

SOCIOLOGY AND AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC RELATIONS: A CRITICAL APPROACH

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DECLARATION

This thesis is based upon original research conducted by the author. Sections of the theoretical analysis in Part II and the empirical research in Part III were part of a much larger study undertaken by the author and Frank Lewins of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University. The study was funded by ERDC. A preliminary report was published in September 1979, and the final report is in press. Sections of the reports reproduced in this thesis constitute original work by the author.

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ABSTRACT

What makes the sociological analysis of Australian ethnic relations necessarily *sociological*? To what extent is the knowledge produced in the study of this area *scientific*? This thesis sets out to provide constructive answers to these two questions. While the specific aim was to develop a systematic sociological analysis of Australian ethnic relations, a more general objective was to attempt to provide a guide for the sociological analysis of other sub-areas within Australian society, e.g., the sociology of health, work, etc. The method selected for attempting to answer these questions was firstly, to try to identify the nature of *scientific sociology*. This resulted in the development of an epistemological position for sociological inquiry called *critical systematic sociological practice*. One important principle of this practice was the need to locate the study of specific areas, such as ethnic relations, within the historical development of the Australian social structure. This practice was then used to critique the study of Australian ethnic relations in order to show the non-systematic nature of much of the *knowledge* produced in this area. It was also employed to analyse ethnic groups in the context of the wider class structure. This analysis, while pointing out the connection between ideology and the concept of multiculturalism and the dominant discourse of ethnic relations, was mainly intended to focus on the mechanisms by which the class structure is maintained and reproduced. In light of this analysis and the *emancipationist-realist* epistemological position adopted, it was suggested that *consciousness raising* coupled with various forms of praxis could be a means by which oppressed groups may be liberated from their subordinate social position. These means indicated the need for some sort of education programme (conscientization). How and where could such a programme be instituted? A case study of the organisation and curriculum of four Greek ethnic schools in Sydney was carried out to determine the role these schools now play in Australian ethnic relations and the role they *could* play in a *truly multicultural society*. The conclusion emphasises the contribution of critical systematic sociological practice to sociological knowledge in general and to knowledge in ethnic relations, in particular.

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PREFACE

Although the major focus of this thesis is the sociology of ethnic relations in Australia culminating in a case study of Greek ethnic schools in Sydney, one of its major objectives is to attempt to answer the question: Why have a social science at all? One of the propositions underlying this thesis is that questions about the nature of sociological knowledge per se cannot be separated from any piece of sociological research which claims to advance our understanding of human behaviour. Consequently this work is in four parts. Part I is concerned with epistemological issues in social science. Part II draws on the epistemological position for sociological inquiry developed in the previous part to provide a critique of ethnic relations in Australia while also developing a sociology of Australian ethnic relations. Part III attempts to apply these developments to the study of multicultural education, and the role of Greek ethnic schools in a 'truly multicultural society'. The final part is an attempt to draw the preceding discussion together and emphasises the major findings.

The initial question which provided the point of departure for this thesis was: What makes the sociological analysis of certain problems and areas of life such as health, work, family, ethnic relations, etc., scientific? It is the belief of the writer that this issue lies at the centre of any piece of sociological research. Why do we do sociological research? Probably the majority of responses to this question by the practitioners themselves could be placed on a continuum from careerism at one end to social engineering for the betterment of human existence at the other. Simply to give an answer is not good enough. We ought to be able to specify what sociological inquiry should look like so that we may be aware of the limitations of what we may hope to achieve. At

the most pessimistic extreme this may mean the realisation that sociological knowledge can never be scientific and hence is to be included along with other practices such as theology and journalism although in a slightly more systematic and sophisticated format. On the other hand, taking a more optimistic view, sociology may provide the potential for initiating social change that can abolish many 'undesirable' aspects of society. As should become clear in the first three chapters, social theory is inherently linked with various epistemological assumptions and political practice. It is not possible to divorce these assumptions from social theory if one is concerned about the status of the knowledge produced rather than simply going through the motions of performing what Gellner has called 'methodological ritual' (Gellner, 1973:204).

To what extent is sociological knowledge of a different order than other forms of knowledge? The evaluation of all knowledge seems reducible to two diametrically opposed positions. The first argues that scientific knowledge is somehow different from other types of knowledge. The second denies that there is something special about scientific practice and hence science can be likened to religion or ideology with respect to its hold over man (Chalmers 1976:144-5). The main reason that it is important to establish which of these positions is correct, is not so much because social scientists have a commitment to the status of knowledge as scientific, but because sociological knowledge may have potential as applied knowledge. That is, the role of sociological knowledge, like knowledge in the natural sciences, may be not solely understanding for understanding's sake, but application. For instance, say we pose the question: Why are some countries poor and others wealthy? Then we may point to two major theories which attempt to offer an explanation, 'modernisation theory' and 'world systems theory'. Very

briefly, the former explains the relatively poor status of third world countries in terms of (among other things) the fact that these countries lack certain internal characteristics, e.g., self-sufficient economy, appropriate values and thus tend to remain as traditional societies (Lerner, 1968). This 'theory' appears based largely on the assumption that 'development' is a function of a country's internal organisation and external factors do not substantially influence the modernisation process. On the other hand, the world systems approach, adopted by Wallerstein and others, is based on the assumption that it is primarily the nature of the external economic and trade relationships which exist between 'core' and 'periphery' nations which accounts for the status of countries as first or third world. These theories are clearly opposed in terms of the basic assumptions upon which they are based and both have vastly different implications for policies aimed at reducing inequalities between rich and poor nations. It could be said that the modernisation approach is the more appealing as it appears to offer a more immediate solution to the problem than its rival as well as not threatening the power and position of the wealthy nations in the world system. The world system approach if adopted, would require large-scale political, social and economic changes. I chose the example of development and underdevelopment as this issue is likely to evoke a moral response. At least the moral component of the question is more explicit with this issue than with many other sociological investigations. For instance, sociological problems concerned with worker satisfaction and delinquent subcultures do not usually project the moral concerns of alienated and exploited workers and alienated students (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1969; Hargreaves, 1967). It is ironical that the majority of sociological research has these moral concerns and the big questions *hidden* within the nature of their problems, while many of the classical



sociologists posed the moral problems as *the* point of departure for their writings. If sociological knowledge can be applied knowledge there seems a need to ascertain the status of this knowledge and its implications.

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PART I

EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THE PRACTICE OF SOCIOLOGY

CHAPTER ONEINTRODUCTIONWHY SHOULD SOCIOLOGISTS BE CONCERNED WITH EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEMS?

Of all the crises which writers have suggested plague the discipline, possibly the most persistent and problematic is the question of the scientific nature of social science. The increasing importance of this issue is reflected in the number of recent texts and articles written on the area of epistemology and the social sciences.<sup>1</sup> It may seem surprising that given this increased attention paid to epistemological issues in social science, many sociologists continue to largely ignore the relevance of these issues for their research.

Consequently, this work, although primarily concerned with ethnic relations in general and multicultural education and ethnic schools in particular, begins with a discussion of the subject matter of sociology and its scientific nature. It takes as its point of departure the various sub-areas within sociology. The existence and proliferation of a large number of these areas, e.g., sociology of education, family, law, ethnic relations etc., raises the question of the nature of the connection between these areas and some more general corpus of 'sociological knowledge'. A concern with epistemological and ontological assumptions of social science often brings forth claims from both within and outside sociology that this is a further example of the sociologists' paranoia and defensiveness with respect to the status of the discipline. Epistemology, as applied in this context refers to a methodological watchdog whose purpose is to identify obstacles to the production of scientific knowledge and to offer suggestions for the resolution of these obstacles. It is clear that some of the most crucial assumptions about the nature of knowledge in social science remain unresolved, and for many social scientists, unimportant. Some sociologists would argue that these

types of questions should be left to the philosophers, and sociologists should get on with 'doing sociology'. But there are a number of reasons why sociologists need to concern themselves with these issues.

Firstly, all sociological practice, scientific or otherwise is inherently coupled with social theory and based on certain epistemological assumptions. A rejection of particular sociological practices as 'non-scientific' may seriously question the utility of the knowledge produced by these practices. Secondly, the implications and importance of the epistemological evaluation of sociological method and knowledge can be seen in light of the fact that a number of theorists (*cf.* Fay, 1975; Becker, 1970) have seen particular perspectives as being inherently connected with various political positions e.g., functionalism, conservatism (van den Berghe, 1967; Fay, 1975).<sup>2</sup> This is especially significant as sociology has failed to produce what was generally regarded by many as the aim of any scientific practice, namely definitive explanations, laws or even consensus on adequate theoretical explanations of social phenomena. Furthermore the perpetual excuse of the 'newness' of the discipline to account for this is rapidly losing credibility.

Thirdly, apart from the questions of adequacy of various sociological methods employed in the production of knowledge, it needs to be understood that the most common sociological practices (e.g., positivism) are at the same time conservative i.e., non-critical of the existing *total* system and by their very nature tend to avoid the big questions about the nature of the social system which influences human behaviour. Anthony Giddens' recent work *Studies in Social and Political Theory*, is a notable exception. To begin to relate these big questions to sociological practice means that an analysis of the latter involves looking at the location of this practice in the particular society in which it exists. But, on the other hand, if we assume that it is possible to specify what scientific

sociological practice is and hence what distinguishes it from other practices, then this practice can analytically be seen to exist as relatively autonomous insofar as the knowledge produced is primarily a function of the internal relationships of the components of that practice. By drawing this analytical distinction between the internal workings of a particular theoretical practice and the social structure in which it is located, two groups of questions may be posed:

1. Questions concerning the social relations that are necessary for a particular autonomous science to exist.
2. Questions concerning the functioning of that science as a practice once it does exist (Chalmers, 1976:137).

It is fair to say that materialist conceptions of scientific knowledge tend to focus on the first group of questions (Castells and de Ipola, 1976), while positivist conceptions concentrate on the second (Popper, 1959; Kuhn, 1970a, b; Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970). Part I attempts to draw these two components together and develop a synthesis of the internal-relational aspects of systematic sociological practice and the important external factors.

Fourthly, with respect to concerns about the scientific status of sociology one of the assumptions underlying this paper is that if the knowledge produced in sociology is not, and possibly can never be scientific in the deductive nomological sense of 'problem posing' in Popper's sense, then the discipline must take its place alongside theology and journalism and other non-scientific practices. This position aligns itself with the opinion of many philosophers of science, e.g., Althusser, Kuhn. This realisation would lend strong support to Feyerband's notion of epistemological anarchy and possibly the implicit relativism in Kuhn's subjective position. This position also implies that there cannot be degrees of *scientific* knowledge - it is either scientific or it isn't. However, this part in a more optimistic vein, sets out to show that social



science can be scientific and subsequently attempts to produce a corresponding methodology. A further argument in support of the analysis of epistemological questions in the social sciences is that while these questions remain unanswered then social science continues in an apparently *ad hoc* manner with no real sense of the development of knowledge.

The abundance of theoretical and empirical sociological literature in many disparate areas has made the need for objective criteria to evaluate that which is to become part of sociological knowledge and that which ought to be discarded, long overdue. To the extent that any criteria exist at present, they can be said to be subjective insofar as they rely on indicators such as peer evaluation and consensus.<sup>3</sup> Gellner, for one, would probably question the pay-off to be gained from pursuing these sorts of epistemological issues. He states:

What is true is that, for the first time in history perhaps, we are faced with a (pseudo) empiricist scholasticism. By scholasticism, generally speaking, I mean an active but barren tradition whose barrenness is somehow ensured by its organisation, ideology and practices . . . . It is true what underlies this methodological ritualism is a kind of self-consciousness, which manifests itself in thinking more about method than about subject matter. Preoccupation with method can be seen as a kind of evasion of reality. 'Method' calls forth a strange world of its own, separated from both the inner world of ideas and outer social reality (Gellner, 1973:204).

Probably the best we can expect from empiricist social science are probability statements and empirical generalisations. These seem to fall far short of what may be regarded as scientific knowledge (Willers, 1973).

Finally, the resolution of epistemological problems in the social sciences is likely to have a spin-off with respect to the teaching of sociology. The provision of answers to the problem of the subject matter and scientific status of a sociological sub-area, such as ethnic relations, could clarify the content for the purpose of teaching.

A concern with the location of sub-areas within sociology mainly from the point of view of the relational aspects of the practice itself defines

this concern as epistemological rather than sociological. A concern with the sociological would result in questions such as why do certain sub-areas exist within sociology departments and not others? Why, for instance do some areas appear to be very common in most sociology departments while other topics, which could be justified as legitimate areas for sociological analysis, e.g., the sociology of war, humour, do not?<sup>4</sup> At one level the answer could be in terms of simply the interests and competences of personnel. At another level, the explanation would need to take account of the fact that at some period in the history of sociology, these particular sub-areas became identified as legitimate areas for sociological inquiry. An analysis of these kinds of issues, which might be important for throwing light on the organisation of sociology, would be more in the realm of the sociology of sociology, than epistemology.

Some suggestions which have been presented by a few writers as to the rationale for the location of sub-areas within sociology are not terribly convincing. For example, Worsley suggests that these areas are 'held together by a common body of theory and a common body of available methods' (Worsley, 1977:35). But this begs the question of why it is so difficult for sociologists to specify what this common body is, and more importantly, about the accuracy of this common body of theory and methods as explanations of reality.<sup>5</sup> With regard to the subject matter which unites these sub-areas under the banner of sociology, Worsley says:

... sociology studies all these separate topics only as particular manifestations of its overall subject matter: men's social relationship to one another (Worsley, 1977:35).

This statement requires considerable elaboration as it implies that sociology operates at the micro level which ignores the role of institutions in society and the interplay of macro structural elements, e.g., the class structure. In other words, Worsley's reply begs the question: What *are* men's social relationships to one another?

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF SOCIOLOGY

There appear to be two possible approaches to the subject matter of sociology. The first is to focus on a particular object of analysis and attempt to elucidate what particular sociological elements reside within that object. Wallerstein's approach to social systems is an example of this:

Much of contemporary social science has become the study of groups and organizations, when it has not been social psychology in disguise. This work, however, involves not the study of groups, but of social systems. When one studies a social system, the classical lines of division within social science are meaningless. Anthropology, economics, political science, sociology and history are divisions of the discipline anchored in a certain liberal conception of the state and its relation to functional and geographical sectors of the social order. They make a certain limited sense if the focus of one's study is organizations. They make none at all if the focus is on the social system (Wallerstein, 1974:11).

One epistemological difficulty involved with this position is that the object is not a given, i.e., that knowledge does not reside in the object. Scientists *construct* the objects of their enquiries.

A second approach which varies from that presented above is the position that assumes that there is a specific domain which is exclusively 'social' and that it is the aim of sociology to understand the elements and mechanisms in the social and consequently to discover the laws to which this social life adheres. This position is characterised by the approach of Comte who regarded sociology as distinct from any of the other sciences and although he recognised that the methods employed in sociology may be the methods of other sciences, e.g., observation and experimentation, there were methods exclusive to the practice of sociology. This is pointed out by Keat and Urry:

... either we study the laws of co-existence of the various elements at an instant of time (social status), or we study the laws of succession by which each social strata is seen as the product of the preceding state (social dynamics) (1975:74).

Although this approach regards 'social life as the basic reality' (Keat and Urry, 1975:74) it is unclear as to what constitutes social life. For

we might ask: To what extent does Durkheim's subject matter of social facts provide the subject for sociology? Social facts, for Durkheim have the characteristics of being external to the individual, shared and constraining on behaviour. Keat and Urry have identified some of the difficulties involved with specifying these characteristics. For instance, with regard to the externalisation of social facts, they state:

... it is unclear whether Durkheim considers that social facts are external to all individuals or merely to each one as we consider them in turn. Sometime in his analysis of the 'collective conscience' he argues for the former. Elsewhere he maintains that he has no intention of reifying society as something external to all constituent individuals, since there is nothing in society but individuals or individual consciences and that he is only interested in the social properties which result from the organization of these individuals. It would seem that Durkheim's argument is problematic because of his over-differentiation between the 'individual' and 'society' (1975:83).

The posing of the externality of social facts certainly raises severe difficulties such as the reification of society and the individual/society distinction. What is implicit in the latter is the notion of social control (Berger, 1963:83-84) and assumptions about the nature of this control, e.g., collective conscience. It is not coincidental that the characteristics of externality and constraint occur within the same conceptualisation of sociological phenomena. The adequacy of this formulation needs to be gauged in light of its contribution to a theory of the social system. Any attempt to apply social facts as the subject matter of sociology immediately poses a dilemma for some conceptions of sociological practice. To argue that internalised beliefs, i.e., non-observables, are not only able to constrain behaviour but are the major source of social control, is to reject the assumption that only observables can be regarded as real for the purpose of scientific analysis. Some writers have pointed out similarities between social facts and natural facts in an attempt to counteract the claim that a distinction can be maintained on the grounds that the latter are observable and hence the

chain of causation knowable whereas the former must be manufactured. But all events, it seems, physical or social, require interpretation. Gellner has used the example of the role of the anthropologist to throw light on the nature of any scientific practice (Gellner, 1973:190). Hence, it appears that scientific practices are necessary because causal mechanisms and properties are not accessible to observation, but must be derived by theoretical practice. An example of this from the social sciences is Marx's distinction between appearance and essence under a capitalist mode of production. Under a feudal mode of production:

the lord receives his income by directly appropriating part of the product or value of the product produced by the serf or by compulsory labour-services. There is nothing concealed about the process. Because of political force and legalized custom it is clear that the lord will alienate part of what the serf produces. In capitalism, however, the fact of appropriation is concealed (Keat and Urry, 1975:106).

If Durkheim's notion of social facts together with its inherent qualities are to be regarded as the subject matter of sociology, then this leads to certain definite epistemological difficulties for sociological knowledge.

One assumption of Durkheim's position is that:

society imposes its fundamental categories on men. These cognitive means are a necessary element of social cohesion and social control (Hirst, 1975:176).

This assumption leads logically to the conclusion that 'logic has its origin in the collective consciousness and is imprisoned in that consciousness' (Hirst, 1975:176). This results in an impossible contradiction as expressed by Hirst:

If logic is purely social in origin, if society must impose its categories on individuals as a necessary means of its own existence and social control, then how is a social science possible? Are its most basic assumptions not derived from the society in which it exists? The only escape from the first contradiction is an absolute sociologism which submerges the individual, which determines even his biological capacities ... . This means of escape from the first contradiction exacerbates the second, scientific knowledge is impossible. The only escape from the second contradiction, to suppose that the perceiving subject is not reducible to society, that by freeing himself of preconditions he can perceive the

rationality of the real exacerbates the first contradiction; it supposes an epistemologically extra-social rational perceiving subject (Hirst, 1975:176-177).

Durkheim's position is thus fraught with epistemological difficulties which are reducible to a subjectivist notion of scientific knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is a subjectivist notion in which the thought processes of the individual appear to be totally determined by 'society'. Any notion of extra social subjects is an anomaly in Durkheim's approach.

It is normal practice among social scientists to carve up reality into subject matters which then correspond to different disciplines, e.g., sociology, psychology, anthropology. However, these divisions are extremely difficult to substantiate logically. It is difficult to logically sustain the dividing line and the maintenance of boundaries between disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology (a division which is in fact social in the Kuhnian sense (Bernstein, 1971; Young, 1971). Gellner has explained this point:

The distinction between sociology and social anthropology is itself a social rather than a logical one. In other words, the distinction can best be understood not by looking at some neat dividing line in the subject matter of the disciplines or in their method, but in the concrete, and hence untidy, factors which operated in various times and places to cause people to class themselves as sociologists and as social anthropologists (Gellner, 1973:107).

It is not necessary here to go into detail with respect to divisions which have been applied, e.g., Advanced/Primitive and which can be shown to be based on particular perspectives, e.g., evolutionary approach, and which themselves are open to considerable criticism as 'models' of the social structure. When one attempts to distinguish the subject matter of sociology from the subject matter of other disciplines, the distinction ultimately rests on a normative-subjective evaluation. For example, Gellner's distinction between philosophy and sociology is based on a revolutionary/conservative criteria which says more about the author's interpretation of these disciplines than their subject matter:

In general one might suppose philosophy to be a revolutionary subject, and sociology a conservative one. Philosophy questions the basic assumptions, thereby rocking the boat. Sociology seeks the social roots of what, logically may seem absurd. It shows that social structure has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing. It thus tends to stabilize the boat (Gellner, 1973:78).

Gellner's interpretation of sociology is more appropriate to functionalism and empiricism which ignores, for instance, the contribution of Marxism and materialist epistemology. The conclusion, then to be drawn from attempts to distinguish the subject matter of sociology from other disciplines is that such distinctions are *socially* determined by scientists and not *logical*, and as such are arbitrary and convenient. While avoiding the problem of reductionism by maintaining that there are laws, as yet undiscovered, which are sociological, psychological etc., and which are not reducible to each other, this compartmentalised approach introduces another difficulty of determining the nature of the logical connection between these areas. For instance some sociological studies conclude by pointing out that a more thorough analysis would need to introduce psychological factors. The assumption is that a sociological analysis can not hope to account for the total behaviour, only a portion of it. This position seems similar to having a few pieces of a jig-saw puzzle and somehow believing that these pieces ought to exist where they are located, even though the player has no idea of what the total picture looks like. The distinct domain position of social science, as adopted by Comte and the theoretical reductionist position of Mill, are unsatisfactory insofar as they assume that society and social life can be arbitrarily compartmentalised. For although attempts to differentiate subject matters face critical questions for scientific sociology, these attempts cannot hope to be successful until there is a broader picture of the totality, the social system which links ideas with social and economic organisation, consciousness and unconsciousness, the essence and the appearance.

Given these problems with determining the subject matter of sociology why don't we short circuit these difficulties by stating simply that the

subject matter of sociology is 'man'? There are two related major obstacles which make this claim unsatisfactory. The first is the problem of anthropomorphism. Gellner clearly expresses the dangers involved with viewing the subject matter of sociology in this manner when he says:

The fact that tautologically the subject matter of the study of man is indeed *man* does not seem to me to entail that *explanatory* concepts invoked must also be, in some sense further to be defined *human* (Gellner, 1973:73).

The rationale offered by Gellner in support of this statement is that the causal explanations of behaviour may be outside human experience and may only be accessible to the scientists with special equipment (Gellner, 1973:73).

This view has relevance regardless of the particular conception of science applied, e.g., positivism, realism, materialism. The second obstacle has to do with the relationship between sociology and common-sense on the one hand and sociological versus social problems on the other. These problems in turn seem to be a function of similar factors, specifically the connection between commonsense and social problems to an empiricist system of knowledge (Willers, 1973). All these knowledges are the result of either the assumed causal connection between observable events or the non-systematic nature of the practice. Of concern here is not so much the nature of the existence of commonsense explanation but rather the relationship between this level of understanding and the level of understanding of sociological practice. This is, in part, the ethnomethodologists' problem of attempting to link the method by which lay people make sense of their world with the 'techniques' available to the sociologist. This issue leads inevitably into a discussion of the nature of 'scientific' and 'commonsense' concepts.

#### SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

It is apparent that many of the 'concepts' employed in sociology are nothing more than 'high sounding' euphemisms for commonsense notions



derived from observation and experience, e.g., upward social mobility simply means getting on in the world. Theoretical concepts are not derived from observation but from their connection with other concepts (Willers, 1973). Apart from the derivation of concepts being one of the major obstacles to systematic sociological practice, sociology also faces the problem of the application of nominal and arbitrary definitions of concepts in order to produce scientific knowledge.

Winch attempts to argue that there is a connection between concepts which are applied in disciplines, e.g., economics, and lay terms which operate to locate these concepts within the discipline:

The notion of liquidity preference in economics is, logically tied to concepts businessmen do use in their activities for its use by the economist presupposes his understanding of what it is to conduct a business which in turn involves an understanding of such business concepts as money, cost, risk, etc. (Winch, 1958:89).

Giddens is critical of Winch's argument:

Winch argues that it is only the relation between the economists' 'liquidity preference' and the actor's concepts of money, cost, risk, etc., which makes the activity referred to 'economic' rather than say religious. But that matters are not as simple as this can be readily seen by taking just this example. A ceremony in which a man adorns his place of worship with gold to propitiate his god is regarded by both him and by an observer as a religious activity: but the observer may also surely quite sensibly characterize what the actor does as an 'investment of funds' (Giddens, 1976:150).

Keat and Urry are also critical of Winch's position which they see as an attempt to 'place restrictions on the theoretical concepts of social science' (Keat and Urry, 1975:165). They see the major shortcoming of this approach as lying in the assumption that there is something:

objectionable or improper in characterizing people's subjective states in terms of concepts that are unavailable or unintelligible to them (Keat and Urry, 1975:165).

These authors point out that following Winch's argument it:

would be absurd to explain the actions of a medieval surgeon as intended to prevent the spreading of 'virus infections' since this concept was unavailable at that time (Keat and Urry, 1975:165).

Notwithstanding the point made by Keat and Urry, concepts are in part the product of socio-historical factors of the society in which the particular practice is located.

Discussions of the relationship between commonsense and sociological understanding are actually concerned with a social phenomenon not simply a logical one. That is, as Gellner points out 'people both act on commonsense notions and are *at the same time* aware that these commonsense notions are cognitively inadequate and second rate' (Gellner, 1973:74). Consequently, concepts stand in an inferior-superior relationship in a *social sense* depending on whether they are daily-life concepts or the exclusive domain of experts. This line of argument suggests that there is a strong power dimension to knowledge. Knowledge is power and vice-versa. That is, the ability of groups to define particular concepts as scientific and others as non-scientific and to be able to incorporate the former into a language creates a power differential between practices. Gellner, in discussing the way in which this power differential is maintained points to:

the invention of ideologies whose appeal hinges on a claim that their concepts, underlying assumptions, and so on are cognitively superior to those of commonsense (Gellner, 1973:74).

Gellner goes on to distinguish 'human' from 'non-human' concepts by arguing that the distinction is based on familiarity: 'concepts become 'human' simply through familiarity' (Gellner, 1973:75). Mehlman (1973) has also pointed out the social component of concepts with the notion of 'floating signifier' which acts as a rhetorical device by referring to a word in which the assumption is made that it is of the order of what everybody knows, when it, in fact, is not!

This social context is also relevant in helping to distinguish sociological from social problems.

### SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Sociological problems are not the same as social problems although in the final analysis both may be dependent upon the particular value position of the researcher. Sociological problems or puzzles are concerned with a systematic understanding of the unobservable mechanisms which affect human behaviour. Social problems are defined as such by a group of individuals and reflect an ideological or particular social situation of the definers rather than the relation of a problem to contingent theoretical problems. For example the statement of a social problem 'how can the crime rate be reduced in Australia?' not only reflects an ideological position but the answer to this problem ultimately relies upon a normative evaluation of what is crime? Why crime exists? And what is a desirable crime rate? On the other hand, sociological problems do not rely *solely* on normative positions, although this is a major component of sociological practice, but also systematic practice. For instance the sociological problem of: how is order maintained? can be answered in a systematic-logical fashion although the value-position of the research also plays a part, as will become clearer in later chapters.

It appears that any attempt at sociological explanation must take into account various situational factors and one of the major difficulties for sociological practice is determining which factors are to be taken into account, which omitted, and why. At present this problem is usually handled by pointing to the multiparadigmatic nature of sociology which implies that the particular perspective applied by the researcher is responsible for the components in the researcher's theoretical framework and the evidence he or she collects.

### THE SUBJECTIVE VIEW OF THE ACTOR

The confusion about how the subjective view of the actors is to be taken into account for sociological practice arises because of the

tendency to treat these viewpoints as *causes* of phenomena as expressed in the overriding concern with reasons and purposes rather than *effects*. Consciousness with its various manifestation, e.g., beliefs, attitudes is a product, an outcome of the complex configuration of elements in society. Durkheim certainly saw the role of the actor in sociological inquiry in this way:

I consider extremely fruitful this idea that social life should be explained not by the notions of those who participate in it, but by more profound causes which are unperceived by consciousness, and I think also that these causes are to be sought mainly in the manner according to which the associated individuals are grouped. Only in this way can history become a science and sociology exist (quoted in Keat and Urry, 1975:164).

This is not to deny the importance of consciousness for sociological practice. One sociological 'perspective' which attempts to use the actor's viewpoint as an explanatory variable is the 'action frame of reference'.

As Mackenzie has pointed out:

This perspective makes explicit recognition of the prior orientations that actors ... bring with them to the work place and which therefore influence their choice of job, the meaning they assign to it and hence their relation to it (Mackenzie, 1974:241).

These explanations regard social institutions such as the community and the family as the sources of these prior orientations. But these structures are themselves determined by the occupational-economic structure of the region (Mackenzie, 1974:242-3). Consequently any sociological analysis, which is not in the form of abstracted empiricism, needs to begin with the nature of the social system in which the particular phenomenon under study is located. It was theorists such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber who did attempt to provide just such a theory of the social system and their contributions would need to be considered in any attempt to produce an adequate theory. Some writers have indicated that it was Durkheim who offered the potential for an adequate non-positivist, realist sociology. For example Zubaida has stated that 'he was on the right track but did not quite make it' (1974:80). Unfortunately no constructive suggestions

are offered by these authors as to how we might be able to build upon Durkheim's contribution and 'make it'.

## CONCLUSION

This work attempts to develop a systematic sociological practice for the production of scientific sociological knowledge. In the light of some of the epistemological issues touched on in this introduction which are relevant for sociological analysis, it could be argued that sociological research should not proceed until these issues have been satisfactorily resolved. This work is a study of the sociology of ethnic relations and the role of ethnic schools in Australia. However, the position suggested here is that it is not possible to apply scientific sociological practice to an area such as ethnic relations, unless there is a clear understanding of what is sociological about this area and of course what is scientific sociology.

The following chapter asks 'what is scientific knowledge?' and critically evaluates some of the various conceptions of scientific knowledge which have been proposed. Many of the conventional conceptions such as positivism and falsificationism are rejected as based upon false assumptions about scientific practice. It will be argued that the notion 'scientific' has many dubious connotations, e.g., objectivity, and does not seem helpful in application to social science, and that the notion of systematic knowledge is more useful. The chapter concludes by suggesting that a materialist conception of knowledge based upon realist assumptions provides the potential for the development of a systematic sociological practice. Chapter Three draws on the work of writers such as Althusser, Foucault and Fay to develop an adequate methodology for sociological practice, namely Critical Systematic Sociological Practice (CSSP).

Part II attempts to show how CSSP can be applied to the discourse of ethnic relations. Chapter Four is intended as a critique of the sociology

of ethnic relations in Australia and attempts to expose some of the conceptual contradictions and the rhetoric of the discourse of ethnic relations as it is developed in some of the leading texts and government documents. One of the points repeatedly emphasised in this introduction was the need for a theory of the social system in which to locate the area of concern, in this case ethnic relations, and this task represents the content of Chapters Five and Six.

Part III focuses on multicultural education as a component of ethnic relations and the role of ethnic schools in a truly multicultural society, while Part IV re-emphasises the connection between epistemology, sociology and ethnic relations.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER ONE

- 1 For instance notice the additional sub-areas in the chapter 'The Logic of Sociological Inquiry' in the 2nd edition of Peter Worsley *et al.*, *Introducing Sociology*, which were not included in the 1st edition.
- 2 There are a number of scholars who would disagree with this claim. Merton (1968:93), for instance, suggests that functional analysis is neither inherently conservative nor radical. He refers to a statement from La Pierre which Merton claims 'suggests that functional analysis is an approach inherently critical in outlook and pragmatic in judgement' (1968:92). It is difficult to determine why Merton regards La Pierre's comment as 'critical'. Clearly it is not suggesting that functional analysis is critical of the total social system which is the sense in which 'critical' is applied in this analysis.
- 3 The criterion of internal consistency is often applied by sociologists to evaluate the work of their peers but is not formally spelled out. The criterion of peer evaluation and subjective definitions of what is sociological knowledge, is unacceptable to many as scientific knowledge (Hirst, 1975). In the communication of sociological knowledge, very often sociologists point out the logical inadequacies of the knowledge in question but continue to communicate it as though it enjoyed scientific status. For instance one has only to read the introduction to many sociological studies under the heading usually of 'Review of the Literature' to appreciate what is presented as sociological knowledge and which is often regarded as inadequate for various reasons by the writer.
- 4 I recall a situation which occurred when I was in Canada which highlights this point. A postgraduate student experienced considerable difficulty in getting staff members to accept his interest, 'the sociology of humour' as a legitimate topic for sociological analysis.
- 5 Worsley seems to offer evidence which is in contradiction to the existence of a common body of theory. For example, notice the discussion of the various theoretical perspectives such as functionalism, Marxism, labelling theory and ethnomethodology.
- 6 Durkheim himself did seem to be aware of the role of the social context in predetermining knowledge especially in respect of religion:

But it has been less frequently noticed that religion has not confined itself to enriching the human intellect, formed beforehand, with a certain number of ideas; it has contributed to forming the intellect itself. Men are to it not only a good part of the substance of their knowledge, but also the form in which this knowledge has been elaborated.

At the roots of all our judgements there are a certain number of essential ideas which dominate all our intellectual life; they are what philosophers since Aristotle have called the categories of the understanding: ideas of time, space, class ... (Durkheim, 1965:21).

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE?

Invariably, the way in which the problem; what is scientific knowledge? is approached reflects the conception of science within which the writer is operating, e.g., questions about causation, verification and explanation tend to be located within a positivistic conception of science while questions of scientific *practice* which refer to the production of knowledge by means of the application of concepts to the 'raw material' indicate a materialist conception. We may specify what we regard as the main propositions of positivism as follows:

1. The phenomena dealt with by the social sciences are qualitatively no different from those of the natural sciences. This being the case, the methodology of the latter is appropriate for the former.
2. The principal aim of sociology is to formulate a system of empirically grounded theories that will ultimately be used for accurate prediction of social phenomena.
3. An empiricist epistemology, in which knowledge of an object consists in apprehending its essence by a process of abstraction (generalising) from the concrete object, is appropriate for scientific sociology.
4. The sociologist, qua sociologist, seeks to be neutral with respect to values (Lally, 1978a:5).

These propositions are similar to the four aspects of positivism specified by Fay. Fay uses the term 'positivist social science' to 'refer to that metatheory of social science which is based on a modern empiricist philosophy of science referred to as the hypothetico-deductive model of science' (Fay, 1975:13). The four 'essential features' of this metatheory are:

First, drawing on the distinction between discovery and validation, its deductive-nomological account of explanation and concomitant modified Humean interpretation of the notion of 'cause'; second, its belief in a neutral observation language as the proper foundation of knowledge; third, its value-free ideal of scientific knowledge; and fourth, its belief in the methodological unity of the sciences (Fay, 1975:13).



The notion of a 'materialist conception of scientific practice' is taken from the writings of Louis Althusser. Pickvance (1976:4) has contrasted this position with empiricism:

Whereas in the conventional ('empiricist') conception of knowledge, theoretical objects, or concepts, are produced as a result of abstraction from reality (real objects), Althusser dismisses abstraction as an 'empiricist' process which has no place in his 'materialist' epistemology. Since the precise relation between theoretical object and real object is the matter of some debate, let us simply say that the real object refers to some aspect of reality, ready-wrapped in preconceptions which are usually 'ideological' which the science seeks knowledge of in the form of a theoretical object. (Theoretical knowledge is seen as arising not from the action of a subject [thinker] on the real object, but by the action of theoretical concepts on the real object).

The nature of this materialist process in terms of the application of concept to a raw material to produce knowledge will be elaborated on later. Writers who have adopted this materialist approach include Tribe (1973) and Castells and de Ipola (1976).

A prevailing concern within the philosophy of science is the examination of the question of whether or not there is only one universalistic practice which produces legitimate knowledge and thus only one *form* of product that can be regarded as knowledge (Keat and Urry, 1975:7). This issue is apparent, for instance, in the distinction between natural scientific knowledge and all other forms of knowledge. As Giddens says:

There has been the attempt to sustain the claim that natural scientific knowledge, or a particular characterization of it, should be regarded as the exemplar of everything which can be regarded legitimately as 'knowledge' (1976:13).

Knowledge, in the social sciences, by the very nature of the components involved (i.e., the subject-subject relationship as opposed to the subject-object relationship in the natural sciences) and the characteristics of these components, suggests that social science knowledge is likely to be different than knowledge in the natural sciences. The exclusive specification of knowledge in the form of 'natural scientific knowledge' is partly a function of the belief that there does exist a universal method

which is the only true method for the production of scientific knowledge. No such method exists. There exists only specific *practices* which provide their own internal standards to evaluate the status of the knowledge produced (Althusser, 1969).

The methods of the natural sciences, which, by and large have been whole-heartedly employed in the social sciences, are logical positivism and empiricism. It is these methods which have at best produced empirical generalisations in the social sciences: an extremely limited system of knowledge (Willers, 1973).<sup>1</sup> To quote from Giddens again on this topic:

But any approach to the social sciences which seeks to express their epistemology and ambitions as directly similar to those of the sciences of nature is condemned to failure in its own terms, and can only result in a limited understanding of the condition of man in society (Giddens, 1976:14).

A considerable problem in critiquing the literature on scientific method is the difficulty of distinguishing the various *terms* which do more to confuse analysis than to enlighten it, e.g., positivism, inductivism, falsificationism, conventionalism, realism to name just a few. These terminological difficulties are compounded by the various meanings different authors apply to the same terms. However, a considerable number of these epistemological positions can be reduced to a few assumptions upon which they are based and which some of them share, e.g., that knowledge resides in the 'real world' and all observations precede theory; that in the final analysis, what constitutes scientific knowledge is a function of what scientists say or do. By refuting these assumptions, the approaches themselves can be said to be refuted. Another problem is that the conceptualisation of the problem in terms of the discovery of an 'adequate' or 'satisfactory' philosophy of science is usually in the form of dichotomies, e.g., objective/subjective; realism/idealism; naturalist/anti-naturalist, which tends to set boundaries and categories within which the debate proceeds. In other words these 'opposites' tend to put blinders on the range of debate. An example of this is the point made by Keat and

Urry that the application of these dichotomies has been such that the 'natural' combinations *between* dichotomies to classify approaches has generally been naturalist positivist or anti-naturalist idealist. The authors go on to argue that this is incorrect as it is possible to hold a naturalist position which is *not* positivist (Keat and Urry 1975:1-2). What then distinguishes a *naturalist* from a *positivist* conception of science?

#### NATURALIST CONCEPTION OF SCIENCE

What specifically distinguishes naturalist from anti-naturalist approaches is the belief about the *purpose* of science. The aim of science in the former is to produce objective *general laws* which explain particular events. Subjective elements and the relationship between science and society has no role to play in a naturalist conception of science. However, as Keat and Urry have pointed out within this general approach to science, three various positions can be identified - positivism, realism and conventionalism.

##### A. Positivism

For the positivist, knowledge resides in the external world and needs to be extracted. This process is achieved by means of the construction of theories, based on observations which are representations of the regularities existing in the real world. Knowledge, in this approach is tested knowledge, i.e., statements about these regularities are tested by means of experiment and observation which are the only source of sure and certain empirical knowledge (Keat and Urry, 1975). For the naturalist:

It is not the purpose of science to get 'behind' or 'beyond' the phenomena revealed to us by sensory experience, to give us knowledge of unobservable natures, essences or mechanisms that somehow necessitate these phenomena (Keat and Urry, 1975:4).

## B. Realism

Realism shares with positivism the belief in science as an 'empirically-based, rational and objective enterprise, the purpose of which is to provide us with true explanatory and predictive knowledge of nature' (Keat and Urry, 1975:5). According to Keat and Urry what distinguishes realism from positivism is that whereas the latter does not include any concern for *necessary connections* between events only that a particular event is an example of a general regularity, the former with a different notion of explanation, is based on the assumption that:

We must discover the necessary connections between phenomena, by acquiring knowledge of the *underlying structure and mechanism at work* ... . Thus for the realist, a scientific theory is a description of structures and mechanisms which causally generate the observable phenomena, a description which enables us to explain them (Keat and Urry, 1975:5, emphasis added).

## C. Conventionalism

Realism and positivism both view knowledge as residing in the external world and to this extent both rely on observation as the final adjudicator of theoretical representations.<sup>2</sup> By necessity then, both these positions distinguish between *theory* and *observation*. Conventionalism denies this dichotomy and instead argues 'that no useful distinction between theory and observation can be maintained' (Keat and Urry, 1975:5). Furthermore, conventionalism rejects the view that there are universal criteria for choosing between theories, rather subjective factors are important for this purpose. (It is this final point about the rejection of universal criteria which must cast doubt on the categorising of conventionalism as a naturalist conception of science.) Keat and Urry add the following comment:

What unites conventionalists is their opposition to the view of science as providing true descriptions and explanations of an external reality, through theories which can be objectively tested and compared by observation and experiment (Keat and Urry, 1975:5).

Conventionalism cannot, on the basis of the presentation of this approach by Keat and Urry, be logically incorporated into a naturalist approach as

it rejects the assumption that knowledge resides in the real world and that observations are theory-free (Giddens, 1976:146).

For the positivist, observation provides the verification or otherwise of theories. But no amount of observation can ever verify theories as there is no logical connection between past events upon which theories are based and future events (Keat and Urry, 1975:15) i.e., there is no guarantee that future events will be like the past and so positivism is founded on an incorrect assumption about the connection between 'scientific laws' and observation. Whether the specific approach within positivism is falsificationist or confirmationist, the same basic assumption underlies this position.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier it was pointed out that any attempt to specify what constitutes scientific knowledge is dependent upon the particular belief about the *aims* of science and the manner in which the problem is posed. This is clearly indicated in the *positivist's* understanding of the aims of science as *prediction* whereas the *realist* views the aim of science as *explanation* (Keat and Urry, 1975:27). With respect to the positivist approach it is possible to go further and point out that the nature of the assumptions upon which the approach is founded does not permit scientific prediction to be possible, i.e., precise statements, but must settle for probability statements about the likelihood of events occurring (Willers, 1973). The limitation is brought about partly as a function of the limitation pointed out earlier, namely the assumption that future events will be like past events. But another reason for this limitation is that positivism, as can be deduced from its basic assumptions is located within an 'empiricist system of knowledge' (Willers, 1973). These authors argue that as a direct consequence of the technique it employs, empiricism cannot produce scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, this knowledge is often mistaken for scientific knowledge.

EMPIRICISM

Empiricist knowledge 'is gained by experience or sensation alone' (Willers, 1973:7) and relies on empirical connections between observations. This method, then, attributes connections to events which are observed to follow one another in time, 'but we do not observe any power or force connecting them' (Willers, 1973:8). In a 'Humean' fashion, causality or connection is interpreted where only sequentiality is observed. One of the most poignant examples used by the authors to make this point is that of attempting to determine the temperature at which a car radiator will break. An empiricist observes that when his or her car is left in the open overnight in winter, the radiator sometimes breaks. Over a large number of trials he or she interprets that the radiator breaking is connected with low temperatures and he or she may even achieve a level of precision with this method to be able to predict that the radiator will break when the temperature drops below 5°, i.e., the radiator will *probably* break when the temperature is below 5°. The best this method can hope to provide is probability statements and rough predictions. A scientific explanation, on the other hand, would be able to state at precisely what temperature the radiator would break. The empiricist assumes that the association between cold temperature and radiator breaking is a causal one which may not be correct, and is unable to offer an *explanation* of why the radiator breaks. The application of theoretical concepts and scientific laws about freezing water, volume, temperature etc., would be necessary in order to offer an explanation.

Although the latter explanation is preferable to the empiricist system of knowledge it is extremely limited with respect to the social sciences. One ingredient present in the so-called scientific explanation and which is lacking from an empiricist system of knowledge is the application of scientific (theoretical) concepts. Any discussion of scientific *knowledge*

needs to concern itself with the method of development of such concepts and any concern with scientific *sociology* needs to concern itself with the reason for the *absence* of such concepts in social science. Nominal definitions of concepts which characterise social science appear untenable as scientific concepts.<sup>4</sup> The application of nominal definitions is often connected with an inductionist methodology. Kuhn has pointed out that the method of induction does not provide an adequate method for the development of scientific knowledge as the definitional categories are *arbitrary* (Kuhn, 1970a:12, 18). For instance, he says

Decisions about which characteristics are to be parts of a definition and which are to be available for the statement of general law are often arbitrary, and in practice are seldom made (Kuhn, 1970a:18).

The arbitrariness of nominal definitions of concepts raises questions about the relationship between concepts and the problem which is posed.

Althusser has argued that the system of concepts, what he calls the *pre-*formulated 'problematic', is brought to bear on problems that can only be defined as problems because of, and within, that problematic (Althusser, 1970). George Canguilhem has expressed the order of this relationship clearly: 'to define a concept is to formulate a *problem*' (Lecourt, 1975:172).<sup>5</sup> That is, while a problem may exist prior to concepts, it cannot be articulated.

The question remains as to what criteria can be applied to differentiate between various conceptions of knowledge as to their adequacy for the production of scientific knowledge. Previous reference has been made to the inadequacy of conceptions which are based on the assumptions that knowledge resides in observations and is a function of experience and that observations precede theory and are theoretically neutral. It is possible to extend these critiques into two general perspectives: firstly, approaches that distinguish between 'subject' and 'object' and, secondly, those that distinguish the theoretical from observation and those that do not make this distinction.

SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE APPROACHES TO SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Subjective notions of scientific knowledge are presented as usually based on the belief that this knowledge, i.e., theories or explanations is ultimately reducible to what scientists do and to knowledge which is shared by the scientific community. This conception of knowledge can be represented by the form subject = knowledge = truth. The existence of this process is not disputable but it is doubtful that it follows logically that this *is* scientific knowledge. It may be more correct to posit that this process is one of mystification which produces knowledge *presented as though* it were scientific knowledge.

The subjectivist position

The subjectivist position is best characterised in the writings of Thomas Kuhn. Knowledge for Kuhn is 'embedded in terms and phrases learned by some non-linguistic process like *ostension* (Kuhn, 1970b:235). That is, an unconscious process of learning how nature really is. Furthermore, problem-solution exercises are seen as the ways by which the language of a theory is learned and how the knowledge of nature embedded in that language of a theory is learned. This knowledge is organised as *paradigms* or disciplinary *matrices* which are shared by a particular scientific community at a particular time (Therborn, 1976:69).<sup>6</sup> What becomes 'extremely problematical' for Kuhn is the recognition that this process of 'ostension is not perfect, i.e., communication is incomplete and these disciplinary matrices act as mental blinders for scientists who hold incommensurable points of view and are prisoners caught in the framework of (their) theories' (Kuhn, 1970b:232).

A disciplinary matrix such as  $F = m \cdot a$  is a law sketch and needs to be rewritten for specific problems, e.g., free falls, pendulum and harmonic oscillation (Kuhn, 1970b:272). But an important question is: *How* does the scientist come to see the problem as connected to a specific



law sketch? According to Kuhn the scientist is continually exposed to a series of exemplary problem solutions which teach him or her to see different physical situations as like each other (Kuhn, 1970b:272). The scientist acquires the ability to conceptualise situations in terms of a particular theoretical framework: 'by assimilating a sufficient number of exemplars, we learn to recognise and work with the world our teachers already know' (Kuhn, 1970b:275). It follows that any explanation of scientific progress in Kuhn's schema must be concerned with value systems and the institutional socialisation of scientists. Kuhn explicitly states this:

Knowing what scientists value, we may hope to understand what problems they will undertake and what choice they will make in particular circumstances of conflict. I doubt there is another sort of answer to be found (Kuhn, 1970a:21).

Given this sociological conceptualisation of science, how does Kuhn deal with problems of scientific development? *What is the basis by which a particular matrix enjoys a greater degree of acceptance than other matrices?* Kuhn does not accept the possibility that specific matrices are rejected because they do not hold with observation, on the grounds that historically, some theories were overthrown *before* being put to the test. He also rejects the idea that a matrix predominates because it represents a closer approximation of truth, because scientists, according to Kuhn, do not approach ever closer to truth. The notion of 'truth' is seen as problematical because there does not exist any shared neutral language among scientists for observational reports.<sup>7</sup> Without the existence of such a neutral language it is meaningless to talk of a closer approximation to truth (Kuhn, 1970b:265). Theory choice is resolvable for Kuhn by the scientist in an apparently arbitrary manner:

... take a group of the ablest available people with the most appropriate motivation, train them in some science and in the specialities relevant to the choice at hand; ... with the value system, the ideology current in their discipline; let them make the choice (Kuhn, 1970b:237-8).

A second major problem with Kuhn's formulation can be expressed as follows: *With scientists supposedly socialised into the acceptance of a specific matrix, how does a new matrix develop?* Kuhn states that scientists should be constantly critical and involved in attempted framework-breaking (Kuhn, 1970b:242-44). Paradigm shift is seen to be possible in the context of this approach due to the existence of *normal science* based on a 'good scientific theory' which permits 'puzzle-solving'. According to Kuhn, it is this puzzle solving exercise which provides the occasion for *resolution*, i.e., when normal science confronts a crisis, signified by the questioning of the good scientific theory. The critical problem with this dialectic between good scientific theory and puzzle-solving is elucidated by Kuhn himself:

What is the actual criteria ... to be applied when deciding whether a particular failure in puzzle-solving is or is not to be attributed to fundamental theory and thus to become an occasion for deep concern? (Kuhn, 1970b:248).

The gist of Kuhn's response to this problem is that it is left to the individual scientist to decide when an anomaly spotlights a crisis or whether it is an individual failing on his behalf - there exists for each scientist 'a critical level at which a tolerable turns into an intolerable amount of anomaly, and this critical level is not the same for all scientists' (Kuhn, 1970b:248). Both normal and revolutionary science represent changes but whereas the former refers to the refinement of scientific theories, the latter concerns their replacement.<sup>8</sup>

Kuhn's historical investigations of scientific discoveries has led him to assume that because an observed method of science has co-existed with the appearance of scientific discoveries, then the latter was the result of the former. It would appear that the dilemma and confusion in Kuhn's approach is a result of an attempt to answer epistemological questions by resorting to a sociological analysis. Tribe (1973) is critical of the frequent switches Kuhn makes between the epistemological

and the sociological. This dilemma is perhaps best exemplified in the distinction Kuhn makes between *normal* and *revolutionary* science. When is a change a revolution and not simply a modification within normal science? Kuhn attempts to answer this by citing examples of extreme changes which he claims constitute revolutions. However, they all have one thing in common: the resultant theoretical framework is either (a) composed of *different* concepts, or (b) *different* connections between existing concepts (Kuhn, 1970b:251). In light of this, an analysis of the *nature* of the *matrix*, i.e., the internal consistency and relationship between the concepts would appear warranted. This is ignored by Kuhn.

As a retort to the charge of relativism, Kuhn presents an analogy of a tree to indicate his view of scientific knowledge as an evolutionary process (Kuhn, 1970b:264). A set of criteria (presumably community shared values) can be applied to theories situated on a descendency line on the tree to determine which theory is the older, which descendent. Kuhn concludes from this that one scientific theory is not as good as another for doing what scientists normally do (Kuhn, 1970b:264). This statement is puzzling in light of the normal/revolutionary dichotomy proposed by Kuhn. Given the existence of a number of criteria (which is in itself problematic) that may be applied to theories it does not follow that these criteria will necessarily determine direction or chronological order. This is so because revolutionary science implies a new theoretical framework and hence there is *no* necessary connection between concepts of succeeding theories, or the relationship between concepts.<sup>9</sup> The confusion resulting from Kuhn's continual jump from the epistemological to the sociological is compounded by his major argument intended to counter the charge of relativism:

No part of the argument here or in my book implies that scientists may choose any theory they like so long as they agree in their choice and thereafter enforce it - all puzzles in normal science involve nature indirectly and *nature cannot be forced into an arbitrary set of conceptual boxes* (Kuhn, 1970b:263, emphasis added).

This statement clarifies the connection Kuhn sees between the subject (scientist or group of scientists) and the object of study (nature). For Kuhn the object is non-problematic and given, *but* because of incomplete communication scientists do not perceive nature from the same 'gestalt' and hence it is the intervention of the subject into nature which is problematic. To resolve this problem (a problem which only arises for Kuhn because of the different meanings scientists attach to the world), Kuhn sees the need for some sort of 'translation manual' so that communication can be complete and some degree of objectivity can be assumed and thus facilitate theory comparison (Kuhn, 1970b:270). In Kuhn's conceptualisation, scientific knowledge and its development is dependent upon the nature-language link. In order to gain a better understanding of the development of scientific knowledge, Kuhn argues that we need to know more about the structure of language and how it is applied to nature, e.g., how is it that we all have abstract mental classes which allow us to classify objects even though we have not encountered them before? (Kuhn, 1970b:276).<sup>10</sup>

In summary, Kuhn has introduced the importance of the subjective component of science, but the empiricist assumptions and suppositions upon which his conceptualisation of scientific knowledge is based, leads to an incorrect interpretation of what *subjective* aspects are and their role in scientific attitudes. It appears that any conceptualisation which sees scientific knowledge as the product of scientists' attitudes, beliefs, etc., must be rejected as an inadequate representation of scientific practice (Chalmers, 1976). It needs to be realised that the *object* of knowledge is *constructed* by scientists and it is a materialist conception of science which offers the potential for providing a theoretical formulation of this practice. To maintain, as Kuhn does, that knowledge is not 'relative' in his scheme but that scientists are accountable to *nature* in the final analysis, suggests that there is some method by which

it can be determined that a theory is a correct interpretation of that nature. Kuhn presents neither such a method nor the means by which a method could be derived. His rejection of the notion of truth is consistent with his sociological analysis of scientific knowledge but inconsistent with his epistemological position. Given Kuhn's 'fallacy of sociologism' it would appear that, in order to be consistent, he would need to argue that '*nature is relative*', i.e., according to the predominant interpretation of the time (a point he goes to great pains to deny).

The fallacy in Kuhn's subjective position arises from the assumption that nature is a given and that therefore any analysis of science must concern itself with the subjective representations of nature scientists make.

To this extent the concept of *paradigm* (or disciplinary matrix) has provided an important insight into scientific knowledge, but it does not permit, as does the notion of *problematic* for instance, an analysis of the way in which the *object* of knowledge is constructed.<sup>11</sup> It is in the sense expressed by Kuhn that a subjective practice (based on consensus) can never be scientific and a rejection of this position suggests the need for some criteria by which to analyse knowledge which does not ultimately rely upon attitudes and beliefs of scientists. If scientists do construct the object of their inquiry then it is the nature of this construction that needs to be analysed in order to ascertain the status of the knowledge produced.

Approaches which distinguish theory from observation and those that do not

A view which regards interpretive understanding as non-scientific bases this claim on the grounds that there are some external criteria of validity which may be applied to knowledge (theories) and that these criteria are missing from interpretive understanding. This empiricist positivist position ignores the fact that observational statements which

act as the external criteria of validity are themselves theory laden and hence *all* methodologies which distinguish theory from observation are applying an *interpretive* method, i.e., interpreting and selecting *which* particular observations are to count as evidence for or against the truth of the theory. However the recognition of this point must not be seen as the rationale for searching through scientists' attitudes, beliefs, etc., to determine *why* these particular criteria were chosen to throw light on what is scientific knowledge as this is consistent with a subjectivist approach which was rejected earlier as being inadequate. A materialist approach needs *concepts* which allow for the analysis of the *product* of scientific practice to determine its epistemological status.

But if we cannot distinguish the theoretical from the empirical and are able to identify only specific practices, what are the characteristics of a particular practice which allows us to define that practice as scientific? To reiterate a point made earlier and notwithstanding the fact that knowledge is related to many practices and settings (Castells and de Ipola, 1976; Foucault, 1976, 1977) 'a scientific practice functions in a way that is independent of [all] other practices' (Chalmers, 1976:137). Any question which concerns itself with scientific versus non-scientific practices<sup>12</sup> is, in the final analysis, concerning itself with the extent to which the *practice* applies *concepts* to a particular *object* to produce an end product. There is a sense then, in which the object of a particular practice may be seen as 'ideological' rather than 'real' which could be one possible distinction between science and non-science. Ideology in this sense refers to an imaginary relationship (rather than a practice). In Althusser's words:

In ideology the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation; a relation that *expresses a will* (conservative, conformist or revolutionary) a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality (Althusser, 1969:234).

The imaginary relationship is given by experience which provides the 'given', i.e., the object for what David and Judith Willer have called an empiricist system of knowledge (Willers, 1973). But as Hirst has pointed out, 'the objects of science do not correspond to the objects of experience; they are not given but the products of scientific knowledge itself' (Hirst, 1975:4). Essentially then, *one* distinction between science and non-science with respect to the history and philosophy of science could be the distinction between the 'real' object and an ideological object.

Using ideology in the sense of 'ideological *practice*' (rather than as an imaginary relationship) then ideological practice can also refer to the epistemological inadequacies of the basic assumptions of definite practices. One of these inadequacies, alluded to previously, is the distinction between *the theoretical* and *the empirical*. As soon as this distinction is posited, the problem of correspondence and representation of the empirical and the theoretical appears. A problem which is not resolvable because it is based on the assumption that knowledge lies within the observable and is a function of experience. This assumption is basic to empiricism and as Castells and de Ipola have pointed out, it is nonsense to talk of knowledge residing in the object and preceding theory because 'there is no possibility of recording or observing without prior categorisation of what is to be observed ... there is no evidence which is not *constructed* in a process of production in which theory plays an important role' (Castells and de Ipola, 1976:124). Theory then cannot be distinguished from practice, so any materialist approach to knowledge needs to concern itself with the specific nature of the practices which allows one to be regarded as scientific and the other as non-scientific as well as the nature of the *object* upon which the practice operates. Unfortunately, Althusser who applies such an approach, adds confusion to any conceptual clarity by distinguishing *theoretical* from *non-theoretical practices* while also referring to *scientific practices*. For example, theoretical practice is:

... distinguished from the other, non-theoretical practices by the type of object (raw material) which it transforms; by the type of means of production it sets to work; by the type of object it produces (knowledge) (Althusser, 1970:59).

Consequently to avoid terminological confusion, I do not refer to theoretical versus non-theoretical practices, but to scientific versus non-scientific (or ideological) practices. Practice, in this sense, can be defined as:

... any process of transformation of a determinate given raw material into a determinant *product*, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means of 'production' (Althusser, 1969:188).

In order to make sense of the components and structure of scientific practice it is necessary to apply some sort of systematic framework to the notion of *practice*. It is with respect to the development of such a framework that Althusser's writings are extremely useful, specifically his notions of Generalities I, II, III.

If scientific practice is a process of transformation (*not* a process of abstraction or purification), then the process may be divided into its various components:

1. The raw material (the object) upon which concepts operate to produce knowledge (Generality I).
2. The conceptual field which operates on the raw material to produce knowledge (Generality II).
3. The knowledge produced by the application of concepts to the raw material (Generality III).

These generalities may be applied to various practices in order to analyse the nature of the knowledge produced and may be useful for analysing sociological sub-areas, such as ethnic relations.

However, before this conceptualisation of the production of scientific knowledge can be applied there are still some questions about the nature of scientific practice and related issues which need to be clarified. The



positivist's notion of *scientific laws* as the aim of scientific practice in the social sciences appears untenable because of the insistence that these laws be universal. The position adopted in this paper is that any explanation needs to take into account *situational* and *historical* factors related to the phenomenon in question.<sup>13</sup> A non-positivist position which denies the separation of the theoretical and the empirical creates the need for some alternative type of *necessity* (logical), other than observation, by which to evaluate the practice (Keat and Urry, 1975:14). The rejection of the predominance of observation as the final arbiter, also logically rejects inductivism, deductivism and confirmist notions of how scientific knowledge, in the form of law-like statements, is produced.

As Keat and Urry specify:

No finite amount of observational evidence (and this is all we have) can finally establish the truth of a law which is held to apply at all times and places, and whose instances are therefore potentially infinite in number (Keat and Urry, 1975:15).

To this extent the distinction between visual data (which is claimed in positivist conceptions to be theory neutral) and interpretation is a false distinction. All data are interpreted. What is problematic though is whether or not in the *analysis* of interpretation, the focus is upon *subjective* states of the observer, i.e., in terms of *gestalt* and different theoretical perspectives which makes the observer see different things, e.g.,

You see a bird, I see an antelope; the physicist sees an X-ray tube, the child a complicated lamp-bulb; the microscopist sees coelenterate mesoglea, his new students see only a gooey, formless stuff. Tycho and Simplicius see a mobile sun, Kepler and Galileo see a static sun (Hanson quoted in Keat and Urry, 1975:57).

or *objective* aspects of the object. As pointed out by Keat and Urry the acceptance of the crucial role played by subjective states in the determination of knowledge leads to a circularity in the problem of verification of knowledge:

If what we see or observe is determined by our beliefs or knowledge, then we cannot, without circularity, test the truth or falsity of those beliefs by means of observation ... . If what we observe depends upon our beliefs, and these are experienced in our theories, then the truth of our claims about what we observe must depend upon the truth of those theories. This means that if our observation - statements are true, our theories must also be true. But if this is so, we cannot falsify our theories by means of true observation - statements, since if the latter are true, the former cannot be false (Keat and Urry, 1975:52).

What all these criticisms point to is the rejection of any conception of scientific knowledge which -

1. is based on the subjective state of the scientist, or
2. the distinction between theory and observation which regards observation as pre-theoretical; or
3. sees the process of the development of scientific knowledge as the correspondence between observation and theory with the latter as a correct representation of the former.

#### NON-POSITIVIST AND ANTI-EMPIRICIST CONCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

What different conceptions of knowledge are there which avoid the shortcomings of the positivist and empiricist positions outlined above? With this question in mind I wish to consider in some detail the conceptions of knowledge developed by the Willers, and the epistemological positions of Foucault, Marx and Althusser. I have included the system of knowledge put forward by the Willers because these authors have provided a systematic criticism of the empiricist system of knowledge and it is relevant to see to what extent their conceptualisation overcomes these criticisms.

#### The Willers' scientific system of knowledge

David and Judith Willer distinguish between the empirical level and the theoretical, each with its respective 'thought connections'. Rational connections are made at the theoretical level (a la Kant) and according to the Willers are not adequate for the production of scientific knowledge while the process is restricted to this level alone (Willers, 1973:12).

One problem for the Willers is *how* to connect the theoretical with the empirical while ensuring that the former is an accurate representation of the latter. This is achieved according to the authors via a third thought process: *abstraction*. Unfortunately, just how this process operates to bridge the two levels is not clearly articulated by the authors.<sup>14</sup>

Science, for the Willers is a process of model building through the application of 'abstractive thought'. The goal of science is to generate a *model* which is in an *isomorphic* relationship with observable phenomena:

The acceptance of a particular model is solely for practical purposes - that is for its isomorphism with empiricist structures and thus its effectiveness in providing an explanation for them (Willers, 1973:14).

To understand how this system of knowledge operates, the important question is: *On what basis is a model developed?* The Willers claim that it is on the basis of a *theory*<sup>15</sup> which is:

A constructed relational statement consisting of non-observable concepts. Concepts are defined not in terms of observations but by their relationship to each other (Willers, 1973:24).

According to the Willers it is a theory which generates models (Willers, 1973:27), but within the particular conception of knowledge adopted by these writers, explanation resides in a theory not in a model, something which the Willers seem to be unclear about.<sup>16</sup> Models may be viewed as heuristic devices of presentation, necessary because of the need for us to communicate knowledge and because of the nature of our communication system. Knowledge does not reside in a model. But David and Judith Willer have incorrectly vested explanatory power *in a model* as well as in a theory:

As long as one has a theory and a model for it, empirical cases can be explained by it with a high degree of exactness (Willers, 1973:26).

The notion of 'model' then in the Willers' scheme is a red herring, but one which they need to include to be consistent with their conception of science. The dilemma faced by these authors is that they are unable to break out of the empiricist's problem of correspondence. They attempt

to do so by introducing the thought processes of rational and abstractive connection but so long as their goal is to produce models which are in isomorphic relationships with empirical structures they seem unable to resolve their dilemma.<sup>17</sup> As this analysis of the Willers' system of knowledge has shown, their system is built upon many of the inadequacies and criticisms of positivism pointed out by Keat and Urry. One author who rejects these positivist assumptions and who has provided a critique of empiricism from which to criticise the Willers' system of knowledge, is Louis Althusser.

#### Althusser and the object of knowledge

The Willers' critique of empiricism was based on the inadequacy of the sensory process imputing causal connections between observations, while the description of their scientific system of knowledge relied on the structural components of a *theoretical level* as distinct from an *empirical level* which are seen as being related through the process of *abstraction*. This process somehow draws out the relationships between observations and represents them as models which are in an *isomorphic* relation to the empirical observations.

The claim that the Willers' own presentation of a scientific system of knowledge suffers from the same inadequacies as the empiricist system they depict (i.e., the problem of correspondence or isomorphism), suggests that a different form of systematic critique than that supplied by the Willers is necessary in order to understand the essence of this method. The process of *abstraction* necessitates the existence of a subject (the knower) and an object (the knowable) which then begs the question: What is it that the process of abstraction attempts to draw out or isolate from the object? Answer: Its *essence*, the possession of which by the subject is then called knowledge.<sup>18</sup> This knowledge is conceived of, in an empiricist

system of knowledge, as lying solely within the object but is not visible. Althusser's criticism of empiricism is based on different grounds than that of the Willers - grounds which seem to permit an assessment of the Willers' isomorphic model as empiricist. Whereas for the Willers, empiricism can only produce empirical generalisations based on *past* events, Althusser's critique is based on the argument that this system of knowledge identifies one part of the real object (its essence) and hence its object is the object of knowledge *as distinct from the real object which exists outside the subject, independent of the process of knowledge* (Althusser, 1970:40, emphasis added). In short, empiricism identifies and works on a second object, knowledge of which must not be confused with knowledge of the real object itself.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, what distinguishes the Willers' criticism of empiricism from that of Althusser's is that, in the former the concern is that the knowledge obtained is not scientific as it is not (nor can it be) in the form of law - like statements, whereas in the latter the concern is that the knowledge is knowledge (of whatever form) of a secondary object, the object of knowledge. Althusser's distinction between the object of knowledge and the real object raises at least three questions for scientific practice:

1. What constitutes the existence of the real object?
2. If the application of thought to any object means that the object of inquiry is always the object of knowledge then how is it possible to 'know' the real object?
3. What structural factors are associated with the formulation of the object of knowledge?

#### The object of knowledge and the real object

In describing the connection between the object of knowledge and the real object, Althusser bases his conceptualisation on the belief that the

real object is knowable but does not provide a detailed analysis of how it can be guaranteed that a particular object is the *real* object.<sup>20</sup> One major question raised by his analysis is: By what mechanism does the production of the object of knowledge produce the cognitive appropriation of the real object which exists outside thought - the real world?

(Althusser, 1970:56). Answer: *By practice*. Althusser rejects the duality of theory and practice as opposites and suggests that the dichotomy is merely an 'ideological myth' (Althusser, 1970:58). There exists only distinct practices (e.g., economic, political, ideological, scientific). As it is scientific practice which is of major importance for this paper let us look more closely at what Althusser has to say about this practice. Scientific practice is divisible into different 'domains' (e.g., mathematics, philosophy). The knowledge produced by these practices are validated by the strict exercise of the scientific practice (Althusser, 1970:59) and the science itself (in practice) determines the validity of its knowledge: 'They have no need for verification from *external* practices to declare knowledges they produce to be "true", i.e., to be knowledge' (Althusser, 1970:59).<sup>21</sup> The same process is involved in Althusser's presentation of how theoretical practices produce knowledge as is involved in his critique of the Hegelian problematic which moves from the 'concrete' to the 'abstract'. The latter is a *reflection process* in which the external *social formation* validates the abstract. In scientific practice, *reflection* is still the process in the validation of the knowledge of scientific practice, but it is an internal reflection determined by the practice itself.

Unfortunately, the 'internal validation' thesis as proposed by Althusser is purely descriptive and is only re-emphasising the structural nature of knowledge as practice. Bernard views scientific practice as a more specific process than Althusser's conceptualisation, although both

are compatible within the one construct. For Bernard it is a practice for producing knowledge and in which 'experimental proofs consist in demonstrating the conformity of a result with the specified conditions of experimentation and its variants with these conditions' (Hirst, 1973:453). This view is again consistent with the denial of the existence of any universal method for the production of scientific knowledge - it is scientific practices which determine scientific knowledge. From Bernard's view of scientific practice, one thing that distinguishes the product of scientific practice from non-scientific knowledge is that the latter, unlike the former, cannot provide proof of its product in terms of the 'specified conditions of experimentation'.

#### Social formation as a determinant of thought

The above discussion, although throwing light on the problem of scientific practice does not resolve the question posed earlier, i.e., what is the mechanism by which the object of knowledge appropriates the real object? As we have seen the immediate answer to this is 'by practice' but in order to clarify the *nature* of the object upon which this practice operates it is necessary to consider in greater detail that which in Althusser's schema constitutes the *real object*. The distinction that Althusser makes between the real object and the object of knowledge is paralleled in Marx by a distinction in the *production* of these objects. Whereas *the real object is produced by a series of historical events* in a real order:

The production process of the object of knowledge takes place entirely in knowledge and is carried out according to *a different order* in which the thought categories which 'reproduce' the real categories do not occupy the *same* place as they do in the order of real historical genesis, but quite different places assigned them by their function in the production process of the object of knowledge (Althusser, 1970:41).

Althusser's understanding of the relation between thought and reality is one of a structure of complex unity. A structure which *combines* the raw

material, the tools of the means of production and the historical conditions in which it produces (Althusser, 1970:41). The *reality* determines the *thought* of individuals 'who can only "think" the "problems" already actually or potentially posed ... "thought" is a peculiar real system' (Althusser, 1970:42). The nature of the reality, that is the social formation (legal-political-ideological) then, determines in the first instance the raw material, and hence, individuals in different social formations worked on different raw materials.<sup>22</sup> This raw material does not represent an intuition or 'imaginary posit' but a complex element already elaborated and transformed (Althusser, 1970:43). The positioning of thought and the raw material within a particular social formation (as the determinant component) means that the problematic and solution of a discourse *reflect* the elements (either as a unity or in part) of that social formation (religious, ethical, political or other) (Althusser, 1970:52). In this context, with the object of knowledge existing 'in the form of ideology at the moment of constitution of the science which is going to produce knowledge from it in the specific mode that defines it' (Althusser, 1970:46), the problem and solution exist in a sort of circular void as a reflection of the *elements* of social formation. How then do we break through this ideological - reflection - representation? Althusser's response to this question is inadequate. He suggests that what is required is the development of a 'new problematic which *allows* the real problem to be posed' (Althusser, 1970:52). However the way in which a new problematic is developed is not made clear *nor is it clear how we know that it is now the real problem which is posed.*

Althusser avoids idealism by positing the distinction between the *real* problem, practice, etc., and ideology, but the nature of the former and methods of knowing it are not clearly elucidated. The inability of Althusser to specify the exact distinction between the knowledge produced



leads him to resort to the idea of knowledge as (at least in part) a function of historical circumstances:

At each moment of the history of the knowledges this history takes knowledges for *what they are*, whether they declare themselves knowledges or not, whether they are ideological or scientific etc., *for knowledges* (Althusser, 1970:61).

In other words the products of these practices reflect a 'knowledge effect' (Althusser, 1970:61). A further confusion in Althusser's conception is that his writings suggest that the solution of the problem of the appropriation of the *real* object lies *solely* within the nature of the different *practices* applied rather than the nature of the object upon which the practice operates. For instance he says:

The problem of cognitive appropriation of the real object by the object of knowledge, *which is a special case of the appropriation of the real world by different practices*, theoretical, aesthetic, religious, ethical, technical, etc. (Althusser, 1970:66, emphasis added).

This statement implies that epistemologically, there is no important distinction between the appropriation of the real object by the object of knowledge and other practices. That is, there is no indication why the appropriation of the real world by the object of knowledge needs to be regarded as a *special case*. Althusser seems to be positing the existence of the real object which is 'true' but which no adequate method of appropriation of this object can be specified. This is also coupled with an historical and cultural notion of knowledge effect. This position seems to come close to Foucault's notion of truth and power which will be dealt with later.

Althusser does not clearly elucidate on the nature and role of *truth* in his theory of knowledge but appears to be talking about different levels of truth. At one level he seems to be referring to an absolute truth, e.g., 'the Marx through whom spoke the truth' (Althusser, 1969:52),<sup>23</sup> while the most common usage of the term in his writing is to treat it as

synonymous with knowledge, i.e., the product of practices, and is therefore confirmed by the practice itself:

We showed that the validity of a scientific proposition as a knowledge was ensured in a determinate scientific practice by the action of particular *forms* which ensure the presence of scientificity in the production of knowledge, in other words, by specific forms that confer on a knowledge its character as a ('true') knowledge (Althusser, 1970:67).

This usage of 'truth' in this context implies *validity* which reintroduces the problem of the means for determining the nature of these *specific forms* that confer on a knowledge its character as 'true' knowledge.

A third usage of the term truth which is related to this notion of validity is in the context of the criticism Althusser makes of the Hegelian model of science, i.e., the duality of theory and practice. If, in this model, the theory and solution to questions are imposed from 'external bodies' then indeed the ideas are judged according to the *norms* imposed by the external body as to what is true (Althusser, 1970:56-57). Consistent with this particular formulation and his notion of scientific practice, Althusser argues that a scientific practice provides its own assessment of what is true (Althusser, 1970:59).

Althusser has distinguished between the *object of knowledge* and the real object and presented a critique of empiricism which can be applied to the Willers' scientific system of knowledge. His critique of empiricism is not based solely on the inadequacy of the sensory process of developing empiricist knowledge, but upon the nature of a problematic which incorrectly distinguishes between two levels, i.e., theoretical and empirical, and which confuses the object of knowledge with the real object.

Geras has neatly summarised Althusser's position in two propositions, one of which is:

Scientific knowledge is not immediately and directly (i.e., miraculously) *given* in the consciousness of an individual or class, but has its specific *condition and processes of production*, which involve, among other things, the activity of theoretical labour ... (Geras, 1972: 80 ).

However, some of Althusser's arguments on theoretical practice and the production of knowledge 'lead us straight into the realms of mystery' (Geraš, 1972:80). Althusser's position, while avoiding the relativism and sociologism of Kuhn's, suffers from the shortcomings of, on the one hand, describing a general form of a theory of knowledge, but on the other omitting the *means* by which it operates, e.g., how is Generality I determined? It is unclear as to what role the social formation (ideological, political, economic) and its corresponding elements (legal, religious) play in determining practices. Consequently, a major failing in Althusser's scheme is his inability to connect certain practices to knowledge. His view is consistent if his apparent insistence on *truth*, the *real* object and *scientific* practice is rejected for a nihilistic notion of knowledge. That is, it is accepted that scientific practice, e.g., the experiment, produces knowledge and that all practices work on raw materials (concepts) which constitute the object of knowledge but that we *can never produce knowledge of the real object*. To argue against this position, in the context of Althusser's approach, is to disregard the distinction he makes between the real object and the object of knowledge, and fall back into the empiricist pit! Furthermore, in respect of Althusser's scheme, to claim that we can produce knowledge of the real object, is to argue for the existence of *absolute* truth, a position which, in regard to a *materialist* conception of scientific knowledge, is difficult to sustain. If looked at closely then, Althusser's conceptualisation, at least the parts of it discussed in this chapter, while presenting some useful ideas for the production of knowledge, seems to contain a number of inconsistencies and to create serious dilemmas. It seems fair to say that Althusser himself is aware of some of these problems and their implications and sees some answers lying within the structure of *discourse*:

We can say, then, that the mechanism of production of the knowledge effect lies in the mechanism which underlies the action of the forms of order in the scientific discourse of the proof (Althusser, 1970:67).

If discourses (and problematics) represent thought systems, and if knowledge is a function of thought (which is itself determined by the social formation), and if the interiority of the theoretical practice determines the validity (i.e., supplies the proof) of the practice, then the organisation of concepts within a discourse is one important point of focus for an understanding of how knowledge is produced. (Another important point of focus is the nature of the social formation which Althusser has not dealt with adequately in his analysis.) However it needs to be kept in mind that:

The knowledge effect is produced as an effect of the scientific discourse, which exists only as a discourse of the system, i.e., of the objects grasped in the structure of its complex constitution ... (Althusser, 1970:68).

It is possible that some of the problems involved with Althusser's notion of knowledge effect can be elaborated on, even resolved, by adopting some of the ideas from other writers, e.g., Michel Foucault.

#### Michel Foucault and knowledge as discourse

At the outset it must be realised that there are 'three Foucaults', i.e., three writings of the author which represent considerably different and incompatible epistemological positions on the development of knowledge. These writings can be classified as 'early Foucault' (episteme), 'main Foucault' (archaeology of knowledge) and 'later Foucault' (truth and power). It is important then to be clear as to which particular set of concepts is being considered when analysing the work of Foucault. The concept which offers a noticeably radical and different conception of scientific knowledge than that offered by the positivists, the Willers, or Althusser is Foucault's episteme. It is also probably the most difficult to sustain on the basis of rigorous, coherent argument. To recap briefly *scientific knowledge* for Althusser is the product of the application of

Generality II to Generality I. The latter does not represent the *real* object (the concrete-real existing independent of thought) but the *product* of a previous transformation in thought.

Foucault's conception of knowledge as depicted in the *Order of Things* (1970) appears to offer a resolution to the problem of the real object by focusing analytical attention on the nature of the *discourse* which operates on the object. Knowledges for Foucault are *configurations* of 'savoir' (i.e., knowledges as great layers obedient to specific structural laws (Lecourt, 1975:189), in specific structures called epistemes. In this conceptualisation, what makes the 'human sciences' problematical as 'sciences' of man is *not* the complex nature of their object, but rather the 'arrangement of the *episteme* that provides them with a site, summons them and establishes them - thus enabling them to constitute man as their object' (Foucault, 1970:364). The niche occupied by the human sciences which defined man as *object* is defined, according to Foucault, by the analysis of *norms, rules and signifying totalities* (Foucault, 1970:364). This notion of episteme alters the problem from one of attempting to define the *real* object to one of attempting to describe the manner in which configurations are arranged in the episteme. This conceptualisation of knowledge reformulates the questions about scientific knowledge which need to be posed. For example the questions asked in the previous discussion of Althusser's conceptualisation were concerned with the nature of the object and the concepts which operate on the object to produce knowledge (Generality III), i.e., with scientific practice. On the other hand the question framed within Foucault's approach is what does a culture include as part of its epistemological network, i.e., its episteme? For example we are told that 'from the seventeenth century ... natural magic ceased to belong to the Western episteme' (Foucault, 1970:365). With respect to 'man' as the 'object' of scientific knowledge Foucault says:

For man did not exist (any more than life, or language, or labour); and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include man ... among the objects of science - among which it has perhaps not been proved even yet that it is absolutely possible to class him; they appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known (Foucault, 1970:344-5).

The 'human sciences' in the Foucaultian conceptualisation of knowledge do have an object, viz. the analysis of norms, rules and symbolic structures which, though unconscious, do have a conscious existence (Foucault, 1970:364). Thus, what Foucault is suggesting is a method, 'archaeology', which has the task of mapping the episteme (Foucault, 1970:366). The implications of this approach is that distinctions, e.g., ideology and science, non-scientific and scientific practice become meaningless:

To speak of 'sciences of man' in any other case is simply an abuse of language. We can see, then, how vain and idle are all those wearisome discussions as to whether such and such forms of knowledge may be termed truly scientific and to what conditions they ought to be subjected in order to become so. The 'sciences of man' are part of the modern *episteme* in the same way as chemistry or medicine or any other such science (Foucault, 1970:365).

According to Foucault man cannot be the object of *science* because man is a domain of knowledge - a knowing subject. All knowledge is constituted in language and hence for Foucault language becomes the *focus* and method of analysis: '... things attain to existence only insofar as they are able to form the elements of a signifying system. Linguistic analysis is more a perception than an explanation' (Foucault, 1970:382; 385). Foucault has attempted to locate the human sciences in the 'modern episteme' which defines three spaces of representation of discourse, e.g., mathematics and physical sciences; linguistics, economics and biology; philosophy. It is this episteme, i.e., the configuration in which the human sciences are located which is the centre of knowledge, not specific practices or objects etc. To this extent it can be seen that the problem of epistemology in Foucault's analysis has a different focus compared with the problem for, say, Althusser, e.g., Foucault says:

What explains the difficulty of the 'human sciences', their precariousness, their uncertainty as sciences, their dangerous familiarity with philosophy, their ill-defined reliance upon other domains of knowledge, their perpetually secondary and derived character, and also their claim to universality, is not as is often stated, the extreme density of their *object*, it is not the metaphysical status or the ineradicable transcendence of this man they speak of, but rather the complexity of the epistemological configuration in which they find themselves placed, their constant relation to the three dimensions that give them their space (Foucault, 1970:348).

If these three dimensions represent the space of the episteme, the human sciences relate to all three dimensions, although the closest relationship is to mathematics which 'has always been the simplest way of providing positive knowledge about man with a scientific style, form and justification' (Foucault, 1970:351). Human sciences, according to Foucault are reducible to 'man' insofar as he 'lives' (biology), 'speaks' (linguistics) and 'works' (economics) (Foucault, 1970:351). Foucault, then, does concern himself with the object of the human sciences, i.e., man as object but the critical thing is not the production of a real object as opposed to an ideological one (as in the work of Althusser) but in the form of the representation of living, working, speaking (Foucault, 1970:353), and consequently the 'sociological region':

... would be situated where the labouring, producing and consuming individual offers himself a representation of the society in which this activity occurs, of the groups and individuals among which it is divided, of the imperatives, sanctions, rites, festivities and beliefs by which it is upheld or regulated (Foucault, 1970:35).

Foucault identifies 'constituent models' which these regions have borrowed from the domains of biology, economics and philosophy. These models are represented as pairs: *function and norm, conflict and rule, significance and system* which 'completely cover the entire domain of what can be known about man' (Foucault, 1970:357).

Foucault's writings appear confusing as, for one thing, while his analysis sees the nature of the episteme as determinant of knowledge he is also concerned to show in what respect the configurations of the human sciences are radically different from those of the sciences in the strict

sense. The nature of the relationship between these configurations and the 'sciences' is in the:

Transposition of external models within the dimensions of the unconscious and consciousness, and the flowing back of critical reflection towards the very place from which those models come. It is useless then, to say that the 'human sciences' are 'false' sciences; they are not sciences at all ... . Western culture has constituted under the name of man, a being who by one and the same interplay of reasons, must be a positive domain of *knowledge* and cannot be an object of science (Foucault, 1970:366-7).

These configurations, *because* they have borrowed their models from the sciences, are simply labelled as sciences.

Foucault's notion of episteme, which does seem to have interesting potential for an explanation of the development of knowledge, presents a number of epistemological problems which Lecourt has argued resulted in its later abandonment by Foucault (Lecourt, 1975:189). Lecourt claims that the rejection of the notion of episteme by Foucault was because this term connotes a structural explanation of knowledge. Episteme is used to describe the 'configuration of savoir' as 'knowledge obedient to specific structural laws' (Lecourt, 1975:189). It is this notion of episteme which provides the structural component of Foucault's analysis, but its application, according to Lecourt made it impossible to think the *history* of ideological formations other than as brusque 'mutations', enigmatic ruptures', sudden 'break-throughs' (Lecourt, 1975:189).

What appears unacceptable to Foucault in his application of episteme is the concept of history that is inherent in it. Foucault's conceptualisation of episteme includes a concept of history consistent with the meaning applied to the term by Elias:

If one perceives the history of science as identical with the development, with the growth of scientific knowledge, then one sees the term 'history' with reference to a structured and directional change (Elias, 1972:118).

To perceive the history of science in this fashion is to assume that science does follow some internal order and logic and it is any hint of



this idea which Foucault wishes to abandon by abandoning his notion of episteme.

So then, we turn to Foucault's major work - *the Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) - for epistemological insights. One shortcoming of Foucault's episteme that hopefully the archaeology can overcome is its purely descriptive nature. That is, the *structural* aspects which give rise to a new episteme are not elucidated by Foucault. Foucault's work in the *Archaeology* is concerned with '*thinking* the laws that govern the differential history of the sciences and the non-sciences, with reference to neither a subject nor to an object' (Lecourt, 1975:193). So, a further 'break' with the argument as presented in the *Order of Things* is apparent - a rejection of any notion of the object. The emphasis is upon the 'network' or 'totalities' within which elements (texts, documents, statements) are connected. If Foucault in this later work rejects any notion of continuity in history and any hint of the subject and the object, what does his analysis of the sciences consist of? As Lecourt points out, any analysis which posits the importance of the object as the epistemological focus makes two assumptions which are questionable. Firstly, this analysis is based on the distinction between science and non-science, and secondly it assumes that definite obstacles exist which hinder the production of 'true' scientific knowledge (Lecourt, 1975:192). It should be clear from the previous discussion of Althusser's epistemology that the problems and shortcomings pointed out in Althusser's schema are related to these points (e.g., how is it possible to develop knowledge of the *real object* rather than the 'object of knowledge'?) Foucault's analysis is therefore unique in that his epistemological position side-steps these problems. Lecourt has spelled out the purpose of Foucault's archaeology:

It is a matter of thinking the laws that govern the differential history of the sciences and the non-sciences with reference neither to a 'subject' nor to an 'object', outside the false continuity - discontinuity alternative (Lecourt, 1975:193).

The centre piece of Foucault's position is the 'discursive event' -

[a 'discursive event'] enables [Foucault] to determine 'the connexions of statements one to another' - without any reference to the consciousness of one or more authors ... (Lecourt, 1975:194).

The focus of Foucault's epistemology is '*the statement*', i.e., the text rather than the context. The notion of 'discursive event' suffers from similar shortcomings to those involved in the notion of episteme in that it is descriptive rather than explanatory and cannot account for the development of a particular statement in its particular form. But in order to understand Foucault's epistemological analysis it is necessary to distinguish '*connaissance*' from '*savoir*':

*Connaissance* refers to a particular corpus of knowledge, a particular discipline - biology or economics, for example. *Savoir* which is usually defined as knowledge in general, the totality of *connaissances*, is used by Foucault in an underlying, rather than an overall way (Foucault, 1972:15).

For the purposes of Foucault's approach then, *savoir* is the critical notion, for:

*Savoir* refers to the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to *connaissance* and for this or that enunciation to be formulated (Foucault, 1972:15).

The conditions that Foucault refers to are the *material existence* of the statement: 'a statement must have a substance, a support, a site and a date' (Lecourt, 1975:195). It is the material relations in institutions which structure these discursive events (Lecourt, 1975:195). In this approach to knowledge, discourse refers to the connections and relations which constitute it. Thus when we use 'discourse' we are referring to a practice, i.e., a material existence. It is important to realise that practice in this context does not refer to the activity of the subject, it designates the objective and material existence of certain rules to which the subject is subject once it takes part in discourse (Lecourt, 1975:196). The idea expressed by the notion of discourse is different from other similar notions such as problematic or paradigm in that the connections

which are the essence of discursive events are neither *internal* to discourse, nor *external* to it. In the words of Lecourt:

... they are not the links found between concepts or words, sentences or propositions; but neither are they external to it, they are not the external 'circumstances' which are supposed to constrain discourse; on the contrary *they determine the bundle of relations that discourse must establish in order to be able to speak of this or that object, in order to be able to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them etc.* (Lecourt, 1975:196, emphasis added).

The purpose of the archaeology is to discover the laws of discursive formations.

It was pointed out earlier that one of the major components of Foucault's archaeology which perhaps avoided many of the problems in Althusser's schema is that it did not rely on a science *vs.* ideology distinction or the notion of any sort of 'epistemological break' - an aspect which, according to Lecourt was present with the notion of episteme and hence led Foucault to abandon it. However Foucault distinguishes discourse from non-discursive practices in a way which differs considerably from Althusser's distinction. The essence of the distinction as presented by Foucault is that he rejects Althusser's use of ideology as non-science. Ideology is regarded as *savoir* and as such is part of the material relations of discursive practice. Consequently science does not eradicate ideology or replace it. All practices, discursive and non-discursive, including ideology continue to co-exist (Lecourt, 1975:200). As Lecourt says:

In other words, if what is intended by the word 'ideology' is really 'savoir' it has to be recognized that its reality, the materiality of its existence in a given social formation is such that it cannot be dissipated as an illusion from one day to the next; on the contrary, it continues to function and literally, to besiege science throughout the endless process of its constitution (Lecourt, 1975:200-201).

What Foucault has achieved then, for one thing, is the replacing of the science/ideology distinction with the discursive/non-discursive distinction (Lecourt, 1975:205). This conception of knowledge as *savoir* and discursive events is really concerned with the relationship between

discursive and non-discursive practices in the social formation. Ideology, practices, the history of the sciences, are not autonomous but *relatively autonomous*. Lecourt sees a danger in this approach: to think savoir as purely and simply the effect (or reflection) of a social structure (Lecourt, 1975:205). What Lecourt astutely picks up is that no rationale is offered by Foucault as to why it is necessary to distinguish discursive from non-discursive practices (Lecourt, 1975:207). However Foucault's use of ideology seems to offer an extension to the limited sense of this practice, i.e., as non-scientific practice, applied by Althusser.<sup>24</sup>

As we know, ideology has a consistency, a material-notably an 'institutional' - existence, and a real function in a social formation. Everyone knows that in the still descriptive schema of the structure of a social formation given by Marx, ideology (or: ideologies) appears in the 'superstructure'. The superstructure, determined 'in the last instance' by the economic infrastructure, is said to have a 'reciprocal effect on the infrastructure'. As such ideology cannot disappear merely because of the appearance of science. *It is clear in what sense Michel Foucault is right to want to work at a different level from that of an epistemology of 'rupture'* (Lecourt, 1975:207, emphasis added).

Foucault's archaeology does seem to avoid the difficult problem in Althusser's epistemology of positing the existence of the real object as opposed to the object of knowledge. This distinction treats the notion of ideology as error or false and relates to the process of rupture or break whereupon a non-scientific practice becomes a truly scientific practice. Foucault has avoided this dilemma by not posing the problem in terms of *objects* but in terms of *savoir*:

So that the problem arises of knowing whether the unity of a discourse is based not so much on the permanence and uniqueness of an object as on the space in which various objects emerge and are continually transformed (Foucault, 1972:32).

What *are* the determining mechanisms of savoir which account for, at least in principle, the nature of a particular discursive formation? This question is asking for an elaboration on 'the complex bundle of relations' which gives rise to an object of savoir. Foucault is vague with respect to these relations; for instance, in his analysis of psychiatric discourse, he says:

... in the nineteenth century, psychiatric discourse is characterized not by privileged objects, but by the way in which it forms objects that are in fact highly dispersed. This formation is possible by a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation and specification ... . These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object (Foucault, 1972:44-45).

Foucault is more helpful when he attempts to elucidate on these relations as institutionalised relations of truth and power. These concepts appear occasionally in all of Foucault's work but really only constitute the *crux* of savoir in the work I have referred to as 'New Foucault'. This theme of truth and power was first expressed in *The Birth of Clinical Medicine*:

First question: Who is speaking? Who in the set of all speaking individuals, is established as using this sort of language? Who is qualified to do so? Who derives from it his own special quality, his prestige, and from whom, in return, does he receive if not the assurance, at least the presumption that what he says is true? What is the status of the individuals who - alone - have the *right*, sanctioned by law or tradition, juridically defined or spontaneously accepted, to proffer such a discourse? The status of doctor involves criteria of competence and *savoir*; pedagogic *institutions, systems, norms, legal conditions* that give the right - though not without laying down certain *limitations* - to practice and to the experimentation of savoir.

And further on:

The existence of medical speech cannot be dissociated from the statutorily defined person who has the right to articulate it, and to claim for it the *power* to overcome suffering and death. But we also know that this status in Western civilization was profoundly modified at the end of the eighteenth century when the health of the population became one of the economic *norms* required by individual societies (quoted in Lecourt, 1975:205-206).

The same theme reappears in Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972:50-51).

However it is in Foucault's later works that this theme is elucidated as a major component of savoir. In doing this Foucault shows, indirectly, the connection between ideology and the infrastructure. In 'Prison Talk: an interview with Michel Foucault' (1976), Foucault attempts to account for the historical modifications and appearances of psychiatric discourse in terms of the economic relations with respect to delinquents and criminals, e.g.:

One has the impression that the discourse of criminology has such utility, is needed so urgently and made so vital for the working of the system, that it does not ever need to look for a theoretical justification for itself or even a coherent framework (Foucault, 1976:13).

The nature of the relationship which Foucault is positing between the discourse and the social system is the connection between knowledge and power which are presented as an inherent part of each other:

The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information ... . The exercise of power is perpetually creating knowledge and conversely knowledge constantly induces effects of power ... . Knowledge and power are each an integral part of the other. It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power (Foucault, 1976:14-15).

Power in the sense applied by Foucault, in this context, relates to *relations*, not possessions (Foucault, 1977:16), and is essentially a system of *control* which incorporates institutions such as the family, the school etc., to reproduce the capitalist mode of production. However, the ideas expressed here by Foucault represent an elaborate articulation of a materialist conception of knowledge which is presented in one of his later works: 'The Political function of the Intellectual' and will be introduced in the following chapter.

The preceding critique of various epistemological and philosophical assumptions about sociological and scientific knowledge has laid the basis for the development of a position for analysing sociological sub-areas. This position-critical systematic sociological practice - is outlined in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

1. For the purposes of this discussion *scientific* knowledge is employed in its meaning in naturalist conceptions of science. That is, as a set of objective law-like statements which can be used to predict future occurrences. This definition is used at this stage as is the aim of conventional naturalist methodologies and the critique of these methods is more or less from within this conception. It will be argued that these naturalist-positivist conceptions of scientific knowledge are not appropriate to knowledge in the social sciences and that it is more appropriate to apply the notion of systematic knowledge for sociological practice, rather than scientific knowledge.

2 This is not to deny the existence of the external event. Although observation is the method by which the truth or falsity of theories is determined, the external event is the final adjudicator of theoretical representations. Thus, strictly speaking, observation is located in the 'middle':

THEORY <————> OBSERVATION <————> EVENT

This relationship concerns problems in 'getting at' the events (because of the need to be empirical). This is a statement of the relation in principle.

3 However, it should be pointed out that positivists, in this sense, rely on induction, i.e., they take the rational 'punt' that the world will not stop tomorrow based on the experience that the world has never stopped before. Therefore they can claim to predict well.

4 I am using the term 'nominal' to refer to those concepts which are not theoretically derived, but rather are more or less arbitrarily selected to categorise or label phenomena. Most typologies would be examples of this nominal approach. These definitions are commonly applied to 'order facts' in some way, and as such, do not attempt to explain the mechanisms which gave rise to these facts. Nominal definitions, in this sense, may be related to the 'categorical' versus 'generative' theories Connell refers to (Connell, 1977:5). Connell's categories will be discussed in the next part.

5 A good example of this in ethnic relations is the concept 'assimilation' employed by Robert Park which really addresses the problem of 'how can order and social cohesion be maintained in a multicultural society?'

6 Kuhn used the term 'paradigm' in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* but in later writings preferred the term 'disciplinary matrix': discipline because it is common to the practitioners of a specific discipline, matrix because it consists of ordered elements which require individual specification (Kuhn, 1970b:271).

7 For example Kuhn says: 'For scientists to agree that snow is white presupposes that the objective observers in question understand snow is white in the same way'. (Kuhn, 1970b:265).

- 8 One important consequence of Kuhn's notions of 'good scientific theory and puzzle solving' is that they enable him to offer a logical description of non-scientific disciplines and to specify the conditions that these disciplines would need to fulfil to become sciences. He distinguishes 'sciences' from 'proto-sciences'. This distinction is based on the claim that the latter, unlike the former, display a number of competing matrices and hence are not founded on one theoretical framework. This existence of competing matrices is, for Kuhn, a function of subjective factors such as the difficulty of communication between observational descriptions and consensus among the scientific community (Kuhn, 1970b:244-5). In some other conceptions of scientific knowledge, especially that of Louis Althusser, to be considered later, proto-science states is a function of the nature of the object upon which the discipline operates, rather than subjective factors.
- 9 Kuhn himself points out that in some fundamental way Einstein's general relativity resembles Aristotle's physics more than Newton's (Kuhn, 1970b:265). Any notion of the evolution of science can only be applied to normal science in Kuhn's approach. There is a contradiction between the idea that there exists only one external reality (nature) and Kuhn's earlier comments that it is not possible to talk of scientific theories as closer approximations of truth.
- 10 Kuhn sees the role of the philosophy of science to present us with a better understanding of this structure (Kuhn, 1970b:235).
- 11 The assumption that the object of knowledge is constructed transfers the focus from the subject (Kuhn) to the object and a materialist conception of knowledge.
- 12 Chalmers has identified a number of practices which exist in society: an obvious example is material or technological practice in which raw materials are converted by machines and human labour (the means of production) into end products (motor cars, clothing, etc.). Other practices include political practice which operates on social relations to produce new social relations, ideological practice (e.g., religion, education) which operates on human consciousness to produce a different consciousness and scientific practice which operates on conceptual systems (either pre-scientific or already scientific) to produce new conceptual systems (scientific) (Chalmers, 1976:136-7).
- 13 This approach can be called 'historical materialism' as proposed by Karl Marx:
- ... the term 'historical materialism' to designate that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society ... (cited in Feuer, 1959:53-54).
- 14 David and Judith Willer concern themselves with (a) attributes of abstraction and abstractive thought (1973:15, 16, 22, 23) without elaborating on the *process qua process*, and (b) *examples* of the end result of abstraction, e.g., Weber's ideal type (1973:13). 'Abstraction', we are told, 'is a logical procedure for connecting theoretical ... statements with observable phenomena through non-observable constructs or models' (Willers, 1973:24). This is hardly a sufficient account of the process.



- 15 Although the Willers appear to be claiming that science proceeds from observation to theory to models ( $O \rightarrow T \rightarrow M$ ) (Willers, 1973:24, 27), their position appears confused by the following statement:

Conversely the creation of a useful theory requires the abstraction of a pure structural model from the diverse material of observation (Willers, 1973:24).

- 16 An example of the use of models in science is well expressed in the following:

Much more difficulty came from the necessity to fabricate representations of the inorganic atoms. Unlike the other constituents they obeyed no simple-minded rules telling us the angles at which they would form their respective chemical bonds. *Most likely we had to know the correct DNA structure before the right models could be made* (Watson, 1968:72-73, emphasis added).

- 17 In light of the previous discussion, this dilemma appears to be a consequence of the belief that knowledge resides in observations which can be expressed in pre-theoretical terms and act as the final arbiter of the correctness of theories. This conception also suffers from the criticisms pointed out by Keat and Urry that within this method there is no logical way in which we can ever know that a theory or model is an accurate representation of reality. It should be pointed out that even within the particular conceptualisation of what scientific knowledge is as put forward by the Willers (i.e., laws allowing for exact prediction), their own conception of a scientific system of knowledge is not able to meet this requirement. For instance, the authors refer to theories and accompanying models which explain empirical cases with '*a high degree of exactness*' (Willers, 1973:26). But science, according to these authors does not operate by degrees of exactness. The basis of their critique is that it is empiricist knowledge in the form of probability statements and empirical generalisations which operate in this fashion (Willers, 1973, Chapter 2).

- 18 Althusser draws an analogy between this process of abstraction in an empiricist system of knowledge which attempts to determine the essence of an object and the process of extraction by which gold is separated from earth:

(the real) is made up of two real essences, the pure essence and the impure essence, the gold and the dross ... the fact is that the real object contains in it, two distinct real parts, the essence and the inessential (Althusser, 1970:36).

- 19 In this respect Althusser makes reference to Spinoza's cautionary statement: 'the idea of the circle which is the object of knowledge must not be confused with the circle, which is the real object' (quoted in Althusser, 1970:40).

- 20 An example of Althusser's positing of the primacy of the real world is the following:

... by the process of production of knowledges which despite or rather *because* of the fact that it takes place *actively in thought* (in the sense that we have defined) nevertheless provides that grasp ... of the *real* world called its appropriation (Althusser, 1970:54).

- 21 Althusser provides an example of the mathematical sciences to support his internal validation thesis:

No mathematics in the world waits until physics has *verified* a theorem to declare it proved, although whole areas of mathematics are applied in physics: the truth of the theorem is a hundred per cent provided by criteria purely internal to the practice of mathematical proof, hence by the criteria of mathematical practice (Althusser, 1970:59).

Some of the points made by Althusser in this quote can be built on by Bernard's principle of 'scientific determinism' to supplement the notion of the *strict* exercise of scientific practice. Also Foucault's ideas on 'truth and power' can extend Althusser's notion of 'truth and knowledges'.

- 22 As an example of this point showing the 'social-formation-thought-raw material relationship' Althusser states:

... there is a great difference between the raw material on which Aristotle worked and the raw material on which Galileo, Newton or Einstein worked - but that formally this raw material is a part of the conditions of production of all knowledge (Althusser, 1970:42).

- 23 Althusser also claims:

It has been possible to apply Marx's theory with success because it is 'true'; it is not true because it has been applied with success (Althusser, 1970:59).

- 24 This criticism of Althusser's use of the notion 'ideology' is as the concept is applied in *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*. In another work, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' in *Lenin and Philosophy*, Althusser sees ideology as a permanent aspect of social formations and located in the superstructure, which is closer to the meaning applied by Foucault.

CHAPTER THREECRITICAL SYSTEMATIC SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

Scientific knowledge, as presented in this paper is knowledge which is produced by the application of scientific practice. But each science has its own particular form of practice and knowledge effect. Sociological practice can be represented as the application of concepts to objects of knowledge in order to produce knowledge. However, both the concepts and the object of knowledge as reflected in the questions posed, are very much determined by the problematic in which they are located.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the problematic can only be determined by a symptomatic reading of the text or statement surrounding the question. This reading not only exposes the contradictions and inconsistencies (i.e., the non-systematic nature) of the concepts, but also the rhetoric. These characteristics of sociological practice represent the *internal* and *external* components of a truly scientific (or systematic) practice. The former is concerned with the *systematic* nature of the practice. That is, exposing the contradictions, inconsistencies and arbitrary nature of the concepts employed and the object constructed, as well as the inadequacies in the methods by which these concepts were produced. The latter recognises that sciences do not exist in a political, social or economic vacuum and hence, with respect to sociological practice, these concepts and object of knowledge reflect a value laden stance. A reading of a particular discourse (ethnic relations) ought to expose the rhetorical and political nature of the concepts used, the object of knowledge worked on the knowledge produced. To the extent that scientific knowledge is systematic knowledge we may refer to *systematic sociological practice* rather than scientific practice.

The term 'scientific', as applied in the positivistic sense to refer to the discovery of general laws, is not appropriate for what I have called systematic sociological practice. The two main principles upon which

systematic sociological practice is based are, firstly, the production process of knowledge is *relatively autonomous*, and secondly, that neither the knowledge produced, nor the production process is value free. The first principle is stating that each scientific practice is responsible for providing its own internal validation criteria for assessing the systematic nature of the knowledge produced. By recognising that there does not exist some sort of universal rationality which guarantees scientific knowledge, and to the extent that we can refer to systematic as opposed to non-systematic practices, this practice may be defined as 'a complex of definite processes of production of knowledge, the unifying principle of which is a common conceptual field' (Castells and de Ipola, 1976:114). If we apply the *internal* validation notion to practices in the social sciences, the specified *systematic* conditions of the practice is the *internal consistency* of the conceptual field and its relation to its *object* (Generality I). These are well known criteria: indeed most undergraduate students in the social sciences would be aware of, and apply, these criteria in the evaluation of any piece of sociological knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The point is that these criteria are *continually* violated and yet 'knowledge' continues to be communicated in spite of these violations. To return to the meaning given to systematic practice as presented by Castells and de Ipola (1976), the necessary conditions of the common conceptual field to distinguish systematic knowledge from non-systematic knowledge are not indicated by these authors. 'A common conceptual field' could apply equally to Kuhn's notion of *paradigm* or Bachelard's concept of *problematic* but there are significant differences between these two terms which need to be recognised. Therborn has compared them:

Both are designed to think discontinuities in the history of science. But they are not synonymous. Kuhn's concept includes a sociological component referring to the 'disciplinary matrix', to what is shared by a particular community at a particular time. The concept of problematic is used in the analysis of discourses. It denotes the

specific unity of a theoretical complex, scientific or not, and serves to conceptualize and delimit all the possible thoughts of such a complex. That is, the problematic of a given thought is a knowledge that must be produced by analysis and cannot simply be collected by inspection. The concept of problematic is the centre-piece of an anti-empiricist study of discourses (Therborn, 1976:59).

The use of the term 'theoretical' in Therborn's definition of a problematic as a unity of a 'theoretical complex' is bothersome, because the term also incorporates complexes which may not be theoretical. Consequently it may be more correct to regard a problematic as a unity of a complex of concepts that *may* be theoretical (Althusser, 1969:34, 35). Whereas the notion of *paradigm* then exists in the subject component of a subject-object coupling, *problematic* collapses this duality into one by realising that scientists construct the objects of their inquiry (Hawthorn, 1976:4).<sup>3</sup>

Following on from Therborn's definition of problematic we may ask: what is the method by which knowledge is produced by analysis? Answer: *Symptomatic reading*. What Therborn's definition of problematic omits to mention is that 'the analysis' is centred on the 'absence of problems and concepts within the problematic as much as their presence; it can therefore be reached only by a symptomatic reading ... on the model of the Freudian analyst's reading of the patient's utterances' (Althusser, 1969:253-4). However, there are a number of theories of reading which differ slightly but significantly from each other and which Karel Williams has critiqued (Williams, 1974). Williams has shown the inadequacy of the 'History of Ideas' theory of reading which relies upon the existence of a subject, and also the 'structuralist' theory which treats discourses as groups of signs rather than as practices which form the object of which they speak (Williams, 1974:52). The critical distinction between Althusser's theory of reading and Foucault's as presented by Williams is the point made earlier in this paper, namely their different conceptions of the distinction between science and ideology.

Althusser counterposes science and ideology; knowledge is necessarily in the one or the other and between the two there is a break established by giving each a separate means of production of knowledge/problematic. The *Archaeology* ... tries to think the common ground of science and ideology in a field of knowledge/'savoir' ... . *And when science is founded, then science and ideology are interrelated so that ideology is not exclusive of scientificity* ... . In aspiration the *Archaeology* is beyond Althusser in that it is trying to think a more complex articulation of science and ideology (Williams, 1974:53, emphasis added).

This Foucaultian representation of science and ideology which goes beyond Althusser's representation suggests that it is limiting to use ideology to refer to the *violation* of the criteria of systematic sociological practice as this is an extremely narrow application of this notion. It has a more general meaning, i.e., as a component in a capitalist social formation (de Lepervanche, 1980). Consequently, for the sake of clarity and consistency, sociological practice which applies a conceptual field which is not internally consistent or operates on an object which is not theoretical, will be referred to as *non-systematic practice* and the reasons for the status of this practice as obstacles to systematic sociological knowledge - ideology to be reserved for the wider meaning. Althusser's presentation of knowledge as the process of production (Generality III) via concepts (Generality II) which operate on an object (Generality I), avoids many of the empiricist problems attached to science but, while supplying a useful construct for the analysis of systematic practice, does not seem to recognise the *relative* autonomy of this practice. To this extent Foucault's *archaeology*, appears to offer more than Althusser's *problematic*. The conceptual unity which is the crux of Althusser's construct focuses on the ideology and science distinction and the nature of the object which leads to some serious epistemological problems in his position, as highlighted earlier. Foucault's *archaeology*, while recognising the existence of this unity, also recognises that:

If there really is a unity, it does not lie in the visible, horizontal coherence of the elements formed; it resides well anterior to their formation, *in the system that makes possible and governs that formation* (Williams 1974:57, emphasis added).

This is simply restating the importance for Foucault of *non-discursive* elements, i.e., the relations behind objects which do not really have their counterpart in Althusser's problematic.<sup>4</sup> Before turning to what these non-discursive elements are, or, to be more precise what non-discursive elements need to be taken into account for an adequate methodology for social science, I want to elucidate on systematic knowledge as theoretical labour, i.e, as material practice. Systematic knowledge, as has been stated earlier, is a process of production involving concepts operating on objects to produce knowledge.

Materialism is a theory among other things, of history and social change, which holds that the various institutions in society, the polity, education system, the media, are in a specific relationship such that most of these institutions are located in the superstructure while the economy which is seen as the prime determinant of the social formation, in the last instance, constitutes the base. Furthermore these institutions serve particular interests of 'the ruling class' (Connell, 1977), without any necessary awareness on behalf of the members of this class. The structure and existence of a particular society may be seen as not so much dependent upon aims and intentions of individuals but as the consequence of certain unobservable mechanisms which constitute the society in question.

Chalmers has provided a good example of a materialist interpretation of *pollution* in a capitalist society to highlight these points (Chalmers, 1976:136). Systematic practice is, as stressed many times in the paper, *relatively* autonomous and is located in the superstructure. The application of a materialist conception allows us to return almost full circle and restate the questions posed at the beginning of this paper:

1. What social relations are necessary for a particular autonomous 'science' to exist?
2. How does that science function as a practice once it does exist? (Chalmers, 1976:137).

What a materialist conception permits is the realisation that systematic practice is *not* totally autonomous, and as Chalmers has noted:

Its existence depends on its relationships with other practices that make up the total social structure and will only continue as long as those other practices support it (Chalmers, 1976:137).

The various conceptions of scientific knowledge which approach the questions above in terms of the aims of science and operate within a non-materialist conception of science are likely to respond in terms of explanation and understanding which is to overlook the external component of the practice.

As Chalmers has stated:

The scientific practice will exist in a particular society as an autonomous practice provided it plays an appropriate role or function in that society. This will not be a matter of the decisions of individuals. And secondly, given that a particular scientific practice has a role to play, other practices within the society (e.g., the ideological practice of education) will adjust in such a way that there will be sufficient individuals with the appropriate consciousness or attitudes for carrying out the various roles necessary for the particular practice in question (Chalmers, 1976:139).

The final part of this quote from Chalmers highlights a cornerstone of materialism which will become a crucial consideration in the attempt to develop an epistemological position for systematic sociological practice, namely in the words of Marx:

*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness* (Marx, 1935:356).

If any adequate formulation of sociological knowledge needs to take into account the particular formulation of savoir for a particular society and the necessary non-discursive elements, what is the nature of these elements and how do they impinge on systematic practice? This is one of the most *basic* and crucial question which can be posed for the analysis of sociological practice and I wish to attack it from two fronts which correspond to the writings of *Brian Fay* and Marx's notion of praxis on the one hand and what I have called the position of the '*New Foucault*' on the other.



The criticisms which have been presented of positivism and empiricism as scientific methods for sociological knowledge and the discussion of a materialist epistemology suggest that it is naive simply to pose the question: What is the *aim* of science? This question is naive because it is based on the false assumption that science is totally a structural representation in the form of a particular method and which ignores any notion of what is intended with Foucault's term *savoir*. In light of the realisation that knowledge is not value free it might be more pertinent to pose the initial question of sociological knowledge as Fay has posed it: 'Why have a social science at all?' (Fay, 1975:18) or more recently as Lee has posed the same question in the text: *Sociology for Whom?* (Lee, 1978). Other important questions, in turn, are generated by this type of question. For example, if, as a materialist approach to knowledge suggests, theory and practice are indistinguishable, can we find a fit between various epistemological positions and political practice? E.g., should knowledge be concerned with what is or what ought to be? (Fay, 1975:23). Should social scientists concern themselves with attempting to understand and possibly influence aspects, e.g., institutions, within the social system or attempt to control the development of the system itself? (Fay, 1975:25). Fay has argued that indeed there is a logical and empirical correspondence between positivism (and its assumptions) and the belief that sociological knowledge can be applied to aspects of society so that they can be made more congruent with the needs of that society's members (Fay, 1975:19), i.e., that societies are constituted in a series of 'laws' which once discovered can be manipulated for human benefit. Fay goes on to show that it is not accidental that the social engineering role attached to 'applied' social science developed hand in hand with a positivist conception of knowledge which pervades the discipline (Fay, 1975, Chapters 2, 3). The criticisms offered by Fay of the 'policy science' approach to the social

sciences highlights the inherent ideological content of the beliefs which support such a position, and his fourth criticism is so pertinent to any materialist conception of scientific knowledge that it bears restating:

... in a society which is characterised by dominant-submissive social relations (in the sense that there are those people or classes of people who characteristically make decisions of basic social significance and those for whom decisions are made - and this is the case in an industrial society), such a science would almost inevitably be supportive of those who are dominant. The reason for this is that the operation of a policy science presupposes that those employing this approach, or their agents, have the power to manipulate variables to produce the results in the way the policy science calls for, and it is thus only useful to those who have control over the relevant variables. Now it will usually be the case, though not necessarily so, that those who are in power are also those who have the power to control the relevant variables (Fay, 1975:61-62).

Alfred Lee has placed this same sort of issue in the institutional context of sociological practice and perhaps raised questions a little closer to the bone, as far as sociologists doing research is concerned, than that posed by Fay. For instance, Lee sees a contradiction in what he regards as the correct role of the social scientist as 'critics, demystifiers, reporters and clarifiers' and the institutionalisation of sociology and its concomitant organisation as 'professionalism, careerism' etc. This dilemma leads him to conclude with respect to the institutionalisation of sociologists:

They learn to serve as rationalizers and propogandists for the *status quo* and thus to perform as typical middle-class instruments of social control often with little consciousness of the hypocrisy of their stance or their rigidifying influence upon society (Fay, 1975:24).

Once a materialist conception of knowledge is adopted these issues raised by Fay and Lee become of prime concern in the analysis of knowledge. The arguments of these authors can be considerably extended in detail but it is the general point about the ideological content of knowledge and the location of the social scientist in society's institutions which are the important points. The question is, armed with this information about knowledge, how can we proceed to incorporate it into our conception of systematic knowledge? In other words a consideration of the internal

constitution of sociological knowledge in terms of objects, concepts, products, is not sufficient. These wider issues need to be incorporated. If social theory and political practice are interconnected as Fay has suggested, then sociological practice, if it is not simply to be a state apparatus must be in the first instance, *CRITICAL THEORY*, i.e., concerned with analysis of how social formations which display structured inequalities and inequitable opportunities are constituted and manage to reproduce these material relations. Fay has indicated what makes critical theory, critical:

The 'critical model' is 'critical' as will become apparent, in that it sees theories as analyses of a social situation in terms of those features of it which can be altered in order to eliminate certain frustrations which members in it are experiencing, and its method of testing the truth of a social scientific theory consists partially of ascertaining the theory's practical relevance in leading to the satisfaction of human needs and purposes.

This dialectical relationship between truth and reality is encapsulated in Marx's concept of *praxis* (social action). Praxis, especially revolutionary praxis is closely related to questions about knowledge and the subject-object connection in social science. The concept is intended to go beyond materialism, idealism and notably philosophical issues. As Marx commented:

The question whether human thought can arrive at objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical question. It is in praxis that man must prove the truth, that is, the reality, the exactness, the power of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking isolated from praxis is a purely scholastic question. (Thesis on Feuerbach, II, quoted in Lefebvre, 1968:33-4.)

Lefebvre (1968:34) has expanded on the relevance of praxis for social science:

The essence of man is social, and the essence of society is praxis - acts, courses of action, interaction. Separated from praxis, theory mainly comes to grips with falsely formulated or insoluble problems, bogs down in mysticism and mystification. (Thesis on Feuerbach, VIII.)

Of the three levels of praxis (Lefebvre, 1968:52), it is creative praxis (revolutionary activity) which is the most fruitful for transforming the social system and eradicating oppression. It is important to realise that

this praxis, as developed by Marx, is not confined to political action. In Lefebvre's words (1968:52), 'this activity can be exercised in knowledge and culture (ideology) as well as in the field of politics'. It is revolutionary praxis which overcomes contradictions and the disjunction between reality and consciousness by bringing these social forces into accord (Lefebvre, 1968:53). Praxis, then, has very much a demystifying role. Lefebvre (1968:63) has elaborated on this role in a manner which shows the similarity between praxis and Fay's notion of critical theory:

Only revolutionary praxis by articulating the (true) theory and furthering (practical, verifying) modes of action restores the conditions for transparency. Revolutionary praxis does away with the conditions illusory representations thrive on, brings about new conditions to dispel them.

One implication from Lefebvre's comment on praxis is that this concept has two historical components - the past and the future. Praxis 'always points to the domain of possibility' (Lefebvre, 1968:55) out of what has been accomplished. Fay's critical social science model also has implications for non-discursive elements in that through its praxis it has the potential for altering individual's conceptions of their location in the social system and the structural constraints which act to frustrate the needs of individuals. For example, Fay highlights the relation between sociological practice and the experiences of the subject matter of sociology, in the following:

This means that the quasi-causal explanations which are given must be related to the felt needs and sufferings of the social actors *in such a way that they show how their feelings can be overcome by the actors coming to understand themselves in their situation as the product of certain inherent contradictions in the social order, contradictions which they can remove by taking an appropriate course of action to change this social order* (Fay, 1975:97).

Sociological knowledge, then (and the relationships it has with its subject matter):

Is not a moralistic or utopian [theory] which attempts to get people to simply [sic] adopt a new set of ideas which are foreign and threatening to them, but rather is one which seeks to articulate the felt grievances of a specific group of actors, to provide a vocabulary

in virtue of which they and their situation can be conceptualized, to explain why the conditions in which they find themselves are frustrating to them, and to offer a programme of action which is intended to end with the satisfaction of these desires (Fay, 1975:98).

One consequence of this application of critical social theory is that it ought to be expressed in the language of experience of the people for which it is intended (Fay, 1975:98). Another major component of critical theory is that it should show the people concerned that the beliefs they hold are internally inconsistent and cannot really account for the actual situation in which these actors are located (Fay, 1975:98). As Fay says:

It follows from this that the objects of study of this science and the social actors about which it seeks to provide an understanding - actually help to determine the truth of this science's theories by their reaction to them (Fay, 1975:108-9).

The necessity for consciousness-raising as a critical component of critical social theory is, of course, not new. Paulo Friere, for example, has called this process of bringing individuals to a deeper *critical awareness* of the way the social system is constituted 'conscientization' (Friere, 1972). But consciousness raising is only the first step in Friere's strategy. Step two is 'continuous revolutionary practice' - action upon the system in order to change it. But to return to step 1 of consciousness raising, what critical theory attempts to do, by recognising the political nature of social science is to make individuals aware of the illusory nature of the beliefs and attitudes they hold and which are a product of the capitalist mode of production - of the social formation in which they reside. At the level of the discursive sociological formation, this means separating concepts from power. One theme that is recurring throughout this paper is the idea that social theory and concepts, are not, as the positivist would have us believe, politically neutral. Concepts are inherently political and may act so as to perpetuate the illusory nature of the relationships between the individual's existence and the social system. It is in this sense that Foucault has identified the relationship between truth and power. Non-discursive elements include such things as the

institutionalisation of knowledge production in Universities, i.e., 'experts' define truth for the people.<sup>5</sup> This line of reasoning suggests that critical social theory has another point of intervention, namely, the attempt to shatter the connection between concepts and truth by showing the way in which the former function as rhetoric, and by demonstrating their political nature. This can only be achieved by a critical appraisal of the discursive formation, be it ethnic relations or whatever, as well as an analysis of the structure which gives rise to this formation. The realisation of the need to separate concepts from truth is one of the most important insights in the work of the new Foucault:

The problem is not one of changing people's 'consciousness' or what's in their heads; but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth ... . It's not a question of emancipating truth from every system of power - which would be a chimera, because truth is already itself power - but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony (social, economic and cultural) within which it operates at the present time ... (Foucault, 1976:13).

Much sociological research supports the system, not by being directly exploitative but by ignoring the study of the processes of exploitation. Most research still 'supports the system, little promotes any restructuring' (Bryson, 1978:2). Bryson tends to concentrate on non-discursive elements. She points out the ideological compatibility between the concepts employed in scientific discourses and perpetuation of the system:

At present, science has inherited structural circumstances and a paraphernalia of concepts and practices which are not appropriate for attempts to restructure the system (Bryson, 1978:2).

Without the powerless becoming aware of the way the system is structured so as to constrain and frustrate them it is doubtful that they could articulate what the problems are. This is because they are so immersed in the ideological hegemony (Gramsci, 1957) of the system that they are likely to articulate the problems in terms of personal failings, i.e., blaming the victim rather than as outcomes of the way the system is structured. However this is not to doubt the ability of informed and

aware members (leaders) of powerless groups to implement change in the social structure. One of the best examples of this is the women's movement which gradually eroded the hegemonic relationship between the prevailing discourse of the role of women in the social system and the actual experiences of women in society. Departments of Women's Studies have now been introduced into many Australian Universities. Women's journals are being published as well as the enactment of changes in government legislation and the provision of many more social benefits for women. In short, a whole new discourse of the position and role of women in society has now developed which has largely shattered the old discourses which were supportive of justifying and maintaining the subordinate position of women in society. While also altering people's conception of the feminine discourse this new discourse has resulted in social, economic, political and legal changes to improve the position of women in society.

#### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

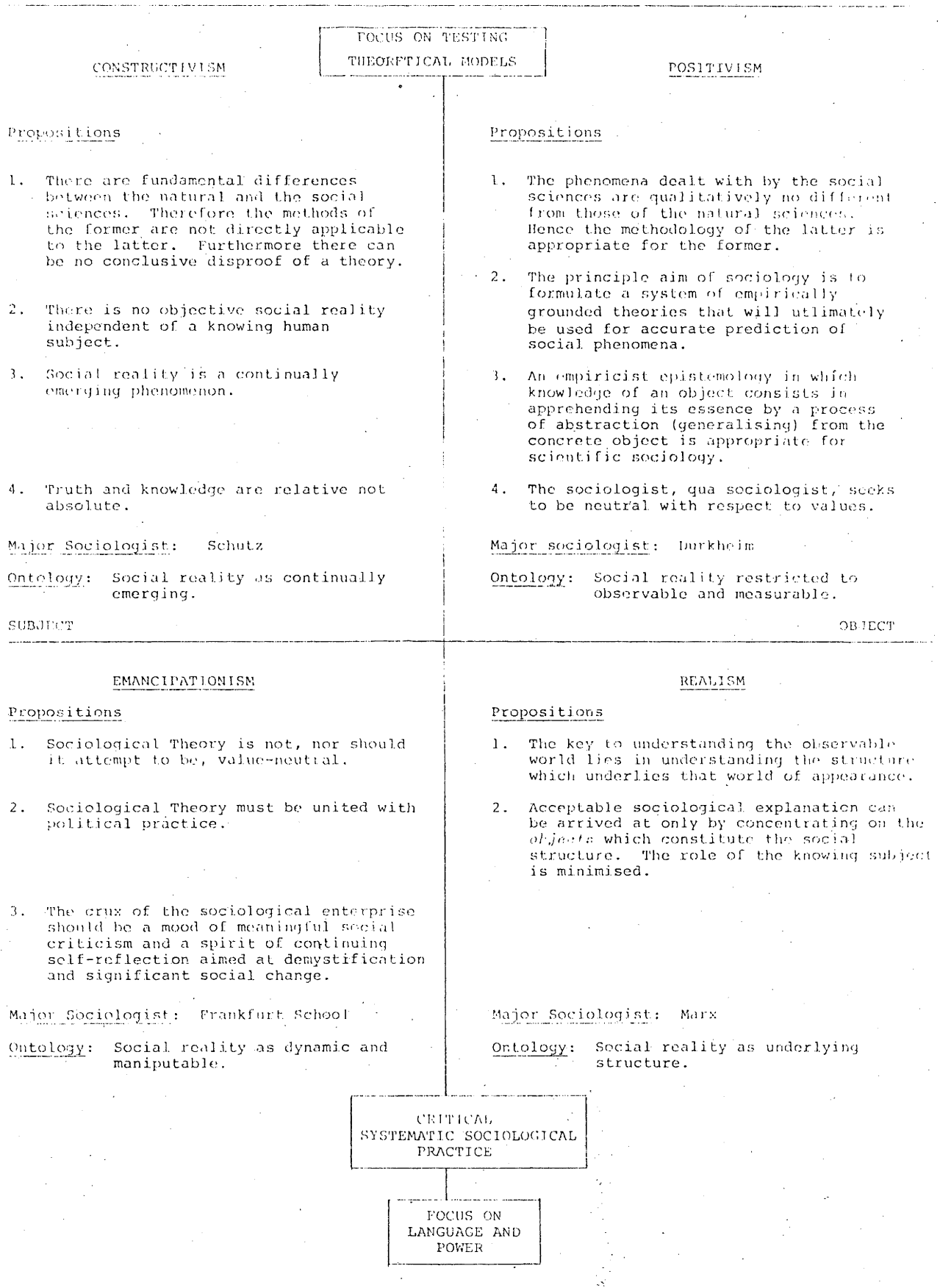
The question posed at the beginning of this part was: What is scientific about the knowledge produced in so-called sociological sub-areas such as ethnic relations, education, etc.? The position maintained throughout this paper has been that an adequate answer to this question cannot be an arbitrary one, i.e., to simply opt for a particular answer for the sake of convenience, e.g., Kuhn's consensus position, is *not* to provide any sort of definitive answer and would possibly contradict some of the essential principles of what I have called systematic sociological practice. This contradiction arises, in part, because of the arbitrary nature of nominal definitions which are often applied in sociological research. The acceptance of certain statements as sociological knowledge because they are widely held by the practitioners in the field may violate one of the essential components of systematic sociological practice, namely the criterion of internal consistency. This violation in turn

results in the perpetuation of non-systematic practice and its presentation *as if* it were systematic sociological knowledge.

The label of systematic sociological practice seems particularly apt to represent the nature of sociological inquiry. I have deliberately not included 'scientific' in the label. The term scientific has so many connotations including ideas of 'objectivity', 'value-freedom', 'truth' etc., that it is often confusing for analytical purposes. 'Systematic' on the other hand is applied in the sense of a logical and internally consistent relation among concepts. This distinguishes a particular collection of concepts from non-systematic representations. Systematic practice as developed in this paper, is regarded as sociological to the extent that its subject matter consists of the consciousness and social location of individuals in a particular social system. It is concerned with the relationship, as well as the consequences, of the structuring of the components of that system. Practice, in general, is used to indicate that knowledge is the product of the application of theoretical labour to a particular raw material. On the other hand, practice, in the Foucaultian sense, refers to the particular rules to which the subject unknowingly conforms once he or she takes part in a particular discourse. Discourse is defined as those connections which are the essence of a discursive event and which determine the bundle of relations that must be established *in order to be able to* speak of this or that object, *so that it is able to* deal with them. But before elaborating on what critical systematic sociological practice looks like, it may be useful to *locate* the epistemological assumptions of this position relative to other major positions. This may be done by locating critical systematic sociological practice (CSSP) in the 'grid' developed by J. Lally (Figure 1). *Critical* systematic sociological practice has one foot in the realism quadrant and the other in the emancipationist quadrant.



FIGURE 3.1 A MODEL OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE



SOURCE: J. Lally, 1978a

Sociological practice, being relatively autonomous, is located in the superstructure of capitalist society along with other components such as ideas, other practices and institutions such as the family, education etc. (Chalmers, 1976). The notion of relative autonomy allows for the analysis of aspects *internal* to the practice (*connaissance*) as well as the nature of the *external* aspects in which the practice is located (*savoir*). The previous discussion has attempted to point out that it would be insufficient to concentrate on only one of these components while ignoring the other. Because the objects of sociological inquiry represent a pre-interpreted world and are actually social interpretations of phenomena, sociological practice is in a subject-subject relationship rather than a subject-object one which pertains in the natural sciences. The recognition of this subject-subject relationship has considerable implications for sociological practice. Firstly, it implies that any account of sociological practice should concern itself with the need to take into account the subjective state of the actors, i.e., the subjects as the focus of inquiry as well as the consciousness of the researcher. Secondly, it is necessary to distinguish subjective from consensus. Subjective, in this sense, is used to refer to the consciousness of individuals as a reflection of the way a particular society is constituted. Consensus on the other hand is used in the sense of sharing of norms or rules. Thus Kuhn's account of science is basically a consensus position, i.e., scientific knowledge is shared knowledge rather than subjective whereas Freire's notion of conscientization is subjective to the extent that it focusses on the level of awareness of individuals to the constraints imposed by the system, i.e., the effect of the structure on the consciousness of individuals.

The intrusion of structural components of the society into sociological practice has implications for the aims of this practice. Understanding and explanation are not value-neutral activities but conversely, are ideology

dependent. That is, they are linked to the nature of how the social scientist attempts to answer the question: Why do actors interpret the world in the way they do? In other words, sociological practice can be concerned with explanation of how the consciousness of individuals is related to the underlying structure of the social system (Sharp and Green, 1975), while recognising, at the same time that the form of sociological practice may be dependent upon the nature of the particular society in which it is located. This argument implies that the form of critical systematic sociological practice in a feudal society might differ from its form in a capitalist society.

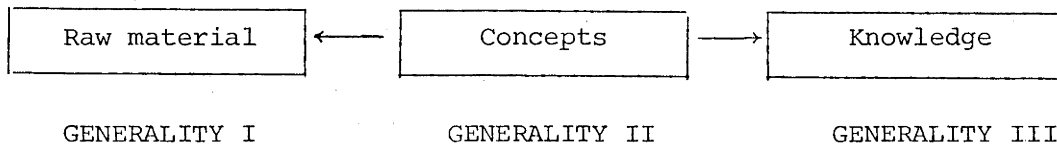
One question, then, that could be posed with respect to sociological practice in a capitalist society is: Why is a social science necessary? This analysis has suggested that it is necessary because the mechanisms which account for the particular format of human behaviour in a capitalist society are totally unobservable. In capitalist society the essential mechanisms are marked by various appearances, e.g., the belief held by many that the social system is an open one - all that is required to 'make it' is dedication and hard work. Herein lies one of the major fallacies of empiricism, that it accepts the appearance as the given - as the real object. Marx, as a *realist* sees the need for a method of abstraction to develop a conceptual framework which allows us to grasp the 'central structures and mechanism of capitalism' (Keat and Urry, 1975:112). Keat and Urry express the need for this process clearly in the following statement:

For since certain modes of production, especially capitalism, are so structured that they present themselves to their members in such a way that their underlying and central mechanisms are obscured, any process of concept formation which is based on the way society presents itself will be inadequate, misleading and ideological. To use the visual metaphor, abstractions and idealizations based on appearances cannot hope to represent or capture reality (Keat and Urry, 1975:112-3).

There is an important point of clarification with respect to the claim that sociological practice must take into account the view to the actor.

This does not mean that only the actor can provide a 'true' explanation of his or her behaviour, because most actors might be unaware of the rules to which they conform. However, most minorities for instance do seem to have a core of members who are more critically informed of the social, political and economic forces which operate to maintain the *status quo* and thus are more aware than the majority of members of the constraints which operate to perpetuate the subordinate status of minorities.

Systematic sociological practice, then, in terms of its internal characteristics is theoretical labour and takes the form of the generalities as shown by Althusser.



This practice is validated by the *strict* exercise of the theoretical practice itself, i.e., with respect to sociological practice *validity* is achieved through the internal consistency of this practice. But, given the pre-theoretical nature of the raw material it is not possible to apply any notion of 'truth' to these internal components independent of the external constraints imposed by the elements existing in the social formation. In this sense it would be incorrect to distinguish society from individual as is the case with many sociological writings (e.g., Durkheim, Mead, Berger), because thought and reality are combined in a complex unity (Sharp and Green, 1975). Reality, in the sense of the totality of the social system determines the limits to the thought of individuals (Sharp and Green, 1976) who can only think the problems actually or potentially posed. Consequently, sociological practice produces a knowledge effect which is related to the cultural and historical location of that practice.

It follows that *critical* sociological practice in a capitalist society should be concerned with a critical look at the nature of the discourse in its relation to ruling-class ideas and whether it is supportive or non-supportive of the *status quo*. It can focus on the *language* and *rhetoric* and the inter-relationships of words within the discourse in order to point out the *contradictions* present in the discourse itself. A discursive event (in the form of the written text) enables us to determine the connections of statements one to another without any references to the consciousness of one or more authors to an object. This discussion of discursive events implies that these events, in the cultural, historical and institutional context of a capitalist society are inherently 'the ideas of the ruling class'. In other words, particular theoretical practices such as sociological practice are connected to non-discursive elements of that society.

The consequences of this position for the study of sociological sub-areas, e.g., ethnic relations are clear. No adequate understanding of the discourse of ethnic relations in terms of its raw material, concepts and knowledge produced can be achieved without considering the *savoir* in which the discourse is located. The material existence of these sub-areas (discourses) is related to the practice of the discourse. Practice refers to certain rules to which the subject is subject once he or she takes part in the discourse. Foucault attempts to discover these rules of discursive formations in his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* but with little apparent success. It is later, in his work on truth, power and language that Foucault is able to make a contribution in this regard. Foucault's analysis of discursive and non-discursive formations showed that the language of discourse is the subtle mechanism by which the dominance of a class is maintained. Consequently any systematic sociological practice which is aimed at reducing inequalities, increasing the participation of

the under-privileged, enhancing the ability of the disadvantaged to satisfy their needs or however the aim of sociological practice is defined in this sense, must begin by demystifying the rhetoric and contradictions of discourses produced in institutions which define truth. A *critical* sociological practice which is directed towards changing the social location of various minority groups in society needs to identify a point of intervention in the system of dominant class-exploited class cycle of reproduction. Such a point could be the relationship between language and power, and systematic sociological practice operates in the first instance to break that relationship and expose the ideological and political nature of the language and rhetoric. The need for critical sociological practice to focus on the class structure and the power relations of non-discursive formations is due to the fact that sociological practice is not a purely logical exercise, but is inherently linked with the class structure in the external components.

Given the importance of *savoir* as an element to be taken into account in sociological practice, what are the determining mechanisms of *savoir* which account for the nature of a particular discursive formation? They have to do with the social location of individuals who use the discourse: from individuals who are so immersed in the cultural hegemony of the ruling class that they uncritically adopt the discourse at one end of the scale, to those 'qualified' to formulate and use certain discourses at the other, e.g., medical doctors. This latter category is of particular importance because these individuals are more directly involved with perpetuating the power-language connection as a function of their structurally defined right to *define* and use the discourse. People in this category would include high-ranking academics who define discourses through their research and writings. However, it is when these academics are influencing government policy and involved with the development of policy effecting minorities that the process is less subtle and more directly related to

reproduction of the dominant-class nature of knowledge. The exercise of power engenders knowledge and knowledge in turn reinforces power. Knowledge and power are thus inherently intertwined and it is one of the roles of *critical* systematic sociological practice to break this hegemonic relationship.

The emphasis on the *critical* nature of sociological practice is necessary since it follows from the above that this practice must, at least initially, be involved in a critical analysis of the discourse. This analysis is achieved by the application of symptomatic reading to the discourse. This symptomatic reading has a logical component linked to the *systematic* nature of sociological practice as well as a critical-external component related to the ideological nature of the concepts in the discourse. For instance in the discourse of ethnic relations the concepts of 'discrimination' and 'assimilation' can be shown, through critical analysis, to be derived from observation, rather than the product of theoretical labour and that they consist of unresolvable logical inconsistencies which make them non-systematic components of any sociological practice which incorporates them.

On the external side, analysis can also highlight the consistency between these concepts and the ruling-class ideological assumptions upon which they are based. Various commonsense words can *conceal* different concepts. For instance, Prime Minister Fraser's often repeated reference to 'The Australian Public' connotes the idea of wholeness and unity which necessarily opposes any notion of group conflict and has the effect of stigmatising any group which is defined as opposing this unity. Concepts such as 'multiculturalism' in ethnic relations may be analysed in a similar fashion. Conversely the absence of the word in a discourse does not necessarily indicate the absence of the concept and it is the role of symptomatic reading, by focussing not on appearances but on the absences to

detect these connections. So then, to ask what is *the* object of ethnic relations for sociological analysis is to ask what is the problem posed and the ideological nature of the discourse. Part II is concerned with a critical analysis of the discourse of Australian ethnic relations.



FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER THREE

- 1 The object of knowledge is presented here as Althusser's Generality I. It includes interpretations of events, ideas, the social construction of phenomena and discourse. This distinguishes the object of knowledge from the real object which exists independent of thought. Consequently, the production of knowledge, as depicted by Althusser's schema of Generalities I, II, III, is a process which takes place entirely in thought, as a function of theoretical labour.
- 2 The application of these criteria is an example of the combination of the internal conditions of systematic practice in the social sciences with the external circumstances. Undergraduate students in sociology are socialised into applying these criteria regularly through exposure to their application in courses and professional journals.
- 3 The acceptance of the notion of problematic over that of paradigm as being more useful for the analysis of conceptual fields is not to deny the utility that the latter may have in accounting for some external aspects of systematic practice. For example, problematics may be shared by scientists but they are not to be taken as representative of systematic knowledge just because of their popularity.
- 4 The concept of problematic seems to belong more to the analysis of the *consistency* of the practice and the extent to which this practice meets the requirements of its internal *validity*. Thus problematic is an inherent *internal* part of systematic sociological practice. As Althusser says:

What governs the posing (and hence production) of a question in the last resort is a definition of the field of the problematic in which this question (problem) must be posed (Althusser, 1970:46).

- 5 It is useful to distinguish between 'truth' and 'knowledge'. I am applying the notion of truth in this context in the Foucaultian sense:

By 'truth' is meant a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution and circulation of statements.

'Truth' is linked by a circular relation to systems of power which produce it and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which redirect it (Foucault, 1977:14).

This definition of the notion clearly distinguishes it from other definitions often implied by writers in the philosophy of science, e.g., truth as objectivity (Rudner, 1966) or as realism (Keat and Urry, 1975). 'Knowledge', on the other hand, refers to a knowledge *effect* or statements (discourse) which are the products of the application of concepts to the object of knowledge. To this extent, knowledge can be systematic or non-systematic.

PART II

CRITIQUE OF CURRENT SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE: ETHNIC RELATIONS  
IN AUSTRALIA

## CHAPTER FOUR

THE NON-SYSTEMATIC NATURE OF THE STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC RELATIONS

Many criticisms of the study of race relations in general highlight the lack of 'theoretical integration' of this area with the rest of sociology and the atheoretical and ahistorical nature of most of the studies (Wild, 1978:117; van den Berghe, 1967). Furthermore:

The study of race relations has been dominated by a functionalist view of society, a concern with social problems at the expense of the sociological issues, a concentration on *ad hoc* situations and a lack of integration of the basic concepts into broader theories of inequality (Wild, 1978:117).

Wild emphasises the way in which studies of black/white relationships in Australia tend to study the groups and relations in isolation:

The analysis is concerned with specific situations and is not placed *within the wider context of social stratification and power* (Wild, 1978:118-119, emphasis added).

These criticisms seem equally applicable to the study of ethnic relations in general. Van den Berghe has aptly described the field:

Until recently anthropologists tended to study ethnic groups in isolation from each other, and hence to neglect the field of ethnic *relations*. In sociology, ethnic relations have long been studied, but the functionalist mainstream in the United States largely failed to put ethnic relations in their political and economic context, and thus failed to understand the nature of ethnic conflicts. In the Marxian tradition scant attention has been devoted to ethnicity, except as a policy problem (van den Berghe, 1975:70).

This comment, although referring to the study of ethnic relations in the United States, could also be applied to the field in Australia.

'ETHNIC' AND 'RACIAL GROUPS': WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

It is common practice for writings in this area to separate the concepts of 'racial group' and 'ethnic group' (van den Berghe, 1967). The former is usually regarded as characterised by biological factors, such as skin colour, which are irreversible and passed on by descent. The latter, on the other hand, tends to be defined in terms of cultural attributes,

such as language and religion, which are reversible. But do not these *social* groupings apply to the same sorts of behaviour experienced and location in the social structure?

If this is so, then it might be argued that the distinction is a false one. To the extent that racial and ethnic groups are both 'minority groups' they are similarly located in the social system (Western, 1977). However, some authors have argued that the distinction is meaningful and ought to be retained. Lewins (1978a:10), for instance says:

The concepts being analytically distinct, the explanation for the emergence and persistence of one kind of group is not necessarily 'appropriate' for another.

The concept of race has its historical origins in European colonisation and slavery in which whites were quick to impose their ideas and value judgments on the association which existed between white 'supremacy' and coloured 'inferiority' (Lewins, 1978a). It was also often the case, as in Australia, that the 'competitive type of race relations' (van den Berghe, 1967:29) between Chinese, Kanakas and Australian workers for employment exacerbated notions of racial prejudice and conflict (Curthoys and Markus, 1978). As Lewins has pointed out the scholarly concerns with race have not so much to do with *explaining* the rise of this phenomenon but rather its *accompanying characteristics* such as conflict, prejudice and discrimination (Lewins, 1978a). This has meant that the objects of race relations for sociologists has tended to be *conflict, prejudice and discrimination* (Schermerhorn, 1970:6). Socio-historical analysis may be able to explain the existence of certain 'irrational' attitudes which tend to exist between racial groups by analysing the frustrations experienced by groups (van den Berghe, 1967:19), e.g., missionaries, in their attempt to educate the indigenous populations in colonies.

How is any sort of meaningful distinction maintained between ethnicity and race, given that attitudes and behaviour such as discrimination and prejudice could equally apply to *culturally* defined groups as well as

groups defined on biological criteria? Lewins summarises what he sees as the common approaches to these concepts in the literature:

- (i) those who want to use 'race' to cover not only those groups which define themselves or are defined by others on the basis of physical characteristics, but also those groups which are distinguished by cultural characteristics such as language, religion or national origin;
- (ii) those who want to analytically separate a group which is defined on the basis of physical characteristics from a group which is defined on the basis of cultural characteristics with the former characterised by the concept 'race' and the latter by the concept 'ethnic group'. Finally, there are
- (iii) those who argue that the concepts 'race' and 'ethnic group' have little or no explanatory power and the explanation for the formation, persistence of, and discrimination against racial and ethnic groups entails Marxian concepts such as ruling class, modes of production and class struggle (Lewins, 1978a:13-14).

Lewins favours the second category of definition by arguing that 'it is important to separate analytically the terms 'race' and 'ethnic group' (1978a:14). He supports his claim with a number of arguments. Firstly, that race is *socially* defined (by either the group itself or outsiders) on physical criteria whereas ethnic group is socially defined by cultural criteria. The author admits that there is some 'blurring at the edges' when attempting to apply these definitions, e.g., some ethnic group members who 'look Italian' (Lewins, 1978a:14). Lewins also suggests that race is *more permanent* than ethnicity. Members of an ethnic group may change allegiances and identification with other groups whereas a member of a racial group cannot wish away his or her physical characteristics.

Notwithstanding the saliency of these biological factors and their relative visibility and various histories, this distinction appears to be very much the 'surface' of what the nature of the relationships between the dominant white groups and *both* racial and ethnic groups is *actually* based upon.

The underlying structural mechanisms which *give rise to* the symptomatic behaviours and attitudes towards ethnic and racial groups may

be the same for both groups. *The consequences* of these structural mechanisms may be simply a difference in degree rather than kind and a function of varying historical circumstances. For instance, in Australian history, as in the historical circumstances of many other countries, racism<sup>1</sup> resulted from economic competition between whites and indigenous groups or migrants who happened to be physically distinct from them, such as Chinese or Kanakas, and from social Darwinist ideas that the colonists brought with them (Curthoys and Markus, 1978; Clark, 1963; Ward, 1969). It was largely these sets of circumstances around the gold fields in the 1850s and the subsequent conflicts over cheap labour sources which produced the nature of race relations commonly identified as racism. It is conceivable that given the same set of historical circumstance but a different migrant group, e.g., Italian or Greek, the ideas represented by the concept racism could be applied to relations between ethnic groups rather than racial groups. That is, the crucial factors involved which give rise to racism may have very little to do with the physical or cultural characteristics of the groups involved, but more to do with the historical, economic, social and political circumstances of the time. This argument tends to contradict the final point Lewins proposes in support of the race/ethnic group distinction, namely 'that ethnic group relations may involve different explanations from those advanced for racial group relations' (1978a:15).

It may be more fruitful to search for a common mechanism in dominant group-minority group relations than to initially create a distinction which, in this writer's view, tends towards the arbitrary and artificial and *then* to attempt to theoretically justify this distinction.

Some writers have commented upon the difficulties with attempting to theoretically analyse dominant-minority ethnic group relations. For example, Horowitz has stated that:

In the field of ethnicity it is easier to talk of specific linguistic groupings and national minorities than to deal with the conceptual problems of yet another large social stratification variable (Horowitz, 1977:221).

It is apparent that concerns with distinguishing race and ethnicity and identifying the corresponding behavioural and attitudinal responses is a movement away from focussing on underlying issues such as stratification, inequality, and the issue raised by Lewins: Why do ethnic groups persist? (1978a:16). It is with respect to this last question that Lewins indicates the importance of *historical* and *circumstantial* factors in accounting for this phenomenon:

Ethnic groups form, persist and are related to the wider society because of many factors, some of which spring from cultural baggage - arising from the country of origin or cultural background - while others are of a situational or circumstantial nature (1978a:16).

Moreover, in his concluding paragraph Lewins seems to be suggesting that sociologists interested in explaining ethnic and race relations should turn their attention to these underlying circumstances and the 'bigger issues' which give rise to these relations.

While in most cases the persistence and treatment of these groups by the wider society *is closely related to power and resource disadvantage*, such disadvantage cannot always be explained by Marxian theory. Race and ethnic groups are real groups in our society *whose relations are a complex product of social, political, cultural, economic and historical factors* (Lewins, 1978a:19, emphasis added).

Consequently, the position adopted here is that any explanation of race and ethnic relations needs to locate these relations in the underlying social formation.

#### OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE COMPONENTS OF ETHNIC RELATIONS

These conceptual difficulties involved with the area of ethnic and race relations are compounded by confusion and contradiction as to whether these relations are basically 'objective', 'subjective' or both. It is possible to represent these difficulties in diagrammatic fashion with the confusion over race and/or ethnicity on one axis and the objective and/or subjective criteria on the other.

FIGURE 4.1 *TYPOLGY FOR DEFINITIONS OF ETHNIC GROUPS, ETHNICITY*

	Objective characteristics	Subjective characteristics
CULTURE ONLY	'Groups defined in relation to cultural features and traits' (Cross, 1970-71:487).	'Let ethnicity refer to the sentiments which bind individuals into solidary groups on some cultural basis' (Hechter, 1974:1152).
CULTURE AND RACE	'Groups that are commonly called races, as well as populations that are distinguished on the basis of language, religion, foreign origin, history or other cultural characteristics (Lieberson, 1972:199).	'The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture' (Morris, 1968:167).

The definitions in each cell are intended as examples which best indicate the respective correspondence on the two axes. Other definitions can be located in this typology.

With respect to the subject/object axis, if the aim is to define ethnic (and racial) groups in such a way that they can be isolated from other social groupings in society, then it does not seem satisfactory to restrict definitions to only subjective factors, e.g., sense of belonging, shared sentiments, without linking them to some sort of objective base. Without an objective base, groups based on sex, occupation, etc., could be included in the category of ethnic group. Although there appears to be considerable consensus in the literature that cultural characteristics constitute such an objective base, *the components which comprise* these characteristics (e.g., religion, language, natural origin), seem to vary from writer to writer. There are also often inconsistencies in the components selected by the same writer (see Mackay and Lewins, 1978:413).<sup>2</sup> These difficulties are also present with the concept of race. As Lewins has pointed out, this category is often defined in terms of physical characteristics passed on



through descent, but the indicators selected vary from writer to writer, e.g., skin colour, physical appearance (Lewins, 1978a:10).

Another objective criterion which is often applied to ethnic and racial groups is their lack of power and limited access to economic and social resources, which supposedly, results in various acts of discrimination (Rose, 1968:365; Schermerhorn, 1970:14). This criterion is often applied as a subsequent property of ethnic and racial groups once these groups have been identified in terms of cultural and physical characteristics. There is good reason why power differentials alone cannot constitute *the* objective criterion which defines these groups. To apply this criterion as the defining characteristic would mean including other groups, e.g., women, adolescents etc., as ethnic groups because they share these same definitive elements. Two criticisms have been leveled at this objective approach by Brown (1973). Firstly, there are groups in society of the same race, nationality, religion or language as the majority but yet do not enjoy full political privileges. Secondly, the differences, which constitute the defining characteristics of this approach can exist in society along with the absence of prejudice or discrimination. Brown concludes that the criteria incorporated within the definitions are neither necessary nor sufficient to allow us to 'pick out examples of the properties to which they refer' (Brown, 1973:4-6).

Similar difficulties and inconsistencies can be pointed out with respect to other concepts in the area. For example 'discrimination' may be defined as:

Treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favour of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit  
(Brown, 1973:13).

This definition is almost impossible to apply to actual situations. For instance is the employer who selects whites in preference to Aborigines discriminating? To argue that this is indeed the case, it would be

necessary to show that white and black applicants are equivalent on 'criteria of individual merit', e.g., status of educational institution attended, experience etc. (Brown, 1973:13). This would be extremely difficult to substantiate.

The concept of 'assimilation' also suffers from similar difficulties.

This concept may be defined as:

A process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (Park and Burgess, 1969:735).

One difficulty which arises with this concept, even taking into account Gordon's insightful distinction between cultural and structural assimilation, is the selection of criteria which supposedly measure the degree of assimilation which has occurred.<sup>3</sup> In comparing groups, there are likely to be characteristics which have 'converged' between the groups, but there will also be others which remain dissimilar. In this situation, what are the criteria which determine to what extent assimilation has occurred? It may be claimed that to pose the question in this fashion is to suggest that assimilation is an 'all or nothing' process whereas it may be more useful to regard it as a continuum and refer to ethnic groups or members as 'more or less' assimilated. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the selection of criteria for comparison are based on an *arbitrary* decision.

How did this non-systematic concept of assimilation come to be regarded as an object for ethnic relations? To adequately answer this it is necessary to refer back to some of the points made in the previous part, particularly comments about the external influences which impinge on the construction of concepts, and the value-laden nature of sociological practice. Over ten years ago, Price (1969) made mention of these aspects as they affect the area of ethnic relations. He distinguished 'normative orientations and opinions' from 'more scientific statements'. The former referred to 'facts' presented which were distorted in order to be consistent

with the writer's hopes and beliefs or statements of trends which 'often arose not from accurate description but from the author's desire to affirm what he wanted to happen was in fact happening' (Price, 1969:183). The meaning given to normative orientations by the author implies that these statements are occasions of *deliberate* deceit and distortion on the part of the subject, but, as pointed out in previous chapters, knowledge may be non-systematic and supportive of a particular ideological stance, *not* because of the particular state of the subject, but because of the nature of the methodology employed, the rhetoric of the discourse and the lacunae of the problematic in which it is located.

It is fair to say that for academic purposes (and probably policy purposes as well) Robert Park was responsible for constructing the concept of assimilation. By considering his epistemological and ideological position, it is possible to determine why the concept of assimilation was necessary for Park's problematic. Although he did attempt to develop a set of concepts which could allow for a 'systematic classification and analysis of social data' (Coser, 1971:357), Park was hampered by the empiricist problematic in which he operated. For Park, society is a real structure and knowledge in the form of natural laws lies within society (Park, 1964: 13). Theories are abstracted from the real. This position is clearly expressed in the following statement:

It has been the dream and the tragic mistake of the so-called intellectuals, who have gained their knowledge from textbooks rather than from observation and research, to assume that science had already realized its dream. But there is no indication that science has begun to exhaust the sources or significance of concrete experience . . . . The more abstract sciences . . . are merely methods and tools for converting experience into knowledge and applying the knowledge gained to practical uses (Park, 1964:15-16).

The difficulty, then, posed for Park was the empiricist's problem of providing an exhaustive and systematic classification of experience. But even within this particular conception of knowledge the question needs to be asked: Why was it necessary for Park to produce the concept of assimilation? The previous discussion of concepts, particularly the

insight provided by Canguilhem showing the link between definitions of concepts and the problem posed is useful in assisting us to make sense of the concept, assimilation. Park defined society as 'a group of individuals who are capable of some sort of concrete and collective action' (Park, 1964:4-5), which then leads logically to the posing of the problem: 'How is it possible to establish and maintain an effective social order in a more or less completely urbanized, industrialized and cosmopolitan world?' (Park, 1964:199-200). The logical implications that these problems in turn pose for developing a problematic of ethnic relations is fairly clear, especially if society is also regarded as the product of interactions controlled by a body of traditions and norms (Park, 1964). Park himself provides the logical solution to this problem as it applies to ethnic groups:

The diffusion of culture makes it possible to act collectively over a wide area and to maintain some sort of concert among, and control over a large number of individuals (Park, 1964:5).

By definition, the existence of many cultures in a designated territorial area negates the possibility of a society (Park, 1964:16). This theme is repeatedly stressed by Park:

Under these circumstances it has seemed that the security and the solidarity of the nation depended upon its ability to assimilate and ultimately to amalgamate its different immigrant populations (Park, 1964:202).

In the context of this problematic, *assimilation* is the process by which order and social cohesion are maintained. Consequently this concept became an integral part - the object - of the sociological analysis of ethnic relations as epitomised in the research of the functionalist oriented Chicago school and much subsequent work (van den Berghe, 1967). The point that needs to be stressed is not that the process of assimilation is *desirable* for Park and other writers (although this is part of the problematic) *but that it is a logical conceptual necessity given the conceptualisation in which these authors operated.*<sup>4</sup>

These conceptual difficulties within the discourse of ethnic relations are not limited to the terms which have been discussed above. Considerable problems are also encountered with other notions, such as 'segregation' (Blalock, 1967:12) and 'identity', which are often employed in the discourse of ethnic relations.

At the centre of the discourse of ethnic relations is the concept of identity. In the majority of studies it is the explicit object of analysis while in others it is merely implied. One writer who has frequently defined migrants in this sense is Jean Martin. In one of her studies she says:

Minorities are here defined by the collective identity of their members, not always the same thing as the collective identity ascribed to them by the Australian community (Martin, 1972a:10).

Martin has, perhaps unknowingly, highlighted an important difficulty with employing the notion of identity, namely the *source* of these identities. However there is a more fundamental problem which needs to be resolved before this notion can ever be applied to ethnic relations. This problem concerns the distinction between categories or statistical collections of individual and social groups displaying some sort of consciousness with others in a similar social position. Two writers who have pin-pointed this problem are Mackay and Lewins who concern themselves with the conceptual ambiguities between the terms 'ethnicity', 'ethnic groups' and 'ethnic identity' and point out the problem as stated by Hechter:

... social scientists have often been content to consider ethnicity less as a phenomenon to be explained than a given, a defining attribute of particular social groups (quoted in McKay and Lewins, 1978:412).

In attempting to achieve a greater degree of conceptual clarity, McKay and Lewins categorise the general image of ethnic concepts into those where:

(1) Ethnic identity is attributed to members of ethnic groups which are in fact ethnic aggregates, categories or populations; (2) ethnicity is used to denote members of ethnic groups or categories with, what we shall refer to as ethnic awareness; and (3) ethnicity is used to define members of ethnic groups or categories who manifest, what we term, ethnic consciousness (McKay and Lewins, 1978:414).

Point (1) seems fairly straightforward and requires no detailed examination. As the authors themselves point out while stressing the need for some sort of *interaction* in order to constitute a social group: 'The assumption that, because a number of individuals possess a similar socio-demographic characteristic(s) they automatically constitute a social group is untenable (1978:414). What does need consideration is the distinction these authors posit between two different types of ethnic identity - ethnic awareness and ethnic consciousness (1978:415). What is this distinction based on? The authors define the difference as follows:

Ethnic awareness exists when an individual knows (s)he possesses a certain ethnic trait(s) which is no more meaningful than his or her other cultural, physical, social or territorial characteristics.

Whereas:

Ethnically conscious, like ethnically aware individuals, know they possess a specific ethnic trait(s) but for them this characteristic assumes considerable importance ... a 'we' versus 'them' mentality exists vis-a-vis other groups and there is more likely to be social tension and conflict (1978:415:417).

There is no doubt that this refinement of the concept of identity has utility in categorising particular ethnic group responses from a St Patrick's day march at one extreme to a PLO terrorist organisation at the other. It is precisely as a typology to represent various types of ethnic identification that McKay and Lewins employ the distinction (*cf.* de Lepervanche, 1980). However, it is also the case that this typology suffers from the same sort of shortcomings that the authors have levelled at other writers' definitions:

Despite such qualifications, it remains that in the case of Greeley, who *assumes* that possession of an ethnic trait entails ethnicity, and Taft, who is aware that people experience *more or less* ethnicity, the problem is that *ethnicity has no explanatory dimensions*. That is, there is nothing to indicate *why* ethnicity exists, nor is there anything to distinguish between individuals with ethnicity who do not interact with fellow ethnics (McKay and Lewins, 1978:418, emphasis added).

The authors have focussed on what I see as one of the critical components necessary for a sociological analysis of ethnic relations - the explanatory

dimension. *It is only by means of an historical account of the development of ethnic relations, which can be evaluated in the light of an adequate representation of the social system, that a systematic sociology of ethnic relations can be produced.* Any concern with producing more or less arbitrary definitions of concepts must confront the inevitable epistemological obstacles involved with this exercise and which were outlined previously, e.g., producing concepts from observation. But these obstacles are the consequences of certain epistemological assumptions underlying the knowledge process. No amount of definitional refinement or tampering with non-theoretical concepts can produce a systematic explanatory account of ethnic relations. An entirely different set of assumptions about the nature of sociological knowledge needs to be applied and it is claimed that the assumptions underlying the development of critical systematic sociological practice provide the basis for a systematic sociological analysis of ethnic relations.

#### THE STUDY OF ETHNIC RELATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Kinloch has recently provided a number of distinct problems which, in his opinion, has hampered discussion in the area of race relations in America:

- (1) Ideologically it has reflected the values of America's white elite and has served their interest rather than attempting objective analysis;
- (2) its focus has been primarily on attitudes rather than on the social structure behind them, i.e., an emphasis on prejudice rather than on the structure of discrimination;
- (3) rather than attempting to be theoretical and explanatory, it has concentrated on descriptive accounts of attitudes and discrimination in particular settings; in the past, at least, this field has tended toward the atheoretical;
- (4) when theory has developed, a trichotomy of perspectives (i.e., psychological, social-psychological, and sociological) has evolved in relative isolation, rather than the development of a general theory; and
- (5) a further problem of the theory which has developed is its typological, static qualities, resulting in an ability to describe societies in general terms but not in terms of the ongoing dynamics of race relations within them (Kinloch, 1974:ix-x).

There are two comments which can be made with respect to Kinloch's evaluation of the area of what he calls race relations. Firstly, the general point of his critique, concerning the atheoretical, descriptive and non-explanatory nature of the area (see also van den Berghe, 1967). Although intended to apply to the area in the U.S. these comments seem also applicable to the knowledge produced in ethnic relations in Australia. Secondly, in the light of the previous section, Kinloch appears unable to locate these problems in the epistemological obstacles which are inherent in the general approach to studying the area.<sup>5</sup>

It seems fair to say that the majority of studies on ethnic relations in Australia which purport to be sociological define the object of analysis in terms of the concepts analysed above (Galvin, 1980). For instance one review of the area commented:

Sociological and social-psychological research has been concerned primarily with the problems of both the host society and the newcomers in accommodating and adjusting to each other. For this reason concepts such as assimilation, integration, accommodation and adjustment have appeared prominently in this research literature (Baldock and Lally, 1974:53).

The historical development of migration patterns and ethnic relations play a large part in predetermining what the objects of analysis and concepts applied in the area will be. It is not surprising that the concepts singled out by Baldock and Lally tend to dominate the study of ethnic relations in Australia given the steady influx of non-English migrants into Australia in the post Second World War period on the one hand, and the adoption of the concepts of the Chicago School, on the other. The Canadian experience, for instance, differs from the Australian in the notable presence of *language* related concepts, e.g., bilingualism, language retention, language loss, superordinate-subordinate relationships between English and French languages which are absent from the Australian discourse (Lieberson, 1970). In the light of the nature of the analysis of ethnic relations in Australia it would not really serve any useful purpose to



critique *all* studies in the discourse. An idea of the non-systematic, empiricist nature of the discourse in general can be gained from a brief look at a few studies.

1. Paul Wilson's *Immigrants and Politics* (1973). Wilson sets out to attempt an understanding of 'how the general environmental adaptation of the immigrant affects his pattern of political development' (1973:5) and to:

Find out whether it was possible to explain immigrant political participation by reference not only to the sociological and demographic characteristics of the individual but also by considering the manner in which the immigrant adjusts to or assimilates within his new environment (1973:5).

Although this study focusses on Italian and British immigrants' levels of political participation, Wilson hoped to be able to generalise in an inductive sense to 'political participation among citizens in economically advanced countries' (1973:5). What sorts of questions were then posed by the author consistent with these problems? These include:

- . How real is the great Australian political apathy and is it being reinforced by migrants?
- . Is the Australian Government's professed desire for a well-knit community being relieved by the influx of many thousands of immigrants from political systems radically different from Australia's.
- . Is the lack of interest among new Australians due to the highly structured nature of the major political parties in this country compared with the amorphous character of American parties? Or is the political noiselessness of immigrants due to the entrenchment of Old Australian ward bosses unwilling to give up their powers? (Wilson, 1973:6).

Some of Wilson's findings were as follows:

- . Immigrants of medium socio-economic status are more likely than those at the extremes of the status hierarchy to change their pattern of political participation when moving to a new land.
- . Those immigrants of medium socio-economic status who have been in Australia for only a relatively short period (roughly less than 10 years) are generally low in terms of their satisfaction and identification with their adopted country. Their determined efforts to obtain security for themselves and their families leave them with little time or interest in participating in politics ... . For the Italians, lack of identification with the host country contributes to reduced political activity (Wilson, 1973:97-88).

Many of the arguments presented in the previous part, with respect to non-systematic analysis, e.g., arbitrary definitions, abstracted empiricism, non-theoretical observations, empirical generalisations, 'testing theories' etc., are present, either explicitly or implicitly, in both the questions posed and findings presented by Wilson. Furthermore, the findings tend to leave more questions unanswered about the dynamics of social systems and ethnic relations than they resolve. For instance what is the significance of the relationship between socio-economic status and political behaviour? Why is length of residence an important component of social structure to be associated with political behaviour? Clearly there are commonsense responses which can be offered to these questions, e.g., the longer the period of residence in Australia, the more likely a migrant is to relinquish that aspect of his or her ethnic baggage which distinguishes their political behaviour from the majority of Australians. But from the point of view of systematic sociological practice the shortcoming of this response is the same as that which is present in Wilson's questions and findings, namely the reliance on observation to determine the important variables and the specification of correlations without any theoretical understanding of the mechanisms which maintain and perpetuate the social system and how migrants fit into this totality. A combination of Wilson's problems as posed, and the findings, comprise what the author regards as a 'model of immigrant political participation' which is presented as though the data are a verification of the model, whereas the latter is the product of 'sociological' variables more or less arbitrarily selected by Wilson for purpose of the analysis. These variables also pre-select the evidence and hence data and model are intertwined in the same problematic. The extent to which the author operates within a positivist conception of knowledge, e.g., distinguishing theory from observation is indicated by the major methodological difficulty he poses, namely the verification of the cause and effect relationship between variables rather than ascertaining

mere statistical association.<sup>6</sup> The arbitrariness, non-systematic and commonsense nature of Wilsons' study of an aspect of ethnic relations is clear in the following quotation:

There is for example, ample evidence from the present study to show that the immigrant's political behaviour is affected very much by the social and economic circumstances surrounding him (Wilson, 1973:38).

This is presented as a finding. The theoretical relationship between 'social and economic circumstances' as structured components of the social system needs to be logically and consistely connected to the position of migrants in the system in order to produce systematic knowledge rather than expecting the 'data' to confirm this to be the case.

One writer in the area of ethnic relations in Australia who does pose the big theoretical questions is Jean Martin. It is often implicit in her writings that 'ethnic minorities' is a theoretical sociological problem, not simply a social problem or commonsense issue. For instance in offering a critique of some of the early American writers in the area she notes:

But there central concern was the ethnic minority, not the development of sociological theory. By contrast, for writers like Thomas and Znaniecki, Wirth and Galitzi, the importance of research into ethnic groups lay in its contribution to a comprehensive understanding of social structure and social change (Martin, 1972b:2).

2. Martin, in her text *Community and Identity* (1972 b), attempts to follow the tradition of researching ethnic groups for the purpose of throwing light on the broader issues of the natureof social structure and social change. She asks 'under specified conditions, are ethnic minorities likely to remain as distinct structures and if so, in what form and why?' (1972:8). Unfortunately, from the point of developing a systematic sociology of ethnic relations, the epistemological model in which Martin operates (evidenced in her earlier works), prevents her from contributing to a 'comprehensive' understanding of social structure. In other words, the lack of a critical systematic representation of the social system *in which*

the ethnic groups are located, the arbitrary nature of the concepts and definitions employed, the production of empirical generalisations, in short, the empiricist conception of knowledge in which the writer operates, inhibits the production of systematic sociological knowledge. For instance, Martin in *Community and Identity* presents the following questions and findings:

- Q: [The study's] aim is the limited one of examining the structure and functions of ethnic minorities through a detailed analysis of ethnic associations.
- F1: In the circumstances previously specified the membership of an ethnic minority will emerge as heterogeneous in interests and values.
- F2: To the extent that the associational structure of the minority develops entirely or predominantly around the diverse interests and values, effectiveness in defining and achieving community goals and in developing community identity is impaired and the probability of the minority becoming fragmented or polarised into conflicting factions is increased.
- F3: To the extent that the minority develops community associations whose goals are sufficiently diffuse and flexible to embrace diversity of interests and values, effectiveness in defining and achieving community goals and in developing community identity will be promoted.
- F4: The more minority leadership becomes concentrated in authoritarian individuals, the less responsive are minority goals to the realities of the minority situation and the expectations of the larger society, and hence the more introverted is the minority likely to become (Martin, 1972b :106-116).

These findings are presented as promising propositions and their format implies that the writer sees them as approaching law-like statements and that through further refinement in the form of hypothesis testing they may reach the status of laws. However, the critique of this approach presented in Part I indicated that theoretical laws cannot be derived in this fashion. Martin is making connections between *empirical* constructs, e.g., authoritarian individuals, resources available, but applying them as if they were theoretical concepts. In another sense, the nature of the questions posed and the findings obtained are totally uncritical of the social system.<sup>7</sup>

What is noticeably absent from studies of ethnic relations in Australia is a representation of the social system in which to study ethnic groups. Even where it is the intention of the researcher to develop an increased understanding of the totality which constitutes the social structure, it is implicit that this is to be achieved by 'working up' from ethnic relations in an inductive fashion. This approach fails to appreciate the role of ethnic groups in maintaining the social system: as a *component* of the system.

There are many other studies in the Australian discourse of ethnic relations which rely upon the same epistemological assumptions and hence suffer from similar shortcomings as the studies discussed above. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive review of *all* these studies. Such an exercise would be of little value. However a few of the questions posed in other studies can give an idea of the empiricist nature of the problematic.

3. Banchevska in the study entitled 'The Immigrant Family' asks:

What is the future of the immigrant? Is he to remain an isolate living in his ethnic community, in a foreign enclave, for the rest of his days? What of his children? Is the alternative assimilation, complete absorption into the community? (1974:151).

4. Cell in his work 'The New Australians' asks:

... whether Australia, like America can absorb successfully the massive inflow, mould a 'nation of immigrants' different from any of the countries of origin, one to which all have contributed. Put another way, for of course the people are there and so they must form some kind of cultural compromise, will the product have much resemblance to the Australia of past and present? Can the Australian ethos absorb the shock? Or will it be swamped? (Cell, 1969:249).

How does Cell answer this?

All that can be said is that the swamping has not happened yet ... The impact of the new Australians is thus impossible to assess

with any accuracy. Any judgments would necessarily be premature (Cell, 1969:249-50).

Price has recently edited a collection of writings under the heading of *Greeks in Australia* (1975). This collection is seen as fulfilling the need to supply more studies in depth on this particular ethnic group (1975:2). Furthermore, the volume is seen:

Of special interest to those working in social sciences or involved in the social problems of Greek families and communities (Price, 1975:2).

Thus the social problem orientation of these studies seems clear from Price's statement.

This brief critique of some Australian studies in ethnic relations which go to make up the discourse has concentrated on the internal components of the practice, i.e., the non-systematic, empiricist, arbitrary, aspects.<sup>8</sup> If sociological knowledge is inherently value laden as was argued in the previous part, what values underlie these pieces of research? Questions of this sort are concerned with the external components of the practice and are not easy to ascertain because the *political* implications of the research are not spelled out in these studies (Galvin, 1980). For instance will the results of Wilson's study inform politicians of how they might develop strategies to attract 'the ethnic vote'? Does Martin's study provide information for governments on how they may assist the break down of ethnicity (at least its organisational manifestations) and promote migrant participation in Australian associations? Or does it inform migrant groups on how to retain their ethnicity?

What unites these studies, and the discourse of ethnic relations in general, with respect to the epistemological conceptions underlying them is their *empiricist* and *positivist* nature. Empiricist, in the sense expressed by Althusser of perceiving the object of knowledge as a given and attempting to abstract the essence, knowledge, from the object.

Positivist, in the sense that knowledge is regarded as value free, that the object is pre-theoretical and that the aim of sociological practice is to develop laws about society.

Finally, it should be added, that these studies tend to be non-critical of the social system. Where they are 'critical', it is almost always at a tinkering, social engineering level - and never of the *total* system.

#### TWO IMPORTANT THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

However, recently there has appeared two theoretical innovations in the literature on ethnic relations which breaks significantly from the discourse as portrayed above. The first is Jean Martin's reanalysis of what constitutes knowledge. This is then applied to the historical development of ethnic relations in Australia as far as government policy is concerned (Martin, 1978). The second is Frank Lewins' analysis of some of the contradictions inherent in the conceptualisation of multiculturalism (Lewins, 1978b). I will consider each of these in turn and conclude by presenting what I consider to be a further inherent contradiction in the discourse of ethnic relations which adds to its non-systematic nature.

Jean Martin, in the first chapter of her text *The Migrant Presence* (1978) presents an epistemological position which is vastly different from that which was the basis of all her previous works. It is in this work that Martin expounds the position that knowledge is constructed and this places her position in a non-empiricist category. Under the heading 'Webs of Meaning' the author, quoting Weber's personalised notion of bureaucracy, writes as follows on the question of social knowledge:

The parameters of any particular body of knowledge are thus embedded within large constructs which automatically negate or neutralise alternative definitions of what legitimately belongs to that body of knowledge. The predominance of assimilationist constructs in Australia up to the mid-sixties, for example, meant that questions about how Australian institutions had responded to an influx of

people of non-Anglo-Saxon origin simply did not come to the surface. There was no 'decision' to rule such question out of order. They did not arise; they were not confronted (Martin, 1978:21).

Martin is implying that social knowledge, rather than being the sum of statements and propositions abstracted from migrant structures and behaviours, *is the way in which certain influential elements of the social system construct a conceptual unity which then represents ethnic relations and also what these elements exclude from this unity.* The knowledge effect of this practice is to provide an appearance that the knowledge is an unproblematic given devoid of power relationships. As the author says:

The content of social knowledge also consists largely of taken-for-granted elements which, most of the time, no one is aware of constructing: they are simply there (Martin, 1978:22).

Martin (1978:21) draws on Foucault's concepts of 'truth' (process of constructing knowledge), 'statements' (knowledge) and 'power' to provide the framework for her analysis:

Of the way in which knowledge about migrants and their place in Australian society has been affirmed and constructed, denied and destroyed, over the past thirty years.

Truth is not seen as the property of internal components of a particular scientific practice but in the words of Foucault as:

A system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution and circulation of statements.

'Truth' is linked by a circular relation to systems of power which produce it and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which redirect it (quoted in Martin, 1978:22).

What is implicit in Martin's framework is the recognition that the concepts that have predominated in this literature are *social* constructs, not the products of theoretical labour. What the writer identifies as the important aspect of 'the social' is the structure of relations, *'particularly relations of dominance and subordination'* (Martin, 1978:22, emphasis added). The contribution of Martin's approach to an analysis of ethnic relations now becomes clear. In the terms applied in Part I, she has recognised the importance of the external components in knowledge



construction. This is a position diametrically opposed to the epistemological assumptions of her previous works which assumed that knowledge resided in the object. The systematic attempt by Martin to develop what this epistemological shift means for knowledge and the discourse of ethnic relations is so radical compared to the traditional analyses as exemplified above, that it bears repeating. Martin postulates 'three important dimensions' along which the process of constructing knowledge within a structure of group relations can be analysed. They are:

The extent to which the process articulates, develops or legitimates *groups/sectional* as compared with inter-group societal or universal *interests* and identities; the extent to which the *groups/sections* which the knowledge is about contribute to the process; and the extent to which the knowledge produced has been validated or is valid in the terms that are claimed for it, or on the contrary is spurious, not validated as claimed, directly or by implication, or incapable of validation (Martin, 1978:22, emphasis added).

The critical implication for this essentially materialist conception of knowledge is that the units of analysis now become sectional and groups' interests and identities, not society as some coherent expression of values or interest, i.e., the focus is more on the parts and their interrelations than the mythical whole. This is clear in Martin's conclusion following from the above quote:

... the dominance of some parties implies their capacity to define interests and identities, to monopolise access to knowledge and its construction and to assert that certain knowledge is valid, irrespective of whether it has been validated in the way claimed, or not. To the extent that certain parties dominate the construction of knowledge to the exclusion of others, the knowledge so produced is ideological. But it is important to remember that such ideological effects can be identified only where an object has been admitted as an object of knowledge (Martin, 1978:22-23).

What appears to be absent from Martin's framework is a representation of the social system in terms of the dynamic forces that produce, maintain and perpetuate these knowledge/power relationships. However, her work represents a significant break from the traditional discourse. The two concepts most apparent in the recent work of Martin, presented above, are firstly, the notion of *power* (domination and subordination) and secondly

the focus on *group interests* rather than the total society. These elements also form the basis of the critique of the concept 'multiculturalism' developed by Lewins. It is probably significant that Lewins was a student of Martin for a period. He recognised that the *apolitical* nature of the discourse is also a hallmark of the majority of conceptualisations of *multiculturalism* as it is presented in the literature, and this led him to develop two apolitical representations of the concept.

1. Demographic Multiculturalism which simply acknowledges the diversity of ethnic populations in Australia, often in numerical terms, by noticing but not valuing this diversity.
2. Holistic Multiculturalism regards mutual understanding and tolerance ... within a context of unity and diversity as characterising the sort of relationships which can and should exist between Australians and ethnics ... . In reconciling the needs of the host society and its ethnic constituents, *holistic multiculturalism stresses the wholeness and the welfare of the entire society* (Lewins, 1978b:11-12, emphasis added).

The hallmark of this representation of multiculturalism is that ethnic relations are implicitly and ideologically regarded as *apolitical* and insofar as it recognises ethnic pluralism as a permanent state, it is only in the sense of ethnic diversity, i.e., as a one dimensional horizontal structure which ignores the dominant-subordinate or hierarchical structure of ethnic stratification.<sup>9</sup> Not surprisingly, then, Lewins has developed a third category incorporating those representations of multiculturalism which recognise the political nature of ethnic relations - *political multiculturalism*.

This perspective emphasises the role of political processes in Australian-ethnic relations and regards ethnic groups as legitimate interest groups and as having the responsibility for the realization of ethnic goals. *In this approach, the focus is on the political nature of relations between the parts (usually Australians and various ethnic communities) rather than on the needs of the whole society* (Lewins, 1978b:13, emphasis added).

Martin also has explicitly pointed out the political nature of ethnic relations:

Ethnic pluralism in Australia, is not, then the safely cultural, apolitical phenomenon that some bland interpretations would lead us to think. Nor is there any reason to wish that this is what it

should be. When every other group in our society claims the right to be politicized - from women at the most inclusive end of the scale to convicts, perhaps at the most exclusive - it is hard to justify denying this right, or thinking it can be denied to ethnic groups (Martin, 1976:25).

#### THE ETHNIC DILEMMA

A third aspect of this critique of the discourse of ethnic relations concerns contradictions in some of the assumptions underlying the very nature of the concepts 'ethnic pluralism' and 'equality'. Given the realisation by academics, politicians and ethnics that ethnic diversity is not a stage in a process of absorption into Australian values and institutions, a view that was current in Australian political and academic circles in the 1950s and 60s (Martin, 1978), but is a permanent stable state, the 'ideology of assimilation' is not only unrealistic but largely unpopular.<sup>10</sup> Martin sees this situation in terms of changing social definitions of migrants as assimilable in the fifties and sixties, as people with problems in the late sixties and early seventies to a 'minority pressure group with rights to power and participation in the mid-seventies' (Martin, 1978:78). Consequently, the discourse of ethnic relations, even though exhibiting contradictions and logical inconsistencies as pointed out above, has one common denominator - the recognition of ethnic diversity as a major component of the Australian social structure. However it is not sufficient to simply regard the change in social definition and knowledge of migrants in terms of recognition. The impetus underlying government reports gives the impression of improving the situation of migrants in Australian society - of overcoming the discrepancies (social, educational, health, linguistic, etc.) between Australians and migrants. Very loosely, this impetus may be regarded as an attempt to reduce the degree of inequality between Australians and ethnics. But there is an inherent logical inconsistency with an attempt to combine ethnicity and equality in

a holistic multiculturalism view of ethnic relations. This inconsistency, which I call the ethnic dilemma, is basically a contradiction between the Parsonian variables of *ascription* and *achievement* criteria for the evaluation of individual performance (van den Berghe, 1967). In the conceptualisation of an open opportunity system where individuals have similar opportunities for upward social mobility (presumably the liberal philosophy underlying holistic multiculturalism), this mobility is a function of achievement on certain universalistic criteria, e.g., education, occupation, income. In other words, the criteria for advancement should be achievement and not ascription. However, it can be seen that to value achievement is to devalue ascription and hence a dilemma arises for conceptualisations of holistic multiculturalism. The basic assumption of this conceptualisation is that members of ethnic minorities have the right to maintain their identity and hence a multicultural society is the desired alternative to an Anglo-conformist or Melting-pot product. But, on the other hand, individuals in an egalitarian, open society should be judged on what they do, not on who they are. This dilemma may be presented diagrammatically:

FIGURE 4.2 *THE ETHNIC DILEMMA*

Type of society desired	Criteria for personal evaluation	
	Ascriptive	Achievement
Multicultural (pluralist)	1	2
Ethnically homogeneous (assimilationist)	3	4

In the diagram cells 1 and 4 represent the logical couplings. A multicultural society, by definition recognises the ascriptive

characteristics of individuals and attempts to maintain and take account of these characteristics (as reflected in government policies). In a culturally homogeneous society, ethnicity is no longer an important factor for either the constitution of that society or the criteria of evaluation of individuals in that society. *The ethnic dilemma emerges when an egalitarian multicultural society is represented in the situation in cell 2, i.e., the evaluation of individuals by achievement criteria in a culturally plural society. In other words ethnicity is applied as the basis for constituting a pluralist society but it is ignored in the evaluation of members' performance.*<sup>11</sup>

Consequently in holistic multiculturalism, equality (as defined in this context) and ethnicity appear incompatible. Where one group has effective control over major social institutions it appears that equality and ethnicity are mutually exclusive: *the alternatives seem to be either multiculturalism with inequality or homogeneity (assimilation) with equality.*

#### CONCLUSION

The main themes of this chapter can be summarised as follows:

1. Ethnic relations contains at least two essential dimensions - cultural and structural. The former includes language, values, religion and identity, while the latter focuses on the problem of ethnic inequality and access to social resources.
2. Is there an inherent contradiction between these two dimensions, expressed as the ethnic dilemma?
3. How can these dimensions and difficulties be incorporated into a form of ethnic relations which represents a truly multicultural society?

These issues have been alluded to in a number of government and academic publications. The submission of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council entitled *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (August, 1977), highlighted the cultural and structural dimension of ethnic relations. This document identified three key issues as central to multiculturalism: social cohesion, equality and cultural identity. The Buntine Oration delivered in May, 1978, by Barbara Falk and entitled *Personal Identity in a Multicultural Australia* addresses the question: 'Is the concept of a multicultural Australia a paradox or a contradiction?' (1978:3). But there is an important difference between what lies at the centre of the paradox for Falk and what is the crux of the ethnic dilemma presented above. The former is concerned with the problem of identity, the latter with inequality. The focus on identity in Falk's analysis is evidenced by the set of questions posed at the outset:

Can many cultures be integrated without being assimilated into a new composite of them all? ... If the multicultural society (the whole) is amorphous, *is it not self-contradictory to designate it a society?* And practically speaking, what norms and what laws and conventions, and what institutions, could regulate conflicting interests, and what would be the consequences for the personal identity of each Australian of such a society? (Falk, 1978:3, emphasis added).

One of the main questions posed by Falk is the problem of cohesion in a multi-ethnic society. Indeed, social cohesion seems central to many analyses of ethnic relations (see earlier discussion of Park's analysis and also *Australia as a Multicultural Society* [1977]). But whereas Park's solution to the problem of cohesion was assimilation, the approach adopted by Falk and the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council is to maintain cohesion by 'integration'. Integration,

Means a continuing extension of society whereby the parts added are linked either by bonds of mutual acceptance or only by laws regulating conflicting sectional interests.

The report of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council also stresses, in the sense of holistic multiculturalism, the wholeness of the total society

over sectional interests but also emphasises (in a Durkheimian fashion) the 'social good' (1977:5). One aim of these analyses appears to be the development of a theoretical representation of a truly multicultural society which is, above all a democratic society. As stated by Falk (1978:4):

I shall argue in this paper that a democratic multicultural society must have an integrative set of values, together with diversity, to hold together ethnic groups of unequal size and different class composition, *since inducement and coercion as binding forces are not as effective in the long run as is moral commitment. And I shall argue that members of both dominant and dominated groups would, in a state that lacks such integration, be insecure in personal identity* (emphasis added).

The analysis of multiculturalism presented by Falk and the Ethnic Affairs Council recognises the structural dimension of ethnic relations but does not incorporate this dimension as a significant component which needs to change to achieve a truly multicultural society. That is, although the dominant-subordinate nature of ethnic relations and the limited access to social resources are seen as important components of ethnic relations, the *means* for achieving a truly multicultural society do not involve this dimension but are seen as primarily a function of changes at the level of the cultural dimension. For instance, the last sentence from Falk's comment, quoted above, indicates that the existence of 'dominant and dominated groups' is *not* the problem, but rather is taken as a given. The problem is seen as how to develop an integrated society *within* these structural constraints. The approach to ethnic relations adopted in this thesis is that the dominant-dominated dimension is at the crux of ethnic relations in Australia and needs to be the focus of change in order to develop a truly multicultural society.

Identity, as pointed out earlier, is another concept which seems critical to an analysis of ethnic relations. Identity, as Falk has noted, is socially bestowed (1978:6-8), and in a class society like Australia it is relevant to ask which ethnic group has control over the most important instruments of socialisation? Questions of this sort are likely to lead

into extremely difficult problems concerning the status and relationship between subcultural systems of beliefs, e.g., Falk (1978:4) touches on problems of this sort: 'Can the measuring of a concept or belief be judged by transcultural criteria of truth and rationality, or is the very measuring of a concept bound by the subculture?' A related question concerns the maintenance and perpetuation of cultural values and behaviours which may be inconsistent with the legal and value position of the ruling class (e.g., the possibility of some non-English speaking migrants committing murder as a culturally acceptable method of 'settling a score'). Problems of this sort seem irresolvable while limited to the cultural dimension of ethnic relations. These are problems of power and control and hence are basically political, not cultural issues. They can only be resolved by historical social forces.

While elaborating on the nature of a multicultural society, Falk makes the following point (1978:3-4):

The multi-cultural Australian society is an ideal, a *gemeinschaft*, not a *gesellschaft* in Tonnies' terms. It suggests a unity greater than that of a shared territory, a federal constitution and a common legal system. It implies that the bonds that unite must be stronger than the differences that are divisive, and that cohesion is not achieved at the price of dominance of one culture over the others (emphasis added).

However, it could be argued that cohesion, not defined as the social good, but as the legitimation and acceptance of the *status quo* by subordinate groups, is *precisely* a function of the dominance of one culture over others. In Marxian terms 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (quoted in Heller, 1969:21). Consequently, humanitarian concerns about subcultural behaviour are purely philosophical questions while they remain divorced from the class structure of the social system, and need to be related in the relationship between consciousness and structure.

In something of a contradiction, Falk argues that in a situation of clashes between different ethnic moral codes, 'the code of the dominant



group must prevail' (1978:12), while arguing at the same time that the dominant group needs to be resocialised:

Re-socialization of the dominant groups is demanded by multi-culturalism, and this demand may shake the very foundations of primary socialization (Falk, 1978:13).

Falk concludes her analysis on a provocative note:

How then, could a multi-cultural society come into being in Australia? We have noted some features such [as] a society would have (*sic*): equality of access for all ethnic groups to economic opportunity, well being, the legal process, and political power. But do all Anglo-Australians have this equality of access? Are we saying that the disadvantage of ethnic groups should not be proportionately greater than that of Anglo-Australians as a group, taking into account the class structure of each group? (Falk, 1978:13).

The strength of Falk's analysis lies in the emphasis given to both cultural and structural dimensions of Australian ethnic relations and the pin-pointing of some of the critical issues, contradictions and questions which arise out of this two-dimensional approach. To the extent that Falk offers directives for achieving a truly multicultural society, these mainly have to do with the emergence of new multi-ethnic identities as a consequence of multicultural education programmes. Hence Falk advocates changes to existing structures, e.g., new curricula for schools which would explain shared values. In other words, the suggested means for resolving many of the dilemmas raised by Falk and the achievement of a truly multicultural society, lie in the cultural dimension. Many of the components of the structural dimension, notably dominant-subordinate relations, political power are defined as insignificant and irrelevant when it comes to resolving these dilemmas. This is apparent in the concluding suggestion offered by Falk (1978:13-14):

New curricula would be needed for schools in a multi-cultural Australia which would confirm the values of diverse cultures and denigrate none, so that there could be continuity in synthesis and resynthesis of the identities of pupils; but there must be shared values expressed in a 'stable symbolic canopy' for the whole society.

It is possible that the contradictions and dilemmas raised by Falk, and inherent in her own analysis, can only be truly confronted and resolved

through greater understanding of the historical and structural dimension of Australian ethnic relations. This task is the focus of Chapters Five and Six.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

## 1 Racism is defined as:

The dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority (Benedict, 1942:97).

## 2 A further difficulty raised in this connection is the problem of where does one draw the line regarding what is 'cultural'. Some authors (e.g., Greeley) have even suggested that academics, because of a shared cultural trait (?), could constitute an ethnic group. Schermerhorn (1970) overcomes this difficulty by including the term 'sense of history', i.e., descent, in his definition.

## 3 This concept of assimilation is most often applied to comparisons between various ethnic groups and the 'host' society which assumes that the latter is homogeneous with respect to values, norms, membership in associations, access to social resources, behaviours, etc.

4 Cf. Parson's holism and Gouldner's criticism in *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. One important question that this analysis raises is to what extent do new 'words' in the discourse of ethnic relations, e.g., 'multiculturalism' simply reflect old ideas as expressed in Park's problematic, under a new guise? This point will be considered later under a more detailed discussion of the notion of multiculturalism.

## 5 Kinloch himself also analyses the area from a positivist position. This is evident in his desire to see more 'objective analysis' (1).

## 6 Wilson suggests that the cause-effect nature of the relationship may be achieved by further research, presumably implying the need for more observation and further hypothesis testing.

## 7 This position adopted by Martin contrasts with her most recent work which indicated her fresh grasp of the sociology of Australian ethnic relations. This new approach will be elaborated on later.

8 I would maintain that these studies are *typical* of the discourse with respect to the epistemological assumptions about sociological knowledge which are present in the majority of studies in the area.

## 9 With respect to the hierarchical nature of ethnic relations, Wolff has pointed out what he considers to be an important structural component:

A rough distributive justice emerges from the conflict of interests, but some interests are recognised as legitimate while others are not and the application of the theory of pluralism always favours the groups in existence against those in the process of formation (quoted in Martin, 1976:18-19).

- 10 Whether or not ethnic minorities constitute a 'voting block' in Australia is a debatable point. However the link between some political parties and ethnic groups, e.g., ALP and Greeks in Melbourne (Martin, 1978, Ch.2) and the flood of government reports on migrant issues such as education, health etc., which have appeared in the last decade indicate that it might well be political suicide for a politician to publicly adhere to any sort of assimilationist policy.
  
- 11 An excellent example of this dilemma can be seen in the following case. In 1977 I presented a paper at the first National Sikh Conference (Canberra) which touched on, in part, the ethnic dilemma. A member of the audience, himself a Sikh, commented that he is accepted into his Australian circle of friends on the basis of his occupational status (medical doctor), but on one occasion when he made an error at work, one of these friends commented 'What else would you expect from an Indian'.

CHAPTER FIVETHE RISE OF AUSTRALIAN CAPITALISM AND THE ETHNIC EFFECT

The discourse of Australian ethnic relations can be seen as a social product: the outcome of various social forces which have collectively defined the nature of ethnic relations in this country. This outcome takes the form of a knowledge effect. The aim of this chapter is to trace some of the major social, economic and political forces which have given rise to this ethnic effect.

From its very inception, Australia was a capitalist society. It can be argued that the colony was founded *not*, as popular belief would have it, only to establish a penal outpost for Britain's convicted criminals, but mainly to facilitate trade in the Pacific and to proliferate the flax and timber industries. The class nature of Australian society had its seeds in the accumulation of capital by the officers and their exploitation of convict labour (Wild, 1978:27). Surplus value was accumulated by many means, e.g., officers pooling funds to purchase supplies which could then be sold to colonists at high prices, exporting of pearl shells, sealing and whaling (Wild, 1978:27). One of the most significant means by which officers accumulated capital was the use of rum as payment for labour and goods which could then be exchanged for British currency. The class system was able to be promulgated to such a great extent because of the abundance of cheap convict labour. As well as this:

The wealthy officers also bought land from ex-convicts who had been given small plots to prevent them returning to Britain. They became wage labourers as the propertied accumulated more (Wild, 1978:28).

Perhaps the individual best able to manipulate this system to his personal advantage was John Macarthur. 'In 1802, [he] owned nearly 4,000 acres. He received 320 acres in crown grants and the rest he bought from ex-convicts and other officers' (Wild, 1978:28). This was also the man who is said to have arrived as a lieutenant, £500 in debt, and eleven years

later to have accumulated a fortune of over £20,000.

In 1837, ... Macarthur's sons owned 50,000 acres and employed 186 people of whom 130 were convicts. Clearly the crown as land owner and controller of convict labour was a crucial avenue to the accumulation of private wealth (Wild, 1978:28).

As an offshoot of Britain, the development of Australian capitalist society is perhaps not surprising. Nor is it surprising that the governing institutions (e.g., New South Wales Legislative Council) and apparatuses of power and control reflected this structure in so far as they drew their members from the capitalist class and reflected the interests of the ruling class (Ward, 1969). On the other hand, groups such as ex-convicts and owners of small properties were noticeably under-represented on these bodies, if not excluded. These two main social classes came to be labelled as 'exclusionists' and 'emancipists'. The former referred to:

The colonial upper class, whose members jealously guarded themselves from any social contact with convicts or the associates or descendants of convicts (Ward, 1963:24).

The latter referred not only to ex-convicts and their descendants, but also to others who associated with this group and expressed an empathy with their social or ideological position (Wild, 1978:29).<sup>1</sup>

Categories of individuals such as Aborigines had no place in this class society. After attempts to 'civilise' or 'Europeanise' the Aborigine failed they were held in contempt and defined as lazy heathens. Having thus been defined, the deterioration of white-black relations was probably predictable. Blacks were defined as a 'nuisance' and tended to hinder growth and development by not turning their hand to any productive purpose.

In Connell's generative sense (1977:5), ethnicity and race, i.e., the socially defined cultural and physical characteristics of groups of individuals and their position in the economic, political and social structure, e.g., their *minority* status are largely outcomes of definite social forces, such as a capitalist structure. Consequently, ethnic relations' behaviours and attitudes, such as discrimination, prejudice,

racism and ethnic stratification can be seen as *products* of the way the social system is constituted. They are not *natural* or 'givens' of any multicultural society. Undoubtedly one of the most important events in Australian history which reflected the migrant and Aborigine effect was the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*. What historical aspects of the development of the Australian class system and ethnic and race relations gave rise to the white Australia policy?

In 1831 the British government began a system of assisted migrant to Australia with the aim of redressing the sexual imbalance of the population. In 1821 the ratio of males to females was 100:57, in 1833, 100:36, and in 1841, 100:50 (Willey, 1978:1-2). By 1838 there were two systems of assisted immigration operating. The first applied to single females 18-30 years of age and to skilled workers. The second was a bounty system. Under this scheme, colonists were subsidised for people they brought to Australia and employed. This system operated from 1835-1842 and was abolished due to the depression in New South Wales, and abuses of the system (Willey, 1978:2).

British migrants numbered approximately 465,125 between 1850 and 1859. Of these, 231,600 were assisted. Up until the 1880s assisted British migration supplied over one third of all migrants entering Australia (de Lepervanche, 1975:81). By and large, then, migrants were men and women with little capital and hence contributed to the ranks of the working class rather than to the capital class (de Lepervanche, 1975:81). Organisations were established in England to 'encourage' the migration of members of the working class to Australia. These organisations saw their role as beneficial to British society by increasing the populations in British colonies and thus stimulating markets for British goods, removing potential militant workers and reducing British unemployment (de Lepervanche, 1975:81).

Of the 600,000 migrants who arrived in Australia between 1851 and 1860, over half (372,000) were unassisted and most went to the Victorian gold fields. It was the gold discoveries of the 1850s which brought the first major challenge from non-British immigrants to the predominantly British character of the Australian population - that threat was in the form of Chinese settlers (Willey, 1978). In 1861, 7.2 per cent of the total population or 83,395 was foreign born. This included 27,000 Germans and 39,000 Chinese (de Lepervanche, 1975:82). The effect of gold discoveries in the 1850s to migration for the period 1850-1860 with the increase experienced in subsequent decades.

TABLE 5.1 *THE PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL POPULATION INCREASE DUE TO NET MIGRATION, AUSTRALIA, 1850-1900*

Period	Percentage
1852-1861	76
1861-1870	33
1871-1880	37
1881-1890	42
1891-1900	4

*SOURCE:* de Lepervanche, 1975:91

The appearance of the Chinese on the goldfields and the subsequent anxieties and racial conflicts led to the imposition of a number of restriction Acts against Chinese migration. But as soon as the Chinese threat appeared to subside, the legislation was repealed by the colonies. South Australia did so in 1861, Victoria in 1865 and New South Wales in 1867 (de Lepervanche, 1975:82-83). These restrictions were lifted so as to satisfy employers' requests for a plentiful cheap labour supply, and, for a period, there were no restrictions in the colonies against non-European immigration. But the 1850s was a period highlighted by the



inability to dovetail assisted migration with labour shortages. It was either a case of too many migrants at a time of high unemployment or a cut back in migration when labour was in short supply. To take the experience of one state, South Australia, relief works for the unemployed were introduced in 1851 but by 1854 there was such a shortage of labour that employers were supposedly considering introducing European and Asian labour. However, there was high unemployment the following year when men returned from the diggings. This situation worsened with the arrival of more migrants between 1855 and 1859. Most of the other states were experiencing a similar phenomenon (de Lepervanche, 1975:83), and associations, such as the Political Association of South Australia, were formed in most states to lobby for an end to government assisted migration. Perhaps not surprisingly this working class antagonism against assisted immigration was at its strongest between 1860 and 1890 - the period when British immigration to Australia reached its highest level. Between 1860 and 1889 approximately three quarter million British migrants arrived of whom 392,358 were assisted (de Lepervanche, 1975:85). Of the unassisted many were working class. For instance many members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers funded their own passages to Australia and once here joined the opposition to assisted immigration (de Lepervanche, 1975:2). As agitation against assisted immigration programmes increased, most states, by 1890 had either introduced Acts restricting assisted immigration or had severely curtailed funds allocated to this programme (de Lepervanche, 1975). The immigration and labour issue was particularly volatile in Queensland where, following separation from New South Wales in 1859, land commissioners began to recruit British immigrants. But here, as in the other states, resistance against assisted immigration increased and culminated in the formation of the Land and Emigration League. Also, at this time, opposition to the Kanaka trade was increasing and a Bill was eventually passed in 1885 making the importation of Kanakas illegal after

1890 (de Lepervanche, 1975:87). The sugar plantation owners, attempting to find replacements for the loss of island labour, sought Indian and Chinese coolies, Germans and immigrants from Scandanavian countries - all to no avail. Eventually, in 1883 Maltese labourers were recruited. They were supplemented eight years later by 335 assisted agricultural labourers from Italy procured by the Queensland government to work as cane cutters (de Lepervanche, 1975:88). Queensland and Western Australia were the only two states to continue with assisted migration schemes throughout the nineteenth century (de Lepervanche, 1975:89).

There are two important aspects of the assisted immigration policy which seem to distinguish the nature of Australia-British ethnic relations from Australian-Chinese and non-British European migration. Firstly, if the figures on assisted and unassisted immigration for any decade between 1840 and 1890 are compared, the number unassisted invariably outnumbered the number assisted, yet working class resentment against perceived and real competitive labour was not directed against all British migrants - only against the *system* of assisted migration. Consequently, it appears that it wasn't so much the *nature* of the migrants in terms of perceived personal characteristics which led to the large degree of opposition but rather the system of assisted migration itself. Secondly, assisted British migrants did not form a permanent physically distinct numerical minority like the Chinese or even Italians for that matter. They were virtually indistinguishable from the white Australian born (Burgmann, 1978).

But no picture of the historical development of Australian ethnic relations would be complete without a consideration of the role played by trade unions in the second half of the nineteenth century, especially their influence in New South Wales and Queensland. In New South Wales from the 1870s, the union movement was committed to lobbying for restrictions on Chinese labour. Henry Parkes attempted to push such restrictive

legislation through parliament, but it was rejected by the upper house where pastoralists and others, who may have perceived their interests linked to cheap coloured labour, predominated. The Trades and Labour Council and the Seamen's Union stepped up their anti-coloured immigration campaign and were eventually successful when a Restrictive Bill was introduced into the New South Wales parliament in 1881 (Markey, 1978:67).

During the 1890s the question of coloured labour was a central, bitterly fought issue in Queensland politics' (Hunt, 1978:80). Reference was made earlier to the restrictive legislation passed in this state against the importation of Kanaka labour. But the government reversed its decision in 1892 when the sugar industry was experiencing financial difficulties (Hunt, 1978).

The struggle against Pacific island labour illustrated a persistent phenomenon of the labour movement as it developed in Queensland: brotherhood, solidarity and the right to work were the exclusive preserve of a homogeneous group of white, predominantly British workers. To rationalise the exclusion of supposedly inferior racial groups from a movement which in theory preached the equality of man, it was necessary to deny Melanesians, Chinese, Japanese, Indians - indeed even Greeks and Italians - the requisite standard of humanity (Hunt, 1978:80).

But it would be incorrect to assume from this position adopted by the labour movement that racist attitudes were peculiar to the working class or even for that matter, peculiar to Australia. For instance, many politicians (notably Barton) frequently expressed such attitudes (Hunt, 1978:80). Secondly, it needs to be realised that:

The myth of innate white superiority, springing partly from Social Darwinist ideas, was almost universally accepted throughout the western world at the time, especially in English-speaking countries. Australians were by no means uniquely wicked - or ignorant. Rather, they seemed to most literate contemporaries both wise and fortunately placed, when they deported indentured Melanesian labourers from the Queensland sugar plantations and sought to forbid for all time the immigration of any other coloured person (Ward, 1969:121).

The Queensland sugar industry played a key role in shaping Australian's definition of immigrants, especially coloured migrants, and Australia's

subsequent immigration policies. For Queensland plantation owners and politicians alike coloured labour was a necessary evil. It was generally believed that coloured labourers, unlike Europeans and Australian born workers, could readily adapt to the difficult conditions of the sugar plantations. Consequently it was felt that any restriction on Kanaka labour would have detrimental economic effects on the sugar industry (Hunt, 1978). Not surprisingly, given the opportunist, short term and pragmatic nature of Labor Party policy, its candidate in the 1899 Queensland election vowed, if elected, to abolish coloured and Asian labour. Even conservatives who attacked Labor's platform on Kanakas as discriminatory also tended to express a belief in the inferiority of non-European nationalities. For instance, one conservative Queensland newspaper stated:

The Kanakas are not numerous enough and have not sufficient vitality to make them a source of danger in the future. We simply cannot in practice exclude all coloured men from the country. What we must do is make Australia as unpleasant a place of residence for them as we can. We must not give way to their Asiatic habits in the way of sexual vice, of gambling and living in an unsanitary way (Hunt, 1978:81).

After the Kanaka trade ceased, tariffs were imposed to protect the sugar industry. By 1900 there were seven Acts, fifty-eight regulations and thirty-eight instructions governing Melanesians (Willey, 1978:5). It was also at this time that the major piece of legislation affecting Aborigines was passed in Queensland and which became the model for the other states. This legislation was known as the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897*. This Act:

- . Placed strict control over the employment of Aborigines.
- . Established reserves where Aborigines could be forcibly detained under the control of the superintendent and local police, outside the legal system governing other Australians (Willey, 1978:5).

The first large-scale migration of Southern Europeans to Australia occurred in the 1890s when several hundred Italians were brought to work in the Queensland cane fields. It was these early settlements which

'formed the nucleus of larger Italian communities in later years' (Willey, 1978:4). However, it was also during this decade that many attempts were made to restrict the 'entry of all immigrants whose presence was considered injurious to the general welfare' (Willey, 1978:4). Italians were generally regarded as 'darker' than Angl-Saxon Australians and some concern was being expressed at this time over the possibility of increased Jewish migration to Australia. Both these groups were conspicuous in their numbers. In contrast, ethnic groups which did not appear as socially distinct *or to be in occupational competition with Australians* were welcomed. Possibly the most notable were the Germans, who numbered about 15,000 in 1900, and who had established small farms in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Similarly, Scandanavians were seen as contributing to the development of the Australian dairy industry in Queensland (Burgmann, 1978:28). In Queensland in 1901 there were 9,327 pacific islanders of whom 7,500 worked in the sugar fields. The remaining non-Europeans comprised 800 Japanese, 600 Chinese, 180 Indians and 270 Malays. There were approximately 3,000 Europeans, mainly Italians (Hunt, 1978:82). The press was quick to portray this ethnic and racial heterogeneity as discriminating against the employment of Australians.<sup>2</sup>

*With the general exclusion of Asians, Southern Europeans, to a considerable extent, acquired their vacated status.* By 1891 there were about 4,000 Italians in Australia (due partly to the efforts of the Queensland government). It was this same year that the Gardener's union in New South Wales 'initiated an inquiry by the Trades and Labour Council into the number and nature of Italian migrants' (Markey, 1978:73). Other groups were also the object of scrutiny, e.g., Armenians and Assyrians. What lay behind these investigations was the belief that these groups posed an economic threat to Australian labour because of the low wages they received. Some concern was expressed by the minority ethnic groups about the possible social stigmatisation of the 'group'. For instance, one of the

Italian Working Men's Societies expressed the fear that the 'Italian name will be brought down to the level of the Chinese' (Markey, 1978:73).

Given the links that existed between the unions, especially the Australian Workers Union, and the Labor Party, it is not surprising that 'white Australia' became the predominant policy of this party. Labor politicians, no doubt persuaded by the 'populist' nature of the anti-Chinese sentiment, ... realized the general support it would receive for such a policy' (Markey, 1978:77). In the 1890s, with the introduction of various policies aimed at excluding all *undesirable* immigrants, the term 'White Australia' was commonly used to indicate the real purpose of these policies (Willey, 1978:4).<sup>3</sup> The racism which lay behind the support for these policies can be seen in some of the statements made by politicians at the time. The Labor leader, J.C. Watson when speaking in support of the White Australia Policy said:

The objection I have to the mixing of these coloured people with the white people of Australia - although I admit it is to a large extent tinged by considerations of an industrial nature - lies in the main in the probability of racial contamination ... the question is whether we would desire that our sisters or our brothers should be married into any of these races to which we object (quoted in Markey, 1978:77).

After federation the first Australian parliament with an almost unanimous decision, introduced legislation aimed at keeping Australia white. But the measures adopted were of an *indirect* nature so as not to offend the British government, which was extremely sensitive to the ethnic and racial heterogeneity of the empire. Australia was also concerned about offending Japan and China (Willey, 1978:4). These measures were in the form of the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901* which included a dictation test that remained in force until 1958 (Australia, 1973:6). This test (a fifty-word dictation exercise) was administered to the intending migrant in a European language. Willey (1978:4) has made the following comment on this test.

During the parliamentary debate over the Bill it was made clear that the test would be given to non-European immigrants. In practice, the 'European language' chosen was invariably one which the person being tested - and whom the officer intended to exclude - could not possibly know.

To what extent can it be claimed that the White Australia Policy - legislation which had profound effects for the source of Australian migrants after federation - was a 'victory for the working class?' (Burgmann, 1978:33). In attempting to answer this question there are three important aspects about the union campaign of the 1880s against coloured migration, which stand out:

- . Its extraordinary degree of success.
- . Its character as not only an individual struggle but a full-scale political movement.
- . Its continued broadening from a working-class base into a multi-class alliance. (Burgmann, 1978:69)

Why was there so much working-class antagonism against coloured labour and why did this antagonism gradually gain such widespread support? Two possible explanations can be suggested. Firstly, that the antagonism was primarily, a result of economic factors, specifically competition for jobs or secondly, that the antagonism was basically the result of racist attitudes against the inferiority of coloured migrants. There appeared to be very few occupations in which there *was* severe labour competition between white and coloured labour. The only clear case of such competition was in the furniture trade - especially cabinet making - but for the most part the Chinese tended to find an occupational niche such as in store-keeping, market-gardening, laundering and cooking (Burgmann, 1978). It is probably the case that the extreme antagonism and resentment by European workers in the furniture trade against the Chinese inflamed widespread opinion about competition from this category in *all* occupations, even though, in reality, no such threat existed. But the Chinese-European conflict in the furniture trade was significant for the development of race

and ethnic relations in this country for another reason, namely it was an instance when the ruling-class mobilised to effectively introduce anti-Chinese legislation. For these reasons it is worth considering race relations in the furniture trade in some detail.

The extent to which the Chinese dominated cabinet making in Sydney and Melbourne in the late nineteenth century can be seen from the following figures comparing the number of Chinese and Europeans in the trade:

Sydney	1894	400 Chinese	300 Europeans
Melbourne	1896	465 Chinese	203 Europeans

*SOURCE:* Markus, 1979:164.

The depression of the 1890s had a severe affect on the trade in Melbourne. The number of Chinese involved with Cabinet making declined from 580 to 140 between 1889 and 1891, while the number of Europeans employed was cut by half. In 1893 less than 100 European cabinet makers were employed. It was most likely the numbers of Chinese involved and the economic climate, which precipitated the agitation against the Chinese from European cabinet makers in Sydney and Melbourne in the 1890s. There was little evidence of resentment against Chinese furniture makers in Queensland where they numbered only about 60 in 1901 (Markus, 1979:164).

In Sydney and Melbourne a black list of firms trading with Chinese was published, but the main efforts of the European cabinet makers were diverted towards the introduction of legislation for the stamping of furniture.<sup>4</sup> Between 1891 and 1896 there were two unsuccessful attempts in New South Wales to have the Legislative Council pass a Bill enforcing stamping (Markus, 1979:164). In Melbourne at this time, agitation against Chinese cabinet makers escalated when, in 1893, a board was set up to inquire into the workings of the Factory Act (1890) and European



cabinet makers saw this as an opportunity to voice their anti-Chinese grievances. Markus has made the following comment on this episode:

Revival of the agitation reveals that Europeans in the trade had not modified their attitude towards the Chinese, despite the fact that Chinese were showing themselves to be receptive to the principles of unionism - in 1885 the Chinese cabinet makers fought a successful battle for higher wages and formed a union which enforced minimum rates of pay and a 50 hour week. Late in 1892 and 1893 Chinese workers were desperately attempting to resist a reduction in wages. But the Europeans contemptuously ignored these efforts on the part of the Chinese. Indeed, when Chinese workers donated to a fund to aid striking shearers, the European cabinet makers indignantly demanded that the donations of the Chinese be refused. During a strike by Chinese early in 1893, leading trade unionists chose to avert their eyes, a former President of the Trades Hall Council commenting that 'We can afford to laugh. It does not affect us' (Markus, 1979:165).

In 1893 European workers increased pressure being applied to have the Stamping Bill approved by the Legislative Council. But this latest Bill included a very important clause absent from the previous Bills - the prohibition of Sunday work. The pressure applied was in the form of an organised campaign against the Chinese cabinet makers. This campaign included:

- . European cabinet makers who enlisted the support of fellow unionists and the church movement against Sunday work.
- . the editors of *The Age* and *The Herald* were approached and their co-operation was secured for the publication of articles dealing with the Chinese influence in the furniture trade.
- . Members of the unions sent letters to the press to solicit 'every man, woman and child ... to resolve to have no dealings with the aliens'.
- . Deputations from the cabinet makers attempted to persuade buyers placing large orders for furniture, not to buy articles made by Chinese.
- . Payments to two members to lobby full-time and present the unions' case to the Council (Markus, 1979:165-6).

The Bill was passed and effectively amended the Factories Act to include not only restrictions on hours of work in the furniture trade and provisions for the stamping of furniture, but also a stipulation that a wage board be elected to fix a minimum wage for the trade. But 'the union soon discovered that the legislation was not the hoped for panacea'

(Markus, 1979:166). For instance, from the unions' point of view, the provision for electing the wage board was 'defective'.

Chinese were not barred from voting and the definition of furniture trade was too narrow, confining the operation to the Act to cabinet makers. A quick count revealed that Chinese cabinet makers and employers outnumbered the Europeans. After a short period of intensive agitation by the union, an embarrassed government amended the Act and provided for the Wage Board in the furniture trade to be nominated by the Governor, rather than elected as in other trades (Markus, 1979:166).

Secondly, the stamping clause proved ineffective as a piece of repressive legislation, as it was almost impossible to convict a retailer because of the difficulty of proving that she or he knowingly displayed unstamped or falsely stamped furniture. Thirdly, the wage fixing proposals failed because of the traditional commonplace practice of piece-work which it was impossible to fix a minimum rate for. 'But the most basic difficulty was the impossibility of enforcing legislation in the face of what was believed to be a conspiracy by the Chinese against its provisions'

(Markus, 1979:167). The most easily enforceable part of the legislation was the provision limiting the hours of work, and prosecutions against the Chinese were frequent. 'The police were aided by cabinet makers who were organised in Vigilance Committees and paid by their union for their activities' (Markus, 1979:168). The next development in the form of calls for the expulsion of the Chinese was perhaps not surprising, and can be best summed up in a speech made by the secretary of the furniture workers union:

We contend that they are a menace to the country ... They refuse to abide by the laws ... If it is impossible to make them obey the law, the only way is to get rid of them. After all, if it did cost a few thousand pounds to buy the Chinese out, we would then employ or practically have something like 2000 persons in the industry ... The only thing to do is send them out of the place altogether (quoted in Markus, 1979:168).

As in the statement made by Watson, mentioned earlier, this comment shows the tendency to combine racist and economic criteria as the reasons for anti-Chinese sentiments. A detailed examination of the historical circumstances surrounding the emergence and maintenance of these

sentiments shows that *racism became the rhetoric whereby an essentially economic grudge came to be mounted as an issue.*

Australian unions had a well established anti-immigration policy to protect their position in the labour market, but this anti-immigration stance failed to attract much support outside the union movement. On the other hand, anti-Chinese leagues sprang up frequently *only when* the Chinese became an economic threat against the employer classes. For instance, the Australian Natives Association was an employer's association which supported the anti-Chinese leagues (Markey, 1978:69-71). The problem that riled the white cabinet makers was an economic one. *They sought to solve it by converting the discourse into that of racism. In short, employing obvious racist characteristics becomes a way of eliminating - in one swoop - a whole group of potential economic competitors.*

Racism was already a well established discourse in Australian society, having grown out of the unsuccessful attempts to westernise the Aborigine. These racist attitudes were assisted 'by the perceived position of Australia as the isolated vanguard of British imperialism surrounded by the races which this imperialist ideology necessarily branded as inferior' (Burgmann, 1978:24). The accusations of cheap labour levelled against the Chinese were also directed at assisted immigration programs. In terms of economic competition, assisted British migrants probably posed more of a threat to Australian workers than did the Chinese. They outnumbered the Chinese; they entered Australia over a longer period of time; being assisted, they were more susceptible to employer control (Burgmann, 1978), but unlike the Chinese, they were not easily definable as an 'out-group'. *Employers did not object to the presence of Chinese until they became an economic threat.*

One important question in the development of race and ethnic relations in Australia is that if the importation of coloured labour was in the

interest of plantation owners in Queensland, why was legislation introduced to end the importation of Kanakas? Burgmann (1978:30) has offered three explanations. Firstly, technological change in the industry had reduced the number of Kanakas required for each plantation. Secondly, 'the cost of melanesian labour had increased more than 50 per cent between 1883 and 1889' (1978:30). Thirdly:

The belief that only coloured workers could adapt to the tropical conditions in the Kimberleys and the cane fields was eroded when white workers were willing to work in these areas in the depression of 1890 and were found to be perfectly capable (Burgmann, 1978:30).

In conclusion, then, it can be said that the White Australia policy was not a victory for the working class for two main reasons. Firstly, racist attitudes as a response to economic competition, played the key role in the introduction of this restrictive legislation and these attitudes were introduced into Australian society mainly by the ruling class. Secondly, an important consideration which led to the introduction of the White Australia Policy was the increasing disillusionment of *employers* with coloured migrants. Not only did Chinese merchants tend to work for Chinese employers, but also the Chinese often competed with Australian industry. In New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, Chinese tobacco and maize farms and factories competed with white owners. Coloured immigration had always posed a dilemma for white employers: initially, their desire for a large cheap, mobile labour force was an overriding consideration compared with considerations of race and colour. But, as Burgmann (1978:32) concludes:

... as soon as employers realised that coloured immigration could provide an entrepreneurial threat and was not even providing a cheap labour force except for coloured employers, the Australian ruling class felt no restraints on the issue of race.

Moreover, some employers began to realise that assisted British immigration served a better long-term investment 'providing not only a useful immediate labour force but also a future one ...' (Burgmann, 1978:32).

POPULATE OR PERISH

Australia, at the time of federation was basically a British nation with 79.1 per cent of the population born in the British Isles - only two per cent were born elsewhere in Europe. But this British Isles category was not homogeneous by any means. During the nineteenth century, about one-quarter of this category was Irish: a group which, because of its catholic and celtic background, was separated from Australians by tradition and history and brought with it a traditional antagonism towards the English (Willey, 1978:4). The percentage of migrants from the United Kingdom which was Irish has steadily declined since 1900 and since the Second World War has been less than ten per cent (Willey, 1978:4).

In the 1890s the issue of Australia's defence had sporadically appeared throughout the Australian press, mainly the Worker in Queensland.<sup>5</sup> But it was after federation, when *nationalism* was coupled with the belief in a white Australia that this issue reached its full force. Australia, between 1900 and 1906 was experiencing a declining population while the Asian countries to the North were experiencing the opposite (Clark, 1963: 183; Willey, 1978). One of the first public figures to put forward the idea of white Australia as a need for self-preservation was Alfred Deakin. In the early years of federation, he made the following stirring comments:

We here find ourselves touching the profoundest instinct of individual or nation - the instinct of self-preservation - for it is nothing less than the national manhood, the national character and the national future that are at stake (quoted in Greenwood, 1955:204).

But the problem which presented itself in light of this concern for defence was how to populate the country? What made this question particularly problematic was the fact that resentment from the states towards British migrants was developing. This resentment seemed to be based largely on two factors. Firstly, there were a number of influential Irish who objected to British immigration. Secondly, since federation, there appeared the idea that imperialism was unAustralian, and Britain, being a major imperialist power, was singled out for special treatment. Some newspapers began to

portray imperialism as the very antithesis of the values of this 'new society'. The Sydney Bulletin, operating under the motto of 'Australia for the Australians' (Greenwood, 1955:207), was at the forefront of this sentiment and declared in 1903 that 'imperialism is utterly opposed to any sane idea of Australianism' (quoted in Greenwood, 1955:205).

The call of 'Australia for the Australians' ignored the economic and geographical realities of Australia's situation. Economically, Australia was a country extremely limited by the availability of labour, capital and markets, and thus highly dependent upon Britain. Geographically, it was located in the Pacific - 'a lonely outpost of white civilization' (Greenwood, 1955:207-208). Also, at this time the states wanted very little to do with immigration as most of them were experiencing drought conditions. However, with economic recovery in 1905, the states' enthusiasm for assisted migrants returned and New South Wales reintroduced assisted British migration in 1906, Victoria in 1907, South Australia in 1911, and Tasmania in 1912. Each state had a representative in London for advertising and selection purposes - settlement schemes were the order of the day.

Meanwhile discrimination of organised labour against Asiatics, Pacific islanders and Aborigines was regularly enforced. *The Commonwealth Posts and Telecommunications Act of 1901* stipulated that no contract for mail delivery would be considered unless it could be guaranteed that only white labour was employed. Under the *Commonwealth Franchise Act (1902)*,

No Aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa or the islands of the Pacific except New Zealand was entitled to have his name placed on the electoral roll unless so entitled by Section 41 of the constitution, which conferred the commonwealth franchise on all entitled to be enrolled in their state (Clark, 1963:185).

*The Invalid and Old Age Pensioners Act (1908)*, excluded Aborigines, Asiatics and non-British individuals, who were not naturalised, from benefits (Clark, 1963:185). The residential requirements for the pension effectively meant

that: 'only "Dinkum Aussies", not "Pommies", or "Dagos", or "Huns" could quality' (Clark, 1963:187).

Assisted immigration between 1901 and 1914 was mainly British and the net immigration increased rapidly over these years. Table 5.2 indicates this increase:

TABLE 5.2 *NOMINATED AND SELECTED MIGRATION 1901-1915*

Period	Total Assisted	Total Net Immigration
1901-1905		16,700
1906-1910		57,300
1911-1915	150,554	136,900

*SOURCE:* de Lepervanche, 1975:92.

It was intended to locate these migrants on the land but their lack of farming skills plus the high price of land (about £1 per acre) meant that many tended to remain in the cities and apply more pressure to the unemployment problem (de Lepervanche, 1975:92). Many of the Italian migrants at this time who, in general, replaced Kanaka and Asian labour, tended to settle in Western Australia. This state had 1354 Italians in 1901, but this figure jumped to 2,400 ten years later - a figure which represented over one-third of the Australian total. In the early 1900s, as a result of worker agitation against competition from Italians, two official enquiries were commissioned to investigate Italian workers: one in 1902, the other in 1904. These reports in general were favourable towards Italians. For instance, they found that wage undercutting by Italians were often due to their 'ignorance of Australian working conditions' (de Lepervanche, 1975:84). The first report concluded that:

Employers often preferred Italians because they were less militant, and there was also evidence that some employers tended to use Italian labour to split the solidarity of the Australian unions (de Lepervanche, 1975:94).

In New South Wales suspicion began to develop among workers about the motives of employers who were strong advocates of immigration. In 1916 many workers believed that attempts were to be made to import Maltese immigrants as cheap labour to replace soldiers at war. Consequently, that year, when a ship did arrive carrying Maltese migrants, Billy Hughes refused it permission to land them. They were eventually admitted only after guarantees of employment were secured (de Lepervanche, 1975:96).

The issue of defence was again the banner under which populating parts of Australia arose in 1911 under the *Northern Territory Acceptance Bill*. When discussing this Bill, which concerned the purchase of the Northern Territory, Deakin said:

To me the question has been, not so much commercial as national, first, second, third, and last. Either we must accomplish the peopling of the Northern Territory or submit to its transfer to some other nation. The latter alternative is not to be tolerated. The territory must be peopled by a white race. We could put a garrison there in barracks as a watch dog. That would be extravagant, foreign to our instincts and having regard to the country, insufficient (quoted in Greenwood, 1955:226).

The link established between defence and white Australia was a persistent theme of ethnic and race relations throughout the first half of the twentieth century, if not beyond this period. A dramatic instance of this definition involved the Versailles Peace negotiations of 1919. One of the proposals presented at these negotiations, if adopted, would have permitted freedom of migration between German colonies. Hughes realised that under this provision the Japanese would be able to migrate to New Guinea. However, an Australian representative at the negotiations was able to push through a compromise motion which permitted New Guinea to apply its own immigration laws and for Hughes to be able to say 'Australia is safe' (Clark, 1963:198).



Indeed the catch cry of White Australia was often heralded by Hughes as an 'ideal which we have nailed to the very topmost of our flagpoles' (quoted in Clark, 1963:200). Possibly more important, at least as far as the continuation of Australia's immigration policy was concerned, was the frequent coupling of the notion of White Australia with 'freedom from communism' and 'national safety' (Clark, 1963:200).<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, Hughes introduced Immigration Restriction Acts partly to keep undesirables out. He amended the Immigration Restriction Act to empower the Commonwealth to deport or declare as prohibited immigrants 'any person who advocated the overthrow of the existing government of the Commonwealth by violence' (Clark, 1963:202). Not only was the time 'ripe' to link immigration with the communist bogey, but also to play up the connection between immigration and national safety in terms of 'populate or perish'. It was in this context that the coalition government of Bruce in 1923 pledged to enforce the White Australia Policy. Greenwood (1955:298) makes the following comment with respect to the policies of the Bruce-Page government:

The principle of White Australia was also maintained, though here there was a much more urgent sense that if attacks against it were to be resisted there was an inevitable obligation to make Australia 'white' in the Deakin sense of filling the empty spaces with European migrants.

The degree of importance placed upon migration by the government for reasons of protection and development can be seen in the establishment of the Development and Migration Commission by the Bruce-Page Government in 1929 to examine, among other things, Australia's labour needs (Greenwood, 1955:305-307).

This was also a period when 'Australia became part of a more sophisticated international and imperial economy' (Wild, 1978:31). Although growth was slow, Australia was very much tied to fluctuations in the world trade system and highly dependent upon primary exports. The economic vulnerability of Australia in the world system placed more

reliance on support from Britain. This support was in the form of 'men, money, markets' (Wild, 1978:31; Clark, 1975:65). Bruce was explicit in presenting a co-ordinated migration policy with Britain as the means by which Australia's prosperous economic and secure future could be ensured.

He stated:

All who study our present national circumstances must realize that the marketing of our surplus production is one of the greatest problems that we have to face. It is impossible for us to maintain our White Australia Policy, or our present standard of living, or to ensure our national safety, unless we increase our population. But it is of no use for us to increase our population unless every individual who enters the country becomes a productive unit and even production units are of no value to us unless a payable market is available for their production. The problem of marketing our surplus production has become acute in the last few years (quoted in Greenwood, 1955:307-8).

As in the last decade of the nineteenth century, in the 1920s migration was seen as 'reducing British unemployment and modifying political repercussions' (Wild, 1978:31).

Between 1901 and 1940, 626,800 predominantly British immigrants arrived. The trickle of non-British immigrants in this period were predominantly Italians and Greeks (Wild, 1978:31).

However, once again the urban working-class nature of the British immigrants did not equip them for farming and developing Australia's rural industries, but rather tended to swell the ranks of the urban proletariat and hence perpetrate Australian working-class anxieties about competition from cheap migrant labour. Clark (1975:66) comments:

Late in 1930 Australia was faced with an offer of hundreds of thousands of coal miners with the suggestion that they be turned into wheat farmers! This was at a time when Australia was furiously trying to grow more wheat, in a futile effort to counterbalance falling grain prices. This eleventh-hour offer personified the limited impact the Empire Settlement schemes had on Australian development in the long run. Our population was expanded, necessitating capital widening which was being financed through overseas borrowing, but unemployed coal miners did not make good potential wheat farmers.

Italians constituted the largest non-English migrant group to Queensland at this time and in the mid-1920s some concern was expressed at the possibility of this immigration resulting in a large labour surplus

(de Lepervanche, 1975:97). One consequence of these fears was the Ferry Report of 1925 - a government commission of inquiry into alien settlement in the north. This report:

Recorded the Australian's fear and suspicion of southern Europeans who accepted low wages too eagerly, worked too long hours, especially in the sugar plantations, and put their relatives to work for bed and board and not a proper wage (de Lepervanche, 1975:98).

The effects of the Ferry Report were immediate. The Federal government, in a response to pressure from employers and wage earners, introduced a Bill for the restriction of Immigration in 1925 (de Lepervanche, 1975:98).

De Lepervanche (1975:98) adds:

Also contributing to this legislation was concern about unemployment in 1923 and 1924 amongst recently arrived southern European immigrants in the cities. The result was that quotas, already imposed on Maltese were extended to Yugoslavs, Greeks and Albanians, and an arrangement with the Italian Government restricted entry of their nationals.

Most states had imposed restrictions on non-British migrants. In South Australia and Western Australia these restrictions affected, respectively, the purchase of property and employment in the pearling industry (de Lepervanche, 1975:98).

But Queensland was the most exclusive of all. The Leases to Aliens Restriction Act, 1912, prevented European aliens from acquiring leases of more than five acres unless the lessee passed a dictation test. And between 1913 and 1921 Queensland passed several Acts excluding foreigners from employment in the banana and sugar industries, in dairy produce premises, in the construction or working of tramway and omnibus services, unless they had passed the dictation test. Although subsequent treaty rights and regulations precluded widespread application of these Acts they were manifestations of an over-riding intention to protect Australian working and living conditions (de Lepervanche, 1975:98).

The antagonism and resentment against Italian workers in Queensland was transferred to Italian farmers who purchased farms from British immigrants. Approximately one-third of all southern Europeans who migrated to Australia before 1940 were involved with farming.

Of those naturalized, 25 per cent were farmers by 1946 and 11 per cent agricultural labourers. Not all had stayed in Queensland. Some migrated south to the Riverina district and to Victoria (de Lepervanche, 1975:99).

Employers continued to satisfy their interests in a cheap supply of a mobile labour force. As Crowley has stated:

No matter what form their arguments took and no matter what general principles they adduced to support their cause, the advocates of immigration were above all concerned to use immigration as a means of increasing the supply of labour (quoted in Wild, 1978:32).

The presence of these migrants - predominantly male and employed in unskilled jobs - formed the racism which was an historical characteristic imported with British colonisation.

The labour movement and the Labor Party, prior to the Second World War, were consistent in viewing immigration policies in light of the repercussions such policies may have on the working standards of Australian workers. H.V. Evatt had voiced these concerns in 1926 (de Lepervanche, 1975:98-100). However, these views were to change after the war.

There were two processes occurring in Australian society at this time which were to have profound influences on the development of Australian ethnic relations and immigration policies - urbanisation and industrialisation. In 1906, 35.49 per cent of the population lived in capital cities, by 1921, this had risen to 43.01 per cent and by 1940, approximately half of Australia's population lived in capital cities. The catalyst for this rapid urbanisation was the growth of secondary industry which, in turn, attracted many of the unskilled migrants to the large cities and produced migrant concentrations around the central business districts (Burnley, 1974). In 1901, 26 per cent of the workforce was engaged in secondary industry, 32.5 per cent in primary production. In 1933, the respective figures were 27 per cent and 17 per cent, and by 1947 one-third of the workforce was in industry while only 14.5 per cent was involved with primary production.

What this economic transformation from primary to secondary industry meant was that there developed an increased need for a relatively unskilled labour force. This became the basis of the post World War II federal

immigration programme. One of the effects of the large-scale migration of unskilled workers into the Australian workforce was to displace Australian workers from the bottom of the occupational hierarchy and thus raise their socio-economic level. This effect is known as the 'aristocracy of labour' (Collins, 1975). A labour aristocracy consists of workers who have benefitted from structural changes such as the movement of a large percentage of unskilled migrants into the bottom rung of the occupational ladder. In Australia there is a labour aristocracy of indigenous workers over immigrant workers (Collins, 1975:120). One consequence of this structural alteration is that it excludes competition from these migrants as any sort of threat to Australian workers. As Gorz has pointed out, 'to replace 20% of the Australian born workforce located in manual jobs with migrant workers is to promote these Australian workers into tertiary and technical jobs' (quoted in Collins, 1975:122). This in turn devalues manual work and manual workers as a whole, as well as increasing the division between manual and non-manual labour which further differentiates the working class. Furthermore it tends to inflate the political importance of non-manual workers and hence legitimate their existence as meaningful participants in the political process. This is possibly one important reason why Australian governments have, till recently, defined migrants as having little political significance.

After the war the issues of defence and manpower were to overshadow the traditional concern of the Labor Party in restricting immigration in order to protect the living standards of Australian workers. It is not difficult to see why defence was such a prominent issue. During the war, for the first time, enemy troops had invaded Australian territory: New Guinea had been rapidly over-run by the enemy, Japanese bombs had dropped on Darwin, enemy submarines had entered Sydney harbour and the Japanese navy had been engaged in a large-scale sea battle off the north eastern

coast. The shock of Australia's vulnerability 'was the main reason for the government's decision to take all steps it could to introduce hundreds of thousands of new Australians into the country in the immediate post-war years' (Greenwood, 1955:406). The immigration programme was introduced by Arthur Calwell, the minister for immigration in the Chifley government. The target was 100,000 migrants per year or one per cent of the growth rate. The government hoped to increase this figure to 200,000 when the programme reached its peak but the nearest they got was 174,000 in 1950 (Greenwood, 1955:407).

There were three main elements in the programme:

- . Assisted immigration from the United Kingdom.
- . Agreement with the International Refugee Organization for the migration of displaced persons.
- . Agreements with various European countries.

In some cases the scarcity of ships forced the government to settle for fewer migrants than they would have liked (Greenwood, 1955:407). Between 1947 and 1952 over '700,000 migrants came to the country with the assistance of the Australian government' and during 1949 and 1950 the population growth rate exceeded three per cent per annum (Greenwood, 1955:407).

What were some of the major effects of this large-scale migration for Australian society? Apart from the aristocracy of labour mentioned earlier, there was clearly a demographic effect. In 1947, 9.8 per cent of the population had been born overseas and less than 3 per cent of these were of non-Anglo-saxon origin. By 1974, 37 per cent of the population had been born overseas or had at least one parent who had been born overseas (Storer, 1978:75).

Given the historical development of Australian ethnic relations, especially the working-class fear of competitive labour, how was Calwell able to get people to accept his programme? Undoubtedly, the social and economic consequences of such a programme were extreme. Almost one quarter

of one million migrants per year were to be brought into the country for an unlimited period and in a country of only seven million! The over-riding reason behind the successful acceptance of the programme was the realisation of Australia's vulnerability from outside attack. But it is also important to view the immigration policy as a *response* to a powerful capitalist lobby for labour. The depression in the early 1930s had drastically reduced the birth rate of that period and hence produced a severe labour shortage in the years following the war (Wild, 1978:33). Thirdly, economic times were prosperous. Greenwood (1955:407) makes the following statement in this regard:

It was estimated that in June 1950, with a population of some 2½ million breadwinners there were 100,000 more jobs available than persons to fill them.

TABLE 5.3 AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION BY PLACE OF BIRTH, 1947, 1971

	1947	1971
Total British Isles	72.6	42.9
Total Southern Europe	7.0	20.4
Total Eastern Europe	3.1	11.5
Total Northern Europe	4.5	10.9
Asia, Africa, America	5.7	11.0
New Zealand	5.9	3.1
Oceania	.6	.3
	99.6	100.1

*SOURCE:* Pyne and Price, 1971:A78-79

Indeed, throughout the 1950s workers were well off. The average annual earnings for males rose from 410 in 1947-48 to 1,270 in 1962-3 (Wild, 1978:34). The minister responsible for immigration also made a point of regularly reminding the House that 'for every foreign migrant, the

government proposed to bring out ten from the United Kingdom (Clark, 1963: 232). The justification for this ratio was to protect not only the British character of Australian society, but also foreign migrants, from any covert hostility (Clark, 1963:232).

But one further significant reason for the relatively uncritical acceptance of the programme was the model of ethnic relations which formed the implicit assumptions behind the immigration policy, i.e., assimilation or anglo-conformity (Gordon, 1964:Ch.4). It was assumed, by those responsible for the design and implementation of the policy, that anyone who came to this country would become a 'fair-dinkum Aussie' (Clark, 1963: 232). The popularity of this model of ethnic relations can be partly attributed to the work of Robert Park and his 'theory' of the race relations cycle which asserted that whenever two or more ethnic groups came into contact they passed through a 'natural' cycle of: contact-competition-accommodation-assimilation (Price, 1969:213). It was assumed that minority ethnic groups would eventually disappear and become invisible by becoming like members of the host society. Park 'derived' his theory from observations of various ethnic groups in the United States, and postulated that, in cases where assimilation had not occurred, external factors (e.g., the war) had intervened to slow up the cycle. But there was no doubt that, in the long term, assimilation would be the inevitable outcome (Kringas, 1973:Ch.1)

Probably one reason why this model of ethnic relations tended to dominate government policies in ethnically plural societies (Martin, 1978) was because it was politically appealing to governments. That is, not only had assimilation been 'scientifically' shown to be inevitable (thanks to Robert Park) but it was also politically desirable. There are a number of reasons to account for this. Firstly, as discussed earlier, assimilation is consistent with a particular apolitical problematic. If it is believed



that a society is defined by one value system and that society continues to exist in a state of relative harmony because of a high degree of consensus on these values, then the presence of many values, as would be the case in an ethnically plural society, is seen as resulting in, at best, a continual state of ethnic conflict or, at worst, in the total collapse of the society. Assimilation, then, is the means by which this disruptive possibility is eliminated. A second reason for the popular acceptance of an assimilationist model is that if it is assumed that assimilation is *not* inevitable, then governments have to recognise ethnic groups as permanent structures. This would involve not only practical problems (social, economic, political) of how to incorporate these groups as a part of Australian society (e.g., do you teach their language in schools?), but also, political problems of ethnic rights (Martin, 1972; Storer, n.d.). Australian governments were not asking these sorts of questions in 1948, or, for that matter, throughout the 1950s, because they were not part of the conceptualisation and definition of Australian ethnic relations.

It was not even considered that migrants would seek to maintain their language and cultures, at least not in the second generation:

In any case it was believed that even if migrants did not learn English, the school system, being monolingual and monocultural, would ensure that their children 'fitted in'. (*Victorian Country Education Project*: 4).

One effect of the perpetuation of a monolingual education system was that English was informally given the status of *the* official language and, by definition, the migrant child's parents' language was inferior. It was also suggested at the time that not to assimilate was a sign of 'ingratitude on the part of migrants who had been 'allowed' to come and share Australia's wealth' (*Victorian Country Education Project*: 5).

These assimilationist assumptions defined Australian ethnic relations up until the mid 1960s (*Victorian Country Education Project*; Martin, 1978).

Assimilationist ideas 'are expressed' in policy statements mainly by omission and inaction rather than positive legislation, i.e., by doing nothing to promote ethnic cultural characteristics or migrant participation in Australian institutions. However, assimilation, in this period, was put into practice, both directly and indirectly. *Directly*, for instance, in the legislation passed in 1945 which stipulated that 25 per cent of the content of ethnic newspapers had to be in English. This Act was interpreted by some members of ethnic groups as an attempt by the government to actively discourage, if not eradicate, non-Anglo-Saxon cultures. For example, in response to this legislation many Greek ethnic schools in Sydney changed their name to 'religious schools', on the assumption that the government would be more reluctant to close down institutions with such a title.

*Indirect* influences included the refusal by employers to recognise overseas qualifications of migrants and legislation forcing these migrants to work in manual occupations selected for them (Western, 1977). One effect of this response to migrants was to keep them out of positions of influence where they could possibly push for ethnic rights.

However, it would be incorrect to infer that there was no opposition to Calwell's immigration programme of 1945. Some trade union leaders, for instance, were opposed to the entry of migrants who, for various reasons, 'would be hostile to the Soviet Union' (Greenwood, 1955:407). But the opposition was minimal and certainly nothing like the anti-migrant fervour for example, which accompanied the importation of Kanakas and Italians to the Queensland cane fields. Greenwood (1955:408-409) accounts for this mild reaction in the following fashion:

No doubt, trade union opposition was blunted partly because in the economic conditions that followed the war the danger of unemployment seemed extremely remote, partly because a labour government was in office which was pledged to a policy of full employment, and was not likely to permit trade union rights and practices to be affected by the entry of thousands of European workers. It is significant that shortly after the change of government, the trade union movements, and even the extra-parliamentary organs of the Labour party, reverted to type and began to call for the slowing down and or even the cessation of migration programme.

One major economic concern of this migration programme expressed by some, was that such a large-scale influx of migrants settling in the cities would further develop the imbalance between the manufacturing and agricultural industries. Indeed 'only 5 per cent of the employed migrants who had come into the country by the beginning of 1952 had found employment in agriculture' (Greenwood, 1955:408).

Between 1947 and 1960, 408,000 British migrants entered the country, 59,000 Dutch, 62,000 Germans, 15,000 Austrians, 200,000 displaced persons from Eastern Europe, 42,000 Italians and various others comprising Greeks, Spaniards, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Swiss, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and French. 'All told 853,953 received assisted passages between 1947 and 1960' (Clark, 1963:232). The decline in the number of British migrants as a proportion of all migrants is noticeable and this trend has continued. From 1947 to 1970 Australia received 2,288,462 migrants.

Of these 43 per cent were British, 23 per cent Southern European, 13 per cent Eastern European, 12.7 per cent Northern European, 4.5 per cent Asian and 3.8 per cent others (Collins, 1975:109).

Why this gradual but significant change in the proportions of British and Southern European migrants? Some writers have suggested that this cosmopolitan trend reflected a general feeling in Australia, following the redistribution of power in the world after the war, that British institutions and culture were not supreme (Greenwood, 1955:409). Possibly a more plausible explanation is that the Australian government *preferred* British migrants but the supply was drying up. The 1950s was a period of European recovery, with the formation of the EEC, which had the effect that British workers were tending to stay in England or migrate to the continent. It was also at this time that refugee migration declined. The net migration of Southern Europeans (mainly Italians, Greeks and Yugoslavs) between 1951 and 1961 exceeded net British migration (Collins, 1975:110). The importance of the EEC for Australia's future immigration policies is relevant in light

of the fact that Greece and Italy, two of the largest traditional suppliers of Australia's immigrants, have recently joined the EEC. It was due to the competition from the EEC in the 1950s that the demographic nature of Australian immigration changed (as one example of this demographic change the Northern European intake was 26.3 per cent of the net intake between 1951 and 1961. This figure had declined to .8 per cent for the period 1961 to 1966). The inability to fill the immigrant quotas with British and Northern European migrants, forced the government to relax the immigrant restrictions. This relaxation of restrictions included the acceptance of Lebanese migrants and highly skilled Asians (Collins, 1975:110-111).

The high migrant intake figures were maintained throughout the 1960s (in 1966, 145,000 immigrants entered the country). It was increasingly the Southern Europeans, largely unskilled, which provided the labour for manufacturing industry and projects such as the Snowy Mountains scheme (Collins, 1975:110). From 1961 to 1966, migrant labour accounted for 122 per cent of the increase in the manufacturing workforce (Collins, 1975:113). But there is a clear division in the work performed by migrants. Collins (1975:114) has pointed this out:

... for migrants from Northern Europe, Britain, Canada, the U.S.A. and New Zealand tend to come from a professional, skilled or at least semi-skilled background. In general they are educated (and) have few language difficulties ... . On the other hand, two-thirds of the immigrants from Malta, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia have been unskilled or semi-skilled on arrival. These migrants flow into the low paid, low status manual jobs in manufacturing, building and construction with little chance of advancement.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s it was becoming increasingly obvious that ethnic groups were not going to assimilate. Government officials and many Australians began to question whether assimilation was an inevitable process. Many events were occurring to challenge the validity of assimilationist assumptions. These included:

- . The growth in size and number of ethnic residential concentrations.

- . The perpetuation of ethnic institutions, e.g., newspapers, by the group themselves.
- . Ethnic groups continuing to display high levels of endogamy, e.g., approximately 90 per cent of Greek-born females living in Australia married Greeks.
- . The maintenance and perpetuation of ethnic languages through the establishment of ethnic schools.
- . Chain migration. One of the modifications the government had made to the immigration policy in order to maintain its quota was a 'family oriented programme'. This change contributed to chain migration which had the effect of reinforcing ethnic concentrations.

These kind of happenings led to the recognition amongst policy makers that Australia was, permanently, a multi-ethnic society. Not only would these different ethnic groups continue to exist but some people and parts of the media were now arguing that it was unfair to expect migrants to give up their heritage (Birrell, 1978:134).

It might appear that the development of policies on Australian ethnic relations since the early 1960s has been an extension of this ethnic pluralism. As stated in the *Victorian Country Education Project, Migrants and Education in a Rural Community* (p.6):

Everytime one listens to the radio, watches TV, goes shopping, goes to school, visits a library, one ethnicity, one culture is being reinforced, legitimated and promoted. Migrants who in their countries of origin had never considered themselves or were never considered by anyone else, except perhaps anthropologists, as 'ethnic' became ethnic in Australia. They now cook 'ethnic' food, belong to 'ethnic' organisations, listen to and read 'ethnic' media, speak 'ethnic' languages and have 'ethnic' problems.

#### SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND DISADVANTAGED MINORITIES

One interpretation from this perpetuation of a "'pretty" ethnic tradition' (Australia, 1977:6) is that Australia is now a multicultural society, in principle, if not in practice and it is

only a matter of time before the situation is complete in practice. That is, as a function of this redefinition, Australian ethnic relations are no longer problematic. The complicating issue which has made ethnic relations in this country *extremely problematic* is that in the 1960s when it was realised that assimilation was not occurring, another definition of migrants was being perpetuated: *migrants as minority groups*. This ethnic cultural diversity was being seen, not as a horizontal structure of co-operation and egalitarian co-existence, but as a vertical stratification structure.

But the analysis and recognition of the ethnic opportunity structure in Australia was in contradiction with the official government response to ethnic relations in the late 1960s. The response was to define immigrants as social problems. However, these migrant problems were not seen as consequences of the opportunity structure, but rather as individual problems. For instance, the government response to the 'minority definition' of migrants was to claim that if non-English-speaking migrants were not as upwardly mobile as the Australian born, then this was because they lacked motivation or had no desire to be upwardly mobile. In other words, *defining the problem in this fashion implies that it is not the nature of the institutions which is at fault - no amount of changes in the structure of institutions would rectify the problem*. Most of these institutions had developed just after the second world war when Australia was at its most (Anglo-Saxon) homogeneous. So, for instance, interpreting and translating services were almost non-existent (Martin, 1978). *The anglo-Australian ethnicity was dominant: the language, structures and institutions of Australian society constantly reinforced and maintained this particular ethnicity*.

Throughout the 1960s, the Australian government found it difficult to achieve the specified migrant intake of one per cent of the population. Between 1961 and 1966 migration contributed 0.8 per cent per annum to the total population. It was becoming increasingly difficult to coax British

and Southern European migrants to come to Australia. In 1967, the government, in an attempt to improve recruitment redefined Turkey as a European country and hence opened the gates for many Turkish migrants. Not only were migrants not arriving at the desired rate, but they were departing at an increasing rate. By 1966 over one-fifth of all post-war German settlers had left, 18 per cent of Dutch and British, and 13 per cent of Italians. However, notwithstanding these high departure rates, immigration figures still remained high. Between 1966 and 1971, the number of migrants entering the country averaged 160,000 per year (Martin, 1978).

One 'migrant problem' that attracted the most attention towards the end of the 1960s was the education of migrant children. This concern grew out of studies such as the Henderson inquiry, but the people who were clamouring for structural changes to solve these migrant problems tended not to be in positions of power, e.g., social workers, the Labour opposition and migrants (Martin, 1978:47). Martin (1978:47), has made the following comment on the changes in institutions which took place in the early seventies as a response to the migrant presence:

Most of these were minor changes aimed at providing some service or facility for migrants without disturbing the status quo. Indeed - as the Child Migrant Education Program patently illustrates - most took the form of concessions or adaptations that would allow migrants to be dealt with as marginal, special or exceptional problems and so would protect established practices from pressures for radical restructuring.

#### ETHNIC RIGHTS

It was a group of migrants in Melbourne who, in 1973, produced a collection of writings under the title of *Ethnic Rights, Power and Participation* (edited by Des Storer) which provided another major dimension to the conceptualisation of Australian ethnic relations: *ethnic rights*. This fourth definition of ethnic relations represented an attempt by a small, but organised section of the more aware ethnic population, to present ethnic groups as *interest groups* responsible for the realisation of ethnic goals.

This definition was the antithesis of holistic multiculturalism. The emphasis and focus was on respective ethnic groups, *their* rights, objectives, problems etc., rather than on the ethnic contribution to the whole society. It is difficult to explain the appearance of this definition at this particular time. One possible reason could be the disillusionment of migrants themselves with the government's response. Another could be the gradual cut-backs in migration. The Liberal government had reduced immigrant intake to 140,000 in 1971-1972, but the biggest reduction was introduced by the Labour government in 1973 - down to 110,000. This figure continued to decline, probably as a consequence of the worsening economic climate, to about 70,000 per annum in 1978, 1979.

It seems fair to say that the ethnic rights movement has lost its momentum as a viable definition of ethnic relations. Certainly the promise of a new definition suggested by the appearance of the Storer collection has not eventuated - no comparable document has appeared since 1973. There are a number of possible reasons to account for the fact that the ethnic rights definition has faded as a legitimate contender for the definition of Australian ethnic relations. Firstly, the inability of ethnic group members to define ethnic goals and to articulate the necessary viable structural and political changes to achieve them. Linked with this is the lack of any sort of organised consensus on these issues both within and between ethnic groups. Secondly, is the fear held by many migrant organisers and expressed in personal conversation, of a possible Anglo-Australian backlash against non-English-speaking migrants. The concern is that attempts by ethnic groups to highlight migrant problems *as structural problems* and to demand structural changes, may lead to the government recruiting migrants who are not likely to experience these problems. The recently introduced NUMAS scheme is often cited by these migrants as a movement in this direction. That is, NUMAS is seen as tending to favour



English-speaking migrants and this may be an attempt to replace traditional sources of Australia's migrants with, for example, immigrants from Rhodesia. Thirdly, and most importantly, is that the ethnic rights movement has been undermined by the introduction of the Liberal governments' multiculturalism programme. The Galbally Report, which appeared in 1978, proposed that \$50 million be spent before 1982 for the development and implementation of multiculturalism. The theoretical assumptions and specific recommendations of the Report place it within the holistic multiculturalism conceptualisation of ethnic relations (Lewins, 1978b). It plans to achieve multiculturalism by eventually speeding up the incorporation of Australia's cultural diversity into Australian institutions, e.g., the introduction of bilingual programmes. There is no discussion of the *political-structural* dimension. It is likely that many migrant organisers, intellectuals and activists involved with the ethnic rights movement have been co-opted into the implementation of the Galbally Report, for, like many involved with this area, most of them see multiculturalism as replacing the *assimilationist* policies of the 1950s and 1960s. *But the ideas underlying these concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive*: multiculturalism unintentionally can be and often is a *new* concept for an old idea. Holistic multiculturalism, primarily concerned with cultural diversity (*cf.* the Galbally Report) will not change the Anglo-Australian dominant opportunity structure.

#### CONCLUSION

Australian ethnic relations represent the outcome of various social structures and processes. These social forces include the class structure and the Anglo-Australian economic, political, social and legal domination as well as the previous hegemonic consequences which result from such a structure. The control of economic and political power carries with it the right to define the location and social perception of other categories

which are economically and politically subordinate. A review of the history of ethnic relations in this country has shown how some of these forces have developed and interacted to produce the ethnic effect in 1980. This effect can be summarised in diagrammatic form as follows:

FIGURE 5.3 *THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ETHNIC EFFECT OF AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC RELATIONS*

Definition of migrants	Period					
	1800	1850	1900	1950	1960	1970
Sources of cheap labour						
Competitors for jobs						
Racism/inferiority-superiority						
White Australia						
'Populate or perish'						
Assimilate!						
Social problems						
Disadvantaged minorities						
Multiculturalism						
Ethnic rights						

There are a number of aspects of this historical development which can be pointed out. Firstly, various definitions of migrants are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can co-exist, e.g., competitors for jobs - racism. Secondly, certain definitions tend to co-exist as 'natural' couplings, e.g., competition for jobs - racism; white Australia - populate; disadvantaged minorities - social problems; assimilation - integration/equality; (multiculturalism - ethnic rights?) These couplings appear as

natural because they are consistent with the problematic in which they are located. Elaboration of the logic and content of some of these problematics appeared earlier, e.g., assimilation-integration in the discussion of Robert Park's work. Thirdly, these definitions and couplings often contain internal contradictions which only appear under rigorous systematic scrutiny. It is precisely because of the *lack* of such scrutiny that these definitions are able to be perpetuated by the ruling class. But this brief overview of some of the major social, economic and political forces which have given rise to the ethnic effect in Australian society, tells only a small part of the story. For a more extensive picture of a sociology of Australian ethnic relations, much more information is required. Such information would include analysis of the location of ethnic groups in the social system and greater consideration of the *structural* component of Australian ethnic relations. In short, a more detailed analysis of ethnic groups and the class structure.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 This brief outline of the beginnings of Australian capitalism is intended to simply provide the foundation for an analysis of the development of the ethnic effect and the location of migrants in the Australian social system. For a detailed study of these aspects and an extension of the analysis into later periods of Australian history see Wild (1978); Ward (1969); Wheelwright and Buckley (1975, 1978a, 1978b); Connell (1977); McQueen (1977); Clark (1963).
- 2 For instance one political cartoon which appeared in *The Worker* in 1892 showed a Chinese man panning for gold with Kanaka labourers cutting cane in the background and an Australian pondering a sign which says: 'Wanted: Shearers and Station Hands. No White Man Need Apply' (Markus, 1979:26). For an excellent collection of these 'powerful' cartoons on racial and ethnic relations of this period, see Markus, 1979.
- 3 The term 'White Australia' has never appeared in any Federal or State legislation (Australia, 1973).
- 4 'Stamping' referred to marking the furniture with the name and nationality of the manufacturer. Markus says that this practice:
 

Would not only allow people 'to support their own brethren', but would also be a device to raise standards by establishing a name for the better manufacturers (Markus, 1979:165).
- 5 See Markus again, *Fear and Hatred*, for examples of some of the vivid political cartoons on this theme which appeared in the press at the time. The cover of this text shows a cartoon, which is taken from *The Worker*, of an Asian creeping through a bedroom window, huge knife in hand, and a young fair-haired girl peacefully asleep in the foreground.
- 6 Clark suggests that members of the Nationalist Party were embarrassed by the enthusiasm Hughes applied to the ideal of White Australia (Clark, 1963:200).

CHAPTER SIX

ETHNIC GROUPS AND THE CLASS STRUCTURE

ETHNICITY, RACE AND CLASS

One aim of this work, given the epistemological position developed in Part I, is to consider possible strategies for altering the position of disadvantaged migrants in the social system. This aim requires firstly, an elaboration of the major social structures and processes in the social system and the implications they have for maintaining the position of migrants in such a system. Secondly, consideration of how these processes and structures may possibly be applied to alter the location of migrants in the social system. These concerns are the focus of this chapter.

There are some important implications for the analysis of ethnic relations which can be derived from the work of Lewins and Martin presented in Chapter Four. I have suggested that the approach of these writers differs markedly from the regular problematic of Australian ethnic relations. One of the important conceptual components of this new approach is that ethnic relations is seen as closely related to the concept of *power*. That is, *power* in the sense of both the ability of certain groups to define the discourse of ethnic relations and secondly, in the dominant - subordinate nature of ethnic relations itself. A recognition of the power dimension of ethnic relations means, for one thing, that these relations *are inherently political relations* (Lewins, 1980). In dealing with the concept of power in ethnic relations, I want to begin by returning to 'Marxist' perspectives applied to race and ethnic relations as discussed by Lewins (1978a). This author referred to:

Those who argue that the concepts 'race' and 'ethnic group' have little or no explanatory power and that the explanation for the formation, persistence of, and discrimination against racial and ethnic groups entails Marxian concepts such as ruling class, modes of production, and class struggle (1978a:14).

Marxist analyses of ethnic and race relations tend to focus on what is regarded as one of the behavioural and attitudinal outcomes of the constitution of capitalist societies - racism. As Lewins has stated:

Applied to race and ethnic relations, orthodox Marxist theory holds that racial and ethnic loyalties will 'wither away' as the class struggle runs its inevitable course. In terms of explanatory value, race and ethnic group in this perspective are epiphenomena of class conflict, the material base of class relationship to the mode of production is *the* most significant aspect of reality. Thus race and ethnic group have little theoretical significance - class is the supreme concept (1978a:17).

In a general manner, the similarities between the Marxist emphasis on class, as stated by Lewins, and the need for a theory of the social system as expressed throughout this paper lie in the belief that a thorough analysis of ethnic relations would entail linking the nature of these relations to the total system. Some Marxist approaches present this link in terms of the 'stigmatising' of some groups for the purpose of exploitation. For instance, Cox sees racism as:

A social attitude propogated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatizing some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources may both be justified (quoted in Lewins, 1978a:17).

Lewins has correctly criticised Cox's position for its ahistorical nature and its inability to adequately account for why working class whites are not stigmatised (1978a:18). The crux of the debate between Marxist and non-Marxist positions on racial/ethnic groups centres on whether the economic system perpetuates and maintains the nature of ethnic relations in any particular country or whether racial attitudes are an independent force affecting other aspects of the system (Lewins, 1978a:18). It appears that any 'theory' postulating a one-directional relationship between economic factors and racial or ethnic attitudes *regardless* of the direction, is an overly simplistic and narrow conception of the nature of ethnic and race relations (Lewins, 1978a).

Balandier seems to be one writer who incorporates race and class in a more comprehensive framework:

The colonial situation produces races and racial thinking, just as capitalism produced classes and class perspective. Since human beings form groups, as Marxism rightly posits, on the basis of their relation to the labor process, race and culture as a basis for group formation and interest have a 'material base' in colonial systems. Because colonization has been a historic force, races are not just survivals of archaic thinking or epiphenomenal manifestations of economic claims - they are real groups (quoted in Lewins, 1978a:19).

Lewins, in general, agrees with Balandier's position in his conclusion:

While in most cases the persistence and treatment of [race and ethnic] groups by the wider society is *closely related to power and resource disadvantage*, such disadvantages cannot always be explained by Marxian theory. Race and ethnic groups are real groups in our society whose relations are a complex product of social, political, cultural, economic and historical factors (1978a:19), emphasis added).

It is difficult to point to a particular theoretical representation and to call it a Marxian theory in light of the various interpretations of Marxist theory which exist (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:118-119). Nevertheless, although writers may disagree about the direction and the influence between ideas, e.g., racism, and economic relationships, most writers who concern themselves with Marxist analysis tend to see this issue as central to such an analysis. As Gabriel and Ben-Tovim state:

The distinctive task for Marxist analysis is not just the assertion of the relative autonomy of the ideological level and its interaction with the other levels of the social formation, but also the specification of the conditions under which that autonomy is achieved and the delineation of the mechanism through which ideology realises its effects at the level of the economy (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:119).

One important contribution Gabriel and Ben-Tovim make to the analysis of ethnic relations is in the treatment of racism in terms of *ideology* and the *economy*. It may be that the concepts developed to analyse race and racism in western societies are also concepts which underlie the notion of ethnicity. If this can be shown then *the distinction* made between race and ethnicity for the purpose of sociological analysis would need to be seriously reconsidered. Alternatively, if it can be shown that race and ethnicity do relate to different concepts, i.e., different practices, then

it is still possible that an analysis of racism may throw light on *how* we may develop an understanding of the nature of ethnic relations.

Gabriel and Ben-Tovim suggest an approach in which the:

Concepts of race and racism may only be understood as the products of theoretical/ideological practices that subsequently intervene at the level of the economy. Clearly the scope of such intervention can only be determined via an adequate conceptualisation of the economy, for it will pose its own conditions for the intervention of this and other ideological forms (1978:121).

These authors consider the writings of people they regard as Marxist on the development of racism and conclude that what unites them is the fundamental relationships they posit 'in which the ideology expresses, reflects, or is reducible to an economic essence' (1978:125). They then proceed to consider the two sets of arguments, which attempt to account for the connection between capitalism and racism:

The first suggests that capitalism requires stratification on racist lines as a result of a series of specifically *economic* requirements or exigencies. The second set argues that capitalism requires racism as a justification for certain forms of *political* practice that may or may not correspond to economic requirements (1978:132).

This debate can be linked back to many of the points made previously, especially the issue of whether any systematic sociological explanation can concern itself with general processes common to say, all western societies as Marxist analysis implies, e.g., the capitalist mode of production, or whether each ethnic or racial group relation with other groups is unique and needs to be historically - analytically, constructed. There is a sense in which the answer is 'a bit of both'. That is, there are clearly economic and ideological factors involved with *all* ethnic and race relations, regardless of the particular characteristics of the groups involved, but the nature of ethnic relations as pointed out previously, can only be fully understood in its historical context (see Chapter Five). Thus there is a sense in which the history of the relations between a migrant group and the dominant group is *unique* to a particular society.

Gabriel and Ben-Tovim specify what they see as two important *general* processes of the capitalist mode of production, which, if not responsible



for determining the nature of ethnic and race relations in western societies, certainly place severe limitations on the development of ethnic relations.<sup>1</sup> These processes are twofold:

The first of this latter set of arguments concerns the *production of a surplus population* conceived as a necessary effect of capital accumulation and transformations in the organic composition of capital and its constituent elements . . . . The second concerns the inevitability of a declining rate of profit as a consequence of the decline in the ratio of constant to variable capital. Amongst a series of counteracting tendencies designed to offset this process is the mechanism of reinforced exploitation. This provides in principle the basis for the super-exploitation of certain groups in the economy (1978:133, emphasis added).

It is important to realise that the *object* of ethnic or race relations is different for each of the two processes selected by Gabriel and Ben-Tovim. The first is addressing itself to the question of: Why *conflict* in racially and ethnically mixed societies? While the second attempts to answer: Why *exploitation*? The authors identify a number of problems with using their economic processes to explain racial and ethnic conflict and exploitation. They argue that the surplus population argument is difficult to sustain insofar as it assumes that levels of employment exist as a 'function of changes in [the composition of capital]' (1978:134). Their critique is based on the claim that this assumption is false as it is not possible to:

Extrapolate general principles of employment levels from the practices of a single firm. What may appear 'beneficial' to a single employer, e.g., the 'cheapness' of migrant labour is not necessarily 'beneficial' to the economy as a whole: it may for instance deter a more efficient use of machinery and raw materials and thus prompt a reduction in the social product of labour (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:134).

What is immediately noticeable about this criticism offered by Gabriel and Ben-Tovim is that it has no place for subjective elements. That is, it assumes that the underlying mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production follow an *objective* causal relationship. Consequently, because of the contradiction in the outcome for the economy and the firm (in the example used) from the same mechanism, then the explanation is inadequate.

But is it not possible that individuals, for a number of factors, perceive, for example, the importation of migrant labour as an economic threat and *this perception* results in hostility and conflict between ethnic or racial groups? In this analysis, the actions of employers and government immigration policies are important considerations, i.e., the importation of migrants as a source of cheap labour, and *as either* intended or unintended consequences.

The second problem these authors identify is the falling rate of profit argument and exploitation. Their criticism is based on the point that:

The argument that reinforced exploitation amongst a number of counteracting tendencies serves to resist the law always assumes that without these influences the law would apply. However, as Steedman ... points out this can hardly be treated as axiomatic (1978:134).

Insofar as Gabriel and Ben-Tovim restrict their analysis of this argument to solely the effects on the economy the same criticism can be made of it as was applied to their discussion of surplus labour.

The authors go on to point out that the problems involved with attempts to reduce racial categories to economic categories. For instance, any attempt to do so ignores the differences which exist between sub-categories *within* the same ethnic or racial category (1978:134-5). The consideration of these points lead Gabriel and Ben-Tovim to distinguish two further sets of arguments with respect to racism:

... that capitalism requires racism for certain *economic* reasons from those which suggest that in fact capitalism requires racism in order to justify certain forms of *political* practice, such as the Jim Crow Laws in the U.S.A., or laws affecting terms of residence of European migrants and those restricting access to certain facilities (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:136).

In attempting to account for the existence of racism, these authors are unable to identify *any* 'ideational structure that is specific to the capitalist mode of production' (1978:138). They conclude:

For those Marxists who have tried to develop economically-determinant variants of the racism/capitalism thesis applicable to the contemporary capitalist formations, there remains the problem of establishing why racial categories necessarily constitute the basis of either fractional disputes between capital, reinforced exploitation or a surplus population. *The fundamental problem with all these versions is that there is nothing in the economy itself to establish the racial basis for differentiation. Hence the racial dimension may only be superimposed from without* (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:139, emphasis added).

These conclusions lead the authors to suggest that race and racism 'must be seen as concepts whose objects are *ideological*' (1978:139), and that they are autonomous from political and economic practices and, as such, have their own conditions of existence 'and their own irreducible contradictions' (1978:139). It is with respect to the function of the capitalist mode of production, that Gabriel and Ben-Tovim make an important point:

[Political practice and the economy] themselves cannot be held responsible for the production in the first instance of racist ideology, although there is a sense in which they can be said to determine in the last instance the *mode of reproduction* of racism: for transformations in the economic structure of capitalism impose limitations, which require rigorous specification, on the scope for the intervention of racist ideology; they provide the necessary conditions of class struggle in which the ideologies of race have certain effects (1978:139).

If the need for *historical* analysis to act as the backdrop for analysis of contemporary situations is one theme of this paper, another is the need for a theory of the social system. Gabriel and Ben-Tovim have assisted in this regard by showing that one component, the ideological cannot be regarded simply as the *artifact* of the economy or political practice.

They state:

The clear delineation of these conditions, together with the distinct conceptualization of the economic, political and ideological forms, would provide the basis within a Marxist notion of complex totality from which racism can be analysed without succumbing to the pitfalls of expressivism, whether in its economic or its voluntaristic variants as typified by the work of Cox and Genovese (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:139).

One important side effect of the development of this argument by the authors is the realisation of the role and conditions of the existence of

ideology in its own right in the field of race relations.<sup>2</sup> However, an account of *what is ideology* is absent from the writing of Gabriel and Ben-Tovim. For instance they are critical of the few attempts to apply ideology as they regard them as entailing some sort of 'essentialist' position:

Here ideology is taken to designate the sum total of representations, whether or not what is being represented is some form of economic category or some imaginary relation to the real. The result is the same in both cases. Ideology somehow reflects either the interests of some social class or some relation to the real (Gabriel and Ben Tovim, 1978:140).

However, the authors do not provide what they would regard as an adequate theory of ideology but simply point out that 'any general theory of racism will entail similar problems' (Gabriel and Ben Tovim, 1978:140).

It is on the issue of the consequences that their thesis has for political action to overcome racism that Gabriel and Ben-Tovim appear to make claims that seem to be either inconsistent with their argument as developed earlier or are based upon entirely different concepts. This is apparent in the following statement:

If racism is a necessary product of the capitalist mode of production and a necessary condition of its maintenance, then logically political struggle to overcome racism is doomed to failure or else is a diversion from the main class struggle to eliminate capitalism, whose fall will of itself also entail the elimination of racism (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:140).

Firstly, the authors, by positing the external autonomous nature of ideological factors to the economy, have not been able to show that racism *is a necessary* product of the capitalist mode of production. The tenuous nature of this claim by the authors seriously questions the validity of the second part of the statement. Gabriel and Ben-Tovim consider two strategies of political intervention which have been proposed in the literature: struggles confined to 'manifestation of the capital-labour contradiction' and 'the tendency to over-politicise the race issue' (1978:141-142). The first is criticised by the authors on the grounds that it is reducible to

an economism/opportunism position which tags along behind economic struggles (1978:142), while the second is seen as producing divisions and antagonisms between exploited racial groups and supporters (1978:143). But the amount of space allotted to these strategies seems unwarranted as they are both based on the assumption that race is reducible to class - an assumption which seemed to be successfully refuted by the authors earlier. Much of the evidence these authors draw on to discuss these strategies is taken from literature dealing with blacks in England. They conclude their discussion as follows:

The first major political tendency outlined above, then, liquidates the struggle against racism in favour of the struggle against capital, racial oppression being a simple variant of class exploitation and blacks being simply proletarians; our second approach completes the equation from the opposite direction, arguing that the race struggle and blacks are the only authentic proletarians. Thus a chauvinism of race replaces a chauvinism of class ... (Gabriel and Ben-Tovim, 1978:145).

#### THE CLASS STRUCTURE

This analysis of the writings of Gabriel and Ben-Tovim has attempted to introduce some of the main issues in a Marxist account of the concept and role of race in capitalist society. These issues are of interest for the purposes of this paper because they may be relevant for the development of ethnicity and its various manifestations, e.g., inequality, lack of access to social resources, powerlessness (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978; Martin, 1976; Australia, 1977). What does seem clear is that many of the processes and aspects of capitalism that are highlighted as important for an analysis of race, e.g., surplus labour population, the inevitability of the falling rate of profit and the subsequent consequences, could be generally applicable to categories based on ethnicity as well as categories based on race. But what is also clear is the inability of Marxist accounts to adequately link *ideological notions*

of racial and ethnic categories to the economic base of capitalist society (de Lepervanche, 1980). In terms of the methodological position developed earlier (CSSP) a critical question for the analysis of ethnic relations in Australia is how it was that certain groups in Australia came to define ethnic relations and develop certain concepts to conceptualise ethnic relations? This question focuses on historical-dynamic, social, political and economic processes of the general development of society. It does not separate out ethnic relations as *either* an autonomous domain of *life* or *inquiry*, or as a static set of relationships, behaviours and attitudes which need to be categorised. These two perspectives correspond to Connell's distinction between 'categorical' and 'generative' approaches (1977:4). He applies these different kinds of approaches to the concept of 'class'. The categorical theory:

Is one whose basic move is to find a systematic way of sorting people. All societies, a familiar argument runs, are 'stratified', that is to say divided into groups or sections which are hierarchically ordered in some way. The task of theory is to discover and formulate the bases of this division and ordering in various societies, and the task of research is to trace out their correlates and consequences. The underlying notion of class is that of a kind of map-maker's grid, on which people (or in some versions, families) can be located. Spatial metaphors - 'social mobility', 'social distance', 'dimensions' of differentiation, even 'stratification' itself - are so fundamental to it that their non-metaphorical meaning is normally taken for granted. The characteristic research problems that arise are matters of technique: identifying the dimensions, measuring the distances and correlating other things with them (Connell, 1977:4).

One other characteristic of this approach, which comes out of the discussion in the previous part, is that, by its very nature, it tends to be non-critical of the total social system. That is, the concern is to adequately slot people and groups into the existing structure, rather than attempt to change the system in any way. The second type of theory identified by Connell, is called 'generative'.

To stress its most distinctive feature, the way in which elementary structures and processes are seen to generate a huge and complex historical reality. The stress here is on the processes producing social groupings, rather than the categories they produce; and on the activity of people, not merely their location in social space (Connell, 1977:5).

The author goes on to suggest that 'Marxism of Marx's kind remains the most important and fully developed instance of generative theory' (1977:5). One important advantage of this generative approach over the categorical is its attempt to provide a *general* theory of the social system *within* which various sub-components, e.g., ethnic relations can be analysed.

What does this theory of the social system consist of? The existence of surplus value by means of the ownership of property permits the accumulation of capital for one category of individuals in society. The non-owners of capital constitute the second category. Regardless of similarities which may exist across this division, e.g., similarities of lifestyle, attitudes etc., which are very often the focus of categorical approaches, the Marxist approach identifies this relationship to the means of production as the crucial difference. As Connell says:

Capitalist society, characterised by these processes, develops a class structure, and it is the structure as a whole that is primary - classes develop in interaction (both conflict and alliance) with each other (Connell, 1977:5).

These two classes (Feuer, 1959) display varying potential for mobilisation and because of various conditions also display various degrees of class consciousness (Feuer, 1959), and hence different possibilities for class action. With respect to mobilisation, Connell states:

Working-class mobilization is always undertaken against odds, *not only the economic but also the political and cultural strength of the owners of capital*. Where the mobilization is weak and the indirect controls effective, we speak of a *hegemonic situation* (1977:6), *emphasis added*).

It is important to elaborate on this aspect of indirect control as this was the crux of the epistemological position linking *power* and *concepts* in Chapter Three. Connell has suggested that the continued success and thriving of capitalism is indicative of 'the strength of its non-economic defences, on the one hand, and the ambiguities and internal weaknesses of working-class movements on the other' (1977:205). But whatever the necessary mechanisms for the reproduction of the system of the means of

production, it is apparent that explanations concerned exclusively at the level of the economic base and interests cannot adequately account for the reproduction and extension of social control. Consequently writers, such as Althusser (1972) have attempted to develop theories of the role of non-economic forces in capitalist societies. Connell has summarised these attempts, which include efforts to apply Freud in order to explain 'mass support for a repressive social order as parts of the general problem of hegemony' (Connell, 1977:206). This concept of *hegemony* was first applied by Gramsci:

To refer to the leadership role in an alliance of parties or classes for a specific struggle. But he also extended it to cover situations where a kind of permanent alliance existed: where a general solidarity between oppressors and oppressed had developed, *with cultural processes reinforcing the political and economic domination of the ruling group* (Connell, 1977:206, emphasis added).

The interpretation that Connell has placed on Gramsci's use of the concept of hegemony is as a *situation*:

A moment in history in which control is effectively exercised, can thus be distinguished from the *mechanisms of control* that operate in it (Connell, 1977:206).

This conceptualisation refers to a continuum of effectiveness rather than to a system of total control:

Control is never total - even in Nazi Germany at the height of war there were circles of resistance - though it can be pretty thorough. Hegemonic situations range from a strongly established pattern of direct controls with only marginal dissidence, through situations where a working class has formed an economic and social category but its mobilization is being aborted, to situations where mobilization has occurred though only within decided limits (Connell, 1977:207).

Hegemony, then, as presented by Connell is an extension of the notion of control in the Machiavellian sense - the exercise of direct, conscious repressive power - to include other forms of control which may influence the outcome of various situations. Power, in the sense of direct control, is not an alternative to the sorts of things Connell and Gramsci include in the notion of hegemony *but is a part of it*. This representation of hegemony differs from other conceptualisations which see the concept as



referring to a general process of a totality which is a permanent state and supposedly determines the outcome of *all* class interactions. Williams, for instance states:

Hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the limit of commonsense for most people under its sway . . . . It is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understanding of the nature of man and of his world. It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because (*sic*) experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives (Williams, 1973:8-9).

There is a possible contradiction between Connell's conception of hegemony and that presented by Williams. The contradiction lies in the possibility of incorporating a base/superstructure distinction in Connell's conception, whereas Williams explicitly denies this distinction (1973:8). An acceptance and application of Williams' concept would have considerable implications for analyses, such as that presented by Gideon and Ben-Tovim, of the economically or ideologically based notion of racism.<sup>3</sup> But it can be shown that this contradiction is a false debate arising from interpretations of the two positions which *appear* to be at odds. Williams' account of hegemony is the total control of the individual's existence. To suggest otherwise, that the individual's existence *is* the function of a totality which cannot be separated out into its various components comes perilously close to the Durkheimian notion of the individual and the 'collective conscience' (see Chapter One). Furthermore this interpretation would contribute to the hegemonic situation by confirming the power of the totality and the inability for mobilisation. In other words it would deny the *possibility* of critical theory intervention as presented in Part I. In a sense then, to regard hegemony of this fashion, would be to perpetuate the very concept that supposedly a Marxist, or critical theory, is attempting to destroy.

What sorts of things, then, do Gramsci and Connell include in the concept of hegemony? The critical component is *cultural control*. Connell attempts to deal with the make up of this cultural control by breaking it down into a number of *levels* 'at which one can analyse hegemony' (1977:207). He identifies three levels, essentially: consciousness, the unconscious, interactions. The third has to do with 'the operation of ideology as a system of social practices as regular patterns of action by which people are constrained' (a la Althusser) (1977:208). Connell has applied these three levels to develop an account of the post Second World War hegemonic situation in Australia (1977:208-217). He concludes:

These are not 'soft', epiphenomenal and ephemeral matters. On the contrary, as the women's movement is finding in the case of sex segregation in employment, and as the industrial unionists found half a century before in their attempt to end craft exclusiveness in union organisation, they are extremely tough and resistant patterns of customary interaction. It is difficult to say whether a change in these patterns is a condition of general mobilization or can only be achieved by it. But either way, the fact that they were generally reinforced rather than reduced in the postwar period of industrialization and affluence was an important feature of the hegemonic situation (Connell, 1977 : 217).

Connell emphasises the point made earlier about the apparent contradiction between his concept of hegemony and that of Williams, when he says:

Assuming that hegemony is a specific historical situation and not a permanent condition, it must be produced by processes that are identifiable in history (Connell, 1977:218).

Connell lists the following components linked with specific social processes as the important mechanisms which foster *or* counteract the hegemonic situation.<sup>4</sup> Fostering hegemony: the Catholic church and Protestant clerics, teachers and journalists, concepts, organisation of the school system, social workers, intellectuals, parents (1977:218-220). But, according to Connell it is not sufficient for an analysis to point out simply the pro-hegemonic forces:

In defining hegemony as a situation, I wanted to stress its historically contingent character; or to put it in plainer English, the fact that cultural control can be opposed, weakened and overcome. It may be difficult, but it is possible. *In an analysis of hegemony there should always be a consideration of counter hegemonic activity* (Connell, 1977:220, emphasis added).

These latter activities would include the activities of some intellectuals students, incidents of industrial vandalism and sabotage (1977:221-222).

Most of these processes or activities could be classified as instruments of indirect control. One important component of society which manifests itself as *both* direct and indirect controls is *the state*.

The state is understood as the sphere of direct enforcible social relationships (as against the indirect relationships of markets), which underlie markets and also provides the basis for the construction of the state organizations such as courts, parliaments and government departments (Connell, 1977:6).

But there is another way in which the state manifests indirect control and that is by means of what Althusser has referred to as 'ideological state apparatuses'. He has argued that social institutions and organisations such as the family, the media, and especially the school socialise individuals into this hegemonic situation and thus reproduce the relations of capitalist production (Althusser, 1972). Consequently, the school as an ideological state apparatus, is responsible for *perpetuating various concepts and rhetoric*:

The political apparatus by subjecting individuals to the political state ideology, the 'indirect' (parliamentary) or 'direct' (plebiscitary or fascist) 'democratic' ideology ... the communications apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc. ... this concert is dominated by a single score, occasionally disturbed by contradictions (those of the remnants of former ruling classes, those of the proletarians and their organizations): the score of the ideology of the current ruling class ... . Nevertheless, in this concert, one ideological state apparatus certainly has the dominant role, although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music: it is so silent! This is the school (Althusser, 1972:259-60).

One writer who has contributed to an understanding of the role of the state and the connection between class and the state has been Poulantzas. Poulantzas (1973:100) sees state power as 'the power of a determinate class to whose interests the state corresponds'. According to Poulantzas, the state 'intervenes' at the level of social relations rather than structures. State apparatuses:

Maintain the unity and cohesion of a social formation by concentrating and sanctioning class domination, and in this way reproducing social relations, i.e., class relations (Poulantzas, 1975:25).

Furthermore, these apparatuses help solidify class relations and, although they are constrained by these relations, are not reducible to them. Hence the state has a relative autonomy from social classes. It acts as a form of political organisation of the dominant class, who are unable to achieve their own internal unity or hegemony over the dominated classes.<sup>5</sup>

What most of this discussion has been concerned with is the pattern of power as *relations* rather than *possessions*, and social control in society. Regardless of the nature of the various components of social systems, their interrelationships and implications which go to make up this pattern they can be linked back to the concept of '*class*'. With respect to this concept Connell says explicitly:

'Class' at least is a term with a definite, classic meaning; it refers to a particular type of society. When we talk about the 'class structure' in Australia, we are saying that the facts of power, privilege and property in this country have a definite pattern, one which is familiar over much of the world (Connell, 1973:31).

Connell ties the appearance of class societies in various geographical parts of the world to the historical changes which resulted in a new order based on the combination of the ownership of the means of production with industrial production (1973:32). The effect of this change was the division of societies into the owners of capital and wage labourers - the latter significant because they did not possess either capital, i.e., private property, nor the means for acquiring capital.

There has been a running debate, perhaps more covert than open, in some of the literature on power and control in society as to whether the most appropriate concept to describe the category of the owners of capital is 'ruling class' or 'power elite' (Connell, 1973; 1977; Encel, 1961; Mills, 1956; Higley, 1978; Pareto, 1969). At one level this debate is purely a semantic one in that many of the aspects selected by writers to

show the existence of a powerful group are the same regardless of whether power elite or ruling class is the dependent variable. One example of this is the focus on corporate power by both Connell (ruling class) and Encel (power elite) as an important component of the consolidation of power and control in society (Connell, 1977: Ch.3; Encel, 1961). However at another level of analysis the concept of elite does appear to be more limited than the concept of ruling class with respect to the mechanisms of control. In other words, the concept of ruling class includes the components of direct control often associated with this term, *but is also more than this*. Connell, for instance, when discussing the concept of ruling class says:

It is not simply a top group or an 'elite'. It is in a sense an elite, *but one whose position and power has its roots deep in the culture and basic institutions of the society* (Connell, 1973:33, emphasis added).

This extension of, and emphasis on, *indirect* and subconscious aspects of control is consistent with the previous discussion of cultural hegemony and Foucault's analysis of language and power. The direct aspects of control include economic power in the sense of controlling the production, pricing and the distribution of goods but also power in the right to locate factories where corporations desire and which has implications for employment and the welfare of large numbers of people. It also includes power in the sense of control over our buying habits (Connell, 1973:33; Hacker, 1966). Once in power the ruling class consolidates and perpetuates its existence by political power, i.e., by controlling various apparatuses which protect the system of private property (Connell, 1977:33). Also, the mere existence of these ruling class apparatuses acts to rigidify the existing system insofar as it is more difficult for a 'new' idea or group to achieve the same degree of legitimation as the existing ideas or groups. Wolff has expressed this view clearly when he comments:

A rough distributive justice emerges from the conflict of interests, but some interests are recognized as legitimate participants in this conflict while others are not *and the application of the theory of pluralism always favours the groups in existence against those in process of formation* (1976:18-19, emphasis added).

Another major component of the power and control exercised by the ruling class is *cultural hegemony* (Connell, 1977). This dimension incorporates many of the aspects mentioned previously, e.g., the use of floating signifiers and rhetoric to perpetuate ruling class ideas, the cultural and political domination of apparatuses, such as the school. The role of the media, insofar as this apparatus promotes ruling class ideas, cannot be underestimated (Connell, 1977: Ch.9). Connell says of cultural hegemony:

The ruling class disappears behind a veil of ideas that seem to come from the society as a whole, and seem to represent a consensus of opinion. It becomes difficult for the common people even to formulate the nature of their discontent, or to arrive at terms in which to criticize their world. Cultural dominance in this way can take the sharp edge off resentment at economic exploitation (Connell, 1973:33).

It is not intended here to present a detailed analysis of the structure of the ruling class. This has been done elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Rather the aim of this analysis of social power and control is to attempt to indicate the manner in which control is manifested in society at the macro-system level. The aspects of direct and indirect control which have been discussed reinforce each other so that it is the position and interests of the dominant class in society which is protected and enhanced by the total structuring of the system. The dynamics of this system cannot be reduced to the specific actions of individuals, as, for instance in the notion of conspiracy (Connell, 1973:34). As Connell has states:

The whole system has a logic and a movement of its own that no one man can master ... . It is the way individual and joint actions within this structure have unintended and apparently unrelated consequences that profoundly influence other people's lives, that makes the class structure so difficult but so important to study (Connell, 1973:35).

It is possible that, with all the attention paid to the various manifestations of ruling class hegemony, the underlying factor upon which

these controls is based, can be easily overlooked - private property.

Connell is very explicit on this point:

Let us stress again that these social patterns are not consciously planned, that we are not dealing with any kind of conspiracy, nor even a 'power elite'. At the same time, these patterns are not accidental. *They are produced by the operation of a system of power based on property.* They are the unintended, sometimes unexpected, but unavoidable consequences of deliberate actions taken by generations of wealthy men in the interests of themselves and their families (Connell, 1973:41, emphasis added).

At the level of consequences of this property based system, it is also possible to overlook the extent to which this system has produced in the minds of people a *legitimation* of the capitalist system. A legitimation which is almost total. As Connell points out:

The mass of the people accept the socio-economic system of capitalism as the normal and natural condition of life. Their chief hopes are for private fulfilment and personal success, which they (correctly) believe can happen to individual people in this system. They do not commonly identify their fate with that of a whole class. There is no serious alternative social system presented to them (Connell, 1973:43).

Hegemony is manifested in many different forms - some subtle, others more overt. But the effects of these different forms are similar. They act so as to perpetuate the success, advantages and privileged position of one class or group in society over another. What is crucial to realise, though, is that the structure of this success and advantage cannot be reduced to some form of naive economism argument, such as in the attempt to reduce ethnic groups to classes. Rather, in a generative sense the location of ethnic groups in a class society needs to be analysed in terms of the framework established in previous pages, e.g., the ability of the ruling class to define 'migrants' in society; the processes by which the ruling class maintains its control over under-privileged groups, such as migrants, in society; the way in which migrants themselves may tend to legitimate the structure which oppresses them; the role played by academics

and government in perpetuating a particular ideological position (e.g., holistic multiculturalism) which operates to further entrench the position of the ruling class. On the one hand Connell's writings have been beneficial in highlighting the nature of the class structure and social control while Gabriel and Ben-Tovim's analysis of the concept of racial groups (and implicitly ethnic groups) provides a link between these concepts and the class structure. Perhaps more importantly the link is of a *generative nature* attempting to show how racism and the class structure have evolved as a dynamic process.

These analyses are very much at a macro-level and are not, in themselves, helpful in attempting to explain the experiences of particular groups or individuals in society. In order to explain these phenomena it is necessary to develop a theory of the outcome of the class structure. To pose this in terms of a question: To what extent does this class structure enhance or restrict the life chances of particular groups, e.g., migrants, or individuals, in society? This is to focus on the *structure of opportunity* in society as a *product* of a class society, especially how this structure relates to the position of ethnic groups in the social system.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

In Chapter Four reference was made to the apolitical nature of conceptualisations of multiculturalism as depicted in Lewins' notions of 'demographic' and 'holistic' multiculturalism. The discussion of cultural hegemony and the manifestation of the power of the ruling class in the previous chapter (Foucault's knowledge/power connection) suggest that it is the ruling class which largely defines the nature of ethnic relations in this country. Martin's discussion of the power of some groups to determine what is to be included and excluded from the discourse elaborates



on this perspective. Some writers have attempted to present a typology of the various definitions and views of ethnic relations reflected in government policy statements and academic works.<sup>7</sup> Possibly the most common typology is that developed by Milton Gordon: Anglo-Conformism, the Melting Pot view and permanent ethnic pluralism (Gordon, 1964). The first holds that ethnics can and should relinquish their language, customs and attitudes and take on the attributes of the dominant Anglo-Saxon 'core culture'. The melting pot view, as applied to Australia, holds that it is possible and desirable for Australians and ethnics, through interaction, to blend together and emerge from the 'pot' as a distinct culture. On the other hand, permanent ethnic pluralism holds that each ethnic community desiring it, is permitted to create its own communal life and preserve its own cultural heritage indefinitely, while taking part in the general life of the nation (Kringas and Lewins, 1979:11). The typology has been applied to the Australian scene (Poole, 1977; Price, 1966) and it is commonplace to see in academic journals and in government reports references to Anglo-conformism and the melting pot view having given way to a model of ethnic pluralism or multiculturalism. The *Inquiry into Schools of High Migrant Density* (Australia, 1975:19), for example, noted that:

Acceptance of the fact of multiculturalism implies a rejection of two other common conceptions of Australian society, those of Anglo-Saxon conformity and the 'melting pot'.

Making a similar point, Birell (1978:133), points out that the current favour enjoyed by the notion of multiculturalism stems from the inadequacy of 'two pre-existing models: The Anglo-conformity (or assimilationist) approach and the "melting pot" model' (see also Smolicz, 1971; Cigler, 1975; Storer, 1977). But 'multiculturalism' is a floating signifier. It is when this concept and its relationship to other concepts in the discourse of ethnic relations is subjected to considerable analytical scrutiny as Lewins has provided, that the omissions, e.g., its *apolitical* nature become apparent. The concept of multiculturalism in the sense of

*demographic multiculturalism*, appears in many academic works, government reports and policy statements on such issues as 'multicultural education' (Steinle, 1976; Victorian Association for Multicultural Education, 1975: 8-9; Matheson, 1974; Commissioner for Community Relations, 1976:33; Ramsay, 1978:53-4). It is a position found mainly in educational organisations and is inferred from the inconsistency between what is said about meeting the needs of ethnic school children and the reality of the classroom (Kringas and Lewins, 1979:13). Multiculturalism, in the sense of *holistic multiculturalism*, appears in conceptualisations of Australian ethnic relations which stress not only the wholeness of the entire society over the parts, but also the capacity of existing structures to meet the special needs of ethnics (sometimes in co-operation with ethnic bodies), and the problems of structural pluralism such as 'separation' and segregated ethnic group life (Kringas and Lewins, 1979:14). Jayasuriya (1977) expresses this type of multiculturalism as does Grassby's notion (1977) of the 'family of the nation' (see also Smolicz, 1976:42; Zubrzycki, 1977; and Australia, 1978:104-5).

One assumption underlying the perceived movement, as depicted in the literature from a prevalent ideology of Anglo-conformity reflected in government policies to one of multiculturalism, is that these ideologies are mutually exclusive. In other words, it is implicit in discussions of these approaches that multiculturalism has replaced Anglo-conformity or melting-pot models. The critique of multiculturalism provided by Lewins seriously questions the validity of this assumption. By demystifying the concept and showing its *real* nature in conceptualisations of holistic multiculturalism, Lewins has been able to show that the ideologies of Anglo-conformity and melting pot are now masquerading under a new concept - multiculturalism (Kringas and Lewins, 1979:16).

A more accurate picture of the development of broad ideologies of the place of ethnics in Australian society is outlined by Martin in her

attempt to apply Foucault's ideas of knowledge and power (Martin, 1978: 27ff). She posits three phases in post World War II Australian society in which ethnics were defined differently by governments and institutions. The first was an assimilationist phase in the 1950s and 1960s. The second was a phase where ethnics (Martin refers to migrants) were defined as people with problems or as a 'social problem' and thirdly a current phase of 'differentiation'. The assimilationist phase was consistent with the prevalent view of ethnic relations at the time epitomised in the 'inevitable and desirable' assimilationist approach of Robert Park. It was in the late sixties, according to Martin, that 'predictions about migrant assimilability were often not borne out in reality' (see T. Birrell, 1978:133)<sup>8</sup> and 'the staff of a number of organisations were finding non-English-speakers a disturbing obstacle to the adequate performance of their job' (Martin, 1978:33). All this, together with the sheer increase in the numbers of non-English-speaking migrants, placed considerable pressure on Australian organisations such as schools. As a consequence, 'there gradually consolidated a definition of migrants as a social problem' (1978:36). In other words, if Australian schools and hospitals, which were responsible for handling large numbers of migrants, were not able to cope effectively, then it was because of problems pertaining to individual migrants and not the organisation - it was a psychological rather than a structural problem. Around the early seventies, the 'migrants as people with problems' phase gave way to what Martin calls the period of 'differentiation' among definers of migrants *vis-a-vis* Australian society (1978:50ff). This means as the above discussion indicates, that migrants (and other ethnics) as well as Australian institutions are once again redefining the place of ethnics in Australia and the action necessary to realise it (see Martin, 1978:141; Kringas and Lewins, 1979:16-17). Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the predominant definition of

Australia's ethnic relations, as defined by institutions of power, such as government bureaucracies and academics, is holistic multiculturalism.

How is the opportunity structure conceptualised in this problematic of multiculturalism? The conceptualisation most consistent with this model of holistic multiculturalism is that represented by the metaphor of 'social ladder' which implies that anyone, regardless of background experiences, can make it to the top. This model is described by Wiley:

The ladder is a straight one and no rungs are missing. Secondly, it can be climbed and the means of climbing are the same at all levels. It is implicit that ability and hard work determine one's place on the ladder (Wiley, 1967:148).

This model, which tends to be the view from the top, is most likely espoused by those who have made it and thus acts as a justification for the way the social system is constituted. Given that this model is the dominant ideology it represents an important component of cultural hegemony, and, as such is transmitted and perpetuated in social institutions of which the school is probably the most influential. For instance, Gilmour and Lansbury provide an example of the school experiences of non-English speaking migrants in Melbourne and, on the basis of this, draw the following generalised conclusion:

Parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more familiar with the education system. They have a greater understanding of how bureaucratic government structures work. They are typically more political, more vocal and more articulate. They have the time to organize and campaign in order to try and influence the school system. *Parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially those who do not speak English well, do not realize the extent to which they can change the system; they do not understand the rules of the game.* Rather than insist that it is their right to have their children taught their own language and culture in the government primary schools, the Greek parents, for example, pay substantial amounts to have their children taught these subjects after school. But the agitation for the school to hire at least one Greek-speaking teacher or teacher's aide came from non-Greek professional parents, not from the Greek parents (1978:11-12, emphasis added).

To what extent does the social ladder model of the opportunity structure represent reality as far as ethnic groups are concerned? It was the Melbourne poverty studies of the mid-sixties that probably provided the

first piece of large-scale systematic evidence that ethnic groups were a *minority* and that Australian society constituted an ethnically stratified society, not simply an ethnically heterogeneous one. For instance, Henderson's inquiry in 1966 found that:

30 per cent of Greek migrants were earning less than thirty dollars a week (either 'very poor' or poor in Henderson's terms), half though married with children, were living in rooms and sharing bathrooms and lavatories; 98.5 per cent were uninsured under any medical or hospital scheme (the native Australian figure was 29 per cent (Western, 1977:15).

The figures are similar for Italian migrants (Western, 1977:15-16). In contrast:

Only 15 per cent of U.K. migrants were earning less than thirty dollars per week, only 10 per cent were renting rooms and only 26 per cent were uninsured (Western, 1977:16).

Obviously the lack of skills of the Southern European migrant at entry was an 'important contributing factor to the migrant's socially deprived condition' (Western, 1977:16). But the system was loaded against them. Western points to many factors inherent in the Australian social system, such as the non-acceptance of overseas qualifications, which perpetuated and maintained the inferior status of these migrants (1977:16).

The disadvantaged position of the migrant in the workforce can also be shown (Ford, 1970). O'Malley (1978:47) has recently commented:

There is little room for doubt that in Australia there exists a 'sub-proletariat' of socially and economically disadvantaged migrant workers and their families. These workers, particularly from Mediterranean countries of origin, occupy a range of roles in the workforce which have largely been abandoned by the Australian-born and migrants from English-speaking countries. In this case, these non-English-speaking migrants are performing 'dirty-work', i.e., work which is low paid, has poor job security and which involves poor work conditions - work which the relatively advantaged members of the workforce avoid.

The author goes on to point out (1978:48) that migrants from Mediterranean countries are about 'three times more often found in these 'disadvantaged' industries than their general presence in the labour force would lead us to expect', and concludes:

Clearly, Australian society faces a range of serious moral, economic, social and political dilemmas in view of these findings. On the one hand most Australians and native-English-speaking migrants believed that they have gained materially from the expansion of industry made possible by the influx of non-British migrants. On the other hand, this has been achieved at the expense of creating an ethnically distinct group of people who perform certain tasks which Australians themselves are unwilling to do (O'Malley, 1978:50).

The 'dilemmas' O'Malley speaks of are being 'resolved' by the institutionalisation of holistic multiculturalism and all that this entails. One of the consequences of this structure of the workforce is that events, such as industrial accidents (and possibly industrial sabotage), are more likely to be a migrant phenomenon than a native-Australian one. Trade unions, for historical reasons, tend to be anti-migrant and do not support migrants as they would native-Australian workers (Western, 1977:17; Hearn, 1978). Studies have also shown that migrant women and adolescents tend to experience unusually high levels of mental stress following a number of years' settlement in the country (Krupinski and Stoller, 1974; Western, 1977:17-18).

Gilmour and Lansbury, concerned about the differential life chances of children from different ethnic backgrounds who attend Toorak Central School, indicate how the school 'has acted as a *de facto* screening device':

Those children with a father in the professions tend to move from Toorak Central School to a private school and from there to a university where they will in time, qualify for a profession. A small number of children from non-English-speaking families and from working-class Australian families do manage to use the school as a means of gaining entry to Melbourne Boys High School or to MacRobertson Girls High School. From these prestige high schools, the chances of going on to university are considerable. These children will eventually gain access to high-status well-paid positions in the community. For the rest, the prospects are not so bright. They move on to lower-status high school, but by this time most have become alienated from the educational process and are resistant to orthodox teaching methods. Many good teachers cannot cope and do not stay long at this type of high school. The students, in turn, leave school and obtain low-status low-prestige jobs. Some of the more fortunate may become apprenticed in a trade ... one stream of children start out on a path towards gaining a ticket to somewhere; another stream starts out on a path which will give them a ticket to nowhere (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:9).

Zubrzycki (1960) and Borrie (1964), among others, have highlighted the over-representation of migrant ethnic groups in occupations at the lower end of the socio-economic hierarchy. Jean Martin, recognising this relationship, has also pointed out that:

To the extent that ethnic culture becomes associated with socio-economic inferiority, we will develop a culturally as well as structurally stratified society (Martin, 1972 a:18).

To put this 'social fact' of ethnic stratification into perspective, it would be expected that recently arrived migrants, given their background occupational and educational experiences, would be over-represented at the lower end of the socio-economic hierarchy. However, given what we know about inter-generational occupational mobility, especially the noticeable *lack* of upward mobility out of unskilled and semi-skilled occupations (Broom and Jones, 1976), a major concern is with the extent to which *children* of newly arrived migrants do not have equal opportunity relative to children of native-Australian parents.<sup>9</sup> Martin has supported this claim by showing that non-English speaking migrants are over-represented at the lower end of the socio-economic scale and have not the same degree of upward social and occupational mobility that other groups have (Martin, 1972a).<sup>10</sup> The report of the Australian Population and Immigration Council entitled *A Decade of Migrant Settlement* (1976) stated that 'the migrant's disadvantage often persisted well past the initial settlement period and that there are many migrants long resident in the country whose welfare is cause for concern and action' (quoted in O'Malley, 1978:49).

If we compare the occupational status background of say, Greek and British migrants arriving in this country, the differences are indeed remarkable (Table 6.1).

One consequence of this structure is that non-English speaking migrants would most likely be more vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy. Not surprisingly, similar percentage differences between Southern Europeans and British migrants (and Australian-born) appear when

comparisons are made with respect to 'level of education' and 'highest qualifications obtained' (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:148).

TABLE 6.1 *OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MIGRANTS ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA, BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, 1947-1971 (PERCENTAGES)*

Occupational status	Country of origin	
	U.K. and Eire	Greece
Professional, managerial, clerical, etc.	19.6	5.9
Skilled trades	34.4	11.1
Semi-skilled	35.4	7.1
Unskilled	10.6	75.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

*SOURCE:* Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:146.

One important question that may be asked about occupational status is: Are migrants better off in occupational terms in Australia than they were in their own country? In a survey of new settlers carried out in 1973, 20 per cent of new arrivals gave 'greater employment opportunities' as their main reason for migrating to Australia (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:149). To what extent do these migrants achieve their expectations? Table 6.2 matches the occupation of migrants in their home country against their first and current occupations in Australia. It is clearly difficult to generalise from these figures as pointed out by Gilmour and Lansbury (1978:150), but the category which did display the largest increase was the semi-skilled. To what extent this increase is a function of downward mobility from the skilled and upward mobility from the unskilled is difficult to say (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:150). However, factors such as the reluctance of employer organisations to accept overseas



qualifications would indicate that a large proportion of the semi-skilled figure comprised *downwardly* mobile migrants (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:150).

To sum up:

Low status in the labour market tends to reinforce the migrant's social and economic disadvantages and establishes a vicious cycle from which he finds it difficult to escape. The children of migrants tend to perpetuate this pattern unless they are able to obtain greater access to education and the labour market (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:150).

TABLE 6.2 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MIGRANTS IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN COMPARED TO THAT IN AUSTRALIAN WORKFORCE, 1973 (PERCENTAGES)

Occupational status	Occupation in home country	First occupation in Australia	Current occupation in Australia
Professional, technical	12.1	4.9	10.5
Managerial, self-employed	9.6	2.4	6.9
Clerical	8.7	6.1	9.6
Skilled trades	34.5	22.8	29.7
Semi-skilled	19.9	19.1	32.1
Unskilled	15.2	44.7	11.2
	30.4	13.4	27.0
	35.1	63.8	43.3

SOURCE: Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978:149.

Australia, then, is not the open society that the social ladder metaphor would have us believe and that in most cases, ethnicity, especially in the case of Southern Europeans, is one of the attributes in our society which hinders movement up the ladder. Yet this model of the opportunity system is the dominant ideology which is projected in many of society's institutions. The logical connection between this model and holistic multiculturalism is the exclusion of any notion of structured inequality - of ethnic stratification.

One conceptualisation of the opportunity structure which does recognise the link in the social system between ethnicity and stratification

is Wiley's model of the *ethnic mobility trap*. In this model the opportunity structure is visualised as:

A tree and mobility as tree climbing ... . The limbs are like (*sic*), leading gently upward but primarily outward and away from all chance of serious ascent. Normally the climber who wants to hit the top will avoid the limbs as much as possible and concentrate on the trunk (Wiley, 1967:148-9).

The trunk of the tree represents the superordinate opportunity system of the dominant (Anglo-Australian ruling class) group while the limbs represent the respective subordinate opportunity systems of minority groups. In order to advance in the majority's system a member of an ethnic group would need to throw off his or her ethnicity, descend the limb to the trunk and advance up the trunk of the tree.<sup>11</sup> In the context of this representation of the opportunity system the essence of the mobility trap is this:

The means for moving up within a stratum are contrary to those for moving to the next higher stratum. In other words there is a conflict between intra- and inter-stratum mobility norms (Wiley, 1967:149).

The conflict which Wiley refers to can be represented as the problem of trade-off between ethnicity and social mobility. That is, consistent with the mobility trap model, in order to be upwardly mobile, a member of a minority ethnic group would need to relinquish his or her ethnic traits and adopt the normative and relational characteristics of the majority group. Any attempt to develop a systematic theoretical conceptualisation of an egalitarian multicultural society entails the need to develop, in turn, a model in which ethnicity and equality of opportunity are not mutually exclusive but can co-exist. Metaphorically, this could mean replacing the 'tree' model with a 'candelabrum' in which the opportunity system of the ethnic minority groups parallel the trunk of the dominant Anglo-Australian group.<sup>12</sup>

The contribution that Wiley's model has made to the discourse of ethnic relations is that it incorporates ethnic stratification as an important component of any conceptualisation of the dominant opportunity

structure. What is clearly lacking from this representation is the *nature* of the dominance of the trunk - the hegemonic situation as depicted by Connell, Gramsci and Althusser.

#### CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The discussion in this chapter and the previous one has operated at two levels. The first - the macro level - concerned the sketching in of the mechanisms of the social system while the second focused more on one important outcome of this structuration, namely the development of a system of dominant and subordinate opportunity structures. Gilmour and Lansbury (1978) have elucidated on how the system is perpetuated and maintained. What is implicit in these representations, but needs to be made explicit, is that sociological practice is about individuals. With the application of so much theoretical labour, as evidenced in sociological practice, to the representation of the social system and opportunity structures, this aspect of sociology is often overlooked. As Sharp and Green have stated:

Sociologists, unfortunately, frequently fail to articulate the basic psychological assumptions and theories on which their sociological formulations depend. Similarly, psychologists have often avoided explicating the social assumptions which their theories presuppose . . . . There are, however, far too many theorists within both sociology and psychology who, operating at one level of analysis, rely on certain assumptions about the nature of man or society which are either unexplicated or perhaps inconsistent with the main body of ideas being developed at the other level (Sharp and Green, 1975:16-17).

The conclusion these authors draw from this state of affairs is that:

It is necessary to situate the individual in a social context, to be able to say something about that context in terms of its internal structure and dynamics, the opportunities it makes available and the constraints it imposes, and at the same time to grasp the essential individuality and uniqueness of man that evades any total categorization (Sharp and Green, 1975:17).

It should be clear that a large part of this work has attempted to do many of the things suggested by Sharp and Green by firstly specifying the nature of the social system and then locating ethnic group members within this system. <sup>13</sup> Sharp and Green have provided a detailed analysis linking

individual consciousness to the social structure. After pointing out the distinction between the forms of social consciousness which permeate actors in society and how society exists objectively they argue that it is inadequate to simply concentrate on the first as 'such consciousness may conceal and distort the underlying structure of relationships' (1975:22). They go on to claim:

In the same way that Marx was against starting his analysis of society and history at the level of consciousness but rather sought for the basic societal structures which regulate interindividual action, so we need to develop some conceptualization of the situations that individuals find themselves in, in terms of the structure of opportunities the situations make available to them *and the kinds of constraints they impose* (1975:22, emphasis added).

This is clearly consistent with the position developed in this paper, but the crucial input provided by Sharp and Green concerns the nature of the relationship between consciousness, especially a *critical* consciousness as contained in Freire's notion of conscientization:

The actors may be conscious of these constraints but need not necessarily be so. They may be subconsciously taken for granted, or unrecognized, but the situation will present them with contingencies which affect what they do irrespective of how they define it (Sharp and Green, 1975:22-23).

Having rejected both the idealist position, that the social structure is the creation of men's mind', and the mechanistic materialist' position which sees ideas as 'mechanistic emanations from the base'. Sharp and Green conclude:

Suffice it to say that an adequate theoretical perspective must be able to take into account human coherency and the creative power of individuals in acting in and transforming the world - and the relationship between conscious activity and objective reality (Sharp and Green, 1975:23).<sup>14</sup>

In a previous chapter it was suggested that in attempting to explain the social system and the location of various groups within it, it is more useful to treat consciousness as the dependent rather than the independent variable (See Chapter Two). By drawing on the work of Foucault considerable emphasis was placed on one 'effect' of this structuration namely the ability of the dominant group to define the existence of various

societal relations, e.g., ethnic relations. But in this context, it is important not to overlook the *crucial* pre-existing condition for the effect - namely, the structuration of material forces. As Sharp and Green state:

... The social world is structured not merely by language and meaning but by the modes and forces of material production and the system of domination which is related in some way to material reality and its control. Indeed we would want to suggest that the intellectual construction of social reality, the structuring of language and meaning is affected by the relationships of domination and subordination in society (Dreitzel, 1970) and different interests of groups within the social structure (Lockwood, 1956, 1964; Dahrendorf, 1958). The conscious active interpretations and definitions of social actors takes place within a context of givens, psychological social and material. It is for this reason that we want to suggest that the relationship between ideas and the substratum of reality should be treated as significant sociological problematic (Sharp and Green, 1975:25).<sup>15</sup>

The authors go on to suggest that the manner in which the individual is the focus of sociological inquiry is that:

(he) can only be understood in terms of his embeddedness in a societal context, giving rise to a level of problem which is emergent from and not reducible to our knowledge of individuals (Sharp and Green, 1975:25).

We can now begin to develop a conceptualisation of the location of individual's consciousness to the social system presented earlier. The idea of the social system we have built up is basically a system of *constraint and control* which provides limitations on individual's world views and practices (Sharp and Green, 1975:30). This constraint and control is manifested through the multi-faceted system called hegemony. Migrants' perspectives and behaviours then (i.e., views of multiculturalism and ethnic relations in Australia, plus their position in the opportunity structure) are not *totally determined* by this system of hegemony. To suggest that this is the case would be to imply that men's actions are in the form of mechanistic stimulus-response behaviour (Sharp and Green, 1975:30). What seems a more appropriate conceptualisation of man consistent with the social system problematic developed is that developed by Sharp and Green:

Our view of man is one which sees him as more than merely a responder to certain fixed stimuli in his environmental proceedings on some mechanistic and determinate destiny but acting within a context which cannot be intended away by consciousness and which narrows the range of likely ensuing behaviour (Sharp and Green:1975:30).

Having posited the nature of the social structure, hegemony and consciousness as the major representation of the social system, two questions about this framework arise. Firstly, what is the *content* of this consciousness in a class society? And secondly, how is this content transmitted to particular categories of individuals, e.g., migrants, in society? The problem of content is particularly difficult to articulate if the objective is to describe, in detail, 'what individuals in a capitalist society think' because the empiricist problem arises of providing exhaustive categories for experience. So, while Sharp and Green (1975:30) may be correct in claiming that:

There will be an affinity (Weber, 1948) between consciousness and structure in the sense that given types of structure can only accommodate certain ranges of content for consciousness.

their attempt to specify this content falls into the 'categorical' approach as presented by Connell.<sup>16</sup> The problem of content then can be approached in another way. It is not so much the positive input of a class society which determines the consciousness of its members, although this is an important element, but rather the *absences* of alternative forms of consciousness which has the *effect* of legitimising the present structure as a 'given', e.g., with respect to the social ladder representation of the opportunity structure presented earlier, the important aspect of the hegemonic situation is not so much the perpetuation of this model in schools, media etc., but the absence of an alternative model, e.g., the tree model, which is not legitimated and articulated in government policies and institutions. There are examples of how institutions such as the school positively structure the consciousness of underprivileged individuals (e.g., working class) and do little to promote alternative models. Connell, for instance, carried out a study of working-class children in Sydney and

asked them for their occupational expectations. The children tended to respond in terms of working-class occupations and when queried on why they did not aspire to occupations of higher status, often replied in terms which implied that they were not 'brainy' enough. Connell concludes:

Here are children and teenagers who have learned what the 'good jobs' are, and who have picked, often with some imagination, ones that would suit their interests; but who are convinced, before they have really begun, that they are not able to get them. Not able - that is the crunch. For in fact they would be able to manage these jobs, given half a chance. They were selected for the survey as being children of normal intelligence and school performance. The trouble with them is not that they are subnormal, simply that they are working-class. They live in lower-status suburbs, their fathers are tradesmen, drivers, factory process workers, and so on. And their estimate of their chances of getting the 'good jobs' is deadly accurate (Connell, 1977:152-3).

Connell contrasts this situation with the much higher, and also consistent with reality, expectations of upper-class children. Other examples of this hegemonic situation would include occupational choices of girls and political apathy among working-class voters.<sup>17</sup> The mechanisms which contribute to the creation of this hegemonic situation include, on the one hand, discrete phenomena such as the socialisation of pre-school children through the portrayal of sex-role occupations in children books (Weitzman, 1972) and more blatant elements such as streaming in schools, on the other (Hargreaves, 1967). These structural elements, as a consistent totality, produce a legitimated definition of the way things really are for the actors, and *by their very existence* define alternative definitions as non-legitimate. The difficult experiences of some groups, e.g., women, and homosexuals, in attempting to have an alternative definition of their possible situation in the social structure legitimated is indicative of a powerful hegemonic situation.

How do these principles relate to the position of migrants in the social system? If we adopt the Marxian position that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness, then clearly we

are faced with varying degrees of potential between minorities to effectively alter their 'social being'. This is perhaps best seen in comparing women with migrants. Consider the following account of the 'women's movement': The general increase in the cost of living in the western world since the Second World War (perhaps stretching back to the industrial revolution) has had the effect of forcing many married women to enter the workforce in order to maintain the standard of living to which the family is accustomed. One major consequence of this changed social position was that women were able to entertain *alternative* roles, not just as part-time providers, but as a *real* full-time alternative to the role of housewife. Migrants cannot entertain or experience alternative models. There is no intervening alternative model comparable to the employed housewife: rather, successful individual migrants (from football players to politicians) are held up as evidence of the existence of the social ladder opportunity structure - a belief consistent with and supportive of ruling-class hegemony. *This situation of migrants suggests that the only course of counter-hegemonic intervention with any real relevance for redefining the ethnic relations discourse is to critique the dominant discourse and to provide a critical alternative for the benefit of migrant leaders.*

It needs to be pointed out that the approach presented here corresponds to a 'structural determinist' position. It emphasises the macro-structural *parameters* which constrain various alternatives and choices. More specifically, this position could be regarded as a 'soft' determinist position in that while it recognises that people, such as members of minority ethnic groups, are free to make certain choices, these choices are very much constrained by structural parameters. Consequently, this determinist position is consistent, in principle, with the definition of sociology discussed by Banton (1977:28):



Economics is all about how people make choices. Sociology is all about why they don't have any choices to make.

However, the acceptance of this position is not to deny the usefulness of approaches which focus on rational choice and voluntaristic aspects of individual behaviour (Parsons, 1968). Banton's recent work (1977) has attempted to apply 'the theory of rational choice' to race and ethnic relations. This approach, as presented by Banton focuses on the concepts of exchange and boundary maintenance and is seen as complementing power/conflict theories of race and ethnic relations (1977:65). This choice theory seems more applicable at the micro level of analysis than the macro (Banton, 1977:64). However, Banton himself distinguishes the rational choice-voluntaristic approach from a determinist position:

The theory here proposed is therefore only in part about individual choice; it is equally concerned with the way historical, geographical, socio-structural and other factors determine the alternatives with which individuals are presented (Banton, 1977:20).

The position adopted in this work is concerned with these structures and processes rather than individual choices as rational decisions.

If education, in the form of an ideological state apparatus, acts so as to perpetuate the system described in previous chapters, why cannot education be employed to change the system? What is to be achieved by a new form of education? These questions lie at the hub of the major concerns of this work, i.e., the means by which an Anglo-Australian dominant system may be challenged and changed. The following chapter looks more closely at the role of education in society and its possible use as a mechanism for change. More specifically, the role of education and the structure of the curriculum may have relevance for the concept of 'multicultural education' and ethnic schools in a 'truly multicultural society'.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER SIX

- 1 One of the most important contributions these authors make is that they attempt to provide a general process (exploitation, deprivation), which underlies many of the concepts in ethnic relations and which previously were shown to be arbitrary. As the authors say:

To this extent it does not matter much whether we are discussing the migration of southern blacks to northern industrial cities in the U.S. or migrant labour in the South African reserve economy, or migrant/immigrant labour in Western Europe (1978:133).

- 2 The authors decry the general lack of attention paid to ideology in writings in the field:

It is disappointing to note in this context that recent developments in Marxism and the theory of ideology have been almost entirely ignored in the field of race relations. This is even more surprising in view of our suggestion that any theory of the origins of racism depends on a general theory of ideology. Even the tentative advances made elsewhere in anthropology (Godelier), philosophy (Althusser) and political theory (Poulantzas) have generally been ignored ... . (1978:139).

- 3 It is difficult to speculate on how the concept of hegemony would affect the analysis of Gideon and Ben-Tovim, but presumably the emphasis would not be so much on the theme of developing and introducing a theory of ideology into racism as they have presented it, but rather on specifying the various components which make up the hegemonic totality.
- 4 In earlier discussion of Marx's realism, the difficulty of *selecting* those aspects of society which are relevant for the generative analysis of the society, was pointed out. It appears that the selection of these components by Connell is on a more or less arbitrary basis, or if not, then the theoretical justification for their selection is not clear.
- 5 There has been very little research in the area of the relationship between the state, class and ethnicity. One significant contribution which has recently appeared has been the work of Jakubowicz (1980).
- 6 See R.W. Connell (1973). In pp.34-36 the author attempts to counter the various claims that there is no ruling class in Australia. See also Connell (1977), Encel (1970), Playford and Kirsner (1972), Wheelwright and Buckley (1975).
- 7 A lot of what follows has been taken from a preliminary report to the Education Research and Development Committee, entitled *Migrant Definitions of Ethnic Schools: Selected Case Studies* by Paul Kringas and Frank Lewins, March, 1979.

- 8 It is likely that the text *Beyond the Melting Pot* by Glazer and Moynihan which appeared in the mid-sixties had considerable influence amongst academics and policy makers on their view of assimilation. The theme of this text was that the American melting pot - the test case for the ethnic relations - 'did not boil'; rather, ethnic pluralism could and was likely to exist as a permanent state.
- 9 The writings of Gilmour and Lansbury presented earlier have spelled out some of the mechanisms involved with maintaining this opportunity structure. However, this notion of 'migrant deprivation' requires elucidation to avoid confusion. Alan Matheson has put forward what he regards as a number of myths about migrant education, the first of which is the belief that 'migrants alone need a special educational focus' (1973:11). As Matheson conceptualises multiculturalism as *cultural* pluralism his notion of 'special educational focus' is restricted to the concept of cultural deprivation. This deprivation may well be an expression of 'Anglo-Australian chauvinism' (Matheson, 1973:11), but the deprivation that I am referring to is not cultural, it is social and the consequence of a class society and ethnic stratification.
- 10 There are a number of other studies which point out the subordinate status of migrants in Australian society. These include: Martin (1975); Zubrzycki (1976); Lever (1975); Hearn (1975); Davies (1966); Wilson (1973); Storer (1975); Jakubowicz (1980).
- 11 'Majority' and 'minority' in this context are used in the sense that Schermerhorn has applied them to refer to control over access to society's resources, not size (Schermerhorn, 1970).
- 12 Wiley's metaphor can be extended so that the location of the limbs on the trunk and the angle the limbs make with the trunk indicate the degree of difference between the respective ethnic opportunity systems (i.e., the higher the limbs on the trunk, the greater the share of society's resources; the smaller the angle between the limb and the trunk the greater the similarity between the normative and relational aspects of the minority group and the majority group). So, for example, the angle of the limb representing the Jewish occupational structure makes with the trunk would be relatively small compared with the limb representing the Italian and Greek opportunity structures. A possible example of this Candelabrum model is Will Herberg's *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1960). He discusses the vertical and equal (?) dimensions of protestants, catholics and Jews in the U.S. with their own opportunity system etc. (horizontal dimension). I am indebted to Frank Lewins of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, for providing the candelabrum metaphor depicting a system of equal opportunity structures.
- 13 It is interesting to note in light of the first part of this thesis that Sharp and Green see these issues as linked to issues in the philosophy of social sciences:

Such aims presuppose a preoccupation with some of the crucial central issues in the philosophy of the social sciences - those concerning holism and individualism, free will and determinism, causal analysis and understanding, subjectivity and objectivity. It has already been noted that a complete resolution to these dilemmas will not be forthcoming here. Indeed it is doubtful

whether such resolutions could be forthcoming given the frequently incompatible ontological, metaphysical and epistemological assumptions which the varying theoretical stances on these issues presupposes (1975:17-18).

Part I is not intended as an exhaustive and definitive resolution of these issues - such a task is beyond the scope of this paper. It is intended as a statement of what a truly critical systematic sociological practice could look like.

- 14 It is implicit in Critical Systematic Sociological Practice that the effect of the social structure is not totally determining, but that it is possible for critical theory to intervene at various points to change the hegemonic situation. The two points of intervention suggested were, firstly a critical attack on the dominant discourse of various underprivileged groups in society and, secondly, as a more direct method of intervention, action by informed members of these groups to alter their situation in the social system. Both these strategies raise a number of related questions including: how can more social scientists be persuaded to adopt critical systematic sociological practice? What is the method by which some members of minority groups become critically informed? What is the nature and object of the action by minority groups to alter their social situation? Some of these questions will be addressed in Part III while others, being outside the scope of this paper, require a separate exercise.
- 15 This position is consistent with the Foucaultian connection between concepts and power in the representation of a discourse as also presented by Martin (1978).
- 16 These authors indicate what they consider part of this consciousness to consist of:

For example, one would expect a stratified society to coexist with institutionalized forms of social consciousness which include a notion that there is a structured differentiation between men in terms perhaps of intelligence, desert, needs, etc. (1975:30-31).

However, there is no theoretical explication of why this should necessarily be the content of consciousness in a stratified society.

- 17 An example of the force of cultural hegemony with respect to female occupational choices can be seen in this example. Recently I asked a 9-year old girl what she wanted to be when she left school. When she replied 'a nurse' I enquired as to why she did not want to be a doctor and she answered: 'I am a girl, silly!' Furthermore, my enquiries suggest that this was not an atypical response. With respect to political apathy I participated in a study of political efficacy while in Canada in 1972, which involved requesting individuals to forward a letter to a member of parliament via a person they knew on a first name basis. When the various chains were analysed it was apparent that people furthest removed from the politician and who tended to be working-class, also felt that they were powerless to affect any sort of social change or personal advancement by 'working the system'. This was in contradiction to the attitudes expressed by individuals who were only one 'link' removed from the politician (Erickson and Kringas, 1975).

PART III

EDUCATION, MIGRANTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

CHAPTER SEVENTHE POTENTIAL OF EDUCATION AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGEEDUCATION, IDEOLOGY AND POWER

The question as to whether or not education can act as an agent of social change has been a much debated one in the area of the sociology of education. In this chapter we will need to consider briefly some of the major arguments in this debate. This will take us into a brief analysis of the major theoretical assumptions underlying these arguments.

After the Second World War the economic competition between nations influenced the direction of educational research in America and England. The *problem* which often formed the point of departure for the sociology of education was a concern with achieving the maximum benefit from 'human resources' in a rapidly changing technological society (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:8). This emphasis, although most relevant in the United States - what Karabel and Halsey (1977:10) refer to as preoccupation with 'wastage' and 'dysfunctions' - was also a major concern with British sociologists and educationists. However there was also a concern in Britain, possibly for a variety of historical-class factors, with the question of educational opportunity and inequality. A concern which has been termed 'political arithmetic' by some authors, i.e., 'calculating the chances of reaching various states in the educational process for children of different class origins' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:11). This theoretical issue, of course, forms the basis of much of the discussion of ethnic relations in previous chapters, notably the representation of Wiley's ethnic mobility trap and the ethnic dilemma. Karabel and Halsey locate this approach in a functionalist perspective and point out the nature of criticisms which have been levelled at it, e.g., exaggerating the role of technology and underestimating the importance of conflict and ideology (1977:11, *cf.* discussion of functionalism in Part I).

The application of the functionalist theory of stratification to education is a formulation which attempts to link the individual to the social structure. However, unlike the previous formulation presented, i.e., that developed by Sharp and Green (see Chapter Six), the functionalist argument is not concerned with *constraint and control* so much as with the function performed by a social structure which provides incentives for individuals to achieve high levels of education, and which rewards them well if they succeed. The system is seen as a just and fair one (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:13). One of the assumptions underlying this approach to education is that there is a direct relationship between individual benefits in the form of higher wages to be gained from educational attainment and the benefit to the whole society in the form of increased productivity.

Karabel and Halsey (1977:14) express some support for this assumption:

The actual level and type of educational investment that are optimal for economic growth is a matter of complex debate, but the idea that there is a social rate of return to education is not intrinsically unsound.

Much of the educational research which has been labelled as being in the 'methodological empiricist tradition', such as the work by Blau and Duncan, has attempted to quantify the problem of educational inequality. Blau and Duncan, for instance, conclude that there is a tendency in modern society for achievement to replace ascription, and hence for universalism to become the general criterion for upward mobility. This is clearly an issue relevant to the discussion of ethnic relations, especially so, in light of the ethnic dilemma presented earlier. Karabel and Halsey are critical of this finding in so far as it does not resolve the problem, but simply may mean that the privileged employ different means to reproduce their position. These authors point out:

If, as Bourdieu (1973) and other writers suggest, the inheritance of status in modern societies takes place through the transmission of 'cultural capital', then the distinction between ascription and achievement becomes a misleading one. With the decline of the family firm, the privileged no longer reproduce their positions solely

through property but also through the acquisition of superior education for their children. Rather than describing this process as heightened universalism it would seem more accurate to view it as a new mechanism performing the old function of social reproduction. Social inheritance, whether through the transmission of property or through the transmission of cultural capital, is still social inheritance (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:19).

Other 'methodological empiricist' studies of the 1960s did highlight some new possibilities for the role played by schools in maintaining the disadvantaged position of minorities. For instance, the Coleman Report suggested that it was not so much inter-school differences which affected the achievement levels of the blacks and the poor, but 'something characteristic of *all* schools'. These authors go on to say that according to Coleman's findings:

The difference between minority and majority children increases with time spent in school. It seems likely, then, that schools at least *reinforce* the inferior position of disadvantaged children with respect to educational opportunity (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:21).

The relevance of this argument to much of the previous discussion of educational opportunity of ethnic minorities (e.g., Gilmour and Lansbury's account of the educational experiences of Greek children at Toorak school and the superior status of English as the language of instruction) should be clear. Possibly the most important contribution of the Coleman Report was the distinction drawn between *equality of opportunity* and *equality of outcomes*. Such a distinction emphasises *the processes individuals are subjected to* in various institutions, e.g., the school, and which differentially affects the participants. The point is that providing equality of opportunity, e.g., with provision for particular percentages of blacks, women, poor, to enter universities, etc., in no way guarantees or even increases the likelihood of increased achievement for these individuals *because the very structure is 'loaded against them'* (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:21-22).

No analysis of the problem of social and educational inequality could expect to do justice to the area without a consideration of the contribution



by Christopher Jencks. Jencks seriously questioned the value of exclusively relying on equality of education 'as a means of obtaining either equality of opportunity or equality' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:23). The point Jencks is questioning is the effectiveness of educational reform for any large-scale social reform. In other words, is the education system an appropriate point of intervention to bring about social reform? However, it appears that Jencks is guilty of drawing somewhat arbitrary interpretations from the data and statistics, consistent with his underlying value position on the role of schools while an alternative interpretation appears just as plausible and reasonable. He also fails to recognise the important link between what goes on in schools and the wider social structure. For instance, it has been well documented that schools:

Play a crucial role in legitimating inequality by internalizing failure. The structure of the educational system upholds those meritocratic values that justify differential rewards, and the separation of the 'successful' from the 'failures' provides daily objective lessons in inequality. In view of the links between the hierarchical character of the educational system and the value system that underpins social inequality, is it realistic to assume that the absolute equalization of education would have no effects whatsoever on the American class structure? (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:25).

Although it seems reasonable to assume, on the basis of educational research and theoretical argument, that reforming schools will not automatically result in wider reforms, it does not seem reasonable to maintain as Jencks does, 'that a viable strategy for social equality can afford to ignore the schools' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:26).

The 1960s saw an increase, especially in Britain, in the application of conflict theory to the analysis of education. In light of the earlier discussion (see Part 1) concerning the value-laden nature of social science, specifically the reference to the influence of what I called external factors on social science research, then the relative turmoil of the 1960s compared with the preceding decade, and expressed in such happenings as

increases in political, economic, national, racial and social factions and antagonisms, could have affected approaches to educational research (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:28-29).

The essence of any conflict theory is the conceptualisation of society as made up of 'interest groups' competing for social resources, e.g., power, prestige. However, crucial differences arise between various versions of this approach on the questions of what is the essence of these groups, i.e., status groups or social classes? and the mechanisms by which such groups maintain and legitimate themselves, as well as the implications for the society, given their existence. For instance on the one hand a Weberian-oriented type of conflict theory might suggest that powerful groups vie for control of the education system:

The center of this status-based conflict over education lies in the labor market where organizations use the education requirements to allocate people to jobs with varying rewards. Seen in this light, struggles over educational requirements are often in the end, conflicts between superordinate groups trying to monopolize positions of privilege and subordinate groups trying to gain access to them. As superior status groups raise educational requirements higher so as to reinforce their privileged position, groups of lower social status demand access to more education (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:32).

So power is the crux of this approach, and is seen as important in so far as it allows the holders of it to manipulate the education system and thus influence the labour market and life chances of individuals.

However, it was the conceptualisation of the role of education in society presented by Bowles and Gintis which possibly incorporated most of the ideas previously discussed in this paper, e.g., the role of schools as ideological state apparatuses and as a major mechanism of capitalist hegemony. In their conflict theory approach, these authors maintain that the major role of the education system is 'the reproduction of a division of labour that is itself largely a reflection of the hegemony of the capitalist class' and consequently argue that 'it is impossible to understand the workings of the educational system independently of an analysis of the class structure in which it is embedded' (Karabel and

Halsey, 1977:33) - a point consistent with the approach to ethnic relations put forward in this thesis. The components of the class structure identified by Bowles and Gintis as being of primary importance in the reproduction of the division of labour are the family, work and the schools. These components are seen as responsible for perpetuating structured inequality by, for instance, legitimating the regular patterns of success for some and failure for others, and also the process of differential socialisation which 'reinforces inequalities' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:34). It is clear that the analysis of the education system from the perspective of conflict theory usually means, for one thing, attempting to link the *processes* and functions of such a system with corresponding characteristics of these interest groups, e.g., differential socialisation (values, norms, expectations, beliefs). It is this concern with interest groups rather than 'common values that hold society together' that largely distinguishes a conflict theory approach to education from a functionalist one. Another major difference between these approaches is that whereas functionalist approach is mainly concerned to *describe* the connection between the education system and other social institutions, conflict theory often attempts to *explain* how this system of structured inequalities developed, how it has changed and possibly how it may be altered by praxis in the future (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:35).

This position, developed by Bowles and Gintis, suffers from a number of major theoretical weaknesses, which seem to be the result of the authors' limited conceptualisation of the mechanisms which perpetuate capitalism. The logic of the argument presented by these authors suggests that educational inequalities will continue so long as capitalism survives. The nexus, it is claimed, is based on private ownership of the means of production and the hierarchical system which stems from this, but, as Karabel and Halsey imply (1977:39) this nexus is a spurious one 'for, the roots of inequality extend far beyond private ownership of the means of

production to the division of labour itself'. They go on to say 'educational inequality may, as Bowles suggests, persist as long as capitalism survives, but the abolition of capitalism would hardly assure the emergence of a non-hierarchical school system' (1977:39).

The representation of the class structure developed in previous chapters, especially the reliance of a systematic attack on the rhetoric of dominant discourses, as well the concept of hegemony, provide a way out of this dilemma confronted by Bowles and Gintis. Firstly, this representation suggests that it is overly simplistic to specify the ownership of the means of production as *the* mechanism which *produces* the consequences of a capitalist system. It may be correct to argue that private ownership is an original defining characteristic of the capitalist structure, but it is necessary to realise that the existence of this original characteristic *makes it possible* for further capitalist effects, e.g., cultural hegemony, establishing the legitimation of the knowledge - power connection, to arise. It is these secondary effects (rather than the ownership of the means of production *per se*) which act to perpetuate the capitalist system and structured inequality. By emphasising, as I have done, the role and crucial function of these secondary effects, it then becomes possible to argue that by manipulating these variables, significant structural change can be achieved. In other words, ownership of the means of production is not the only point of significant intervention. This latter point raises questions about the relationship between the education system and structural change which is taken up in the next section.

#### EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The problem immediately confronted when applying conflict theory to the role of the education system in society is that of structural change.<sup>1</sup> If there is a correspondence between the class structure and the education system, as most Marxist theories of education imply, then, one question

which can be posed is: How is educational change in the absence of structural change, to be explained? (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:40-41). However, posing the question in this fashion implies that fundamental educational change *has* occurred without accompanying structural change. This is doubtful. Certainly 'minor' changes to the education system have occurred in countries e.g., changes to curricula, proportion of government funding to private as opposed to public schools, 'opening up' education to deprived classes. However, and this is the rub, these changes do *not* appear to amount to significant changes in the *effects* of the education system. In other words, the relationship between social class and educational attainment still exists (see earlier reference to Connell's study of the occupational expectations of middle-class and working-class youth).

Karabel and Halsey (1977:41) note the attempt by some 'revisionist educational historians' to view 'a given educational structure [as] the outcome of a political and ideological struggle between social classes'. They tend to be critical of this approach as 'it does not specify the conditions under which the education system, usually considered apolitical, becomes an arena of overt class conflict' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:41). This criticism appears misguided as it assumes that to be political, education must be the centre of *open* conflict, but one of the most important aspects of the political nature of structures, relationships and processes such as education (and ethnic relations) is its covert nature as reflected in such things as for instance, the concept of cultural hegemony, Basil Bernstein's work and labelling theory. Oddly enough, it is precisely these hidden characteristics of the political which Karabel and Halsey focus on in discussing the content of education, rather than its structure. They say (1977:43):

Weber pointed researchers in the right direction when he suggested that a critical element of the power of dominant groups resides in their capacity to impose their own educational and cultural ideals on

schools. These ideals are reflected both in what is taught and in how it is taught, for the goal of education is to form both the mind and the personality. Thus what is regarded as knowledge and the way it is transmitted are eminently political questions - and no less so in the absence of overt conflict. Indeed, as Bachrach and Baratz (1962) have argued, the capacity to keep an issue off the agenda of political debate may well be the ultimate form of power.

It appears that although the inegalitarian consequences of schooling are fairly well understood, just *how* the school achieves this is not so clear (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:44). It was the 'new sociology of education' developed in England in the early 1960s, and which is usually linked with the work of Basil Bernstein, that focused attention on the content of education and the need for 'curricula reform' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977: 44-45). What is of paramount importance in this shift of focus from structure to content was that the previously apparently unrelated issues in the sociology of knowledge now suddenly became extremely relevant for the analysis of education. The education system, rather than being regarded as a structure corresponding to social class, was now analysed in terms of its role in the 'management of knowledge' or in the Foucaultian vernacular, for its role in consolidating the connection between truth and power.

Unfortunately, the epistemological assumptions underlying this approach have resulted in a relativistic conception of knowledge (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:53-58). The ethnomethodological and phenomenological perspectives which have guided this new sociology of education posed questions in terms of problems concerning the 'social construction of reality' and the 'definition of the situation'. These problems can be explicitly seen in the kinds of issues raised and research undertaken by proponents of this approach, e.g., teacher-student interaction (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:53).

Some of the discussion presented earlier in Part I, pointed out the limitations of an interpretive approach to knowledge which is not located in a position of structural realism. The major limitation is the relativism of such a position which cannot evaluate knowledge *vis-a-vis* reality, i.e., one particular construction of reality is as good as

another. One consequence of this approach is that knowledge construction is analysed as unrelated to the nature of the social formation, hence any alteration or change must, in effect, be a change in consciousness, not a change in the social structure. That is, 'the head may be altered, but reality remains constant' - a sort of fool's paradise. Those aspects of the social formation most noticeably absent in this interpretive paradigm are *power* and *constraint*. Karabel and Halsey highlight this criticism (1977:58).

But emphasis on 'man the creator' often fails to take adequate account of the social constraints on human actions in everyday life. There is, to be sure, a considerable latitude available to those engaged in struggles over the 'definition of the situation', but the question of whose definition will ultimately prevail is pre-eminently one of *power* ...; teachers, by virtue of their powerful institutional positions, wield sanctions that not only delimit the boundaries of what may be 'negotiated' but also give them a crucial advantage in determining whose 'definitions' will prevail. The teachers themselves, however, also operate under external constraints ... there are ... limits to the extent to which 'definitions of the situations' may be negotiated.

In another insightful criticism of the application of the interpretive paradigm to the sociology of education, Karabel and Halsey attack the failure of this approach to take into account the historical development of the social structure with its various patterns (1977:58):

The notion that 'meanings' are created anew in every encounter in an educational institution contains an important element of truth, but it also diverts attention away from the tendency of interactions to occur in repetitive patterns. Teachers and children do not come together in a historical vacuum; the weight of precedent conditions the outcome of 'negotiation' over meaning at every turn. If empirical work is confined to observation of classroom interaction, it may miss the process by which political and economic power sets sharp bounds to what is 'negotiable'. The classroom analyses of the 'new' sociology of education are not, in short, related to *social structure*, and therefore tend to ignore the constraints under which human actors operate and so to exaggerate the fragility of the daily routine of school life.

These criticisms also contain discussion relevant to the concept of social change. In order to clarify this concept a distinction was made earlier between social change and structural change (see Footnote 1). Applying this distinction to the criticisms made by Karabel and Halsey, an emphasis on the creation of meanings and new definitions of situations may be

regarded as depicting frequent social change. However these changes do not accompany any radical changes in the social structure, for instance, a redistribution of power.

Basil Bernstein, in an attempt to relate micro level aspects of education with macro aspects of the social structure offers an apparently 'new' conceptualisation of the relationship between social class and educational achievement. His concepts of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes applied to social-class communicative characteristics, are used to explain the educational disadvantage of working-class children. Some writers argue that Bernstein's position is very similar to theories of 'cultural deprivation' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:65), and therefore he implies that the problem lies with the deficiencies of working-class language codes and communication, *not* with the organisation of the social structure or the education system. This implication appears as a result of the absence, in Bernstein's work, of any systematic formulation of power in the social structure. As Karabel and Halsey point out (1977:67):

The children of the middle class may have more 'cultural capital' than the children of the working class, but Weber would have been quick to note that their 'superiority' is ultimately based on power to determine what is admissible as 'cultural capital'.

Earlier discussion of Althusser's conception of the education system as an ideological state apparatus emphasised the point that education is not politically neutral. Its functions:

As an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it (Freire, 1972:13-14).

So the problems of education that arise within a conflict theory-Marxist problematic have not so much to do with cultural deprivation, as the underlying cause of this deprivation, namely, the inherent power relations present in the education system. It was Paulo Freire (1972) who recognised the possibility of using schooling to bring individuals to a deeper critical awareness of the way the social system is constituted and



the implications which flow from this structuring. The process of 'bringing people to a deeper awareness' he calls 'conscientization'.

Lally supports the need for this process as a stage in the emancipation of individuals from structural constraints.

Reaching this critical level of awareness is an essential first step on the road to freeing those groups who are oppressed by the system. It enables such groups to come to the realization that they are considerably constrained by the system but that their situation is historical, not eternal, and that it can therefore be changed. (Lally, 1978b:14).

Consciousness raising then, is only the first step in Freire's strategy.

Step two involves 'continuous revolutionary practice' - action upon aspects of the structure in order to change it. There have been some examples of this process being applied, with success, at the community level. For instance, Williams and Rennie (1972) describe a situation in England where urban development was to take place. This development would involve the relocation of a large number of working-class families who had resided in the area selected for many years. A few teachers in the local school, dismayed by the apathy of the residents to the planned redevelopment began a series of lectures to their classes which amounted to a critical analysis of urban redevelopment. This analysis included a consideration of the contradictions of redevelopment, e.g., aesthetic and social justification compared to the underlying economic interests, the social and psychological consequences of urban relocation, etc. The outcome of this conscientization (which presumably was also passed on by some of the children to their parents) was the mobilisation of the residents in opposition to the scheme. This opposition took the form of the erection of barricades and lobbying for support from individuals in positions of power. The redevelopment plan was eventually shelved.

Some implications of this approach to education for ethnic minority groups, in the context of their location in the social structure, should be fairly clear. Given an emancipationist-realist position, there is a need

to educate minority group members about structural inequality and how the social system constrains the life chances of individuals depending on significant social characteristics (e.g., ethnicity), and their location in the social structure.<sup>2</sup>

To supply minority group members with the necessary skills to be able to compete for society's resources, as suggested in the compensatory approach to education (Karabel and Halsey, 1977), is no solution as this has the effect of perpetuating mystification about the opportunity system. As far as ethnicity is concerned, the compensatory approach, in the light of the ethnic dilemma, suggests that the best way to equip migrant children to compete, is to remove their ethnicity.

But before elaborating on the usefulness and function of this critical education for minority group members, I want to consider the relevance of some of these ideas to multicultural education and the role of ethnic schools.

#### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: WHAT FORM OF EDUCATION?

One area in Australian ethnic relations which is currently receiving considerable attention in the literature is 'multicultural education'. Given the nature of holisitic multiculturalism and its apparent predominance as *the* framework for the presentation of Australian ethnic relations, it is not surprising that sub-areas in the field, like multicultural education, also reflect the limitations, contradictions and inadequacies of this position, as outlined previously. For instance, Martin (1978:138) in search of reasons as to why so little was learnt from experience, in the area of multicultural education, has commented:

One reason was the lack of any theoretical structure other than the assimilationist model within which to organise observation and experience about migrants and migrant-Australian interaction.<sup>3</sup>

Two other major shortcomings of the treatment of the area multicultural education, can be singled out. Firstly, and this follows from the previous

critique of the discourse of Australian ethnic relations, the tendency to focus on cultural factors as the very essence of such relations. This ignores the political-power structural dimension. Secondly, the concern with the multicultural side (incorporating the limitations expressed in the first point above) of the concept, rather than the education side. The education in multicultural education is seen as non-problematic. To exemplify these two shortcomings in turn, the five definitions of migrant education presented in a recent government report on this area, *all* dealt solely with language and culture:

1. Migrants instructed in the English language of Australia.
2. Migrants instructed in the language and culture of Australia.
3. Migrants instructed in the language and culture of Australia, and the language of their, or their parents', homeland.
4. Migrants instructed in the language and culture of Australia and the language and culture of their, or their parents', homeland.
5. Migrants and Australians instructed in the language and culture of Australia and the migrants' homeland (Nicoll, 1977:10).

Also, one of the assumptions underlying the recent proposals for the teaching of 'community languages' in government schools is that bilingualism is one of the necessary and *sufficient* conditions for multiculturalism, and consequently becomes a desired objective. Furthermore, these proposals are based on the assumption that bilingualism can exist as a stable state (Ozsoy, 1973:35). Such an assumption tends to ignore the social context of language, i.e., language is *not* politically, economically, socially and legally neutral. Bilingualism does exist as a stable state in border areas such as various regions of Germany, Denmark and the Balkan states, for the sake of convenience. But in societies like Australia, where one language is *dominant*, not simply in the numerical sense but in the sense of class, status and power (English is the language of the economy, polity, the legal system, etc. See earlier discussion of Wiley's notion of the ethnic tree), then *bilingualism* tends to be a stage in the process of language shift from

foreign mother tongue to the dominant language. As Weinreich (1970:68, 94) pointed out, 'language shift, defined as the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another is almost invariably preceded by bilingualism'. So long as the economy, the political, legal and education systems remain dominated by the language of one dominant group, then bilingualism, as a stable state, is not likely. The maintenance of non-English mother tongues is not a viable permanent state without these structural supports (de Vries and Vallec, 1980). This domination also means, in effect, that bilingualism, in general refers to non-English speaking Australians learning a second language, *not* Anglo-Australians learning a community language. The material existence of Australian society does not necessitate the learning of a language other than English.<sup>4</sup>

Some writers in the area of multicultural education have commented upon the lack of issues identified in the area (Martin, 1978: Chapter 4), while a few have recognised that questions about ethnic minorities, in respect of education, would entail questions about participation in the power structure as well as socio-psychological questions. Claydon (1975:53) for instance, says:

Questions of this kind are uncomfortably productive of 'hot potatoes'. They cannot be easily isolated as 'purely educational'. The temptation within the system must be to shelve the issue which engenders them and to hope that neglect will dissipate it.

Given the logical connection and compatibility between the conceptualisation of multicultural education and holistic multiculturalism, it might be expected that discussions of the role of ethnic schools in a multicultural society (an issue which cannot be divorced from the wider issues of multicultural education and the nature of a multicultural society) would reflect a similarity uncritical, apolitical and narrow cultural-linguistic approach.

#### WHY ETHNIC SCHOOLS?

'Ethnic schools' is the term given to those institutions developed by migrants to provide instruction in ethnic languages and cultures. These

schools are also known as Saturday schools and Community schools. They commonly operate after regular school hours, e.g., 4-6 p.m. from two to three times per week, and sometimes on Saturday mornings. These schools, which commenced in South Australia in 1839 with the Lutheran church, have shown a marked increase in numbers in the last decade. Some government reports have quoted figures of 600 part-time ethnic schools in Australia providing instruction for approximately 50,000 students (Australia, 1976:61, New South Wales, 1978:147). However, indications are that these figures are most likely on the low side - the Greeks alone have 350 such schools catering for about 25,000 students (Tsounis, 1974:2).

There is a paucity of published literature on ethnic schools in Australia. Before the 1970s:

The only social knowledge available about ethnic schools consisted of negative comments from teachers who believed that after hours classes retarded the migrant child's progress (Martin, 1978:130).

Harris (1973:47) has also found support for this view of ethnic schools in various references made to them in the 1960s. Some of these references doubted the value of these schools which 'placed too much stress on past loyalties to the detriment of new' (Kringas and Lewins, 1979:5). Kringas and Lewins (1979:6) make the following statement on the common themes appearing in the literature in the 1970s and which related to ethnic schools.

References to the adverse response of Australians or Australian institutions to ethnic schools have persisted into the 1970s. Other negative comments of a thematic nature centre around the financial difficulties of ethnic schools, the poor quality of their teachers, curricula and accommodation, and the long hours and competition which they represent in relation to day schools.

Martin (1978:130-1) has offered four definitions of the role of ethnic schools now being advanced.<sup>5</sup> The first defines ethnic schools as harmful competitors for the child's time and attention and is inferred from the fact that ethnic schools are not taken seriously. This point of view is evident in the occasional newspaper article (e.g., 'Homeland Schools Run by

Migrants', 1969:3; Skelton, 1974:21), some government reports, such as the *Recommendations to the Minister for Immigration* from the Migrant Task Force Committee, Victoria, in 1973 (Bullivant, 1975:124), and is implied in accounts of Australians' indifference and hostility to ethnic schools (see Smolicz and Wiseman, 1971:13-14; Australia, 1973:12-13; and Tsounis, 1974:4-5). Perhaps the clearest expression of this position is contained in a report on disadvantaged schools prepared for the Director of Primary Education in Victoria in 1974. The report noted that many migrant school children suffer severe hardships by attending lengthy after-school sessions in poorly accommodated ethnic schools. It went on to say that:

The present after hours ethnic school system only encourages a deep sense of independence by the migrants, drawing them further away from any form of integration with the rest of the community. It also undermines the confidence of teachers working in migrant schools because parents do not show confidence in the programmes currently available in the schools since they do not include ethnic languages and culture (Victoria, Parliamentary Debates, Vol.321, 1974-76:4761-2).

The second definition of ethnic schools which Martin offers 'acknowledges the right of ethnic communities to seek to transmit their cultural heritage through ethnic schools, but sees no place for these schools in the established educational system and denies that they have any claim on public funds'. Interestingly enough, this point of view is current among some ethnic communities. Noussair (1977:21-2), for example, seems to convey the temporary role of ethnic schools by stressing that a 'basic objective' of Yugoslav ethnic schools in Sydney is to promote the introduction of a regular curriculum in the Australian Education System to teach the languages and cultures of the people of the Yugoslav origin. Current Saturday classes are 'inadequate to achieve the objectives'. In this view there is no long-term role for a system of separate ethnic schools. Instead, they are seen as a transitory phenomena, a means to the full incorporation of a wide range of languages within the existing school system. It is difficult to tell from available literature how prevalent

this position is among ethnic communities, although according to Bowen (1977:364) it is 'the publicly-expressed majority ethnic viewpoint' (cf. Ramsay, 1978:53).

The third definition of ethnic schools sees them as having a role alongside day schools in teaching community languages and in multicultural education. This point of view acknowledges that financial support for these schools could be justified if their standards were improved. This definition is the most common in the existing literature. Apart from the support given by the Committee on Migrant Languages (1976:113), there have been numerous expressions of this position over the past five years (e.g., Golding *et al.*, 1973:21; Tsounis, 1974:67; Wiseman, 1974:159; Smolicz, 1975a:25; 1975b:20; 1976:68-9; Australia, 1975:20-1; Noble and Ryan, 1976:43-4; Cameron, 1977:340; Bowen, 1977:363; and New South Wales, 1978:149-50).

Finally, the fourth point of view which Martin identifies regards ethnic schools as 'agents of ethnic communities and capable of taking responsibility for teaching community languages and cultures on behalf of the education system as a whole, which implies that they should be funded'. Of the relevant seventy submissions to the Committee on Migrant Languages, only a fifth supported this position, that is, separate ethnic schools. This was 'the policy advocated by most *small* ethnic groups, who saw it as the only realistic way of having their languages taught in Australia' (Smolicz and Secombe, 1977:18; and Martin, 1978:131).

The explanation of this diversity of definitions of ethnic schools is not readily apparent. The position adopted in this thesis is that the explanation appears to be related to diversity in the wider philosophies or conceptualisations of the place of ethnics in Australian society and the nature of a multicultural society (e.g., holistic multiculturalism). What the four definitions of the role of ethnic schools discussed above have in common is that they are all concerned with the location of ethnic

schools and their relationship to the dominant education system, rather than to their specific function which is taken for granted as the transmission of culture and language (Wiseman, 1974:147; Smolicz, 1976: 68-69; Smolicz and Wiseman, 1971:8-9). Ideas about the role of ethnic schools in a multicultural society and the role that these schools *could* play are constrained by their location within the conceptualisation of holistic multiculturalism. Take for instance, the aims of ethnic schools as put forward in a recent state government report:

Their basic objective is to teach language to facilitate communication with parents, relatives and friends, to preserve family cohesion and to develop in the children a knowledge of the culture of their forebears (New South Wales, 1978:147).

The report also identifies a second objective which can really be incorporated under the first (p.147):

... to preserve cultural heritage and to engender a sense of ethnic identity in the children through the teaching of the history, geography and literature of their culture. These studies are often supplemented by activities involving the maintenance of national music, dance and other arts. Religious instruction is also included in the teaching of many ethnic schools, particularly when the schools are sponsored by the relevant religious organisation.

What some of these discussions and proposals for ethnic schools are concerned with is, in the event of the introduction of ethnic languages in schools, the duplication of this function by ethnic schools (Australia, 1976). Smolicz (1976:69) for instance, says:

Even when the teaching of ethnic languages and cultures becomes widespread in Australian schools, there will still be room for continued existence of ethnic schools in certain areas and for certain minority groups. In larger communities, some parents may continue to send their children to such schools to supplement the teaching of ethnic languages and cultures in Australian schools.

This holistic view of the role of ethnic schools 'stresses the value of the wholeness and the welfare of the entire society' (Lewins, 1978b:12). It is also the case that some writers, given a change in their conceptualisation of Australian ethnic relations, have also indicated a change in outlook on ethnic schools. In 1971 Smolicz and Wiseman, for instance (1971:13-16) pessimistically suggested that because of:



The indifference, if not active hostility, of the host society to ethnic cultural pluralism and the absence of any real chance of governmental aid to ventures which could reinforce it, any hope for a large number of viable ethnic schools is deemed to disappointment.

As a practical approach to this 'problem' they suggested the introduction of courses on migrant languages and cultures in both primary and secondary schools. This position is close to Martin's second definition of ethnic schools and contrasts with Smolicz's position some five years later when he adheres to Martin's third definition by recommending funding for ethnic schools and their continued existence in co-operation with day schools (1976:69).

One of the objectives of this discussion of various conceptualisations of the role of ethnic schools was to attempt to relate them to underlying broader ideologies of Australian ethnic relations. But another objective was to highlight the narrow definitions of education in general and multicultural education in particular, which appear to be implied in the discourse.

The next chapter describes a study of Greek ethnic schools I carried out to analyse the role of these schools in the Australian social structure, in general, and Australian ethnic relations, in particular. The questions which acted as the point of departure for the study arose out of concepts such as holistic and political multiculturalism, the ethnic mobility trap, the ethnic dilemma, cultural hegemony and concerns about the constraints and contradictions within Australian ethnic relations. These questions include: To what extent do the views of Australian ethnic relations held by migrants correspond with an ideology of holistic multiculturalism or political multiculturalism? How are these views reflected in migrants' expectations of the role these schools play in Australian society? How does the role these schools play correspond to the development of Australian ethnic relations - what contradictions and mystifications exist?

What degree of 'fit' exists between the expectations of these schools held by migrants and 'reality'? What role *could* these schools play in a truly multicultural society?

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 I use the term 'structural change' to indicate what may be loosely called 'significant social change in the structure of society'. A difficult problem with the analysis of the process of social change is that of determining what constitutes social change. At one extreme it may be argued that all change is social change. Under this definition, an increase in the birth rate, or crime rate, for instance, could be regarded as indicating social change. One difficulty with applying such an all-encompassing definition of social change is that it ignores *the extent to which structures don't change*. To elaborate, many of the changes in rates, proportions and percentages would, to my mind, constitute superficial changes (see Cohen's distinction between 'minor' and 'fundamental' changes (Cohen, 1968:176). The term structural change is reserved for those core elements of society elaborated on in Part II, such as the concentration of power in the ruling class, the relationship between superordinate and subordinate ethnic groups, educational advantage and disadvantage, the opportunity structure etc.
- 2 In a Weberian sense societies are hierarchically differentiated along the dimensions of class, status and power and there is an unequal distribution of people's life chances in terms of their access to income, education, occupation. This approach does not seem to be incompatible with a Marxian problematic so long as differential life chances are regarded as *consequences* of the economic mode of production (i.e., the economic base) and the superstructure.
- 3 The confusion in meaning and ideology which surrounds the notion of multicultural education was also pointed out by Martin. She stated 'what was once "migrant education" now means different things to different people' (Martin, 1978:119). Some politicians have also commented that the concept of multicultural education in Australia is 'still confused' (*From the Ethnic Press*, 3 October, 1978:No.119:5). The concepts of holistic and political multiculturalism assist in a systematic understanding of some aspects of the structure of this confusion.
- 4 The political nature of language relations does not appear to have been incorporated into conceptualisations of multiculturalism in this country as it has in some other ethnically plural societies, like Canada, for example (see Lieberman, 1970; Joy, 1967).
- 5 The discussion which follows on these four definitions is taken from Kringas and Lewins, 1979:6-9.

CHAPTER EIGHTTHE ROLE OF ETHNIC SCHOOLSTHE STUDY

The decision to study ethnic schools was based, in part, on some ideas about the role these schools could play in moving towards a truly multi-cultural society. While these schools have shown a rapid increase in numbers over the last decade, very little is known about them (Kringas and Lewins, 1979). But the decision to select ethnic schools for research was also prompted by the idea that migrants' expectations of these schools, and their conceptualisation of the role they play in respect of the wider issues of Australian ethnic relations, could throw light on some of the theoretical arguments developed in this work. Ethnic schools were seen as ideal in this regard. They constitute an important component in ethnic relations and while their function may appear obvious at a commonsense level, at a deeper sociological level of analysis, they can be used as a tool to tease out and confront the contradictions and inconsistencies in Australian ethnic relations. Ethnic schools could also provide a means for resolving some of these problems.

Consequently, the study was not a survey of ethnic schools. It did not pretend to generate data which would be representative nor easily expressed in quantitative form. Because of the difficulty of gaining entree into ethnic communities where the researcher was not already known, it was decided to sacrifice some representativeness in the selection of ethnic schools and rely on previous contacts. But the decision to investigate Greek schools in particular was not entirely constituted by the researcher's established contacts. Greek schools represent the greatest number of ethnic schools in Australia (Kringas and Lewins, 1979).

Two factors associated with the structure of Greek ethnic schools in Sydney led to the choice of the four schools investigated (see Appendix A).

First, Greek ethnic schools in general are associated with two bodies - the Greek Archdiocese and the Greek Orthodox Community (Bottomley, 1979).

'Archdiocese schools' are affiliated with churches in various parishes and are mainly organised by the local priest and Greek community. The priest is also likely to teach in the school. On the other hand, the Greek Orthodox Community, as an organisation, is responsible for the running of its schools throughout the Sydney metropolitan area. Both bodies conduct ethnic schools in areas of different socio-economic status. Second, Greek ethnic schools attract a large percentage of Greek children in areas they serve. Because children at Greek ethnic schools in Sydney come from a significant proportion of the total Greek population and because of their wider than anticipated dispersal in two distinct groupings, it was decided that the selection of schools should represent as much as possible all these variations. Hence, the choice of two Archdiocese and two Community schools in areas of varying socio-economic status. Most interviews with Greek parents and children were conducted by the Sample Survey Centre at the University of Sydney using bilingual interviewers. The structure of interviews for the study is outlined in Appendix B. Apart from interviews, data for this study derived from numerous conversations and correspondence with a variety of individuals directly and indirectly associated with ethnic schools, observations in the classrooms of these schools, and analysis of documents, leaflets and relevant secondary sources.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Any attempt to provide an accurate account of even a handful of Greek ethnic schools in Sydney, must firstly recognise the significance of the split among Greeks into the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and New Zealand and the Greek Orthodox Communities. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, it is important to trace the connection between the

historical development of this split and the organisation of Greek ethnic schools in Sydney. The first Greek ethnic school in Sydney, and most likely the first ethnic school in that city, was established in 1896 by the Greek Orthodox Community, a lay ethnic organisation which was responsible for establishing the first Greek church in Sydney in 1899. Although this organisation did not recognise the ecclesiastic authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, it brought priests to Australia for the purpose of providing religious instruction in both church and school. These priests provided classes in catechism and religious instruction in ethnic schools up until the period of large-scale Greek migration to Australia. In the mid to late 1940s, presumably because of the pressures of their regular religious duties, priests largely withdrew from teaching in ethnic schools and laymen were appointed to replace them. It was also during this decade and the next that Greeks in the outer suburbs of Sydney established their own independent Greek schools. Although there were a number of minor conflicts throughout the first half of the twentieth century between the Archdiocese and its ecclesiastic representatives in Sydney on the one hand, and the Greek Orthodox Community on the other (see Bottomley, 1979:53), the major conflict did not occur until 1960. This confrontation was apparently over the issue of the right of the Archdiocese to take full responsibility for, among other things, ethnic schools in Australia, as well as dissensus over recognition of the Patriarch in Constantinople as the spiritual leader of the Greek church. It was a consequence of this split that the Archdiocese began to develop its own ethnic schools.

#### THE ORGANISATION OF GREEK ETHNIC SCHOOLS IN SYDNEY

Among the 45,000 Greek-born population in Sydney there are approximately 107 ethnic schools. These consist of 55 Archdiocese schools, 45 organised by the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales and

7 independent schools. Schools from the latter category have not been included in this study. A distinctive feature of Community schools is that they are not attached to churches or parishes. Even though the Greek Orthodox Community has five churches in Sydney, the schools are solely operated and organised by the school committee of the Greek Orthodox Community. Organisers claimed that the Community allots approximately \$150,000 annually for the operation of these schools which operate on a financial loss. It was estimated that in 1978, for example, the Greek Orthodox Community lost \$35,000 from the operation of these schools, a loss that one organiser regarded as a necessary burden in light of the important responsibility of the Community to provide this service.

Community schools cater for around 4,000 pupils and employ about 60-65 teachers. Enrolment figures for Archdiocese schools are reportedly somewhat higher - about 6,000. The schools in this study varied in the length of time they had been operating: Archdiocese schools were the oldest, both being established in 1962; the Community school located in the western suburbs commenced in 1968, while the other, being the most recent of the four, began in 1972. Teachers and organisers spoke of the increasing numbers of enrolments at their respective schools, especially over recent years. For instance, one organiser estimated that three schools on the north shore had more than tripled the overall enrolment from 70 to 250 in the last five years. The Community school situated in the eastern suburbs had an enrolment in the first year of operation of 40, which gradually increased to 180 in 1978, and declined to 160 in 1979. The reason offered for the decrease was the opening of other schools nearby. A teacher at the largest school estimated that new enrolments at her school numbered 80-90 per year, while only between 30-40 left annually. One organiser associated with the Community schools estimated the total annual increase in student numbers for all these schools at 10 per cent of the

current enrolment. However, he did point out that there were considerable fluctuations in numbers from suburb to suburb on a yearly basis as a function of internal migration movements.

In general these schools operate about two or three days a week after regular school hours and for one and half to two hours at a time, with an average total of three hours a week. Greatest variation between schools in the study was in the number of enrolments and the teacher-pupil ratio. The smallest number of pupils enrolled in any school was 60, the largest, 500. The differences in class sizes was even more pronounced. The school catering for 500 pupils employed only five teachers, while one of the other schools, with an enrolment of 80, employed eight teachers with class sizes of between 10 and 24. In general, it appears that Archdiocese schools enjoy much more favourable staff-pupil ratios than do Community schools. Socio-economic status seems important in accounting for these observed differences. For instance, schools located in the wealthier suburbs, which also tended to be Archdiocese schools, indicated the lowest staff-pupil ratios. Conversely, schools in low status areas, such as parts of the western suburbs, displayed high staff-pupil ratios. But the most noticeable difference between schools of dissimilar status was in the qualifications of teachers. Of eight teachers in one school in a high status area, all were fluently bilingual and at least half were trained teachers. This contrasts with the teachers in the other three schools who had no formal training and were not as fluently bilingual in English and Greek.

Archdiocese schools tend to operate in church halls or rooms attached to the church, although some rely on public school buildings. One of the schools in the study was located in a renovated house close to the church, purchased for this purpose with funds provided by local Greeks. Community schools rely mainly on public school premises.

The school committee of the Greek Orthodox Community is responsible for selecting texts, hiring teachers and writing the curriculum. They



receive texts from Greece and modify them for the Australian situation, e.g., replacing saint's days with birthdays as an important event to be celebrated. Archdiocese schools are conducted through the local parish communities. Consequently, the local priest, usually in conjunction with the church council of the parish, is responsible for organising and overseeing the operation of the school in matters such as texts and hiring of teachers. There is no uniform curriculum in these schools and there appears to be considerable variation from school to school, especially with respect to the texts used. One Archdiocese school, for instance, employed texts from America, whereas the other received its texts from Greece. However, at the time of this study, the Archdiocese was reportedly in the process of establishing a uniform curriculum. The Greek Archbishop has an adviser on education who provides general guidelines for the curriculum and there is also an educational committee for Archdiocese schools which meets annually to discuss various aspects related to the running of Greek schools. In addition, the Greek government has an official in Australia who is involved in developing a curriculum for all Greek ethnic schools.

Both Community and Archdiocese schools charge fees in order to cover expenses, mainly teachers' salaries. Clearly these fees which, for one of the schools studied, was \$35 a term, are inadequate to cover costs. However, as one organiser explained, the school committee is reluctant to raise the fees for fear of exceeding what most parents are able to afford. One teacher complained about some private ethnic schools which, she claimed, were established primarily to make profit, and charged exorbitant rates. Limited funding for Greek (and other) ethnic schools is available from the New South Wales Government on request each year and is allocated on a needs basis.

The variation in socio-economic status between different suburban areas of Sydney in which Greek ethnic schools are located also indicates

variations in cultural characteristics, such as ethnic identity. For instance, in some of the schools studied the majority of pupils, like their parents, knew very little English. On the other hand, most of the children attending other schools were second generation Greek, born in Australia and knew very little Greek. The parents of these latter were also likely to speak English in the home.

#### MIGRANTS' EXPECTATIONS OF ETHNIC SCHOOLS

Organisers, teachers, parents and pupils associated with Greek ethnic schools seemed to fall into two categories with respect to their familiarity with issues, problems and questions concerning the role of ethnic schools. On the one hand, organisers and teachers appeared, on the whole, to be well aware of some of the important underlying issues. On the other hand, parents and children generally showed less awareness and tended to display much less familiarity with questions about the role of ethnic schools. Consequently, for the purposes of presentation these two categories will be kept separate.

#### Organisers' and teachers' responses

Although there was general agreement among organisers and teachers that ethnic schools were formed to teach the Greek language, religion and culture, there was some diversity of opinion as to why they were initially established.

In the eyes of organisers and teachers, Greek Community schools were established for the purpose of facilitating communication among Greek families and for ensuring the continuation of Greek ethnicity. This latter role was seen as crucial in the 1940s and 1950s, when many migrants believed that the Australian government was pursuing an assimilationist policy by actively discouraging preservation of foreign languages. This was evidenced in legislation passed about 1945 which stipulated that 25 per cent of the content of all ethnic newspapers had to be in English.

One effect of Greek ethnic schools according to one organiser is that they have given official recognition to this minority language and hence, have elevated its status in society - Greek children are then able to speak the language freely 'without feeling ashamed'.

Organisers of Archdiocese schools tended to see language and religion as inseparable and placed more emphasis on religious instruction in the curriculum than did organisers of Community schools. As one priest commented:

We feel it is a good education to have another language behind them, and especially as their worship is explained in the Greek culture we have received from the past, as formulated in the age of the great fathers of the church from the fourth to eighth centuries. Most part of the liturgy is still held in the biblical Greek, so we feel it's an education which enables them to understand their faith as well and also, I believe with those peoples who have contact with the mother country Greece, would be an asset to be able to have a holiday and have the knowledge of Greek available to them.

Most teachers and organisers agreed that Archdiocese schools were established by the church rather than the impetus coming from a collection of interested parents (see 'historical background'). Another organiser expressed the view that identity is inherently bound up with language and, given the 'marginal man' situation of many migrants in Australian society, it is only through the teaching of Greek language to Greeks that they can discover their true identity. One teacher suggested that many migrants intend to return to Greece and hence, by sending their children to an ethnic school, they are equipping them with the linguistic requirements for life in that country. Others referred to the increased personal status to be achieved by being able to speak more than one language and the practical utility of being bilingual in a multicultural society.

The common view expressed that the role of ethnic schools was to facilitate communication in the family seemed to depend on the background cultural characteristics of the pupils concerned. For instance, in one school, where most of the pupils were Australian-born with English as their

mother tongue, both teachers and organiser commented on the difficulty of teaching Greek to children when their parents did not speak Greek in the home. These children, who, according to their teachers, did not consider themselves to be Greek but learned Greek as a foreign language, clearly did not communicate in Greek with their parents. One teacher commented:

I have noticed when grandmother comes, or an aunt, who doesn't speak any English, the children will make an effort to speak as much Greek as they can, but, on the whole, they regard it as just another language that they are learning, it's not part of their home life unless the parents say, 'speak Greek, don't speak English'. That may, in a way, be our fault because we are teaching it as a foreign language.

Why did the parents of these children send them to Greek schools? According to one teacher they did so in the hope that 'becoming more Greek in their ways' might keep the children in the family unit. She noted:

From my experience I have found that parents are afraid that if their children cannot speak Greek then they will become too Australian-oriented and flit away from the family.

One indirect role of ethnic schools was mentioned, namely, their use as a vehicle to bring parents' together to form community conscious groups.

The curriculum was very similar for all schools, focussing on writing, reading and Greek grammar. Other subjects included Greek history, geography and social aspects of life in Greece. While religious instruction formed a major part of the curriculum of Archdiocese schools, not one of the teachers or organisers associated with Community schools mentioned religion as part of their curriculum. Although the need for ethnic schools to teach language and culture was recognised by all organisers and teachers, it was also generally agreed that education in the regular school system must have precedence because 'migrants should all speak English as a first priority'. To this extent both organisers and teachers saw ethnic schools competing with the regular system for pupils' time and for this reason some teachers admitted that they did not set too much homework. There was a general feeling among most teachers that the ethnic school, insofar as it was another school system, was overburdening the child.

When questioned about the major problems of ethnic schools, organisers and teachers pointed to lack of finance which limited facilities, lack of adequately qualified teachers in both the Greek language and teaching techniques, and irrelevancy of the texts. Organisers of the Archdiocese schools highlighted problems posed by using texts which were produced in Greece and which required considerable explanation in order for pupils to understand. One organiser commented:

We are ... contemplating the printing of our own books. These books will contain all aspects of the childrens' lives and the things they are confronted with.

He saw the need for more composite texts containing material on Greece, Australia, history and religion. A teacher in an Archdiocese school saw the major problem as the lack of well-defined aims and stressed the need for one central organisation, which could facilitate communication between all ethnic schools, with the intention of setting out such aims. Referring to her own school, she pointed to the lack of any set curriculum and the emphasis placed on completion of texts with little regard for their comprehension by pupils.

The issue of relevance of the curriculum was particularly problematical for both teachers and organisers. In response to the question: 'Would you like to see ethnic schools teaching something about what it means to be a migrant in Australia?' most teachers responded positively, but added that there was insufficient time, while some mentioned their accountability to parents who were primarily interested in the ability of their children to speak Greek.

For some schools, low levels of attendance were considered a problem. But in general, at least for the schools in this study, attendance, as a proportion of the size of the Greek population in the areas in question, seemed high. When considering the question of attendance rates at ethnic schools, it is necessary to determine to what extent dialects in a

particular language are used by the migrants. For instance, it is possible that the majority of Italian migrants speak an Italian dialect in the home while 'proper Italian' is taught in the ethnic schools. This situation could influence the decision by Italian parents whether or not to send their children to the school. The teaching of Greek in these schools does not confront the problem of dialects, which poses problems for teaching other languages (e.g., see Bottomley, 1979). As one teacher stated, 'here we teach them the Greek language, no dialects'.

In light of problems associated with ethnic schools which were identified by teachers and organisers, it is interesting to note their response to the question: 'Would you like to see the government take over the role now performed by ethnic schools?' All wanted to see Greek taught in the regular school system, although if this eventuated, they would still like to see ethnic schools continue in a slightly different role. The majority of respondents saw the teaching of Greek in government schools as a purely linguistic exercise and argued that if this were adopted then ethnic schools could concentrate on teaching cultural and religious aspects. As one organiser of Community schools stated:

We believe that the Greek language and all the other ethnic languages can be taught better if they are under the education system and, of course, until that happens, we have the task of having our schools teach the language. When the Greek language and other languages would get into the education department and taught at school, then our afternoon schools can play a different role, e.g., cultural promotion, theatrical songs, etc., historical, religious and other subjects.

A variation on this theme was offered by another organiser of an Archdiocese school who regarded language and culture as inseparable. He argued that teaching the Greek language was, in effect, teaching aspects of the Greek culture and consequently, if Greek were incorporated into the regular school system, then the two systems would not only parallel each other but would also duplicate one another. It was this crucial connection between language and culture which he saw as the attraction of

ethnic schools for parents and suggested that, in the event of Greek being systematically introduced into the regular school system, then

You could find some people who would withdraw their children from the ethnic schools but the majority, I think, would insist on sending their children to ethnic schools for identity purposes. They would feel more secure because their children would learn something other than simply the language. They would learn a little bit of the culture, their faith, their church background and so on, in the ethnic schools, which they would not learn in the Australian schools. It would be simply a linguistic approach to learning the language

Most organisers and teachers saw the teaching of Greek as the responsibility of the Australian government, at least as far as the provision of funds was concerned. Some claimed it was the responsibility of the government as it was better equipped financially and had the appropriate facilities. A teacher suggested that the government was morally responsible for the teaching of 'community languages' because of its direct involvement with development of Australia as a multicultural society. Others suggested that this service was the responsibility of both the Australian and Greek governments. At the other extreme, however, was a teacher who claimed that each ethnic group was ultimately responsible, as teaching ethnic languages was for the benefit of the ethnic group itself, whereas the government's involvement with education was directed towards a system for the entire society.

Most respondents regarded the limitations and handicaps under which these ethnic schools operated as preventing them from achieving their aims. Although all interviewed were optimistic about continuation of ethnic schools in the future, there was some disagreement on the possible improvement in, or increased success of these schools. One organiser pointed to the increased need for ethnic schools to teach Greek in light of the increased proportion of Australian-born Greeks who were under greater pressure to lose the cultural traits of their heritage. He saw this increased need as particularly crucial in the face of what he interpreted as the government's continuing cut back in immigration to

Australia and thus the gradual diminishing of the pool of foreign-born Greeks. One teacher suggested that although ethnic schools will continue to exist, they will remain ineffectual unless they become organised around a central body and develop specific aims.

It was evident that there was very little contact between the organisers and participants of Greek ethnic schools, let alone between these personnel and government bureaucracies or schools of other ethnic groups. In some cases educational committees were established but seemed to meet infrequently and with very little positive outcomes. One noticeable exception was the school committee of the Greek Orthodox Community. This overall lack of contact and communication was generally deplored by organisers and teachers.

#### Parents' responses

A somewhat different and more diverse picture emerges on examination of parents' responses to the broad question of the role of ethnic schools. While almost half the parents, like nearly all organisers and teachers, thought that Greek ethnic schools were established to facilitate communication between parents and children, these schools served other roles in parents' eyes. A quarter of the parents mentioned the possibility of Greek families or children returning to Greece, either permanently or for a holiday, and send their children to Greek schools to learn the language so as to be able to communicate adequately in Greece. Another role of these schools, mentioned by a quarter of the parents, was provision for their children of a second language which would enhance their job opportunities in the future or at least enable them to assist others in their employment. For instance, one mother stated that:

By going to Greek schools, then these children, if they have a professional job here, can help the Greek migrants who can't speak English, for example, if they become doctors.

A passing mention was made of the feeling of pride in Greek culture and language held by Greek parents, which prompted them to want to pass on



these cultural characteristics to their children through Greek schools, and the need for children to understand the church services. The latter was important to one concerned mother, who claimed that if Greek children cannot follow the service, then they will not bother to go to church and the churches will eventually be forced to close.

While most parents were satisfied with the curriculum of Greek school, some felt it could be improved by including a greater emphasis on teaching customs and traditions and subjects such as mathematics. However, only one-fifth of the parents had no complaints about the organisation and operation of the schools. Among the remaining parents, the most frequent complaint centred around qualifications of teachers. One mother, who sent her child to an Archdiocese school in the eastern suburbs, commented on the recent improvement in the number of teachers at the school with teaching qualifications. She referred to the fact that a number of children had been taken out of the school by their parents:

Because a lot of the parents didn't like the idea of English being spoken in the school, and the second thing was that the fees doubled.

When asked if the increased fees had improved the operation of the school, she replied:

Yes, I think it did. The video tapes and they have got the earphones and they listen to a lot of conversations and so on, which we didn't have last year. This is all new, plus we have got fully qualified teachers who have studies at university and teacher's college, whereas before we only had just mothers.

Several parents complained about times classes were held. Although it was felt that there was not sufficient time in the hours allotted for after school classes, about half of the parents highlighted a dilemma by commenting on the additional burden these after hours classes put on the child. There were a number of other complaints raised by small numbers of parents. These included the wish to see more taught about life in Australia. However, when asked whether these schools should teach more

about migrants in Australian society, most parents either opposed the idea or could not see the need for it. As one mother claimed:

It is not necessary to teach them about the life and culture in Australia since the children are in Australian society and learn about these things through their day at school, T.V. etc.

Other complaints centred around inadequate texts, the size of classes, the little amount of Greek acquired by children, having to pay for texts and teachers, and schools being too far from home.

A small number of parents thought that the split between the Archdiocese and the Greek Orthodox Community retarded the progress of Greek ethnic schools. As one explained, 'the system can't be improved until both sides unite'. Others pointed out the benefits they saw to be gained by both sides uniting. This would improve the organisation of schools and result in better teaching, but it would also make the possibility of getting Greek taught in the regular school system more likely. One parent suggested that unification could also lead to formation of a Greek Department of Education which would control the organisation and operation of Greek ethnic schools. Another parent thought that all Greek schools should be united for two reasons, first, they could construct a better programme to enable the children to learn more about Greek traditions, second, unification would obviously mean that 'students would not learn about disunity that is, at present, existing'. Taking a more cynical view, another parent saw the split between Community and Archdiocese schools as unfortunate since it indicated that 'the Greek education system' in this country is used as a political tool with the real aims and objectives of education playing a secondary role. He concluded:

If they were all united, then one body of experts could be formed to draft a more constructive and adequate education system that all Greeks would conform to and benefit from.

Interestingly, none of the parents interviewed gave ideological reasons for their choice of either Archdiocese or Greek Community school, but

stated that it was purely a matter of which school was more conveniently located.

Given parents' recognition of unsatisfactory aspects of ethnic schools, it is perhaps not surprising that almost all who responded to questions about whether they would prefer to see the Greek language taught in the regular school system were definitely in favour of this proposal. At the same time though, most of these parents thought that this would be impractical. One mother, whose child attended a Greek school on the north side, illustrated the latter view:

In Greece they have to learn their own language plus French and English. My nephews and nieces are learning French at school and they have an English tutor. So they are learning three languages. The attitude here seems to be 'oh, we're right mate, its okay, English is good enough'. It's not good enough today. If they are taught Greek, well halleluja - but I must be a realist. Perhaps on the other side of the bridge in areas that are predominantly Greek, they may - I don't know, probably not. They are the schools that should be teaching it now. I can't see them teaching Greek over French, or Italian, or German, or Indonesian or Japanese because we've only got a small element of Greek children in our primary school.

Another parent, although recognising the possibility of introducing Greek into the regular school system, once the Archdiocese and Greek Orthodox Community became united, foresaw considerable opposition from Greek teachers to this proposal. He said that:

If they were united they would be better organised and very possibly Greek would be taught in the English schools. Then the existing Greek teachers would be out of work since they don't have diplomas. It is essential to have a diploma in order to teach in a government school, therefore it is not in the interest of all the Greek teachers to change the situation despite how Greek parents and children feel about it.

Isolated comments from other parents of the consequences of incorporating Greek into the regular school system included the emergence of 'better teachers' of the Greek language, the possible closure of Greek schools, and disappearance of discord which exists between the Archdiocese and the Greek Orthodox Community.

Despite recognition of the impracticalities of incorporating Greek language teaching into the regular school system, one third of all parents

regarded it as the responsibility of the Australian government to teach Greek. Other small numbers of parents differed. Some saw it as the responsibility of the Greek government, while others thought both governments should be jointly responsible. Only a few parents thought that the teaching of Greek was solely the responsibility of Greeks themselves. Parents who thought that the Australian government had responsibility for teaching Greek generally thought that the Australian government owed it to the Greeks (and to the Australian community). Generally, because of the perceived impracticalities of introducing the Greek language into the regular school systems this responsibility was seen by parents as meaning increased funding for ethnic schools. Only one parent advocated a takeover of ethnic schools by the Australian government. Of the few parents who regarded the teaching of Greek in ethnic schools as the responsibility of the Greek government, one claimed that 'the Greek government had a responsibility to Greeks everywhere in the world and should assist with Greek schools here'. Another parent, who saw Greek language instruction as the responsibility of both governments, thought that the Greek government should make a request to the Australian government for assistance.

#### Childrens' responses

Information was gathered on age, grade at ethnic school and number of years of attendance from almost all children interviewed. Ages ranged from 7 to 12 and, although there was not a direct correspondence between age and grade at ethnic school, those aged between 7 and 9 tended to be in 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade, while those aged 10 and over were likely to be in 4th or 5th grade. Two 12 year old boys were in 6th grade, while another of the same age was the only child interviewed who was in High School at Greek school. This boy had attended the ethnic school for 7½ years. The shortest period of attendance was two years.

On the basis of parents' general degree of dissatisfaction with ethnic schools, it might have been expected that the majority of the children would say they dislike going to Greek school. This was not the case. Over half the children said they enjoyed attending ethnic school, while only two complained that the work was too hard and attending a second school too tiring. Even allowing for the effect on these responses of parental pressure and the wish to offer desirable replies to the interviewer, the proportion of children that said they liked Greek School was significant. This was because most students were able to indicate why they thought it was important to know Greek. The most common replies included reasons of communication with parents or future clients, and the possibility of returning to Greece for a holiday. One girl referred to the usefulness of speaking Greek if she were to marry a Greek, while two boys expressed the view that it was 'good to know more than one language'.

Most children did not wish their particular ethnic school to teach anything other than what was presently taught. The few exceptions to this were some who claimed that they would like to learn more about the geography of Greece and others who would like mathematics and chemistry included into the curriculum.

Only a few children thought that the schools could not be improved. Of the others, the most common areas identified for improvement were the quality of the teachers and the size of the classes. Other aspects which could be improved upon included the hours of operation, the excessive amount of homework, and the little time spent in Greek school.

Over two-thirds of the children said that they spoke Greek at home with their parents, although about one quarter of these qualified their responses by adding that they did so 'only sometimes'. One pointed out that she always spoke Greek with her grandparents, while two others claimed that

they spoke Greek with their friends, outside of Greek classes. Clearly children's networks and social environment were significant factors in the degree to which they conversed in Greek with friends. As one boy said:

There are a few guys that have just come from Greece to our school, so we have to communicate with them in Greek as they don't speak English.

Because of the important effect of friendship ties on the degree to which these children spoke Greek outside the classroom, it is interesting to note their perceptions of self-identity. Over three-quarters of the children saw themselves as either 'Greek' or both 'Greek' and 'Australian'. Half regarded themselves as 'Greek', and said that most of their friends were 'Australian', who regarded them (the 'Greek' children) as 'Australians' also. Two of the children commented that their 'Australian' friends thought they were 'wasting their time going to Greek school'. However, even in light of these negative reactions, one respondent claimed that she was determined to speak Greek, especially because her teacher in regular school disallowed the speaking of Greek in the classroom.

In almost the reversal of the responses given by their parents, most children preferred not to have Greek introduced into the regular schools. One girl emphasised the separation between Greek school and the regular school system and argued that they should be kept separate. Another argument in favour of maintaining this separation was that the pupil often preferred to learn a language other than Greek, at regular school. Another pupil thought that the Greek language and culture were taught better at the ethnic school than they would be in the regular school system.

It is difficult to assess the degree to which these responses were distorted by the children interviewed. The young age of some of the children suggests that the distortion was significant and this lay behind the decision not to interview a greater number. Nevertheless, there was no evidence of any outright hatred at having to attend ethnic school.

Furthermore, most pupils could articulate the need, as they saw it, to retain their language and, even in an Australian context, still identified as 'Greek'.

#### WIDER ISSUES - MIGRANT EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

Greek organisers', teachers' and parents' conceptions of the role of ethnic schools were generally independent of their understanding of the wider, current issues of migrant education and multiculturalism, which were generally variable, apolitical and contradictory. On the broader issue of multiculturalism, it is clear that when Greeks did express a view on, or employed the concept of, multiculturalism, it was used mainly in a cultural sense - maintaining language and culture - and not in a structural sense - the social and political position of migrants in Australian society.<sup>I</sup> That is, multiculturalism was a descriptive term, used in most cases as a synonym for multilingualism. It is only in this sense of the term multiculturalism that ethnic schools were seen to have a role. As one teacher put it:

Language is the base for a multicultural society. When migrants arrive in Australia it is good for their confidence to meet up with people who can speak their language. You have a greater affinity with people who can speak your language than with people who cannot.

And again:

A multicultural society means that there are many cultures in society. Since there are many cultures, there has to be many languages stemming from these cultures. So long as the Greeks keep pushing the Greek language and the Italians keep pushing the Italian language because they want their children to follow the customs and traditions, language is always going to be a part of a multicultural society.

Given this perceived role of ethnic schools in promoting multilingualism, it is interesting to note Greeks' views on the wider effects of multilingualism. Some parents, for instance, felt that a multilingual (multicultural) society meant greater job opportunities for people who could speak more than one language. One claimed that:

Other languages are important in Australia because Australia is a multicultural country. Therefore the more languages a child knows, the better off he is for himself and to obtain work ... .

While another thought that:

Languages can help one to communicate with others better. Also in some cases, someone who knows more than one language can get a job more easily than someone who only knows one.

Another Greek, a teacher, implied that the perpetuation of migrant languages had the effect of reducing inter-group prejudices and conflict:

We are becoming a multicultural society, particularly in the cities. It is important to keep up these languages and the cultures as well. I have seen a lot of change in the twenty years I have lived in this country ... tremendous changes for the better in the way people live here. They used to be so conservative before. They have learned to accept that there are other civilisations of this world apart from the Australian. They like to know what we eat - they have tried the food.

Although only an isolated instance, yet another Greek offered a contradictory view on multilingualism and the role of ethnic schools. He regarded ethnic schools as:

Damaging for students because they reinforce the attitude that their language or background has no place in Australian society and it increases the culture conflict in the child ... never the twain shall meet.

While most Greeks equated multiculturalism with multilingualism, which they saw as a current, stable state of affairs, some others took a different view of Australia as a multicultural society. One, for instance, saw multiculturalism as a transitory phase in ethnic relations:

Other languages are important in Australia as long as there are new migrants here. However, it won't remain as such. With each generation, when they integrate into the Australian ways, there won't be the need with each generation. This applies to each ethnic group in Australia. Australia is a multicultural country now, but it shouldn't remain as such. Instead, it should gradually become one culture without separate groups.

Another Greek saw multiculturalism as an objective to be achieved but an objective which would involve something other than multilingualism, namely ethnic pride:

I think Australia is going to be very cosmopolitan in a few years time. It won't be the old Australian way of thinking - that you are



a new Australian - and that was that. I feel that you are going to be very proud that you originated from another country and you've got this background.

It is not surprising that Greeks generally did not link multiculturalism with issues of migrant inequality and lack of participation and power. Most saw the position of Greeks in Australian society as having improved considerably because of changes in Australian attitudes. However, there was room for more improvement because the 'main problem' was still Australians' attitudes towards Greeks. One organiser thought that:

The position of migrants in Australian society has, of course, become better than a few years back and, under different circumstances ... could be better still. What is needed is a little more understanding from both parts, of the role migrants should play.

Where equality was mentioned it was linked with Australians' attitudes. The assumption was that once Australians become more understanding and sympathetic to the existence of migrant cultures, inequalities will be reduced. As the above organiser added:

It is a fact that there isn't the equality we would like to have as Greek or other nationalities, as migrants in general to the benefits or advantages Anglo-saxons have. It has become better in the last few years and I am hoping it will get better because people are travelling more now, more than they were travelling before.

This same theme was reiterated by one of the Greek teachers, who claimed that:

A lot of migrants have a hard time in Australian society, especially males, who are forever being called 'wogs'. A lot of Australian people look down on migrants and don't have anything to do with them. On the other hand, there are a lot of Australians who have grown to accept the migrant cultures. It is inevitable because there are so many migrants in Australia now and the Australian people are starting to realise that the migrants have contributed a lot to their culture, e.g., Chinese restaurants, Italian restaurants, etc. The Australian fashion industry is influenced by the European one. In those ways, they are accepting other cultures.

One parent, who seemed to confuse individual mobility with group mobility saw no inequality in Australian-ethnic relations:

[migrants] are treated the same. You take a football team. You got fellows like Raudonikis, you know, he's Greek. So if they want to be in it, it's up to them. If someone wants to get ahead, it's up to them.

However, despite the fact that at least one Greek saw perpetuation of migrant languages and hence, indirectly, ethnic schools as reducing Australians' prejudice, Greeks generally did not see any obvious relationship between ethnic schools and alteration of perceived migrant inequality in Australian society.

On the less abstract notion of migrant education, Greeks generally had no clear or systematic viewpoint nor did they see it directly and necessarily related to ethnic schools. As to what was meant by migrant education, responses were extremely varied. They ranged from broad notions, such as helping migrants to integrate and providing for educational opportunity, to language instruction. The latter included teaching English to migrants, teaching Greek to migrants, and teaching Greek to Greek children and English to Greek adults. Some had the vaguest notions of migrant education, while at least one Greek - an organiser - had a detailed grasp of the location of migrant education as an issue in the wider social context. He went on to add that:

Migrant education is out of date. The appropriate concept now for Australia is 'education for a multicultural society', that is, the question we should now ask is how can one educate a child in a special school?

Clearly, among Greeks, migrant education also means different things to different people (see Nicoll, 1977). Only those definitions which involved teaching Greek to Greek children were in any way linked to the role of ethnic schools. In these cases, the latter were not in the forefront of migrants' thinking but rather, were brought to the surface because of the focus of this study.

### CONCLUSION

Clearly, it is not possible, nor is it the intention, to generalise from the responses of 60 Greek migrants and their children to the Greek ethnic community as a whole. To do so would be methodologically naive. It would also severely distort the picture of the Greek ethnic category.

As should be evident from much of the preceding discussion, this ethnic category, at least in Sydney, is far from being homogeneous - political-ideological affiliations, socio-economic status, period of residence and other social relational aspects of life in Australia operate so as to produce a number of 'subcultures' within this and other Greek communities.

The purpose of this case study was to see how a small number of migrants, who were members of an ethnic category which has a well-developed institutional structure including a vast network of ethnic schools, conceptualised the role that these schools play in a multicultural society. How do they see these schools related to multicultural education and to multiculturalism? In respect of the sociological analysis of Australian ethnic relations developed in previous chapters, of major importance are:

- the extent to which these migrants saw ethnic schooling as providing greater economic and occupational opportunities for children;
- the degree to which these migrants conceived of ethnic schools as different from multicultural or migrant education;
- whether these migrants defined multiculturalism in 'cultural' or 'structural' terms;
- the degree of awareness of ethnic stratification and the relationship between ethnicity and the occupational structure.

In short, we are interested in the degree to which these migrants were able to identify the location of migrants in the social structure and, if so, how they reconcile the role of the ethnic school, as they perceive it, with this status. What do these parents, organisers and teachers see ethnic schools achieving?

In summary, it is clear that not all Greek schools are alike. Even this limited case study highlighted significant differences in such things as class size, staff-pupil ratios, teaching facilities, qualifications

of teachers and the cultural and socio-economic background of the children. In some cases these differences seemed to account for different responses between teachers with respect to the role of ethnic schools in Australian society. But, generally, differences between teachers and parents were more significant. The former were, in general, more aware of some of the major issues underlying migrant education and multiculturalism and tended to differentiate between the role of the regular school system and the role of the ethnic school system. The regular school system, for example, teaches English and, as one teacher put it, 'this is where the future success of the child lies'.

Parents' responses, on the other hand, indicated far more confusion, lack of awareness of issues, and contradictions, especially about the role of ethnic schools, equality of opportunity and multiculturalism. Whereas teachers were not likely to link ethnic schools with improving occupational opportunities, some parents stressed this possible benefit, e.g., their child would have a better chance of acquiring a job in a multicultural society if they were bilingual. In other words, for these parents multiculturalism *did* mean structural changes, i.e., in the nature of qualifications which enhance upward mobility, but they could not indicate how these changes were to be brought about or even the necessity for such changes. For these migrants, multilingualism implied greater opportunity, but no parent was able to identify or speculate as to the nature of this relationship or why a change from monolingualism to bilingualism at the individual level, or multilingualism at the level of society, would cause a change in the opportunity structure.

What was evident from the responses of parents was the large degree of diversity on what they expected ethnic schools to achieve. But, to the extent that we are able to categorise these responses, they tended to relate the role of ethnic schools to familial and cultural factors, facilitating

communication within the family and providing linguistic competence if the family returned to Greece (see Bottomley, 1979:67-69). This view of the individual benefit to be gained from ethnic schooling was transposed to the level of society in the belief that such training either perpetuated, or assisted in bringing about, multiculturalism. Similarly, the diversity in responses was also present with regard to the meaning of migrant education and the connection between this process and the role of ethnic schools.

To the extent to which we are able to draw a picture of migrants' conceptualisations of Australian ethnic relations and the role of ethnic schools from these 60 interviews, this picture was one of a 'model' of demographic or holistic multiculturalism with a one-sided emphasis on culture. That is, multiculturalism was seen basically as a one-dimensional structure involving different aspects of cultural contact and facilitation. It is when these migrants were asked to draw a connection between the cultural role of ethnic schools and the structural location of Southern European migrants in Australian society, that the contradictions and confusions in their conceptualisations emerged. It is as though these schools 'just happened' as a response to a felt need among members of the Greek community to develop institutions to ensure the perpetuation of Greek language and culture. However, once established it was necessary to justify their existence in relation to the 'ruling ideas' of the day about the nature of ethnic relations.

In a period of 'assimilationist' thinking it was probably not difficult to provide such a justification in terms of anti-assimilationist philosophy. In times of vague notions of 'ethnic pluralism' it was probably also easy to justify the role of these schools, in a positive way, as enhancing the right of ethnic categories to provide their own institutions and promote their ethnicity. But, at present, when the

rhetoric of multiculturalism dominates, the role of ethnic schools in such a model is difficult to explain and conceptualise. Moreover, this difficulty seems to be more a function of the ideological mystification surrounding the concept of multiculturalism and its practice, than the problem of simply identifying the role of ethnic schools in a multi-ethnic society.

These difficulties would probably not present such a barrier to understanding and practice, if multiculturalism was concerned purely with cultural issues. It is the structural dimension which highlights the mystifications and contradictions within conceptions of multiculturalism and the connection between ethnic schools and a multicultural society. These contradictions and mystifications become apparent when the question is asked: 'How do ethnic schools assist the migrant child to get on in Australian society?'

Any attempt to answer this question will probably come face to face with contradictions such as the ethnic dilemma presented earlier. Certainly the breaking down of the concept of multiculturalism into its holistic, demographic and political versions, has done a lot to demystify the concept and confront the issue of the role of ethnic schools in a political-multicultural context. The task of *chapter nine is to* unpack the nature of political multiculturalism and to suggest what role ethnic schools *could* play in a truly multicultural society.

#### FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER EIGHT

- 1 The terms 'migrant' and 'ethnic' are closely related and are used interchangeably. This is in accord with their conventional use (e.g. 'ethnic school' and 'migrant education') and therefore aids ready understanding. The term 'migrant' is used in a very general sense when referring to Australian-born children from non-English speaking background. It implies that a child in this situation is likely to experience more or less contact with a non-English speaking milieu.

CHAPTER NINETOWARDS POLITICAL MULTICULTURALISM : STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTUREETHNIC SCHOOLS AND THEIR WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The most significant difference between the views of teachers and organisers on the one hand and parents, on the other, was in regard to the advantages to be gained by the child who attends the ethnic school. Parents pointed to the greater job opportunities which would be available to bilingual children in a multicultural society. Teachers and organisers did not see the benefit of ethnic schooling for the child linked to issues of migrant success in the opportunity structure, but rather, other instrumental functions such as helping the child to find his or her identity and enabling the child to help other migrants who do not know English.

The findings from this limited case study suggest that migrants' expectations of ethnic schools in respect of these issues are responses to apparently 'new' questions. The degree of unrelatedness increased when migrants were asked to link ethnic schools to wider issues of multicultural education and multiculturalism. For most respondents the role of ethnic schools was seen as distinct from anything to do with multicultural education and multiculturalism. Multicultural education was teaching English to adult migrants, while a multicultural society referred to a culturally diverse one. For many of the migrants, multiculturalism was equated with multilingualism and this conceptualisation provided the link for some between ethnic schools and multiculturalism. That is, ethnic schools would ensure the perpetuation of ethnic languages, which would in turn foster multiculturalism.

Consistent with this view of multiculturalism was the common perception of ethnic stratification and migrant disadvantage as referring to attitudes of discrimination and prejudice towards migrants, held by Anglo-Australians. These sentiments were seen as caused by the lack of contact and communication

between Australians and minority ethnic groups. Some Greek parents claimed, in what seems a contradictory attitude, that ethnic schools would help reduce discrimination and prejudice by spreading ethnic languages and cultures and hence develop awareness among Australians of these ethnic cultures.

Overall, these migrants were not aware of any deep-rooted structural ethnic stratification. That is, although most had experienced many of the consequences of ethnic stratification, they were unable to see the underlying mechanisms in the social structure which gave rise to this stratification and the accompanying consequences. However, teachers' and organisers' views of the position of migrants in Australian society differed from those of parents. The former were more aware of the disadvantaged position of migrants, possibly because of their greater involvement with Australian authorities and relevant information. Consequently they were able to point to educational, occupational and economic inequalities between Australians and migrants. Parents, on the other hand, when asked to comment on the position of migrants in Australia stressed the improvements which had taken place over the last 'ten or twenty years'. These improvements were seen as a consequence of the increasing awareness and understanding among Australians of different cultures. Greek organisers saw the best avenue for further major improvements in the position of migrants as the process of consultation and discrimination and claimed that the establishment of various ethnic committees and the co-opting of migrants on to other bodies had clearly paved the way for such improvements. Some concern was expressed at the radical views put forward by migrant activists which, it was argued, could produce an Australian back-lash against migrants. One notable exception to the strategy of consultation was the view expressed by one organiser that 'structured changes' would only result from:



Ethnic groups organising themselves on a political basis ... to get change requires a shift in power. Power doesn't fall in front of you, you have to go out and get it. The pluralist approach is becoming the more popular approach. If we can get parents to articulate their position, then this articulation will lead to bureaucratic changes.

#### WIDER ISSUES: ETHNIC SCHOOLS, MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

The contradictions and confusions in migrants' conceptualisations of the role of ethnic schools in a multicultural society became most apparent when the concepts of inequality and ethnic stratification were introduced. Among migrants, ethnic schools were seen as, not only promoting multiculturalism by perpetuating ethnic languages, but also promoting ethnic equality by means of such processes as making Australians more aware and tolerant of different ethnic minorities. Contradictions arose because of the apolitical framework of multiculturalism, and ethnic relations in general, in which these views were located. That is, they present ethnic relations in Australia as a one-dimensional horizontal structure based on cultural differences, which ignores the hierarchical structure of ethnic stratification in general and educational inequality in particular (see Smolicz, 1979, for an example of this approach). So, for example, although there was consensus among parents and officials that it was desirable for the ethnic languages to be taught in the regular school system (which would be the achievement of an important ethnic goal), there was little awareness of the social, political, economic and legal inequalities between English and other ethnic languages in Australia.

It is clear that in order to make sense of the role of ethnic schools in the wider context of ethnic relations, it is necessary to unpack important aspects of the nature and structure of this wider context. It is only by such systematic theoretical analysis that we can hope to understand the popular view of ethnic schools as fulfilling cultural needs and unrelated to political questions such as equal rights, participation

and opportunity. Such analysis should also make it possible to ask questions about the viability of the existing curricula of ethnic schools. What alternative form of curricula could be introduced into ethnic schools and what alternative roles could these schools play? Finally, given the implications of the possible roles of ethnic schools for multiculturalism and the location of these schools in a society in which the Anglo-Australian education system is dominant, questions concerning these possible roles need to consider the consequences they would have for the existing education system.

It seems obvious that ethnic relations not only constitute material and social relations between ethnic categories/groups/individuals, e.g., differential access to resources, but also cultural relations. *What does not seem quite so obvious is that cultural relations are also relations of control.* That is, to restrict the concept of culture to descriptions of merely different languages, beliefs, primordial attachments, etc., in a multi-ethnic society, is to overlook the cultural control of one dominant culture.

This form of control is based on the relationship between 'truth' (the process of constituting knowledge), 'statements' (knowledge) and 'power' (Foucault, 1977). As mentioned previously (Chapter Four), the late Jean Martin (1978:21) has used these concepts to provide the framework for her analysis:

of the way in which knowledge about migrants and their place in Australian society has been affirmed and constructed, denied and destroyed, over the past thirty years.

But clearly, not all sub-groups in society have the legitimate right to produce knowledge and truth about migrants. Consequently, with respect to ethnic relations in this country, certain government apparatuses have the power to define the nature of these relations. The dominant concept at present is 'multiculturalism'. Multiculturalism, with its popular usage is a buzz word or, in Mehlman's terms (1973), a 'floating signifier'. That

is, its popularity lies in its usage as a rhetorical and ideological device. Its specific meaning is of little importance to politicians and others who use it as a rhetorical device. It is the connotation that this word invokes that is the important point, and because it is an ambiguous concept that 'everybody knows' and has positive connotations, it is often suited to the purposes of politicians and well meaning 'migrant activists'. It is only when the signifier is subjected to rigorous scrutiny, as in these interview situations, that the contradictions and inconsistencies in meaning and usage emerge.

The three distinct meanings of the concept multiculturalism presented by Lewins (1978b) and introduced earlier, have gone a long way in clarifying the use of this term. Demographic multiculturalism simply acknowledges the diversity of ethnic populations in Australia, holistic multiculturalism emphasises tolerance and understanding between Australians and ethnics and stresses the wholeness and welfare of the entire society over its parts. The third meaning is referred to as political multiculturalism (see Chapter Four). The theme of the first two perspectives on multiculturalism outlined above, is that ethnic relations are regarded, implicitly and ideologically, as apolitical, and, insofar as they recognise ethnic pluralism as a permanent state, it is only in the sense of ethnic diversity and understanding. It is fair to say that the majority of migrants interviewed for this study defined multiculturalism in the demographic or holistic sense.

However, any conception of multiculturalism, migrant education and the role of ethnic schools which ignores ethnic stratification must be inadequate, at least when applied to Australian society. Ethnic relations in this country are the result of many competing interests and the consequence of various political, economic and social forces which date back to 1788 and before (see Chapters Four-Six). But one consequence of the structure of opportunity in Australia, ethnic stratification and

discrimination (Shergold, 1980), when viewed from the position of holistic multiculturalism, is the ethnic dilemma. This dilemma is a result of the contradiction in attempting to incorporate ascriptive *and* achievement criteria in the notion of multicultural society (see Chapter Four).

To avoid apparent misunderstanding of the meaning of the ethnic dilemma some elaboration is required. This construct is a structural one *not* an individual one. That is, it is applicable at the group or aggregate level of analysis, not at the individual level. Consequently it does not follow that low status ethnicity and high socio-economic status cannot co-exist at the level of the individual. These characteristics are not mutually exclusive, either logically or empirically, at the individual level. The case of the 'successful ethnic' or the successful Aboriginal Australian, such as Charles Perkins, are cases in point. The crux of the ethnic dilemma is that these characteristics do not co-exist at the *macro* structural level, e.g., the under-representation of Southern European migrants at the top end of the occupational and political systems is testimony of this dilemma.<sup>1</sup>

Where does this dilemma leave us? How can it be resolved? Part of the answer to these questions has to do with the concept of equality. It is assumed that a truly multicultural society is one in which all ethnic groups have equal access to the resources of society.<sup>2</sup> In the words of McKinnon (1975:22-23):

We might agree that a society can only be truly said to be culturally plural if all groups are equal in access to power, status and wealth.

But what does equality of access mean? This concept has two components: equality of opportunity and equality of outcome (Gilmour and Lansbury, 1978: Ch.1). These two components are not synonymous and the difference between them highlights the possible resolution of the ethnic dilemma.

It is possible to legislate for equality of opportunity for migrants by controlling the proportion of migrants who enter prestige schools,

universities, etc., but such affirmative action legislation, other things being equal, would not likely significantly alter the opportunity structure of ethnic groups (Glazer, 1979). Such legislation would amount to a token recognition of what Jean Martin called the migrant presence, but would be ineffectual because it is the structure of the institutions and the consciousness of migrants (which is a function of their location in the social system) that produces ethnic stratification (see earlier reference to Gilmour and Lansbury, Chapter Six). Consequently, positive or affirmative discrimination, at least as it is put into practice as equality of opportunity will not resolve the ethnic dilemma. It appears that any attempt to resolve this dilemma (assuming that assimilation is not an alternative) must focus on the consciousness of migrants and the nature of the structure of Australian institutions, especially education (see Chapter Seven). With respect to equality of outcomes and the position of migrants in Australian society, this means changing the structure of institutions. Spelling out the necessary and sufficient changes to institutions which would ensure equality of outcomes is, of course, the critical problem. With respect to true multiculturalism, would these changes involve the establishment of new institutions, e.g., ethnic language medical schools, or changes within existing institutions, e.g., introducing community languages into the regular school system, or both?

#### POLITICAL MULTICULTURALISM

One reason why holistic multiculturalism conceptualises ethnic relations as a horizontal structure and ignores the vertical dimension is that it accepts as its basic assumption the idea that pluralism and stratification must be kept analytically distinct (Rex, 1970: Ch.3).<sup>3</sup> This is simply misleading. Cultural cleavages as emphasised earlier denote power relationships, such that majority-minority concepts used to designate the nature of the relationships refer to class, status, power and social control.

and not simply to numerical superiority and inferiority. Given the need for any view of multiculturalism to take these aspects of ethnic relations into account, then the view of the role of education for a multicultural society should also go beyond considerations of simply the transmission of culture. Some writers have proposed education programmes for a multicultural society which do go beyond the superficial levels of culture transmission. However, some of these proposals ignore the majority-minority nature of ethnic relations and consequently do not recognise the political dimension of these relations (Australia, 1979a). One example is the program which has been put forward by Matthews which contains five areas concerned with:

- fostering values which support multiculturalism;
- reducing intergroup tensions, prejudices and discrimination;
- showing particularly in history, geography, social studies, and the like, the reality of multiculturalism in Australia;
- showing the unique contributions that all ethnic groups have made in Australia; and
- developing in the child a sense of security and personal worth in being a member of a culturally plural society. (Matthews, 1975:20).<sup>4</sup>

Given the inherently political nature of ethnic relations (Lewins, 1980), and also the desirability of developing a truly multicultural society, where ethnicity and equality are not mutually exclusive, then true multiculturalism is dependent, in the first instance, on the need to educate migrants about structured inequality and how the social system constrains their life chances as a function of their particular location in the social structure. To supply migrants with the 'necessary skills' to be able to compete for society's resources is no solution as this has the effect of perpetuating the mystification about the opportunity system as a social ladder. Also, as far as ethnicity is concerned, this argument, if taken to its logical conclusion, suggests that the best way to equip migrant children to compete is to remove their ethnicity (i.e., assimilation).

One programme for multicultural education which does appear to recognise the minority status of migrants is Bullivant's 'polyethnic survival curriculum'. Bullivant sees the need for survival knowledge to be taught to migrant children but locates it in a holistic multiculturalism model. For example, he states:

Belonging to society signifies that one is in a group of people who are dependent upon one another for survival within their habitat ... and the more effectively a person's behaviour has been programmed or patterned to carry out roles in such action systems, the greater the share of resources he can obtain ... Survival knowledge about competing for social and economic resources should be taught to children from ethnic groups if they are not to be deprived of competitively fair life chances. (Bullivant, 1977:29).

The survival curriculum developed by Bullivant has five basic components:

1. Communicative competence
2. Numeracy skills
3. Political and economic competence
4. Moral and social competence
5. Environmental awareness (Bullivant, 1977:29-30).

Bullivant's curriculum is inadequate in that the social system is taken *as a given* and is seen as 'justly competitive' - all that is necessary is to equip deprived individuals such as migrant children, with the necessary skills. Another proposal is Lally's notion of '*Social System Education*' which contains four skills:

- (i) Communicative Competence
- (ii) Pragmatic numeracy
- (iii) Relevant Law
- (iv) Practice in identifying and confronting authentic contradictions between rhetoric and social structure (Lally, 1978b:11).

'Communicative competence' is the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently and sustain logical argument as well as the ability to see through rhetoric, plus reading and writing skills. 'Pragmatic Numeracy' refers to competence in using numbers encountered in everyday life plus a course in descriptive statistics. 'Relevant Law' refers to those elements of law which touch the individual most closely in his everyday life, e.g., rental agreements, taxation, etc., plus insights into the important legal rights and obligations. The fourth and most important skill refers to:

Contradictions that relate directly to the lives of the individuals or the group under discussion ... [contradictions] are a direct result of the position you occupy in the social structure. This kind of contradiction can lie dormant until an issue emerges which crystallizes it (Lally, 1978b:14).

Lally's social system education is intended to be included in the general curriculum for *all* schools. Similarly Bullivant's survival curriculum should, according to its originator be implemented in 'polyethnic schools', i.e., where the students are largely a mixture of native-born and ethnic children. (Bullivant, 1977:30). There is some overlap between the proposals of Bullivant and Lally and the curriculum I suggest for ethnic schools which I call 'Minority Group Education'.

What would Minority Group Education consist of? Bullivant provides the theme. 'By concentrating on the cultural content side of the ethnic problem we lost sight of the societal side, i.e., *the implications of what it means to be a member of an ethnic group, which is itself within a wider society*' (Bullivant, 1977:29, emphasis added). In general then, Minority Group Education attempts in the first instance to inform migrant children of what it means to be a migrant in Australia. The focus of this curriculum needs to be training in *Australian Ethnic Group Relations*, possibly a simplified version of courses taught in some Universities, and Colleges, including information to enable the migrant child to understand the historical aspects of the development of ethnic relations in this country, the components of the social system and how it is constituted, and ethnic stratification. The second major component of Minority Group Education would involve language and culture. Ethnic language and culture need to be taught as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for a multicultural society. Minority Group Education would include training in *Language Maintenance* which would locate language in its social context and analyse the relationship between dominant and subordinate languages (Lieberson, 1970; Joy, 1967).



Lally has mentioned the practical problems involved with the implementation of his proposals into government schools and has suggested how these might be overcome (Lally, 1978a:17). Ethnic schools of course are not controlled by the state, although some state governments are providing limited financial assistance, and the curricula for these schools are often developed by an education sub-committee or by the organiser(s) concerned. To this extent, then, ethnic communities have considerable autonomy to develop their own curriculum. Some government reports have recommended that ethnic schools receive increased government assistance, financial and otherwise, and in order to implement Minority Group Education some government assistance would be required (Australia, 1976:78-79). However, most of the requirements necessary to implement this curriculum would not entail many facilities over and above what is presently being recommended (Australia, 1979a). It is not so much the case of adding to the facilities but altering them as they are currently constituted. For instance, it has been recommended that teachers in ethnic schools require some sort of training:

- 4.3 To meet the short-term needs of ethnic schools special measures should be taken to provide some training for teachers in ethnic schools (Australia, 1976:78).

For Minority Group Education teachers would need to be trained in ethnic group relations, Australian society, social stratification and language maintenance. Courses such as these are offered regularly in Canberra by the Centre for Continuing Education and other cities may offer similar courses. With respect to reading material, teachers could produce, if given access to day school facilities, their own composite collection of relevant readings in English and the respective ethnic language (Australia, 1976:78). This would be especially convenient for ethnic schools that rely on the premises of day schools in which to hold classes. Ethnic schools

tend to cater for children of pre-High School age and it is likely that Minority Group Education should be aimed at children in later years, but this does not really present a major problem.

Minority Group Education, as presented here represents step one of Freire's process of conscientization - raising the level of critical awareness of how the social system constrains individual behaviour and choice with particular focus on ethnic minority group members. Step two of Minority Group Education would be aimed at *praxis* to change aspects of the social system affecting the particular location of migrants in the social structure. The aspects, which offer the possibility for intervention and change in the short-term are at the community level, e.g., local administration, public works, housing schemes, etc., and it is at this level that minority group members could have some effect on constraints and contradictions in the system. Ethnic schools are very much community based and the next step in Minority Group Education would be some form of *workshop exercise*, which would involve discussion and analysis of the *nature* of problems at the community level and a strategy for their resolution. Clearly, there are many problems with the implementation of Minority Group Education programmes in ethnic schools. One major difficulty is that the ethnic communities must be the instigators of the programmes, and these programmes, *by their nature are critical of the social system.*

#### A TYPOLOGY OF AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC RELATIONS

In conclusion, having made the distinction between the cultural and structural dimensions of ethnic relations on the one hand, and the different forms of multiculturalism as desired outcomes on the other, it is possible to relate these two aspects in a diagrammatic representation of Australian ethnic relations:

## AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC RELATIONS : DESIRED IDEOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

		Holistic/demographic multiculturalism	Political multiculturalism
DIMENSIONS	Cultural	1	3
		-----   Multicultural,   -----	
	Structural	2	4
		-----   Education   -----	

*Cell 1* This position on ethnic relations, depicted by an exclusive concern with cultural aspects, such as language maintenance and an apolitical view of ethnic relations which emphasises the whole society, typifies the majority of migrants' and government officials' expectations of ethnic schools as presented in this study.

*Cell 2* This approach differs from the first insofar as inequalities between ethnic groups, usually Anglo-Australians and migrants are recognised, but this recognition is limited to apolitical aspects such as attitudes of intolerance and the lack of culture contact. This was also a common theme expressed by migrants, i.e., the position of migrants would improve once Australians became more aware of the migrants' contribution to Australian society. The policy equivalent to this position can be summed up as equality of opportunity.

*Cell 3* While the focus of attention in this approach is the cultural dimension, it differs from the position depicted in *Cell 1* in that the concern is for respective ethnic groups rather than the whole society. The establishment of ethnic media and government funding for ethnic schools would be examples of this approach.

*Cell 4* This position depicts ethnic relations as inherently political relations between dominant and subordinate groups and locates ethnic stratification as a deep-rooted structural aspect of Australian society. In order for the position of migrants to improve, according to this approach, it would be necessary to alter the existing Anglo-Australian dominant structures. The establishment of medical and law schools in ethnic languages and equality of outcome exemplify this approach. Notions of consciousness raising as a first step to structural changes would also belong in this cell.

The most common views about the role of ethnic schools fall into one of the first three cells. *It is argued here that any significant change in the position of migrants in Australian society as a consequence of the role of ethnic schools and multicultural education, must involve the components of ethnic relations as projected in Cell 4.*

It may be helpful at this stage to attempt to pull a thread through some of the main aspects of the argument to date. Ethnic relations can be viewed as comprising conceptual relations. The nature of Anglo-Australian-ethnic interactions, institutions and structures are, in part a consequence of the discourse of ethnic relations. That is, a state of affairs which has been historically constructed by significant 'definers' in Australian society. These definers can be best viewed as a complexity of social forces in particular historical periods. Hence, this process of construction involves not only material and objective structural and cultural forces, but also subjective understandings of 'what ethnic relations are all about'. It is this discursive component which is presented as a critical aspect of the sociology of Australian ethnic relations, while at the same time offering a possible strategy for underprivileged migrants to alter the structure of ethnic relations in this country. This strategy is based on the role of education as a vehicle for structural change. Conscientization, as the first step in emancipating oppressed groups from their subordinate position in the social structure, is a process of bringing these groups to an awareness of the way in which the social system perpetuates and reproduces their oppression. The second step is revolutionary praxis. Applying these ideas to Australian ethnic relations, especially to the concepts of multiculturalism and multicultural education, is to suggest possible roles for ethnic schools in Australian society. These possibilities can be presented as three different scenarios.

1. The continuation of the present separate system with possibly some minor modifications, such as more government assistance, trained teachers, better books, etc., as depicted by *Cells 1* and *2*. The perpetuation of this system has the effect of maintaining ethnic inequalities by institutionalising ethnic relations as relations of

separation. That is, 'encouraging ethnic groups to do their own thing' which completely removes the need for governments to concern themselves with issues of migrant participation in Anglo-Australian dominated structures. It does not put any pressure on these institutions to change to accommodate migrants and, hence, does not confront questions of structural changes necessary to achieve equality of outcomes. In the same vein, separate development of ethnic schools assists in preventing recognition of the political-structural processes involved in migrants gaining more equality. In other words, separate development is most likely to foster the belief that ethnic relations are apolitical - it fosters holistic multiculturalism. It removes migrants from the milieu in which change must take place for them to have more equality, e.g., Australian educational institutions. Insofar as separate development institutionalises different structures, the potential for ethnic conflict is likely to decrease rather than increase.

2. The introduction of ethnic languages and cultures as part of the curriculum of the regular school system (Smolicz, 1979:254; Australia, 1979). This raises many other issues, but it introduces the possibility of migrants having a significant input into changing Anglo-Australian dominant structures, and the position of migrants in Australian society. But, insofar as this scenario brings groups together with possibly different vested interests, the potential for ethnic conflict increases rather than decreases.
3. The introduction of a new curriculum into ethnic schools. One that stresses the societal/structural side of ethnic relations, rather than the cultural. The purpose of such a curriculum would be to inform migrants of the location of migrants in the Australian social structure and the way in which the social system constrains the

opportunity structure for various ethnic groups. In short, bringing migrants to a new level of awareness as the first step in changing the disadvantaged position of migrants in Australian society.

It can be said that conceptualisations of Australian ethnic relations and the role of ethnic schools which are located in the first three cells of the diagram above, perpetuate a 'false consciousness' of the nature of these relations and roles. Any significant progress of migrants in Australian society needs to be based on an articulation of the components, processes and strategies in the fourth Cell. Consequently, as far as the role of ethnic schools is concerned, we need to concentrate our attention on the issues raised in scenarios two and three. In what ways would the curriculum and organisation of the regular school system need to be altered to provide equality of outcome for migrant children? Would more be achieved for migrants by ethnic communities retaining their ethnic school system but changing the curriculum? These are the sorts of questions which future research on ethnic schools and the wider issues of Australian ethnic relations needs to confront.

One important consequence of this analysis is the realisation that cultural and holistic views of multiculturalism and ethnic schools which mean, in practice, separate institutions, do not pose any threat to the dominant culture and institutions. Consequently, with confrontation there is minimal ethnic conflict. But without confrontation in the opportunity structures of society, ethnic equality is not possible. As the ethnic mobility trap model indicates there is only one dominant system of the opportunity structure. It is misleading to suggest that migrants can or should create their own. Scenarios two and three briefly sketched out above are likely to promote conflict between minority ethnic groups and the dominant Anglo-Australian group. Some might regard this as sufficient cause to abandon these scenarios in favour of holistic multiculturalism

and separate ethnic schools. But when we have institutionalised procedures to deal with 'legitimate' confrontations and conflicts in areas such as industrial relations, how can we justify ignoring this inherent component in dominant-subordinate ethnic relations?

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER NINE

- 1 The Canadian experience in attempting to implement some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s exemplifies the ethnic dilemma. One of the recommendations of the Commission was that the public service should employ, where possible, individuals who were bilingual in French and English. That is, ascriptive criteria were employed in a policy of positive discrimination for the benefit of French Canadians. One consequence of this policy was a recruitment drive in the universities and other places in search of people who fulfilled these criteria which meant, in effect, people with French mother tongue who had learned English. Many Francophones were enticed away from their studies by the offer of high salaries and the belief that their cultural heritage now constituted a means for social mobility. But the means for mobility within bureaucracies does not include ascriptive criteria - it is achievement that counts. Consequently, it has been reported that many of these Francophones have remained immobile as they lacked the necessary educational qualifications to advance. One effect of this has been that the top positions have remained Anglo-Canadian dominated (de Vries and Vallee, 1980).
- 2 The term multiculturalism or multicultural society as used in this thesis refers to a form of ethnic relations in the social system. This contrasts with other popular usages of the term. For instance, at a conference I attended recently (Conference on Ethnic and Immigration Studies, UNSW 14-16 June, 1980), the term was commonly employed to mean a particular sort of attitude.
- 3 Smooha, for instance, states:

The nonranked divisions of pluralism must be kept separate from the ranked divisions of stratification - neither set of factors should be reduced into the other nor be assigned *a priori* precedence (Smooha, 1975:69).
- 4 There are many other similar programs which have been presented as curricula for a multicultural society. For a detailed description of some programs which have been proposed, both in Australia and overseas, see McHugh, 1980.



PART IV

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TENEPISTEMOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY AND ETHNICITY: RESTATING THE CONNECTION

By focussing on the substantive content of this thesis, ethnic relations and the role of ethnic schools, it is easy to overlook the major objective of the work - to attempt to provide a systematic justification for the location of substantive sub-areas in sociology. While systematic sociology was the principle and theme, ethnic relations provided the example.

The opening question for this work was: What makes the sociological analysis of certain problems and areas of life, such as health, work, family, ethnic relations etc., scientific? This question, by focussing on the *nature* of knowledge in social science, requires a critique of epistemological and ontological issues pertinent to the social sciences, to be answered adequately. The critique developed in this thesis has rejected positivist and empiricist assumptions about scientific knowledge in social science, and replaced them with an emancipationist-realist position (see Figure I). The major propositions underlying this position were stated as:

1. Sociological theory is not, nor should it attempt to be, value-neutral.
2. Sociological theory must be united with political practice.
3. The crux of the sociological enterprise should be a mood of meaningful social criticism and a spirit of continuing self-reflection aimed at demystification and significant social change.
4. The key to understanding the observable social world lies in understanding the structure which underlies that world of appearances.

5. Acceptable sociological explanation is best achieved by giving emphasis to the objects which constitute the social structure and at the same time reducing the importance to explanation of the knowing subject.

These propositions were seen to have the following implications for sociological practice.

1. That any sociological analysis of substantive sub-areas needs to locate these areas in the social structure.
2. The critical objects of the social structure comprise not only material relations, experience, consciousness and various mechanisms such as power and hegemony, but also discursive formations such as 'migrantness' and 'ethnicity' based on the connection between truth, power and knowledge.
3. Such an analysis of the social structure and the 'location'<sup>1</sup> of substantive sub-areas within the social structure can provide possible strategies for intervention and praxis for minority groups to free themselves from their oppressed position in the social system.

The rationale underlying this work was presented as five points in the introduction (pp.2-6). These may be used as a guide to determine to what extent the thesis has been successful in achieving what it set out to do. But before attempting to assess the success of this research it might be helpful to retrace briefly the main steps in the argument.

As mentioned above, this thesis set out to provide an answer to the question: What makes the study of certain sub-areas sociological and what is the status of the knowledge produced? In attempting to answer this question, it seemed logical to begin with a consideration of the subject matter of sociology and its scientific nature. The importance of these issues for sociology is elaborated in the introduction.

Discussion and analysis of some of the main issues involved comprised the first two chapters which culminated in the development of the

epistemological position called critical systematic sociological practice. This position developed from, in part, a critique of various works on epistemological issues in the social sciences. Prominent among these were the contributions of Kuhn, Winch, Althusser and the Willers. Concepts and ideas from many writers including the notion of appearance and hidden mechanism as presented by Marx, the materialist conception of science developed by Althusser, and notably the concepts of *savoir* and *connaissance* of Michel Foucault were drawn on to produce this position for systematic sociological analysis.

Chapter Three elaborated on the meaning of critical systematic sociological practice and attempted to go beyond many of the epistemological problems confronted by introducing the concepts of truth and power as appeared in the recent writings of Foucault. The work of Marx, Fay and Freire was called on to clarify the *critical* approach developed. This chapter also attempted to draw some of the main threads through the preceding discussion with respect to the nature of critical systematic sociological practice and its application to one sub-area, ethnic relations.

Part II opened with a critique of the study of Australian ethnic relations and, consistent with the epistemological position produced, attempted to locate ethnic relations in the class structure of Australian society. Chapters Five and Six built on the preceding analysis and provided an historical account of the development of the discourse of Australian ethnic relations and elaborated on the nature of the Australian class structure. The role of education was seen, on the one hand, as critical for maintaining the social forces which perpetuate the dominant discourse of ethnic relations, while, on the other hand, also providing the opportunity for meaningful intervention into the discourse to enable oppressed migrants to overcome their exploitation. Consequently most of Part III was concerned with the role of education in society and the

concept of multicultural education. Of particular interest was the role of ethnic schools in multicultural education and multiculturalism.

Chapter Nine concluded with a model for the sociological analysis of Australian ethnic relations and directions for the future with special emphasis on the curriculum of ethnic schools and the political multiculturalism/structural dimension as a finding of the thesis.

Of the five points in the introduction which were intended as justifications for this exercise, the first had to do with the inherent link between sociological research and a number of epistemological assumptions upon which such research is implicitly based. This thesis has attempted to bring to the fore the importance of this connection for the production of systematic knowledge. A critique of the knowledge produced in a particular sub-area, ethnic relations, seriously questions the systematic nature of this knowledge and its usefulness to sociological understanding.

Secondly, many writers (e.g., Gouldner, 1971; Fay, 1975; Becker, 1970; Lee, 1978) have pointed to the inherent connection between particular theoretical perspectives and political positions. Sociological research, broadly speaking, is either for or against the status quo. The position adopted in this work is clearly critical of the *total* social system and analyses ethnic relations from this particular viewpoint. These issues which may be categorised as being concerned with external influences on sociological practice are clarified by the introduction of the concepts which provide a new way for analysing the area of ethnic relations. The late Jean Martin was the first scholar to apply these ideas to ethnic relations and this thesis has attempted to extend Martin's effort in a more comprehensive manner.

The fourth justification related to the scientific status of sociology *vis a vis* other practices, e.g., journalism, and the question: To what

extent knowledge in the social sciences can be said to be cumulative? The development of systematic sociological practice is presented as an optimistic reply to critics of the knowledge produced in sociological research. It is argued that this practice produces systematic knowledge which distinguishes sociological practice from other non-systematic practices. Furthermore, the extent to which this work systematically builds on the ideas and concepts of Martin, Lewins, Wiley and others, is evidence of an example of the *development* of sociological knowledge. With respect to the production of systematic knowledge about Australian ethnic relations, this work represents a point of departure. Many of the insights provided by the thesis, especially *Cell 4* in the diagram entitled Australian Ethnic Relations, provide puzzles for future research.

Finally it was suggested that an investigation of the questions posed at the beginning of this work could have a spin off for the teaching of sociology. Thus while this work is intended, in the first instance, as a coherent package of sociological research in that it has attempted to answer fundamental questions about the role and status of sociology qua scientific practice by presenting an example of sociological investigation which combines epistemological, theoretical, ideological, substantive, methodological and empirical concerns in a unified fashion, it also has clear implications for the teaching of sociology. Too often in the teaching of sociology these areas are compartmentalised for teaching purposes. While these areas may be analytically distinct, one consequence of teaching them in such a disjointed form is that the boundaries become reified in sociological practice. That is, research tends to reflect these divisions by focussing almost exclusively on one of these areas. Hopefully, this thesis makes a contribution to providing a structure for a viable course in the critical analysis of the sociology of ethnic relations.

As stated in the introduction and repeated in this conclusion, the theme of this thesis concerns the location of sub-areas within sociology, with ethnic relations as the example. What general principles for the analysis of other sociological sub-areas can be derived from this analysis? There are at least two:

1. Any study of a sub-area in sociology which purports to be systematic or to produce systematic knowledge should begin with the question: Is there a sociology of ...? (Hence the valuable contribution of Castell's question: 'Is there an Urban Sociology?' [1976:331]). This sort of question leads into analysis of theoretical and epistemological assumptions underlying the study of the area and can help locate the research in an 'epistemological grid' like the one presented in Chapter Three.
2. The clarification of the assumptions under point 1, also provide the means to critique the knowledge produced in the area and to indicate the implications for current research. For example, one implication for critical systematic sociological practice developed in this work and applied to ethnic relations is the need for historical analysis of the development of the ethnic effect.

Hopefully this thesis has contributed to a clarification of sociological practice and the study of ethnic relations in Australia. However, it appears that no amount of systematic analysis of sociology can eradicate the ideological component of the practice. But so long as this component is understood as an *inherent* aspect of social science, it does not present a problem. Consequently, no apologies are made for the ideological position of this thesis.

A number of the assumptions about the sociology of race and ethnic relations, which underlie this work are consistent with those of other writers in the area. Prominent among these assumptions is the claim that

sociologists should not be content to look merely at the consequences of ethnic and race relations, but also their causes (Rex, 1970:6; Lewins, 1978a; van den Berghe, 1967). Other shared assumptions include the belief that an analysis of ethnic relations needs to consider political, economic and social aspects of the social structure in which they are located (Rex, 1970:13; van den Berghe, 1967; Bottomley, 1979:13).

Some of the initial questions posed for this study have been asked by other writers in the field. Rex (1970:7) for instance, has also raised the issue about whether race relations, 'as a class of situations, structures and processes and ... a field of study exists'. He adds (1970:12):

Some sociologists would, in fact, take this step, but by so doing they virtually abolish the sociology of race relations as a special field. It becomes an indistinguishable part of a wider field such as the study of stratification.

Van den Berghe argues that race and ethnic relations constitute a special case of a more general set of structures and processes (1967). The nature of the exercise undertaken in this work suggests that if it is assumed that race and ethnic relations constitute a distinct field with their own unique structures and processes, then there would be no *sociology* of ethnic relations - the essence of the area would lie within the object rather than the *nature* of the systematic analysis of the object. Hence the relevance of the opening question in the thesis: Is there a sociology of ethnic relations? One could maintain, as implied by Parsons (and Warner), that ethnic relations do constitute a distinct area because 'ethnicity, to some degree, tends to preserve relatively independent pyramids in the more general system' (Rex, 1970:16). However, these issues are reducible to two basic problems - one epistemological in nature and the other substantive. The former has to do with the scientific status of the knowledge produced in the study of ethnic relations which is a problem inherently linked to the object of ethnic relations. The



substantive problem is concerned with those essential mechanisms of the social system which are relevant for the analysis of ethnic relations. This thesis argues that, systematic sociological practice notwithstanding, the object of ethnic relations is largely constructed as the ethnic effect, by means of the socio-historical development of the *discourse* of ethnic relations. The essential mechanisms of the social system identified are those of the Australian class structure - power, cultural hegemony, social stratification and the structure of opportunity.

Broadly speaking, this perspective on the nature of the social system in which ethnic relations can be located, could be regarded as in the tradition of *conflict theory* (Rex, 1970; Schermerhorn, 1970). That is, the emphasis is on the interrelationship between unequal components of the system - dominant-subordinate groups. *What then makes this version of conflict theory, different from and a contribution to existing versions?* The answer lies partly in the theoretical representation of the dominant-subordinate relationships. Most conflict theories of ethnic relations are based on the idea that perpetuation and maintenance of inequalities are by means of processes such as political domination, coercion, limited access to resources and power. While not denying the importance of these processes in reproducing dominant-subordinate relationships, this thesis has attempted to show the critical role of another process - cultural control and legitimati6n. This is not some form of control which stems from ownership of the media, but rather is a socio-historical, largely unconscious, process of defining the dominant discourse of ethnic relations, e.g., as *apolitical*. This process is a consequence of the connection between truth and power in a class society. In a sense then, this analysis can be seen as the application of many of the leading ideas of Michel Foucault to Australian ethnic relations.<sup>2</sup>

But Foucault's work does more than simply add another dimensions to dominant-subordinate ethnic relations. It provides an epistemological

break from positivist and empiricist notions of knowledge. Foucault's epistemology breaks with the traditional science/non-science distinction and allow for a synthesis of a theory of knowledge with consciousness, experience and action in the social structure. That is, epistemological issues are not to be approached as a set of assumptions about knowledge which the researcher should make explicit at the beginning of the research, but are an inherent part of the research itself which cannot be compartmentalised in such a fashion.

Of course, many scholars who have applied conflict theory to an analysis of race and ethnic relations, have also concerned themselves with epistemological questions about the knowledge produced in ethnic relations. Most notable among them has been van den Berghe. But the contention here is that these forays contribute little more than brief excursions into questions like 'objectivity' in social science. Van den Berghe (1967:2), for example, begins his work with the comment:

Having studied race relations for a decade, I have been driven to abandon the comfort of positivism and to regard scientific objectivity as a chimera.

Apart from telling us that science is not value free, van den Berghe offers little constructive and useful material on the relevance of epistemological questions for the analysis of race and ethnicity. He dismisses lightly a question which this thesis argues is at the very heart of the analysis of race and ethnic relations by saying:

The failure to arrive at a theory of race relations may simply reflect the fact that the subject has no theoretical leg to stand on (1967:6).

On the substantive side, although these conflict theorists attempt a Marxist oriented analysis of ethnic and race relations, their conceptual frameworks often diverge dramatically from any resemblance to such analysis. This diversion seems to be a consequence of the confusion between application of the concepts stratification, pluralism and class. As stated

previously the important components of the class structure identified by scholars such as Rex, Schermerhorn and van den Berghe are usually limited to direct materialist concepts such as control of the means of production and access to resources, power and coercion. These authors also often appear to locate their analysis in the traditional functional approach to ethnic relations by focussing on, for example, integration. One possible exception to these shortcomings is the work of Schermerhorn. Schermerhorn (1970:68-71) introduces the concept of *legitimation* into his analysis. This process is offered as a means by which the dominant group partly maintains their position. However, this concept is given a minor, if not insignificant role in Schermerhorn's framework. Furthermore, Schermerhorn implies a degree of homogeneity, if not consensus, to the dominant and subordinate groups which permits him to talk of the 'needs' and 'goals' of ethnic groups and to imply the existence of overt conspiracy among dominant groups.

Another criticism levelled at these conflict theories is that class structure becomes replaced by concerns with stratification and pluralism. To the extent that ethnic stratification is a concern in these approaches to ethnic and race relations, it is mainly in the categorical sense of providing adequate typologies to describe the structure of the phenomenon, rather than in the generative sense of the socio-historical forces which give rise to inequality, of which ethnic groups are a special case. The emphasis given in this thesis to the historical rise of the *Australian class structure* and the ethnic effect as well as the analysis of the connection between consciousness, the social structure, the structure of opportunity, ideology, hegemony and the ability to define the dominant discourse are attempts to go beyond the position argued by these conflict theorists.

One of the consequences of the concern with stratification (as the structural component of ethnic and race relations) rather than inequality

is the insistence by writers such as Rex, van den Berghe, Schermerhorn and Banton, that cultural pluralism and stratification should be kept analytically distinct. However, the treatment of cultural relations in this thesis as *relations of control*, implies that the division between stratification and pluralism, if not a 'red herring', is not very useful for analysing ethnic relations. This division has the effect of diverting attention from class divisions. Take for instance the conclusion van den Berghe arrives at after distinguishing social from cultural pluralism (1967:135):

Cultural pluralism between ethnic groups cannot exist without institutional duplication and hence without social pluralism; that is, any form of cultural pluralism has a structural facet which can be treated as social pluralism.

The argument developed in this thesis is that the process of 'institutional duplication' van den Berghe argues for has the effect of perpetuating the hegemony of the dominant group.

Most of these conflict theorists are critical of the ahistorical analysis of ethnic and race relations which dominate the literature (van den Berghe, 1967:5; Rex, 1970; Schermerhorn, 1970). But, in what seems like something of a contradiction these authorities, at the same time, make a plea for the comparative approach. The contradiction arises because the explicit assumption that van den Berghe, Rex and Schermerhorn make is that ethnic and race relations are a consequence of particular social, economic and political forces which are deep rooted in the social structure of the particular society concerned. Hence, the nature of ethnic and race relations in any society is a unique outcome of historical processes. The analysis in this thesis, which is also based upon the same assumption concerning historical specificity, denies the validity of the comparative method and questions the epistemological rationale underlying it, namely the development of empirical

generalisations and general laws. To this extent the analysis presented in this work is a sociological analysis of *Australian* ethnic relations.

In conclusion, the most significant difference between the analysis of ethnic relations presented in this thesis and the conflict theories discussed above is that this work is offered as a *critical* analysis of ethnic relations, *not* a *conflict* analysis. The distinction highlights the relevance of Part I to the sociology of Australian ethnic relations and the inherent connection between epistemological issues and the sociology of substantive areas. The distinction is this. Conflict theory, as has been applied to ethnic and race relations by Banton, Rex, Schermerhorn and van den Berghe, represent descriptive analysis of *how things are*. The critical approach applied here, as defined by the realist-emancipationist position in Figure I represents a generative analysis of *how things should be* - that is, it is an interventionist strategy on how migrants who are oppressed by the social system can at least take the initial steps to free themselves from this oppression.

In conclusion, then, this thesis can be seen as an attempt:

Firstly: To establish an epistemological position by asking: What is scientific about the knowledge produced in the sociology of ethnic relations?

Secondly: Once having established the emancipationist-realist position, setting about determining the structures and processes of the social system which reproduce this oppression.

Finally: At the practical level, to make some suggestions for mounting an effective strategy for combating the processes by which this oppression is reproduced.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER TEN

- 1 It follows from the two previous points that location in this context does not refer simply to the existence of certain areas in the social structure, but to their discursive construction and modification through time.
- 2 Since Martin's attempt at the application of Foucault's ideas to ethnic relations, others have appeared. Kelly (1980) has applied what she calls 'the sociology of knowledge approach to ethnic relations' to the analysis of Anglo-Australian-Italo-Australian relations in a small New South Wales community.

APPENDIX AGREEK ETHNIC SCHOOLS IN SYDNEY - INTERVIEW INFORMATION (1979)

Total number of interviews	35
Total number of people interviewed	60

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Breakdown

Organisers	6
Parents	31
Children	18
Teachers	5
TOTAL	60

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By schools, ideological affiliation

Officials/organisers	
Archdiocese	1
Greek Orthodox Community	2
Greek Orthodox Community School in western suburbs	
Teachers	1
Parents	8
Children	5
Greek Orthodox Community School in eastern suburbs	
Teachers	1
Parents	13
Children	7
Archdiocese School in eastern suburbs	
Organiser/teacher	1
Teachers	3
Parents	2
Children	5
Archdiocese School on lower north shore	
Teacher/organiser	2
Parents	8
Children	1
TOTAL	60

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APPENDIX BINTERVIEW GUIDESA. ADULTSNature of Migrant Education:

1. What do you understand by the term 'migrant education'? (Definition of? What does it look like?)
2. Whose responsibility is it to provide for migrant education? (Is it responsibility of Government or migrants?)
3. Does the existing education system adequately cater for migrant children? (What is Education system doing? Is it enough?)

The Role of Ethnic Schools:

4. What has your community provided in the way of ethnic schools? (No. of Schools - Where Number of children Type of school - in class, etc.)
5. Are ethnic schools the best form of migrant education? (Is provision of ethnic schools the ideal or most practical?)
6. How important are ethnic schools to the migrant community? (What are they for - culture transmission or equipping migrants for life in Australia?)
7. Why were ethnic schools formed? ( " " " " )
8. What do ethnic schools teach? (Language only?)
9. Where is it important for migrant children to speak their native language?
  - (a) home
  - (b) school
  - (c) workplace
  - (d) other settings
10. Why do people send their children to ethnic schools?
11. Who are the people who send their children to ethnic schools? (Middle class? Proportion)
12. Why aren't ethnic schools used more extensively? (Is it lack of funds? Lack of interest?)



13. What is the growth rate and the drop out rate of children? (Situation over last few years)
14. What are the main problems/issues facing ethnic schools?
15. Are ethnic schools achieving their aims?
16. What is the future of ethnic schools?

Ethnic Schools in relation to the wider Australian society:

17. What part does language play in the formation of a multi-cultural society?
18. As a migrant or coming from a migrant background, what do you see as the wider Australian view of ethnic schools?
19. What is your view of the current position of migrants in Australian society? (Views on ethnic pluralism, multiculturalism, equality)
20. Has this viewpoint changed in recent times? (Has anything altered your view in recent times?)
21. Is the position of migrants in Australia related to Australians' views of ethnic schools?
22. What do you think the position of migrants in Australian society should look like?
23. Are you doing anything to change the current situation regarding migrants?
24. What contact do you have with other migrants or migrant groups in relation to ethnic schools?
25. Do these other migrants share the same perspectives as you re ethnic schools?
26. What contact do you have with Australians or Australian bureaucracies re ethnic schools?
27. Does this contact affect your views of ethnic schools?

B. CHILDRENThe Child and the Greek School:

1. How old are you? What class are you in at the Greek school?
2. How long have you been going to ...?
3. Do you like going to ...? If not, why not?
4. What do they teach you at ...?
5. Is there anything else you would like them to teach you?
6. How much Greek have you learnt? Can you speak Greek with your parents? Do you? If not, why not?
7. Would you like to be taught Greek in your regular school rather than a Greek school?
8. Why do you think your parents send you to ...?
9. Do you have any problems coping with the Greek school and the regular school you attend?
10. How do you think the Greek school you attend could be improved?

The Greek School and the Wider Society:

11. Are you 'Greek' or 'Australian'?
12. Do your Australian friends think of you as Greek or Australian?
13. Are your friends mainly Greek or Australian? Do many of them attend Greek schools?
14. What do your Australian friends think about you going to a Greek school? What about your Greek friends?
15. Do you speak Greek with any of your friends?
16. How do you think the Greek school will benefit you later? (Probe for importance in Australian society.)
17. Do you think it is a good idea for children to speak other languages in Australia? Why?
18. Where do you think children should speak these other languages?

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