IN A SOCIETY OF INEQUALITY

The condition of cultural pluralism, as we have described it, does not currently exist in our society. Instead, we have a society of culturally different groups living together under conditions of competition, hostility and polarization. The competition has its origins in the struggle for the life sustaining and enhancing resources and the opportunities for participation in decision making. Different groups achieve varying degrees of success in this competition. Some groups achieve success at the expense of others. Other groups achieve almost no success. The struggle results in a society of inequality - inequality of opportunities and of outcomes. This type of drama has been so institutionalized through social policies, processes and sets

of relationships that it has become a way of thinking and functioning, an ideology, rather than an orchestrated arrangement that is organized and conducted by an identifiable and specific group of people.

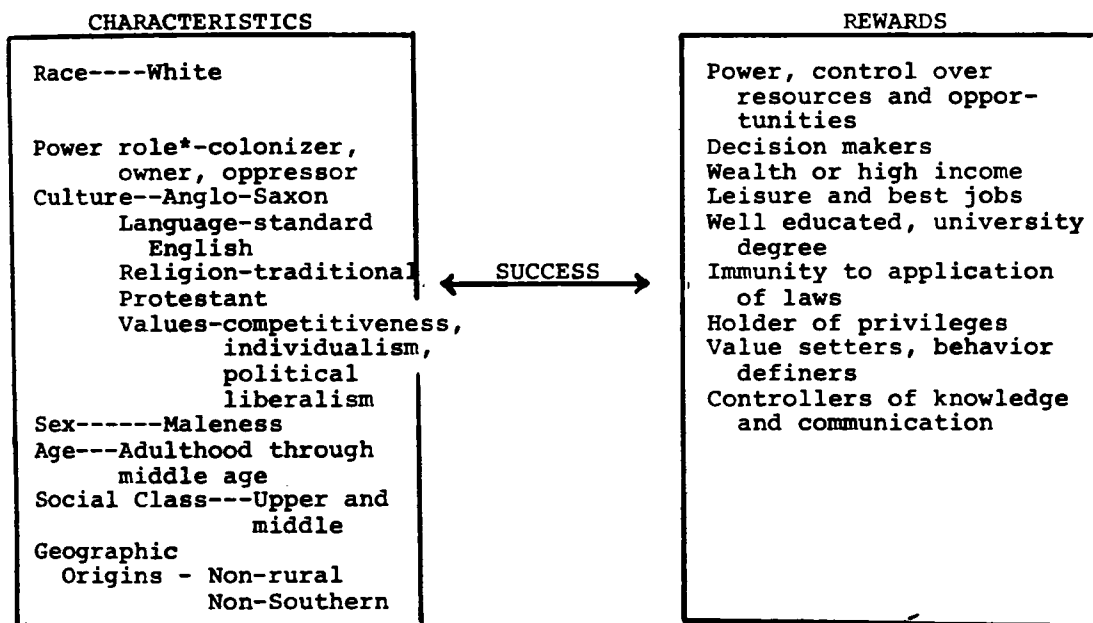
Many members of our, the authors', own ethnic communities reject the premise that groups, other than non-ethnics of color, experience deprivation and exclusion within the society. We, the authors, disagree. The conditions of oppression are experienced by many groups within our society although the manifestations and degrees of oppression may vary.

The persons who gain access and ultimately control the resources of the society can be described as the winners. In our society, these people are the holders of the personal and social characteristics that are most idealized by the society. On the other hand, the losers are those persons who hold the personal and social characteristics that are less preferred or non-preferred by the society. They are penalized for these differences.

The model presented below (see figures 1, 2 and 3) is being offered as a conceptual tool for the systematic observation and analysis of the current impediments to the realization of cultural pluralism. We are calling this model A Criteria for Assigning Preferred or Unpreferred Status.

FIGURE 1

THE PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS



(\*Power role is being used to refer to the position that one is delegated, one assumes or adopts vis-a-vis others in the society.)

The characteristics of preferredness in our society (see Figure 1) are most embodied in the white Anglo-Saxon protestant male. Since there is a direct correlation between the number of preferred characteristics and the opportunities to attain rewards, the degree of success within our society is directly affected by the number of characteristics held. Therefore, preferredness is a matter of degree. Through an understanding of the nature and manifestations of discrimination and oppression, one is able to identify that certain populations, within the society, attain access to certain resources but are denied others. For example, Appalachians, who are Anglo-Saxon white males, but who also tend to be fundamentalist and evangelical protestants, rural, lower class, poor and who do not speak standard English, have not attained the maximum position of rewards. This has also been the circumstance for other Whites, the Southern and Eastern European ethnic groups, who comprise the majority of the working class popula-

tion.

The characteristics of unpreferredness are held by a variety of groups within this society (see figure 2). These groups include Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Philipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and other Non-Whites. These groups also include women, homosexuals, homosexuals, senior citizens, non-Protestant and non-Christian religious groups, evangelical Christians, and alternative life style groups. While the concept of preferredness is familiar to most people, the conceptualization of an unpreferred model, that includes the characteristics outlined in Figure 2, is new.

It is figure 2 of this model that will create, for the reader, the greatest reaction because unpreferred groups, in our society, have been caught in a debate as to their respective levels of suffering. The ethnics of color have claimed to be the most victimized, and they have been because the characteristic of non-whiteness has been historically used to enslave, conquer, colonize and oppress. However, the characteristics of religion and sex have also been used to victimize the Jews, the Catholics and women. It is for this reason that we, the authors, argue for a societal condition that eliminates unpreferredness, oppression and inequality for all groups.

FIGURE 2

THE UNPREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS

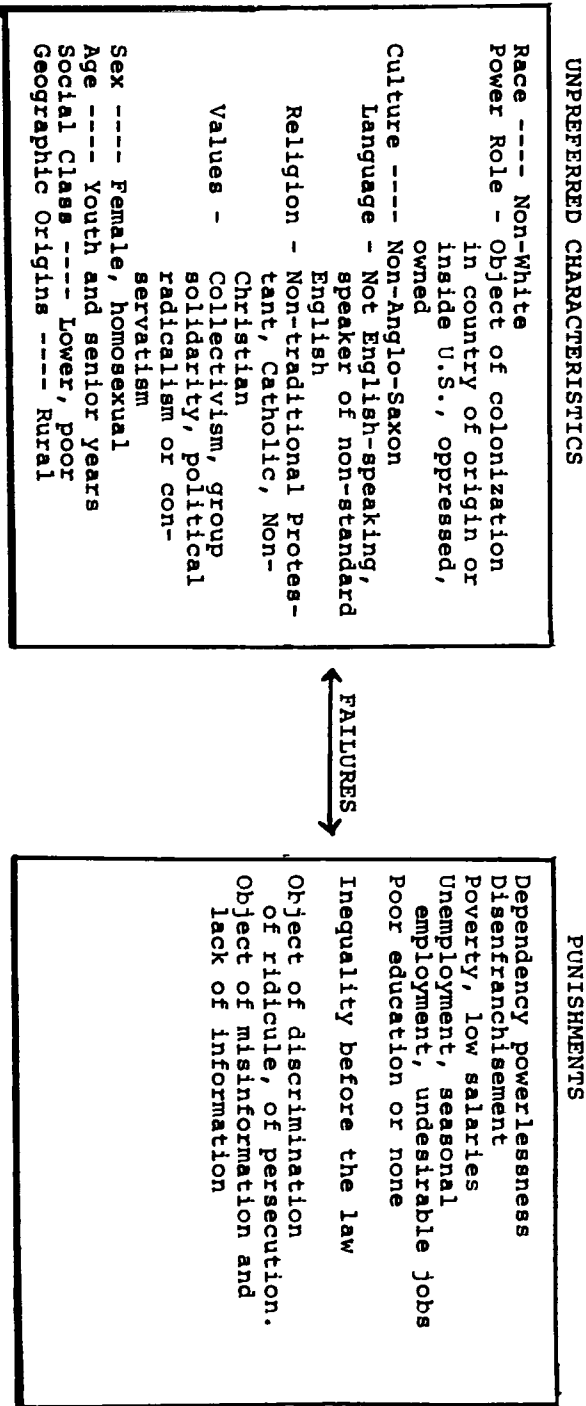
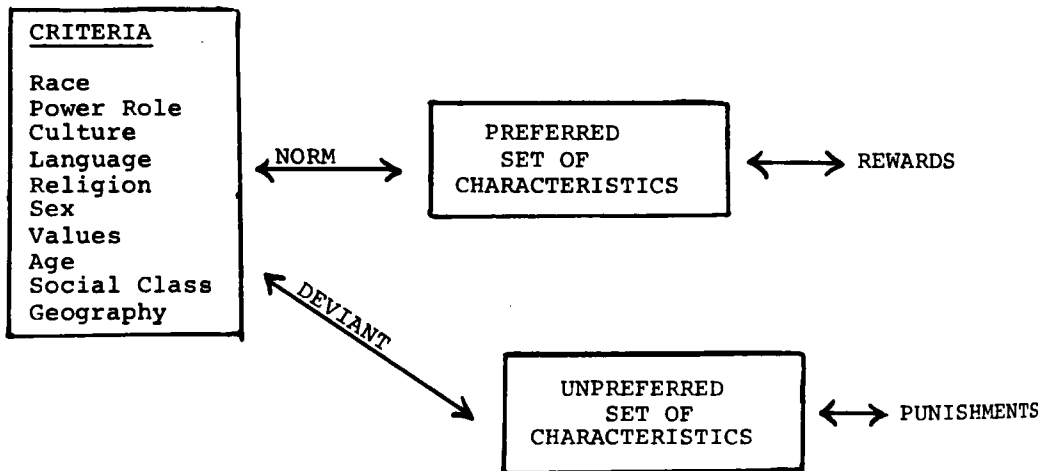


Figure 3 proposes a criteria for identifying the characteristics that our society uses to establish preferredness or unpreferredness. The criteria includes race, power role, culture, language, religion, sex, values, age, social class and geography. Since the set of characteristics of preferredness represent the norm, the characteristics of unpreferredness are used to establish the deviant qualities. Figure 3 also illustrates that deviancy elicits punishment while the norm is rewarded. The three figures of 1, 2, and 3 present a model for analysis of the present situation. The model can also be a useful tool in moving the various groups, in our society, from the level of hostile competition to the level of an understanding of their mutual circumstances, thereby, finding the basis for the establishment of coalitions. This is an important goal to attain since coalitions are a necessary prerequisite in moving towards cultural pluralism.

FIGURE 3

CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNING PREFERRED OR UNPREFERRED STATUS



## THE CULTURAL PLURALISM MOVEMENT: THE REDEFINERS

After the backlash reactions provoked by the direct and vocal revolts of the ethnics of color regarding their situation of deprivation and exclusion, other groups within the society began to also identify themselves as alienated, deprived and excluded. As a result, many new communities are emerging. The solidifying bond is concretized by experiences of personal alienation as well as common experience of social and economic deprivation. These communities have developed to assist members in meeting intangible as well as concrete needs. While many of the groups have remained at a level of defending or advocating for their members, other groups have moved beyond the position of self-protection to provide political consciousness raising, educational and skill development programs, recreational activities, social welfare and mutual support services, and cooperative economically based institutions for their members. These new communities have included women, seniors, white ethnics, homosexuals, physically and emotionally impaired, and others. These persons now identify themselves as suffering from conditions stemming from the unequal ownership of resources and unequal participation in the decision making processes of our society. As the growth of political consciousness progresses within these groups, they are utilizing many of the arguments and explanatory analysis that are used by ethnics of color.

We quote the spokespersons from some of the emerging groups. Kate Millet speaks to the conditions of women:

The continual surveillance in which she is held tends to perpetuate the infantilization of women even in situations such as higher education. The female is continually obliged to seek survival or advancement through the approval of males as those who hold power. As women in patriarchy are for the most part marginal citizens when they are citizens, their situation is like that of other minorities, here defined not as dependent, upon numerical size of the group, but on its status. What little literature the social sciences afford us in this context confirms the presence in women of the expected traits of minority status: group self-hatred and self-rejection, a contempt for both herself and her fellows - the result of that continual, however subtle, reiteration of her inferiority which she eventually accepts as a fact.<sup>14</sup>

Amelia Bass of the Grey Panthers explains the purpose of the organization:



Many of those over 65 are no longer willing to accept their powerless state. They are becoming radicalized and militant about the injustice and inhumanity around them. The revolution of retirees has only begun. As a coalition of young and old people, their aggressive organization for change is gaining group and wide approval. It has a significant emerging force that can empower the powerless.15/

The position of the Orchard Lake Center for Polish Studies and Culture expresses this group's vision of a pluralistic society in which our country is free of segregation and racism.

The new ethnic politics. . . searches for a new way to define what it means to be an American. We embrace the dream as culturally pluralistic - a nation having a unity of spirit and ideal, but a diversity of origin and expression, a national not of atomic individuals, but of dynamic, interacting groups, each of which brings forth its best to help build a just and equitable society, free of isolation, segregation and racism. We believe that people who are secure in their past and joyful in their present cannot but be hopeful in their future. We call this the new ethnicity.16/

The authors are by no means saying that all organized groups within these populations have formulated explicit and comprehensive ideologies regarding their conditions. We are, however, saying that there are individual spokespersons and organized groups that are developing coalition activities based on commonly held ideologies.

This new movement must be viewed as the coalescence of various movements that have preceded it. Central to the ethnic movements, human rights movements, women's movement and life style movements is the reaffirmation of self identity through cultural and ethnic group affiliations. However, unlike the civil rights movement, the cultural pluralism movement is based on a group's positive affirmation of its differences and its values in a multi-cultural society. This position rejects traditional stances of integration, assimilation and acculturation. The goal of the new movement is to change the group's status and its circumstances while working towards promoting a socially just society. The cultural pluralism movement recognizes and embraces other cultural groups identifiable through their adoption of alternative life styles because these new groups, along with the ethnics of color, are now viewing themselves as members of oppressed communities.

Separatism, so abhorrent to the dominant groups of the society, is now accepted by these groups as a necessary step as well as an objective for the development of a cultural pluralistic society. "Conscientization" (the development of political consciousness) is considered a process vital to individual and group identification for white ethnics, ethnics of color, women and communities of alternative life styles. Coalitions among different groups are seen as useful mechanisms for maximizing power to effect a redistribution of economic resources and opportunities as an essential prerequisite for the survival of viable culturally based communities.

The attainment of these goals is viewed as ultimately assisting us in transcending the separation of specific groups by identifying and working towards the values and goals that address common humanity.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE REALIZATION OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

Before proceeding it is necessary to address a number of critics that have categorized cultural pluralism as idealistic. We believe that these statements express a lack of faith in human beings to create a more humane society. In many of the dialogues that we (the authors) have had with others regarding the concept of cultural pluralism, we are told that this condition is unrealizable. We have also been told that our ideas represent the beginnings of a fascist state since cultural pluralism is viewed as the development of homogenized tightly controlling culturally communities. We specifically address the charge of facism because we believe that this is the accusation that has the greatest potential for destroying the movement. The emergence of facism will not develop from cultural pluralism. The provocation for a fascist state comes from those groups who would use their power to prevent the elimination of inequality.

We have the temerity of proceeding to evolve the concept because we believe that the goal of cultural pluralism is a necessary condition. It is not only a valid goal, but it is the next logical step in the development of a more humane society.

Any effort for systemic change to eradicate inequality within our society creates fear and counter positions of repression. Among the critics of cultural pluralism are those who fear that the continuous emergence and proliferation of groups demanding rights and resources, will only move our country towards a major upheaval. In our opinion, these fears whether they anticipate a major social upheaval or the development of a repressive society, they cannot be the reason for deliberately or unintentionally continuing to subject populations to social and economic disenfranchisement.

In order for culturally different communities to function in a condition of cultural pluralism, it will require that members of our

society adhere to certain regulative values. The concept of regulative values is borrowed from Donald L. Noel in his article, "A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification".<sup>17/</sup> Regulative values are those values commonly held throughout a society, generally adhered to by the members of the society and operationalized through policy positions, social institutions and other socialization processes. Priority regulative values enhancing cultural pluralism would include the following among others:

- appreciation for a heterogeneous society
- appreciation for one's own and one's fellow person's heritage
- appreciation for the different and unique contributions of each group to the national heritage
- value of the individual and his/her historical and cultural context

These value positions would not need to be created de novo because they already exist in our society's culture. The policy statement for the Ethnic Heritage Program, (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amended in 1972) codifies several of these types of regulatory values. Other policies of the national and state government include similar lists of regulative values. The irony is that these value positions are institutionalized through the policies of our nation while at the same time other values directly opposing these are also included and competing with equal importance.

The serious inquiry and further conceptualization of cultural pluralism as an interdisciplinary concept and as a societal goal raises several questions for the researcher and the practitioner. Some of these questions are more easily answered, and some are more difficult to answer:

What are the next phases in the evolution of these diversified communities? Is our identification of three phases, through which these communities have already evolved, a correct observation? Separation? Politicalism? Coalescence? What is the nature of the coalitions that are forming? What are the objectives, and what are the targets of these coalitions? Do these coalitions represent a unification around social class? If so, why have some cultural and ethnic groups transcended class differentiations in their development of strategies for social change? Will the struggle

to build the more humane society necessitate an ultimate violent confrontation? If the confrontation is not eminent, what are the overall relationships, arrangements and processes necessary for the continuation of a cohesive society?

The rigorous explanation of these questions require an identification of the underlying paradigm of the traditional social science position. In this paradigmatic position, cultural pluralism is viewed as a detriment to social harmony since culturally different groups are perceived as the basis for intra-societal friction and competition. It is from this value perspective that the policy positions of assimilation, integration and acculturation are identified as the most desirable goals. These ideas originate from and entrench the paradigm used by social scientists to support the current arrangements of social, political and economic inequality.

#### SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICE PRACTITIONERS

The implications for cultural pluralism - realized are many for the professional practice of human service workers. The implications indicate that professional practice must be derived from three salient and significant perspectives:

- (1) that a process of political socialization must occur for both the preferred and unpreferred members of our society.
- (2) that a redefinition of intrasocietal relationships must occur among people of different cultural groups and
- (3) There must be an explication and an implementation of a value system that is accompanied by the institutional supports necessary to secure and perpetuate cultural community patterns. Utilizing these three qualifying statements as organizing concepts, the implications for cultural pluralism-redefined must be identified and examined in terms of current professional practice.

If the practitioners are to become responsive to this new movement, it is important to give particular attention to those implications that may be antithetical to current professional practice. It is a common belief among human service workers that there are human social needs and expressions that are universal and commonly shared among all peoples regardless of race, creed, cultural lifestyles or ethnic origins. Flowing from this premise is the second belief that intervention skills transcend cultural differences. In direct opposition to these principles is the premise of the cultural pluralistic

orientation and its position that communities are best served by politically enlightened ("conscientized") members of the respective communities. The principle of cultural pluralism is based on the acceptance of distinct valuing processes, life styles and behavioral expressions unique to the life experiences of different groups. While professional education may recognize cultural differences, these differences tend to be ignored within the practice arena. Consistent with the position of cultural pluralism there must be a clearly explicated socialization and educational process that identifies cultural myopia and cultural homogeneity as negative values.

Ethnic curriculum content in professional education is primarily focused on content that is presented as pathological when compared to an idealized norm. The culturally pluralistic position requires that the curriculum utilize an interdisciplinary approach to the education of human service workers and that courses dealing with professional skills be derived from an interdisciplinary use of knowledge and experience.

Knowledge, theory and skills that have been presented as culture free must be challenged by a culturally pluralistic position that rejects an ideology that theories and knowledge are applicable to all people. Theoretical perspectives and knowledge must be utilized in the context of their cultural limitations and their cultural relativity.

Since much of human service practice isolates the individual from his/her community, culture is rarely seen as a dynamic for services to individuals or communities. The redefined concept of cultural pluralism requires a practice orientation that values cultural diversity and utilizes cultural specifics towards a goal of personal development and community development. Human service workers must not remain oblivious to this new movement and continue their practice of intervening in communities unprepared to appreciate and respond to the potential richness of cultural diversities.

Throughout periods of our history, human service professional groups have participated in the struggle of non-White ethnics and ethnic minorities of color. If we are to participate in the movement for cultural pluralism-redefined, the professions must move beyond their traditional patterns of helping culturally different groups to assimilate or integrate into an idealized norm. We need to discard the current value-system, knowledge base and practice modalities that minimize cultural differences, that isolate individuals from their community settings, and that intervene in the lives of people with little or no regard for the economic-political processes that impinge upon personal and community functioning.

Instead, the resources of the human service professions must be

committed to helping groups that are culturally different, whether by ascribed or attained status, to retain their uniqueness in a society that will truly support the right to be different.

#### NOTES

- 1/ For a more complete bibliography, see Pantoja, Blourock and Bowman, Badges and Indicia of Slavery: Cultural Pluralism Redefined (Lincoln, Nebraska: Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers, 1975) pp. 150-199.
- 2/ Horace M. Kallen, Culture and Democracy in the United States (New York: Moni and Liveright, 1929), as quoted by Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 142-143.
- 3/ Peggy R. Sanday, "The Application of the Concept of Cultural Pluralism To the United States Domestic Social Policy" (revised version of a paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Diego, California, November, 1970), passim. (Mimeographed.)
- 4/ "The Concept of Cultural-Socio-Economic Pluralism" (Recommended Policy Statement/Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1972)
- 5/ Bruce Gaarder, "Cultural Pluralism and the United States Office of Education," December, 1971 (Mimeographed).
- 6/ Frank Bonilla, "Cultural Pluralism and the University: The Case of Puerto Rican Studies" (a paper presented at the Seminar on Cultural Pluralism, sponsored by Columbia University and the City College of New York, April, 1972).
- 7/ William R. Hazard and Madelon Stent, "Cultural Pluralism and Schooling: Some Preliminary Observations," Cultural Pluralism in Education: A Mandate for Change, eds. Madelon Stent, William R. Hazard and Harry N. Revlin (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1973), p. 13.
- 8/ Peggy R. Sanday, "The Application of the Concept of Cultural Pluralism to United States" Domestic Social Policy" (revised version of a paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Diego, California, November, 1970).
- 9/ Davis, Allison "Light from Anthropology on Intercultural Relations"

in Conference in Educational Problems of Special Cultural Groups Cultural Groups and Human Relations (N.Y. Columbia University, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, 1951) p. 77.

- 10/ Linton, Ralph, The Cultural Background of Personality (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1945) p. 38.
- 11/ Ibid., p. 43.
- 12/ This typology of functions has been discussed more fully by such writers as Roland Warren, Harry Specht, Neil Gilbert and David Gil.
- 13/ Warren, Roland, The Community in America (New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1963) p. 48-49.
- 14/ Kate Millet, Sexual Politics (New York: Avon Books, division of the Hearst Corporation, 1971) passim 41-56.
- 15/ Amelia Bass and Associates, Rationale for Social Change (Philadelphia: The Grey Panthers, 1972) page 1.
- 16/ Novak, Michael, The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics (New York, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1972) p. 236.
- 17/ Noel, Donald L., "A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification", The Journal of Social Problems, Vol. 16, No. 2, Fall, 1968, pp. 167-172.