MERTON'S THEORY OF ANOMIE AND DEVIANCE: AN ELABORATION

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is an attempt to elaborate and develop Merton's theory of anomie and deviance. The purpose is to explore its relevance to the study of deviance in industrial societies, and to extend it to areas relatively neglected by Merton and his followers.

The thesis is divided into two main parts; the first of which discusses the mode of analysis and particular propositions of Merton's theory. It is argued that the theory is best understood as an example of 'functional analysis', a legitimate and commonly employed method, which is to be distinguished from 'functionalism'. It is maintained that Merton's writings on anomie and deviance constitute a developing theory. It is claimed that the theory contains 'stress' and 'non-stress' variables accounting for deviant behaviour, so that it ought not to be classified as merely a 'strain' theory.

The second part of the thesis is an exercise in 'middle-range theorising'. It consists of a series of case studies, which address the issues of social interaction, social dynamics and middle-class deviance, while taking into account empirical evidence questioning certain Mertonian hypotheses. An attempt is made to consolidate Merton's theory with reference group analysis, which enables a reformulation of these hypotheses. It is proposed that this development of the theory allows for the analysis of deviant patterns peculiar to corporations and persons who belong to the upper social strata. Finally, the thesis turns to post-war British society and suggests that Merton's theory provides a framework within which processes leading to social change may be analysed. The abortion law reform, which took place in 1967, is examined as a case in point.

The thesis concludes by pointing out certain compatibilities between anomie and other theories of deviance and by suggesting questions, which may enhance further elaborations and a better understanding of deviance and its control.

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and that the work is my own. No material or results included in this thesis have been published before the submission of the thesis.

Nikos Passas

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis constitutes an attempt to re-examine and elaborate on Merton's theory of deviance and anomie. The theory in question was originally set forth in the well-known essay 'Social Structure and Anomie' (Merton, 1938). From an historical point of view, this influential essay is worthy of special attention. It was at that time that the sociology of deviance began to develop. The very concepts of 'deviance' and 'deviant behaviour' were neologisms and had not yet been established. Until then, biological and psychological explanations of crime - described in terms of individual pathology - dominated. Against this domination, two sociological streams appeared in the United States. Their sources can be located in the departments of Sociology at Chicago and at Harvard. In Chicago, with Park and Burgess, a pragmatic view prevailed and, as a result, the construction of broad theories was generally neglected. In the main, deviance and crime were considered as consequences of tne isolation of particular areas, 'the zone in transition', from the city.

In Harvard, by contrast, with Sorokin and Parsons, there was more concern about general theory; the study of European sociologists such as Pareto, Weber and Durkheim was undertaken; and what came to be known as the 'structural-functionalist' perspective was under development. Coming from Harvard, Merton was committed to the interpretation of human behaviour in relation to 'social structure' (cf. Coser, 1975a), another concept that was not standard in the 1930s. The title itself of the above paper represented this theoretical commitment. When he raised the question 'how is deviant behaviour derived from social structure' or 'how

does conformity induce non-conformity', influenced by Durkheim's writings, he thought in terms of 'anomie' (cf. Appendix: ii-iv).

Merton's essay represented a response to tendencies to portray social control as a "device for 'impulse management' and the 'social processing' of tensions" (Merton, 1938: 672), and called for more attention to non-biological conditions bringing about deviations from socially sanctioned norms and values. Biological and psychological approaches were not regarded by Merton as antagonistic to sociological ones; it was thought as merely a matter of a difference in the focus of the analysis: the former centre upon the *incidence* of deviations, the latter upon their *rates*.

However, the status of anomie theory within the contemporary sociology of deviance has been undermined. In the last two decades, it has lost much of its impact and, particularly in Britain, very few scholars use it for their research. The objections have been both theoretical and empirical in nature (e.g. Clinard, 1964a). It is said that Merton's theory "is riven with a set of unresolved and possibly irresolvable analytical problems" (Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 109). It is frequently considered as an important, yet outdated, chapter in the history of sociological and criminological theorising. The numerous critiques and the development of other theoretical perspectives, which posed alternative questions and guided research in new directions, can be cited among the main reasons accounting for the decline in its influence (cf. Cole, 1975). So, one may reasonably ask: what are the reasons for revisiting Merton's anomie theory?

The first reason is that I am interested in it, as it is part of a rich body of theorising, in which the concept of anomie plays a central role. Like alienation - its most powerful contender - anomie is a key

concept in sociological analyses of changing, industrial societies (cf. P.Cohen, [1968] 1973: 231; Balandier, 1970: 18; Duvignaud, 1970; Tiryakian, 1970; Worsley et al., 1970: 245; Klages, 1984). It is a concept with a long history and various meanings (cf. Orrú, 1987b). Nevertheless, it always refers to a breakdown of norms regulating behaviour and social interaction. It points to a specific relationship between individuals and society (Lukes, 1977b: 74), and to processes leading to the weakening of cultural, moral or legal constraints. Moreover, it "is a concept that bridges the gap between explanations of social action at the individual level with those at the level of social structure" (Abercrombie et al., 1988: 11). As has been argued, in Merton's work, the concept of anomie "epitomises his *structuralist and conflict orientation*" and "illustrates [his] interest not only in *structural determination*, but also in *structure-building*" (Sztompka, 1987: 2-3; emphasis in original).

Another reason for revisiting Merton's theory is that I find the issues it raised significant and relevant to the study of deviance in contemporary societies. Despite a renewed interest in his anomie theory, manifest in recent sociological works (e.g. Diekmann and Opp, 1979; Hilbert and Wright, 1979; Bohle, 1983; Cullen, 1984; Sztompka, 1986 and 1987; Crothers, 1987; Messner, 1987; Orrú, 1987a and 1987b), it has not regained the dominant place that it occupied from the 1940s to the 1960s. It must be stressed at the outset that my purpose is not to reclaim its lost centrality. Nor do I intend to argue that revisions can earn it the title of *the* theory of deviance. For Merton's anomie theory was clearly not designed to be an all-encompassing theory, but it addressed a limited number of issues. The task that Merton set to himself was to examine departures from prevailing standards as a consequence of discrepancies between culture and social structure. The main strength of his theory

lies in its ability to unveil significant links between certain socio-cultural conditions and deviance. His theory, to be sure, did not deal with problems raised by other criminological traditions. Nor did the theory attempt to explain the origins of such discrepancies, as 'new criminologists' have complained (Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 100-101), while making a plea for a 'fully social theory of deviance'. However, an absolutely complete social theory of deviance may not be possible at all. As has been argued, "No general theory can ever exhaust the significance of a particular object - its utility lies in its power of explanation, the ability it has to reveal connections, determinants and significance. In this sense, all sociological knowledge is partial and limited" (Garland and Young, 1983: 13).

While Merton's theory concentrated on the emergence of patterns of deviant behaviour resulting from the pursuit of culturally propagated goals that cannot be easily achieved, other theories focused on different questions and emphasised different issues. Sutherland's theory of differential association contributed to the understanding of the social transmission of deviance. Labelling theorists drew attention to deviance-generating effects of social control, and showed how initial infringements of social norms may crystallise into deviant careers. Conflict theorists pointed to the processes whereby legal rules are formulated and differentially enforced. Control theories - looking at the other side of the coin and positing that deviance results from the weakening of social bonds - centred on the sources of conformity.

Given that 'a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing' and that "questions not asked are questions seldom answered" (Merton, 1987: 10), the limits of anomie theory as well as those of the other theories must be borne in mind. The adoption of these fresh approaches has entailed the

abandonment and displacement of anomie theory. My belief, however, is that that none of them can by itself cover the entire range of questions pertinent to the study of deviance. Each illuminates some aspects of this social phenomenon and neglects others. Sorokin and others have noted "the tendency of sociologists - in their hectic pursuit of new ideas and discoveries - to ignore what was good in past theories and to posit too radical a break with the past" (Plummer, 1979: 102). My claim is that anomie theory has fallen victim to this tendency, and I propose to look into 'what is good' in it and to develop it further.

Further, Merton's anomie theory can be best reviewed in connection with his discussion of middle-range theorising (Merton, 1968: 41; cf. also Appendix: v). This represented a reaction, on the one hand, to crude empiricism and mere data-gathering, which lacked theoretical foundations. On the other hand, there was another tendency at the time, mainly illustrated by Parsons' works, to construct a 'grand theory', which was hardly based on empirical research. Merton's idea of middle-range theories was built upon a critique of a-theoretical research and of the Parsonian stance on the position of sociological theory (in 1947). He has called theories of the middle range "theories that lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behaviour, social organisation and social change" (Merton, 1968: 39).

As middle-range theories constitute little 'islands of knowledge' or 'stepping-stones in the middle distance' (Marshall, 1963), they are meant to be instrumental to the achievement of valid - and more easily empirically checked - sociological knowledge. The *raison d'être* of middle-range theories is that 'we are not ready', 'not enough preparatory work

has been done' for the formulation of *the* general sociological theory (Merton, 1968: 45). In a much more recent publication, Merton has reiterated that "in matters so complex and obscure as much of social organisation and human behaviour, we are wise to be on our guard against 'explanations' that profess to account for every facet of that organisation and behaviour. For, as the ancients knew, those who try to prove too much prove next to nothing". And further, "The didactic emphases in these fields [the newer social sciences and particularly, psychology and sociology] upon methodology and the role of theory can be understood in part as a collective effort to keep their practitioners from falling into the trap of explaining little by trying to explain too much" (Merton, 1982: 46).

It is essential to note that there is no radical antithesis between middle-range and general theorists, and that the general guidelines underlying their work are not significantly at loggerheads. As Merton has pointed out,

> It is significant that a general theorist, such as Parsons [1950: 7], acknowledges (1) that in fact general sociological theory seldom provides for specific hypotheses to be derived from it; (2) that, in comparison with a field such as physics, such derivations for most hypotheses are a remote objective; (3) that general theory provides only a general orientation and (4) that it serves as a basis for codifying empirical generalisations and specific theories. *Once all this is acknowledged, the sociologists who are committed to developing general theory do not differ significantly in principle from those who see the best promise of sociology today in developing theories of the middle range and consolidating them periodically*" (Merton, 1968: 52 fn.; emphasis added).

It cannot be over-emphasised that the role of middle-range theories is fulfilled only "*provided that* the search for them is coupled with a pervasive concern with consolidating special theories into more general sets of concepts and mutually consistent propositions" (Merton, 1968: 53;

emphasis in original). Middle-range theorising is conceived as a methodological canon, a strategy or device for the advancement of sociological knowledge (Appendix: iv-v). In my view, it is a practice characterising the work of most sociologists, although not necessarily in the strict Mertonian sense.

Merton's own various contributions exemplify the effort to develop mutually consistent propositions. Commentators have pointed out that "many of Merton's papers deal, on a deeper level, with the same theme, even when the titles and the apparent subject matter seem quite different" (Lazarsfeld, 1975: 61), and that "the great variety of Merton's empirical theories is generated from a small set of common elements organised around a core theory of rates of choice among socially structured alternatives" (Stinchcombe, 1975: 30). Others have gone as far as argue that Merton's writings constitute, in fact, a general theory (cf. Sztompka, 1986; Crothers, 1987).

Apart from a concern with consolidating mutually consistent propositions, the middle-range strategy involves an effort to gradually extend the theories and specify them, taking into account empirical materials. As Merton has written, "one takes off from antecedent theory and inquiry and tries to extend the theory into new empirical areas" (Merton, 1968: 63). Following his methodological advice, I will endeavour to inquire into the possibility of further elaborations of his anomie theory by examining some of its links with analyses of reference-group behaviour, relative deprivation, patterns of upper-class deviance, and with processes of social change.

A collateral objective of this thesis is to highlight some convergences between claims made by anomie theory and by other theories of deviance. This should not be taken to imply that, by addressing diverse

problems, the evolution of criminological sociology has been cumulative. It cannot be denied that much criminology is "a congregation of fragments without overall design or organisation" (Rock, 1979: 56). But, as Merton has pointed out, the adoption of a middle-range strategy can be helpful in encouraging progressive consolidations: "Tendencies toward fragmentation in sociology have indeed developed. But this is scarcely a *result* of working toward theories of intermediary scope. On the contrary, theories of the middle range *consolidate*, not fragment, empirical findings" (Merton, 1968: 65; emphasis in original). It must be emphasised that no suggestion is made that anomie theory can provide the missing overall design to bring together all theories of deviance. Rather, it is suggested that the various issues and problems attended to by the numerous theories highlight the multi-dimensionality of the phenomenon of deviance. They define the field and concerns of the sociology of deviance. As all dimensions of deviance are not captured by any single approach, the results of research conducted by scholars working in diverse traditions often complement, rather than contradict, each other. So, my attempt to develop and extend anomie theory is accompanied by an effort to show its compatibility with empirical data and points made by different theorists.

Cole (1975) has argued that anomie theory has lost ground to other approaches not because it has been empirically proved to be false, but because researchers have exhausted the puzzles that it provided. As the labelling perspective, for example, supplied fresh research puzzles, its utilisation and influence increased. It is hoped that, by developing anomie theory, extending it into new empirical areas, taking into account research findings and ferreting out certain common *loci* among different perspectives, fresh questions and puzzles for research will emerge. It is

proposed that such an inter-play between theory and research holds a good promise for advancing sociological knowledge.

The point, however, that anomie theory's empirical relevance has not been effectively challenged (cf. also, Muncie and Fitzgerald, 1985: 406-408) is quite important. For, if it is a theory that 'fits the facts', it ought not to be summarily dismissed. Downes and Rock have indicated its relevance to the British experience, while contrasting Durkheimian to Mertonian hypotheses:

> In the austerity of the immediate post-war period, crime and delinquency rose. In 1951, rationing ended, and a newly elected Conservative government encouraged consumption by fiscal measures. The crime and delinquency rates, along with the rate of strikes, fell during the next few years, to increase from the mid-1950s onwards. Durkheim would have predicted an immediate rise in crime following the 'end of austerity' that regulated life in Britain from 1945-51. Merton, however, would have predicted a rise in deviance only after a time-lag, during which advertising and the greater availability of goods stimulated aspirations beyond the modest levels to which people had become habituated during the war and its aftermath (Downes and Rock, 1982: 266fn.).

The fact that different hypotheses can be derived from the writings of the two theorists brings us to a question worth dwelling upon, if only briefly, in this introduction: to what degree is Merton's theory indebted to Durkheim? That Merton has been influenced by Durkheim and European sociological thought, in general, is beyond doubt (cf. Coser, 1975b). Many commentators have focused on Merton's re-conceptualisation of 'anomie' and chastised him for moving far away from Durkheim (cf. N.Davis, 1980: 135; Box, 1981: 97; cf. also Scott and Turner, 1965, who argued that Merton's analysis borrowed rather from Weber's study of the spirit of capitalism). Orrú (1987b) has contended that they differ on both the ethical and cognitive planes. He has placed Durkheim's theory in the same intellectual tradition as Platonism, whereas he classified Merton's theory together

with those of Jean Marie Guyau' and the sophists (cf. Orrú, 1987b: Conclusion). According to some critics, Merton has 'dehumanised' the concept of anomie[2] (Horton, 1964), 'vulgarised' it (Duvignaud, 1970: 69), left out crucial elements of the Durkheimian theory thus 'restricting too much the generality and impact of the notion' (Chazel, 1967: 154), and his analyses are opposed to those of Durkheim (Besnard, 1978). One of them has even spoken of a 'Mertonian imperialism' (Besnard, 1987).

Others have regarded Merton's anomie theory as a continuation and extension of the Durkheimian tradition. It has often been suggested that, whereas Durkheim used the concept of anomie only in relation to the division of labour and suicide, Merton applied the original thesis to deviance and, thus, laid the foundations for a general theory of deviant behaviour (cf. Clinard, 1964b: 10-11; A.Cohen, 1966: 76; Radzinowicz and King, 1977: 80; Orcutt, 1983: 71; Gibbons, 1987: 108; Liska, 1987: 33; Messner 1987; Sztompka, 1987: 3). Briefly then, while some have challenged the 'legitimacy' of Merton's theory on the basis of his departure from Durkheim, others have viewed his distinct contribution as a helpful and appropriate extension of Durkheim's.

In any event, his indebtedness to Durkheim has been acknowledged by Merton himself (cf. Merton, 1964; Appendix: v), and certain affinities ought not to be overlooked. It is essential to note that a state of deregulation is considered by both authors a factor making for departures from established standards. They assign the same meaning to the notion of 'anomie'. 'Anomie' denotes for both a social state, whereby the authority or legitimacy of conventional norms and values has diminished. When such an anomic situation obtains, higher rates of suicide and deviance are to be expected. As Dahrendorf has put it, "[a]nomy provides a background condition in which crime *rates* are likely to be high" (Dahrendorf, 1985:

22; emphasis in original).

Durkheim has suggested that social changes, sudden booms or disasters bring about anomie. His idea of human nature, "essentially in need of limits and discipline" (Lukes, 1977b: 83), led him to propose that, when anomie occurs and social controls lose their strength, people's ambitions are unleashed and extend beyond available means for living up to them. Durkheim's concept is related to a condition in which social norms no longer suffice to hold in check the 'natural', unlimited aspirations, appetites and impulses of the members of the society (cf., for example, Mizruchi, 1965: 255; Poggi, 1972: 247; Messner, 1987: 10). This is a recurrent theme in his various studies (although passages stressing the role of socialisation can also be found in Durkheim's writings; cf. Besnard, 1987: 256-257). In *Suicide* we are told that since nothing in the individuals could set a limit to their needs, needs must be moderated by society or one of its organs (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 275). In *Socialism*, Durkheim has argued:

> What is needed if the social order is to reign is that the mass of men be content with their lot. ...an individual committed only to the pressure of his needs will never admit he has reached the extreme limits of his rightful position. If he is not conscious of a force above him which he respects, which stops him and tells him with authority that the compensation due him is fulfilled, then inevitably he will expect as due him all that his needs demand. And since in our hypothesis these needs are limitless, their exigency is necessarily without limit. For it to be otherwise, a moral power is required whose superiority he recognises, and which cries out: 'You must go no further' (Durkheim, 1962: 242-3).

In *The Division of Labour* human ambitions are also treated as boundless. Their constraint does not constitute 'forced division of labour' and, consequently, it does not pose serious threats to moral authority; such a constraint could not change consent (Durkheim, [1930] 1978: 377). Cases, in which the level of desires is too high and not matched by

corresponding abilities, are considered exceptional and morbid (Durkheim, [1930] 1978: 369). So, extravagant aspirations are thought to be a *consequence* of an anomic breakdown.

Merton, on the other hand, took issue with the *social and cultural sources of the exaltation of ambitions* (cf. Coser, 1975b: 95-96). He advanced a more "social explanation of egoism" (Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 96) and concentrated on its likely effects. The socially induced disjunction between human goals and available means for their attainment is, for Merton, a factor making for anomie by itself. There are some lines of continuity, however, with Durkheim's analysis of the chronic state of crisis and anomie in the realms of industry and trade (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 282ff.). According to Durkheim, this was an effect of the dogma of economic materialism, of the speedy growth of industry and the almost indefinite expansion of the market. Instead of a means to higher ends, industry became the supreme goal of individuals and society. It has fostered appetites unlimited by any authority; and the glorification of well-being has placed them above all human laws. In addition, although this state of things is typical of the above social sectors, it has affected the rest of the society too (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 284).

Merton's analysis does not break from Durkheim so radically as has been thought, as he concentrated on anomie-promoting cultural imbalances and disjunctions between the culture and the social structure, which could be observed in his own more advanced industrial society. In many ways, Merton's anomie theory may be regarded as a response to a 'diffuse utilitarian culture' - just as all Western sociology since the nineteenth century (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 61). As Gouldner has remarked, this culture involved an over-emphasis on the utility and consequences of

social action, thus, superseding the question of its intrinsic moral 'rightness' (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 66-67). He has argued that

> In a market economy 'good intentions' are not enough to validate action; intention and action can be validated only by their consequences in an uncontrollable market... A utilitarian culture, then, inevitably places a great emphasis upon winning or losing, upon success or failure, rather than upon the character of the intention that shapes a person's course of action or upon the conformity of his intention with a preestablished rule or model of propriety (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 65).

Merton's theory can be viewed as an analysis of potential consequences of this culture, which is characterised by "a 'natural' or built-in disposition toward moral normlessness or 'anomie'" (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 67). He was studying a mobile society with a relatively more open class structure, which hardly told people 'you must go no further'; instead, the cultural motto was 'never stop trying to go further'. In his discussion of social problems in the urban context, Merton has remarked:

> it appears that this highly visible tower of opportunity attracts substantial numbers of migrants who, rightly or no, believe that they have the talents that can best be developed and rewarded within the ample confines of the city. But though many are called, comparatively few can be chosen (Merton, 1964: 223).

The items upon which Merton has focused are essentially the ideal of the American Dream, the cultural emphasis on goals overwhelming institutional norms, and the centrality of money and pecuniary success among the values in American society. Merton has withheld judgement about the desirability of those items. He has merely analysed objective consequences of social and cultural forces without any value-statements about their positive or negative quality. He left the issue of their desirability open. In other words, in Merton's work, the Durkheimian moral overtones are absent. One can extract elements of social criticism from his analyses, but they are never explicitly stated. This is not to say

that the Mertonian pursuit of objectivity is preferable to Durkheimian moralising. This is simply to state a difference between the two. Merton has always believed that,

> As sociologists, emphatically not as citizens, students of social problems neither exhort nor denounce, neither advocate nor reject. It is enough that they uncover the great price people sometimes pay for their settled but insufficiently examined convictions and their established but inflexible practices" (Merton, 1982: 57).

Merton's anomie theory has been concerned with the links between the items it singled out for investigation and deviant behaviour. If it is supplemented by an analysis of the origins of these items, its implicit but detectable critical content becomes clearer. This is why I would disagree with Horton's (1964) allegation that Merton's 'anomie' constitutes a transformation from radical to conformist definitions and values. The critical implication of Merton's contribution is that anomie and the resulting deviance are characteristics inherent not only in the USA, but also in other modern societies (Orrú, 1987a). It is true that Merton did not question nor condemn the values of self-interest, status and success goals, consumerism, and relentless competition, in the way Durkheim did. A non-anomic society is, for Merton, an 'ideal type' rather than an 'ideal'. Given that the same values, which make for anomie, also support or contribute to considerable achievements and to the attainment of enshrined goals, Merton did not reject them altogether. As he has noted, "The same conditions of urban life - a degree of emancipation from localistic control, harsh competitiveness, a measure of impersonality - underlie both aberrant behaviour and human accomplishment" (Merton, 1964: 224).

It must be impressed, however, that Merton's stance on the role of the sociologist did not imply that sociology should or can be 'value-free'.

On the contrary, he has ascertained that the selection and formulation of problems, as well as the modes of assessing the evidence for knowledge claims are value-connected (Merton, 1982: 65-67). When Merton speaks of 'objectivity in scientific enquiry', he refers to "tacit and explicit norms [which] govern what kinds of evidence will be judged acceptable by the pertinent community of scientists, requiring individual scientists to approximate objectivity in their scientific work" (Merton, 1982: 66). To be sure, Merton did not attack industrialism and its anomic consequences *à la* Durkheim. Nevertheless, by analysing prominent values and features of his industrial society and pointing to 'the great price' that they often inflict on people, Merton's anomie theory lends itself for equally forceful social critique.

As the effects of the American Dream is one of the theory's main illustrations, one might suspect that it is culture-bound and of little utility in contexts other than the United States, where it is regarded by many as a 'classic' (the Eastern [American] Sociological Society, in its annual meeting of 1987, devoted its plenary session to it). Its relevance, however, should not be regarded as restricted to contemporary North American society. Egalitarianism, accent on material wealth, consumerism, and harsh competition are features of most (if not all) Western industrial societies. In spite of many differences among the U.S.A. and other societies, significant parallels can be drawn. Merton's anomie theory may be and has been applied to other industrialised societies (Shelley, 1981: 7). This can be done, particularly when attention is paid to the interaction between culture and the capitalist economic system which demands (and presupposes) incessant striving for profit, growth and efficiency, and where competition may set limits to available legitimate and effective means.

In short, it is suggested that the plethora of critiques has obscured valuable elements of the theory. It is maintained that it is a fruitful approach to the study of socially induced deviance in the context of contemporary societies and that many of its problems are not 'irresolvable'. Merton himself has pointed out that it is a developing theory (Merton, 1964). The present thesis, then, is an endeavour to tease out some of anomie theory's neglected or latent potential, which has yet to be explored (cf. Downes and Rock, 1982: 114), occasionally going beyond Merton's formulations. It is contended that its conceptual tools and propositions provide a basis for consolidating existing empirical data in areas other than those to which it has been traditionally applied and that it is consistent with valid points made within different theoretical perspectives. It is hoped that, by employing Merton's analytical scheme and by bringing together findings and theories of the 'middle range', our understanding of processes making for deviant behaviour can be enhanced.

No claim is made that anomie theory can provide the 'necessary and sufficient' conditions, under which particular deviant acts will be committed. Rather, it is helpful as it offers an adequate conceptual framework to 'think' the background conditions against which departures from established norms and values are likely to occur. Furthermore, it is argued that the analysis of this background is relevant to processes making not only for deviance, but also for social change. The argument will develop as follows:

Chapters 2 and 3 form Part One of this dissertation, the objective of which is to set the scene for fresh contributions to anomie theory. The second chapter focuses upon the mode of analysis exemplified by anomie theory. As the theory in question has been often catalogued under the general heading of functionalism, many students of social problems,

who rightly consider this theoretical perspective as faulty in many respects, do not accord anomie theory the attention it deserves. Its significance, as a result, may go unacknowledged. It is argued that the distinction between functionalism and the functional mode of analysis is very important indeed, and that anomie theory should be only associated with the latter. Further, it is suggested that functional analysis in sociology is applied in diverse areas by many scholars who have manifestly little to do with functionalism and its assumptions - if they are not declared and outspoken critics of them. This can be taken as a clear indication of the usefulness of this mode of analysis.

The third chapter discusses the particular propositions of anomie theory and of some relevant secondary literature. Although the theory and the critiques it invited are very well known, this brief discussion is necessary in order to show that the theory is far from fully worked out and definitively complete. The main objective here is to call attention to the fact that the formulation of anomie theory has been and continues to be in process. This is of great import given that, once its character of developing theory is established, a good deal of the criticisms it has generated and of the comments upon its propositions will have to be seen in a different light; others may simply become redundant, as posterior extensions take them into account. On the other hand, a recognition of the ongoing process towards a more sophisticated theory will pave the way for further extensions and consolidations with other theoretical perspectives. It is also argued that Merton's theory contains two analytically distinct components. One is the 'stress' component, which helps account for deviance occurring as a result of socially induced pressures under which people act. The second one is the 'non-stress' or 'anomie' component, a social state of weakened commitment to institutional

norms which obtains through processes of interaction. This enables the study of patterns of deviant behaviour not committed under any compelling pressures.

In Part Two, the main task is to explore possibilities of elaboration in selected areas. The particular topics and issues have been selected for various reasons: partly because of personal interest and partly because, being implicit and presupposed in Merton's work, they are deemed necessary for a further development of his anomie theory, relevant material was available, and because they correspond to what Merton's anomie theory has neglected.

The fourth chapter examines how this theoretical framework is useful for the study of a phenomenon observed in contemporary societies, which may seem paradoxical: rising standards of living and wealth for the population at large have often been accompanied by higher rates of deviance and crime (cf. J.Young, 1986: 5-6; Bottoms, 1987: 250-253). One might think that anomie theory, postulating that deviance is an outcome of discrepancies between culturally induced ends and socially structured avenues leading to them, is unable to account for that paradox. An attempt is made to consolidate anomie theory with reference group and relative deprivation analysis, in order to show how structural contradictions in these societies bring about problematic situations and dilemmas, alongside welfare, comparatively higher educational attainment and income. This chapter also represents an attempt to demonstrate that Merton's theory implied considerations of interactive processes. The analysis of such processes are, in fact, *required* for a better understanding of certain patterns of deviance and varying degrees of anomie.

The fifth chapter follows up the implications of the theoretical

linkage between anomie theory and reference group analysis. One of its positive effects is that it can be seen much more clearly that people occupying high positions in the social hierarchy are not so well sheltered against structural strains as previous formulations of anomie theory have suggested. It is, therefore, argued that there is no intrinsic or irreparable 'class bias' in the logic or structure of the theory. A central hypothesis is that diverse social milieux offer not only different kinds of legitimate opportunities for the achievement of valued goals; they also involve different sorts of social networks and relationships with specific sets of rules that can be broken only by those who partake in them (e.g. 'computer crime' can be committed only by computer users). Cloward and Ohlin (1960) have spoken of illegitimate opportunity structures, but limited their analysis to lower-class young delinquents. This and the following chapter attempt to point out the wider significance of their arguments. The impact of the capitalist economic system on cultural messages of success the provision of some (but limited) opportunities for achieving it are also considered. This highlights the fact that contradictions and processes leading to deviance and anomie are inherent to Western societies, even when they are moving towards relatively more material wealth and affluence.

The sixth chapter concentrates more on consequences of socially generated deviance and anomie, in terms of qualitatively different types of deviance peculiar to the upper social strata. It consists in an effort to examine and bring together a large body of empirical data and literature. Two types of 'white-collar crime' are discussed in particular: 'high-status occupational deviance' and 'corporate deviance', which are defined so as to include departures from criminal, civil and administrative rules.

Social change as a consequence or response to processes fostering anomie is considered in the seventh chapter. Merton has observed that, "It is the function of sociologists to discover and to report the human consequences of holding to certain values and practices just as it is their function to discover and to report the human consequences of departing from these values and practices" (Merton, 1982: 55). The latter function of the sociologist, however, has been left largely unaccomplished, as far as Merton's theory is concerned. It is proposed that such departures do not lead only or simply to further deviance and anomie. A case study of the abortion law reform (1967) in Britain is undertaken, which suggests that widespread deviance and a high degree of moral fog on many issues provided a context, in which concerted efforts to achieve legislative change have been crowned with considerable success. One of the chief implications of this chapter, then, is that anomie (or more accurately, potential consequences of anomie) should not be regarded as necessarily negative and undesirable. People's actions and responses to anomic trends and situations may be instrumental to social change, within limits set by the structural context in which they find themselves.

Notes

1. Be it noted, incidentally, that Guyau was the first modern author to use the concept of anomie, from whom Durkheim "learned the term...and adopted it to his moral theory" (Orrú, 1983: 514; cf. also Besnard, 1987: 21).

2. See, however, a replication to Horton's critique in Taylor et al. ([1973] 1981: 95-96), where certain similarities between Merton and Durkheim have been pointed out.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

FUNCTIONALISM, FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION

"When I was walking up the stairs, I saw a man who was not there;
he was not there again today - I wish, the hell, he would go away."

Introduction

Many of the attacks against anomie theory are based on arguments normally used against the theoretical tradition of 'functionalism' or 'structural-functionalism'. It is no novelty to note that close examination reveals several kinds of theorising with diverse sets of assumptions within this tradition (cf. Mulkay, 1971; Sztompka, 1974; Abrahamson, 1978; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The above popular poem illustrates well the case of a theoretical perspective heavily attacked on the basis of an imputed image, rather than one accepted by its alleged representatives. The fact that "much of the criticism has been directed at a straw man, an exaggerated version of functionalism that nobody advocated in the first place" (Abrahamson, 1978: 37) has also been seen as a reason for the relative absence of defence.

This controversial tradition has attracted a great deal of criticisms in contemporary theoretical debate: "It frequently looks as though anyone in search of theoretical acclaim has only to discover one more defect in functionalism to achieve this" (P.Cohen, [1968] 1973: 47). Its alleged conservative implications - it has been called 'the consensus perspective'

(Cuff and Payne, 1979: 23) - is not the least reason for its decline; many would subscribe to the view that it is a movement in social sciences which is "scarcely to be seen now" (Nisbet, 1977: 250). As a consequence of this avalanche of critiques, functionalism has come to be seen as an 'embarrassment' (Moore, 1978: 321), as a theory which, as such, has definitely lost the *lutte* (cf. Giddens, [1977] 1979). Yet, functionalist principles and assumptions pervaded most sociological analyses at the middle of this century and, in a less conspicuous fashion, continue to do so in this day.

Merton is commonly listed as one of its prominent representatives and his work on anomie is often considered as a classic illustration of functionalist criminology. Because of the association of anomie theory with this theoretical framework, many students of social problems have, it is argued, tended to refrain from a fair and thorough examination of the theory itself. Many critics of functionalism, therefore, tend to discard anomie theory virtually *a priori*, or attribute to it all the shortcomings they associate with the former (e.g. Cuff and Payne, 1979: 49-50).

The principal task of this chapter is to examine whether this tendency is justified or not. Since anomie theory undeniably employs a functional mode of analysis, the question becomes whether a wholesale rejection of functionalism is necessary or this would mean throwing the baby out with the bath water. How can this be undertaken? The vast body of literature on functionalism and its various trends makes the definition of it elusive. A complete exposition of what could be categorised under this generic term would fill a whole book by itself. In our search for a strategy, Davis' review of the relevant literature in 1959 offers a helpful insight. In his widely quoted paper, K.Davis (1959) has argued that functional analysis is not different from sociological analysis in

general: "The scientific problems of functional analysis are the same as those of sociology in general" (K.Davis, 1959: 762). In that sense, it could be maintained that 'we are all functionalists'.

What is of interest for our purposes, however, is that Davis was able to renounce what he called the 'functionalist movement' (1959: 765) while endorsing the functional mode of analysis. A similar distinction will be drawn here between functionalism as an ideology and functional analysis as a methodological framework. The most debatable functionalist assertions, the assumptions forming the core of the functionalist vision of society can be singled out. These are: society is a well integrated whole and its parts are functional for it in its entirety; all social or cultural items fulfil vital functions and positively contribute to the maintenance of the society; hence, these items are indispensable and can be explained by their functions. These assumptions will be juxtaposed to Merton's (1968) 'paradigm of functional analysis', on one hand, and to G.Cohen's (1978) discussion of 'functional explanation', on the other.

Although Merton and G.Cohen come from different theoretical backgrounds and their analyses have different objectives and implications, they meet up on two points: 1) they are both critical of the same functionalist presumptions; and 2) they both argue that one can retain the valuable and valid functional form of analysis without subscribing to those unacceptable and damaging presumptions.

The first section of this chapter is devoted to setting out Merton's contribution. An attempt is made to further elaborate and clarify certain ambiguous points. It is maintained that his paradigm constitutes a plausible interpretative scheme and a heuristically valuable research protocol. It is stressed that functional analysis is quite in line with Merton's idea of middle-range theorising. As noted in the introduction,

this idea represents a reaction both to crude empiricism and the Parsonian ambition to construct an elaborate and abstract 'Grand Theory'. In other words, Mertonian functional analysis is seen as a sociological approach emphasising the necessity of interchanges between theory and research. Further, some implications germane to the question of 'structure and agency' are outlined.

In the second section, G.Cohen's defence of 'functional explanation' is examined. This is a type of *causal* analysis, which should also be distinguished from functional analysis. It is argued that, in his suggestions, looms large a danger of implicitly re-entering the objectionable functionalist preconceptions. This danger can be avoided, if by 'functional explanation' we understand the formulation of tentative hypotheses calling for further elaboration.

In the third section, some illustrative evidence is presented to support the contention that functional guidelines and principles figure in the work of many social theorists, who would not define themselves as functionalists.

Finally, it is suggested that anomie theory's concerns and the kind of questions it poses - at least as they are understood in this thesis - employs the Mertonian interpretative framework and set of strategic questions and not the rightly repudiated functionalist assumptions. The connection between functional analysis and middle-range theories is put, thus, in relief. In this way, against much current opinion, especially in Britain, it is contended that anomie theory's interpretative scheme involves a rejection of those assumptions and that it is a scheme implicated in much of the contemporary sociological enterprise. Once this is accepted, the theory can be better assessed and its continuing relevance further highlighted.

Merton's 'Paradigm of Functional Analysis'

Merton has strongly disapproved of and dismissed the labels 'functionalism' and 'structural-functionalism'. Instead, for him as well as for Parsons (1975: 67), the descriptive phrase 'functional analysis' is preferable. This terminological agreement between the two theorists, however, should not obscure their substantial divergence when it comes to the role of functional analysis in theory construction (cf. Mulkay, 1971: 98), as well as to the state of sociological knowledge. The Parsonian variety of functionalism is part and parcel of an overall objective to build a comprehensive general social theory, a task he thought feasible as early as in the 1940s (cf. Parsons, 1948). Merton's (1948) firm reaction to his mentor's optimistic view of the 'position of sociological theory' has led to the suggestion of an alternative procedure: middle-range theories. Merton still believes (cf. Appendix: v) that the best way to arrive at a general theory is through the development and consolidation of such theories and by shunning formulations of concepts void of empirical reference. It is in this context that Mertonian functional analysis has to be understood: "Indeed, Merton's emphasis on functional analysis enters at this point, for he sees it as the basic *method* underlying the creation of theories of the middle range, and thus ultimately the grand theories which would eventually be needed to integrate them" (Hamilton, 1983: 95; emphasis in original).

So, in his 'Manifest and Latent Functions' (Merton, 1968: 73-138; the first version of this essay was published in 1949), Merton set out to rid functional analysis of debatable and unnecessary assumptions associated with functionalism. Interestingly, the German scholar Niklas Luhmann has

attributed the failure of 'structural-functionalism' to fulfil its theoretical promise to its suffering from *avoidable* errors (cf. Poggi, 1979: ix). As Giddens - who has also attempted to rescue certain valid points made within functionalism - has remarked, Merton's essay anticipated criticisms of functionalism "that later became focal to the debate" (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 98). Moreover, as will be seen, the postulates identified by Merton as problematic essentially coincide with the theses that G.Cohen (1978) has attributed to the *theory* of functionalism. Given tnat the model of functional analysis has arisen out of the critique of assumptions viewed by many scholars as characteristic to, or even constitutive of, functionalism, the proposed distinction between the two seems to be reasonable and also implied in Merton's essay.

As certain inconsistencies and ambiguities still exist in his exposition of functional analysis, its separation from functionalism may seem to be blurred. For this reason, partial clarifications, extensions and revisions will be suggested on several occasions. The examination of Merton's proposals and their elaboration will be attempted gradually, following an outline of the basic and controversial functionalist theses one by one.

By the 'interconnection thesis' of functionalism (G.Cohen's term) is affirmed that, "All elements of social life are interconnected. They strongly influence one another and in aggregate 'form one inseparable whole'" (G.Conen, 1978: 283-284). Behind this thesis lies the idea that an analogy can be drawn between social life and organic life (cf. Radcliffe-Brown, 1952: 178). This analogy carries with it the assumption that, as in a living organism, the elements of a social organism are functionally interrelated. As a result, society has to be examined in its entirety. As

Radcliff-Brown has put it, "...if functionalism means anything at all, it does mean the attempt to see the social life of a people as a whole, as *a functional unity*" (Radcliff-Brown, 1952: 185; emphasis added).

Merton has also addressed the problems of this postulate, which holds, in his words, that "standardised social activities or cultural items are functional for the *entire* social or cultural system" (Merton, 1968: 79; emphasis in original). He also castigated organismic sociology and the use of homologies between the structure of biological organisms and of human society. He acknowledged the possibility of deriving a *methodological* model for sociology from the prior experience of biology and other exacting disciplines, but he deplored the adoption of their *substantive* concepts and hypotheses (Merton, 1968: 100-104).

Once recognised that the degree of integration is an empirical question and that it varies in time and space, complete functional unity of human society cannot be assumed. Reality, at any rate, has frequently falsified this assumption. Furthermore, Merton has noted, "not only is the postulate of functional unity often contrary to fact, but it has little heuristic value, since it diverts the analyst's attention from possible disparate consequences of a given social or cultural item (usage, belief, behaviour pattern, institution) for diverse social groups and for the individual members of these groups" (Merton, 1968: 81-82).

It is emphasised that a requirement for functional analysis is the careful "*specification* of the *units* for which a given social or cultural item is functional. It must expressly allow for a given item having diverse consequences, functional and dysfunctional, for individuals, for subgroups, and for the more inclusive social structure and culture" (Merton, 1968: 84; emphasis in original). The concept of social dysfunction, important as it is for the analysis of modern and complex

societies, becomes meaningful and helpful only if applied with equal care. Again, it must be stated explicitly for what or whom a particular item is dysfunctional. So, dysfunctional consequences are defined as a "*designated* set of consequences of a *designated* pattern of behaviour, belief, or organisation that interfere with a *designated* functional requirement of a *designated* social system" (Merton, 1982: 85; emphasis in original). By designated functional requirement we are to understand, for example, the necessity of economic gains when we study an organisation, the main aim of which is profit-making. We need not have in mind society in general.

Functional analysts have only too often been stigmatised for concentrating on consensus and neglecting social conflict. It is maintained that, when they deal with social conflict (e.g. Coser, 1956), it is to point out its function for social integration. Other conflicts, such as social disintegration are regarded off-limits for their theory and practice (Frank, 1973: 69). However, conflict is not under-rated in the Mertonian scheme. The functional analysis of social problems not only caters for social contradictions in general; embedded in it is also the idea that certain instrumental or (however defined) system-maintenance consequences can be antithetical. "This", Merton has argued, "is one of several respects in which, contrary to much superficial opinion, the assumption of structural and functional *conflict* is inherent in functional sociology" (Merton, 1982: 98fn; emphasis in original). Embodied in the concept of dysfunction, which is central to functional analysis, is the concept of structural strain and tension. Thus, "an analytic approach to the study of dynamics and change" (Merton, 1968: 107) is provided.

In the above sense, social dysfunction does not necessarily denote ethical or social undesirability. For this reason Merton has repeatedly insisted that it is "an objective concept, not a morally evaluating one"

(Merton, 1982: 88). This is by no means an argument for 'value-free' theories. One always has an idea about the (un)desirability of the item under study. The selection and formulation of research-problems themselves are determined by one's theoretical or pre-theoretical ideas (Merton, 1968: 96fn). The point rather is that, no matter how an observed consequence of something is evaluated, it may be described as running against some identified goal, want, need, or item; it may be described as dysfunctional to this specified item without disclosing - by the description as such - one's values or theories.

These two categories of observable consequences, however, do not exhaust the empirical possibilities, especially in contemporary societies. Relevant to this point is the argument that "functionalists have...tended to stress interrelationship, and conversely, to underrate the extent of 'compartmentalisation' possible in a social system" (Berghe, 1973: 54). But functional analysis is also equipped with the notion of 'non-functional' consequences, those with no bearing upon a concrete social system under study (Merton, 1968: 105). This concept enables functional analysis to recognise such compartmentalisation, wherever it exists, and can be used as a corrective to the functionalist tendency to underplay it.

Furthermore, units or items can be conceived not in terms of interdependence, but rather in terms of 'functional autonomy'. As the degree of functional autonomy may vary, interdependence is not neglected. A study, however, may focus on an element of a social system in itself or in connection with another system. Also, as the idea of social dysfunctions indicates, the connectedness of parts of the whole may prove to be problematic. Given that units are diversely implicated in a social system, it is essential to raise "the question of the extent of this implication" and to take notice of "the other, *extra*system involvements of

the parts" (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 215; emphasis in original). The advantage of this conception, therefore, is that items can be analysed as parts of the whole under examination, with regard to particular items of this or other systems, and in themselves.

Closely related to the previous assumption of the functionalist doctrine is that of the "universal eufunctionality of social elements" (G.Cohen, 1978: 284). That is, the functions of social items and patterns are presumed positive, in the sense that they fulfil roles vital for the operation and maintenance of the whole (Malinowski, 1926: 132-133 and 1939: 962; quoted also in Merton, 1968: 79ff. and in G.Cohen, 1978: 284). The primary concern is the uncovering and analysis of positive contributions (*eu*functions) of the components to the entire system. Following G.Cohen's terminology, this corresponds to the 'functional interconnection thesis': "All elements of social life support or reinforce one another, and hence too the whole society which in aggregate they constitute" (G.Cohen, 1978: 284). Merton (1968: 84ff.), on the other hand, has referred to the same idea as the postulate of 'universal functionalism' according to which, *all* standardised social and cultural items *by definition* perform positive functions.

As Merton has argued, however, this is a matter calling for investigation; it must be demonstrated rather than assumed. Although a better working hypothesis would be that such items *may* have functions - instead of holding prematurely that they *must* have - the social scientist should not disregard the fact that, as noted above, they may have dysfunctions as well. A far more fruitful directive of research, for Merton, "would seem the provisional assumption that persisting cultural forms have a *net balance of functional consequences* either for the society considered as a unit or for subgroups sufficiently powerful to

retain these forms intact, by means of direct coercion or indirect persuasion" (Merton, 1968: 86; emphasis in original). Merton's suggestion is more important for its implication that power relations in society must be a central concern rather than for the (even provisional) hypothesis about the 'net balance of functional consequences' for the society as a unit. This is because the very concept alludes to the idea that an item can be simultaneously functional, dysfunctional and nonfunctional to different parts of the society. But, when this is the case, to characterise the item "as being 'on the whole' one kind rather than another" would "doubtless be regarded as quite arbitrary" (Nagel, 1956: 270).

In examining how functional analysis can be relevant to questions about power arrangements, Gouldner's (1960) discussion of reciprocity is helpful. He has shown how the concept of reciprocity - referring to processes of mutually contingent giving and receiving that take place between two patterns or items - was implicit in sociological analyses and demonstrated how useful its clarification is for both theory and research. More specifically, Gouldner has pointed out that the functionalist neglect of 'survivals', items which were functional only in the past and which are no longer socially consequential, had also prevented the study of a larger category of social phenomena. He called attention to the fact that

> a survival is only the limiting case of a larger class of social phenomena, namely, relations between parties or patterns in which functional reciprocity is *not equal*. While the survival, defined as the extreme case of a *complete lack* of reciprocity, may be rare, the larger class of *unequal* exchanges, of which survivals are a part, is frequent (Gouldner, 1960: 165; empnasis in original).

The political left connotations of the concept of 'exploitation' also contributed to the relative oversight of such phenomena by modern analysts preoccupied with the establishment of a value-free sociology.

When, however, exploitation is defined in a non-ideological manner such that it refers to "certain transactions involving an exchange of things of unequal value" (Gouldner, 1960: 166), the issue is resolved and, more interestingly, significant analytical convergences between different schools of thought emerge. Implicitly, reciprocity is in the centre of theories emanating from both the functionalist and the Marxian traditions. The emphasis is placed upon the polar ends of reciprocity, as a continuum: the former saw in sound (actual) reciprocity a primary source of social integration, whereas the latter regarded enfeebled reciprocity as a major cause of social conflict. As Gouldner has remarked, "Characteristically focusing on the problem of social instability and change, rather than stability and cohesion, the 'Marxian' tradition emphasised the opposite end of reciprocity namely, exploitation". And he added, "This, I suspect, is one of the major but overlooked convergences in the history of sociological theory" (Gouldner, 1960: 167).

The stability of a pattern or the relationship between two items, then, can be approached in a way informed by valid points made within different theoretical orientations: those emphasising the power differences and those stressing the mutual dependence of the patterns under examination. This can be achieved by bearing in mind that

> the continued provision of benefits by one pattern, A, for another, B, depends not only upon (1) the benefits which A receives in turn from B, but also on (2) the power which B possesses relative to A, and (3) the alternative sources of services accessible to each, beyond those provided by the other (Gouldner, 1960: 164; A and B may represent individuals or groups too).

This also indicates that functional analysis is compatible with social exchange analysis (cf. Mulkay, 1971: 103). More importantly, it must be plain that, although 'the treatment of power as a secondary phenomenon' may have characterised functionalism (Giddens, 1976: 21), this

is not the case with the functional mode of analysis.

In addition to Mertonian queries - e.g. what are the consequences of a social or cultural item? Are they functional or dys-functional and for what part of the society? - we may pose the questions proposed by Gouldner: Is there reciprocity? If not, and if the item persists, what are "...the compensatory arrangements that may provide means of controlling the resultant tensions, thereby enabling the problematic pattern to remain stable"? (Gouldner, 1960: 164). So, although Gouldner was speaking mainly of functional theories, his contribution is more pertinent to functional analysis which, by incorporating such questions, may link up with diverse theories stressing different facets of social phenomena.

The third functionalist postulate criticised by Merton asserts the indispensability of certain functions for the persistence of a system under consideration on the one hand, and the indispensability of particular cultural or social items for the fulfilment of these functions, on the other (Merton, 1968: 87). In other words, because of their positive functions - which, when not so obvious, can be brought to light - particular items tend to be considered indispensable (cf. Malinowski, 1926: 132; for an analysis of the 'necessity' of social stratification and religion, cf. Davis and Moore, 1945).

The widely held view about a conservative bias in functionalism is closely related to this assumption (cf. Merton, 1968: 91-92). The point made by G.Cohen is that, if everything is presumed to fulfil useful roles and, therefore, is indispensable, "there is no scope for desirable social change". The same author went on to note that "Radcliff-Brown's principle of the 'functional consistency of social systems' seems hard to reconcile with the reality of class struggle, and whatever serves to deny the latter is a comfort to conservative convictions" (G.Cohen, 1978: 284).

This reading of Radcliff-Brown, however, is not entirely correct. For Radcliff-Brown, functional consistency amongst the constituent parts of a social system is one necessary condition of continued existence indeed, but he was speaking of a certain degree of it. To be fair, he did not fail to recognise the existence of social conflict and change. The following quotation is taken from the same page of his article that G.Cohen has referred to:

> Functional inconsistency exists whenever two aspects of the social system produce a conflict which can only be resolved by some change in the system itself. ...Consistency is a relative matter. No social system ever attains to a perfect consistency, and it is for this reason that every system is constantly undergoing change (Radcliff-Brown, 1952: 43).

While the early work of social anthropologists has approximated most the functionalist theses, it ought not to be overlooked that, even then, the foregoing assumptions were tentative and constituted rather working hypotheses. This is confirmed by Radcliff-Brown: "...the hypothesis does not require the dogmatic assertion that everything in the life of every community has a function. It only requires the assumption that it *may* have one, and that we are justified in seeking to discover it"; also, "...what appears to be the same social usage in two societies may have different functions in the two" (Radcliff-Brown, 1952: 184; emphasis in original).

Let it also be noted that this theoretical perspective had quite different implications, when the concern was with traditional colonised societies. It was aimed at preventing "British colonial officers from destroying aboriginal peoples by thoughtless tampering with parts of their social system" (Lazarsfeld, 1973: 54). The more conservative overtones of the emphasis on positive consequences of social and cultural items and their indispensability for the maintenance of society are less

unobtrusive when applied to modern societies.

By positing the necessity of eufunctional items, the issue of pre-requisites and the 'needs of the system' is raised. But no exact definition of the 'needs of the system' can be given (Rex, [1961] 1968: 76). On the other hand, functional requisites are logically implied in the given definition of society, in the sense that they are made conceptually necessary elements of it (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 112; Nagel, 1956: 273-274). Further, if factors making for the 'adaptive capacity' of societies are separable from the authors' concept of society, "they are no longer prerequisites, but 'adaptive advantages' which some societies are liable to develop more effectively than others" (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 112).

The often tautological character of attempts to specify society's functional requisites makes this concept "one of the cloudiest and most debatable...in functional *theory*" (Merton, 1968: 106; emphasis added). Merton has been quite sceptical about its validity and value, and has retained it "only in so far as it can be given clear empirical content in relation to specific societies, groups or individuals" (Mulkay, 1971: 101). In any event, as the objective here is to establish a distinction between functionalism and functional analysis (as a methodological guide), this search for functionally necessary conditions can be abandoned; a theory grounded on such analysis *may* (or may not) envisage such an enterprise.

It is noteworthy, however, that speaking of functional needs or pre-requisites in a particular context *does not necessarily* imply functionalist assumptions. This can be illustrated by Marx's theories. As has been argued, on the one hand Marx's "analysis of modes of production does depend on the establishment of functional interrelationships between its elements. Thus he claims there are certain functional needs that must be satisfied for a particular mode to exist..."; but, on the other hand, he

"does not employ functionalist explanation" (Keat and Urry, 1982: 114). To appreciate this argument, the distinction between causal and functional analysis is necessary and will be examined in detail later. For the moment, it suffices to say that the search for functional requisites, combined with the postulate of universal functionality of the elements of a system, is only a step away from the fallacious presumption that, by the mere uncovering of the functionality of an item, the item is 'explained'.

The significance of the difference between Merton and Parsons, however, must be stressed. Parsons has endeavoured to outline a general list of such requisites for a system to exist (e.g. Parsons, 1951), while Merton has shown disbelief about the validity and value of the concept, unless it has clear empirical content. This is symptomatic of their disagreement about the appropriate strategy for the construction of a general social theory. For Parsons, the concept of functional requisites is part of a Grand Theory which involves a high level of abstraction. If one is to advance through the development of middle-range theories, the establishment of functional requisites in abstract, if feasible at all, represents a preoccupation of the distant future. For middle-range theories, the task is to explore observable consequences of particular items upon its environment or other items, with regard only to empirically and historically specified functional needs.

The analysis of a formal organisation, for example, cannot ignore its stated (and possibly changing through time) objectives (Silverman, [1970] 1981: 13-14). The realisation of such objectives can be legitimately taken to be, at least partly, crucial conditions for its maintenance and growth. To study activities and patterns within the organisation in terms of their effects upon its structure and aims involves functional analysis,

but does not entail subscription to any theory of functionalism. As has been remarked, the "focus upon specific ends, concrete obstacles, and the functional efficacy of compensating mechanisms stands in marked contrast to an earlier theoretical emphasis upon functional prerequisites" (Abrahamson, 1978: 105).

The analysis can also take into account the (possibly divergent) aims of individuals or groups within the organisation: functional and dysfunctional consequences may be discovered and construed in relation to either the organisation as such, or the interests and ends of those composing it, or both. Gouldner has suggested, in a similar way, a revision of functional analysis through more precise formulation. This would require "specification of the ends of different people, or of the typical ends of different parts of strata, within the organisation. Such a specification would indicate that these ends may vary, are not necessarily identical, and may, in fact, be contradictory" (Gouldner, 1959: 420).

This kind of specification, connected as it should be with the aforementioned concern about power arrangements, can be extended to larger social units or to society itself. Doubtless, this is a more onerous task, but the point I wish to make is that applying functional analysis is by no means taking societal values and norms for granted or perceiving them as unitary. Hence, functionalist *theories* alone are wanting, when they fail "to make conceptually central the negotiated character of norms, as open to divergent and conflicting 'interpretations' in relation to divergent and conflicting interests in society" (Giddens, 1976: 21). Support for the contention that this mode of analysis does not share much with functionalism is also received from a commentator of Gouldner's propositions:

> While one may agree with all of Gouldner's [1959: 420] suggestions, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how

> they could be embodied in any theory which could still be called functionalist (Silverman, [1970] 1981: 69).

The motivations and purposes of the actors involved are indeed important, and should not be left out of the analysis. Functionalism has allegedly "excluded speculation about human motives", and this results "in the exclusion of an illuminating and legitimate source of data" (Rex, [1961] 1968: 75 and 76). Functional analysis, on the other hand, can and does take them into account and is consonant with Homans' (1964) call to 'bring men back in'. But, in order to avoid reductionism, the following qualification is required. One would have to distinguish between cases, when it is "sufficient to take observed motivations as *data*, as given" and when they are to be "properly considered as *problematical*, as derivable from other data" (Merton, 1968: 105; emphasis in original).

Nagel has pointed out that observed motivations must be taken as data, as givens, if they represent one state co-ordinate among others in a system, and "the values of state co-ordinates at a given time are (by definition) independent of one another" (Nagel, 1956: 266). But they can be regarded as derivable from other data, if "the specific character of subjective dispositions at one time must be derivable from the values of the state co-ordinates at some previous time - provided, of course, that suitable laws for the system have already been established" (Nagel, 1956: 266). From all this we can infer that the treatment of observed motivations would depend on the object, stage and scope of the study which, in any event, can formulate questions in terms of functional analysis.

Some have found it unclear why 'subjective dispositions' "should be listed under a special category in what is ostensibly a *general* paradigm of functional analysis" (Nagel, 1956: 265-266; emphasis in original).

Further, as Nagel has observed, motives and purposes are introduced "as *causally* relevant for the occurrence of some phenomena" (Nagel, 1956: 265; emphasis added). Given that the major concern of functional analysis is with discernible consequences, one might also wonder why such considerations should be included. Is this an indication that causal and functional analysis are merged in Merton's scheme? Is the underlying aim of functional analysis to explain items in terms of their original causes?

In both causal and functional analysis an antecedent-consequence relationship is stated and, as Merton has remarked, if the findings are put "in strictly neutral language, no one could tell whether your orientation was causal or functional" (interview with Merton quoted in Loomis and Loomis, [1961] 1965: 614). The liabilities and mode of investigation involved, nevertheless, are distinct. Indeed, Merton has separated the two quite explicitly, using as an example the study of the political machine (cf. Merton, 1968: 126-136). Causal analysis would start by asking the questions 'what brought about the political machine?; what are its causes?'. This is very different from asking 'what are the consequences (functions) of the political machine for designated groups in a society?', a question which purports to examine the links of the object of analysis with its environment and to relate the consequences to its stability or instability. Merton's point, then, is "that as long as the emphasis is on causal analysis..., you get one kind of observation. [With] functional analysis you get others" (quoted in Loomis and Loomis, [1961] 1965: 614; this distinction is adopted by other theorists too: e.g. Luhmann, 1970: 9-53; Luhmann has reversed the relationship between functionality and causality. For him, causal relations are a sub-category of functional relations. This is because of the concept of 'functional equivalence' to which we will return presently).

To be sure, the examination of an item's consequences is a cause-effect analysis. But there is no preoccupation about the origin of the item. Nor is it implied that the consequences of the item are also its causes - as in functionalism (or, as we shall see, in G.Cohen's version of 'functional explanation'). Merton's framework of functional analysis, then, clearly distances itself from functionalism and causal analysis (in spite of contrary views: Crothers, 1987: 116; whether Merton has or has not employed both types of analysis in his other works, is a separate matter). Although it may constitute a *conditio sine qua non* for the formulation of tentative causal hypotheses (cf. section 2), the latter is a distinct exercise. Dore (1961) was right in saying that Merton's elaboration of functional analysis "destroys its value as an automatic means of transition from function to cause" (quoted in Crothers, 1987: 76). But the avoidance precisely of this functionalist fallacy was one of his aims.

As functionality and causality, consequences and motives are distinguished by Merton himself, the issue remains: for what reason are 'subjective dispositions' included in the agenda of functional analysis? Their inclusion constitutes a symbolic recognition of the importance of intentional human action. It underlines that the significance of human innovation and creativity should not be glossed over in exclusive considerations of larger structures. At the same time, the approach remains sociological in that it proposes to investigate the extent to which individual motivations are determined by or derived from other (structural) sources to be considered. 'Subjective dispositions', that is, are or may be - in a sense - consequences themselves[8].

The main reason for having a place for 'subjective dispositions' in functional analysis is, I would suggest, that (however created or shaped) subjective aims-in-view are frequently confused with objective

consequences. Once recognised that a social action is purposive, one can easily, but erroneously, identify the motives behind it with its actual effects. This may happen to be the case, but it should not be assumed. Addressing this problem, Merton has introduced a conceptual distinction between the cases in which they coincide and those in which they diverge:

> *Manifest functions* are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognised by the participants in the system;
> *Latent functions*, correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognised• (Merton, 1968: 105; emphasis in original).

Although this differentiation has the merit of shedding light to the above confusion, it suffers from some ambiguities. Firstly, by defining 'functions' as the consequences making for the *adaptation of the system*, despite his open disavowal of the needs-of-the-system theme, Merton has been seen as implicitly reiterating it (cf. Rex, [1961] 1968: 73). The above wording of the definitions seems to justify the criticism. One may interpret 'functions', however, in a different manner, more consonant with Merton's middle-range theorising. Since Merton has separated causal from functional analysis, and since the manifest/latent functions distinction is established here with reference to the latter, it may be conjectured that, in contrast to Giddens, the aim is *not* "to distinguish the teleology of intentional action from the hidden teleology of its consequences" (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 106). Teleology can be part of causal analysis, not of functional analysis, in Merton's sense. As the major concern is with the way one item is variably interconnected with others, 'function' can be taken to signify 'objective consequence' (cf. also Mulkay, 1971: 115), which - in accord with Merton's propositions - can be (eu)functional, dysfunctional or nonfunctional for designated parts of the system. It is of importance, nevertheless, to continue analysing social phenomena in

functional terms, for it can thus be conveyed the idea of correspondence or interconnectedness (whatever its degree happens to be) among parts of a social structure. This idea represents an element which even fierce critics of functionalism have found useful and which should be retained.

Because functional statements, therefore, can be expressed in a non-functional language, it must not be concluded, as has been suggested, that "functionalist notions should be excluded altogether from the social sciences" (Giddens, 1982: 527). For Giddens, the statement 'the state has the function of maintaining the conditions of capital accumulation' is acceptable, when translated into: 'in order for capital accumulation to be maintained, the state has to intervene in definite ways in economic life':

> The force of 'has to' here is counterfactual: it involves identifying conditions that must be met if certain consequences are to follow. It supplies us with a preliminary orientation to a problem, and the posing of such questions can perfectly legitimately be defended as an integral part of the social sciences. But it is best to avoid using the term 'function', because of its misleading implications in such a context. For it suggests that the 'has to' in the above sentence refers to some sort of need that is a property of the social system - in which case we have an example of naive overt functionalism (Giddens, 1982: 531).

The sole problem for Giddens with the functional statement, then, is its implication of a need of the social system. This statement, however, does not imply by definition that the function performed by the state corresponds to a need of the social system in general. It may correspond to a need or objective of particular groups (parts) in that social system (who have the power to gain state support to their advantage; or, in less conspiratorial terms, the structural context is such that this function of the state is generally perceived as being in the interests of the whole system - whether this actually is so or not, is a separate matter). We have seen that there is nothing wrong with speaking of needs or

requisites, when they are given empirical content. To say that the state has the function of maintaining the conditions of capital accumulation in a particular society, is to describe the state as functionally related to specific parts of a social system. The issue, thus, is reduced to one of semantics.

There is a second objection to Merton's definition of manifest and latent functions. Intention and recognition, it is said, are treated by Merton "as if they were synonymous", although "they can and clearly do vary independently of each other" (Campbell, 1982: 34). A manifest consequence implies "not only a) that a person knows that the consequence he intends to bring about will come about, but also b) he knows in what way that consequence is functional (or dysfunctional in the case of 'manifest dysfunctions')" (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 108). Further, Giddens has asked, how are we to classify situations where some participants know what the consequences of the actions of *others* are? (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 108).

The reply to these critical observations is twofold. Firstly, a consequence may be regarded as manifest or latent depending on whether knowledge and intention were generally recognised or not. In the course of a study, for example, it may be found that a particular item (action, pattern, etc.) has a previously unacknowledged (latent) consequence. Subsequently, it may be discovered that one or more participants intended or knew the consequence in question. The latter finding does not alter in any way the latent character of the effect originally brought to light by the study.

Secondly, and more to the point, there is nothing essentially different between manifest and latent consequences. That is, the effects remain the same; what differs is levels of consciousness about them. The

objective of the distinction is not theoretical categorisation per se. It must be stressed - yet again, although Merton's emphasis (1968: 118ff.) should have sufficed - that the purpose of the distinction is primarily a heuristic one. It aims at alerting social analysts to the possibility (very frequently fact) that individual and collective actions, beliefs and customs may have unanticipated positive or negative effects on various parts of the system under consideration. It sensitises researchers by drawing attention to those social phenomena and issues most central to sociological enquiry. As is often pointed out,

> Many, if not most, social phenomena are the product of the *unintended* consequences of social actions; these social actions are themselves purposive; but many of their consequences have no direct connection with these purposes" (P.Cohen, [1968] 1973: 48-49; emphasis in original).

Behind Merton's methodological advice is also the separation of immediate and isolated from "the long-term and systematic consequences of an activity" (Rex, [1961] 1968: 76). This distinction is significant enough to be considered, especially when it comes to planned social change and to informed critique of existing arrangements.

Sztompka's (1986: 136) remark that Merton proposed in this essay 'an oversimplified dichotomy', forgetting the implications of his paper on 'the unanticipated consequences of purposive social action' (Merton, 1976e; first published in 1936) is, therefore, off the mark. In fact, his two contributions are complementary and point to a suggestion, which should settle the matter: On one hand, the distinction between anticipated and unanticipated consequences, whether these are intended or not, can refer to the issue of knowledge (for a similar argument related to role performance, cf. Spiro, 1961: 108). A distinction between intended and unintended consequences, on the other hand, can refer to the question of

actors' purposes (for an exposition of all possible logical distinctions within this typology, cf. Zeidenstein, 1979).

Research based on the methodological directives suggested by the functional frame of analysis, then, can uncover dysfunctional as well as functional effects of specific items that people neither intended nor were well aware of. But, even when it is empirically established that an item does have beneficial consequences for another or for the whole system under study, it would be unwarranted to assume without further enquiry that this item is indispensable. Attention should not be diverted from the possibility that other items may also perform functions of the 'indispensable' cultural form or social structure, and thus substitute for it. Merton has warned against premature conclusions which may prove contrary to fact, and introduced the notion of 'functional alternatives'. The research guideline thus offered is that "just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items" (Merton, 1968: 87-88; he also mentions a convergence on this point with Parsons, 1949: 58).

This point has been taken up by Luhmann, who has used the concept of 'functional equivalence' - which stresses the difference between functional and causal analysis - for the analysis of systemic problems. According to Luhmann one can start with a specific systemic problem the solution of which may be achieved by a variety of items. Instead of focusing on the causes of an existing arrangement, his preferred question would be: what alternative arrangements might fulfil the same function? (Luhmann, 1970: 9ff.). As some Marxist participants of the debate on functionalism have put it, "whatever Luhmann's intentions, does it not demonstrate the potential usefulness of functionalist arguments for a Marxist social science?" (Berger and Offe, 1982: 522).

So, despite the fact that an item produces some benevolent effect for the whole system or parts of it, nothing can preclude its rejection and replacement. Merton's concept of functional alternatives "focuses attention on the range of possible variation in the *items* which can, in the case under examination, subserve a functional requirement" (Merton, 1968: 106; emphasis added). This concept, then, is relevant to analyses of social change, albeit of a limited range: when, within the system under observation, a new item is found to meet the *same* particular (identified) need. But, as needs themselves may and do change continually, the concept of functional alternatives has to be complemented with an additional one. I would suggest that the concept of 'structural alternatives' refer to the possible or potential variation of *functional requirements*. This notion, therefore, should not be regarded as merely a better substitute for that of 'functional alternatives' (e.g. Sztompka, 1974: 91-92 and 1986: 132). The distinction is significant not only because it allows for the study of different types of social change, but also because it enables a more far-reaching and constructive critique of existing structural arrangements.

It is not difficult, none the less, "to overestimate the availability of substitutes for a given functional device" (G.Cohen, 1978: 277). The concept of 'structural constraints' underlines that "the range of variation in the items which can fulfill designated functions in a social structure is not unlimited" (Merton, 1968: 106). It also calls for caution against utopian thought overlooking the fact that the realisation of certain ends is often constrained by commitments to other objectives. Thus, it guards against "the false assumption that all values can be simultaneously maximised in society. But cost-free social action is only a sociological chimera" (Merton, 1982: 88).

This outline of functional analysis shows that, by itself, it

involves neither exhortation nor denouncement of observed social phenomena. Assumptions of the type 'whatever is, is right' or 'whatever is is wrong' are far from inherent in it. Rather, this mode of analysis "has us examine each set of social conditions in terms of its diverse and progressively discovered consequences for the human condition, including all those consequences that bear upon the values held in the particular society" (Merton, 1982: 57). A significant merit of it, in Merton's words, is that of

> leaving a substantial place for people-making-their-future-history while avoiding the utopianism-that-beguiles by recognising that the degrees of freedom people have in that task are variously and sometimes severely limited by the objective conditions set by nature, society, and culture (Merton, 1982: 57).

It would not be unreasonable to suggest that the questions asked by researchers employing functional analysis can illuminate what Giddens has called 'processes of structuration': "the modes whereby a system, through the application of generative rules and resources, is produced and reproduced in social interaction" (Giddens, [1977] 1979: 118). Giddens' concept of structuration is based on the 'duality of structure' in contrast to the 'analytical dualism' (structure vs action) of the 'morphogenic perspective' that Archer (1982) has considered more fruitful. Among other reasons, this may be because the morphogenic approach's "specification of degrees of freedom and stringency of constraints makes it possible to theorise about variations in voluntarism and determinism (and their consequences)" (Archer, 1982: 477). However, since this approach is also "sequential, dealing in endless cycles of - structural conditioning/social interaction/structural elaboration - thus unravelling the dialectic interplay between structure and action" (Archer, 1982: 458), functional analysis is again of relevance.

More generally, it can be argued that functional analysis is a systematic way of looking at social phenomena of great import, for the data it may furnish can constitute the basis for diverse *interpretations*, congruent with diverse ideologies and theories. An item or pattern (A), for instance, may be found to have functional consequences for an item (B) and dysfunctional effects on another (C). If (B) is desirable by the criteria and laws of one theory, the functionality of (A) will be stressed. To a second theory, however, (C) is basic or more important than (B); the dysfunctionality of (A), then, will come more to the fore. Further, a third theory critical of (B) will probably consider (A) as undesirable. The results of functional analysis, therefore, may confirm or challenge assumptions of different social theories. In addition, it may inform varying social policies, political arguments and critique of - as well as support for - existing arrangements. This will depend, to a large extent, upon subsequent *evaluations* of the findings. It is chiefly at this stage that moral principles, values and ideologies come into play (and quite legitimately).

This is because this mode of analysis is to be understood as a set of methodological guidelines - or as a 'meta-method' in the sense that it "shows how to co-ordinate various traditional methods and techniques in order to obtain scientific results" (Podgórecki, 1979: 28) - which does not harbour any of the problematic functionalist assumptions. Indeed, according to Mulkay, "In [Merton's] hands, functionalism becomes a method of analysis rather than a theoretical orientation, and substantive presumptions about the character of social systems are kept to a minimum" (Mulkay, 1971: 119). Functional analysis is a systematic set of strategic questions to be posed by sociologists. It guards against premature conclusions and offers a conceptual framework in order to make

sense of existing data and materials.

The distinction between functionalism and functional analysis drawn here, then, is essentially founded on that between substantive theory and a method. The discussion so far has done more or less what Sklair has recommended in his assessment of Parsonian Sociology:

> It is essential to evaluate the functionalistic method, in the sense that it suggests to us where to look, in isolation from the functionalist doctrine, that tells us what we will find there (Sklair, 1970: 40).

Functional analysis has an 'immense cognitive importance' (cf. Sztompka, 1986: 140 and 128), for it links up with the scientific practice of 'Establishing the Phenomenon' (cf. Merton, 1987: 2-6). That is, "one is, in the end, obliged to establish as existing the phenomena that one is undertaking to explain or to interpret" (Appendix: vi). This requirement, self-evident as it might seem, is not always - and sometimes cannot be - met; a kind of 'expectational thinking' induced by ideological or value commitments may lead to false perceptions (Merton, 1987: 4). Systematic pursuit of the issues raised by functional analysis can help in rectifying that but, to be sure, only to a certain extent. This mode of analysis is not proposed as a solution to the epistemological controversies, where the possibility of 'establishing the phenomenon' is problematised. It is merely suggested that, by exploring various possible consequences of specific items, explananda can be clarified and new ones may be drawn out. Distorted perceptions and half-truths may be minimised, common sense transcended, and new grounds may be provided for more sophisticated hypotheses[2].

Functional Explanation

We have seen that the primary aim of functional analysis is to gain knowledge about the functionality or dysfunctionality of specific items in connection with others. As such, it does not assert anything about causality. G.Cohen's (1978) main concern, on the other hand, was precisely with causality. His discussion of functional explanation - as a type of causal explanation - is an effort to demonstrate its validity in contrast to the *theory* of functionalism. He has argued that the explanatory significance of identified functions should not be neglected (G.Cohen, 1978: 283 fn.). The explanatory power of such findings can be exploited without falling into the traps of functionalism and, particularly, its 'explanatory functional interconnection thesis'. This thesis affirms that, "Each element is as it is *because* of its contribution to the whole" (G.Cohen, 1978: 284; emphasis in original), the whole consisting of the aggregate of these elements.

In functionalism, social processes, structural arrangements, social usages etc. are explained *by* the functions they perform for the maintenance of the total society or sub-system within it (cf. Malinowski, 1926: 132-133). For G.Cohen, in functional explanation, social and cultural items are explained not *by* their functions, but *by reference to* their functions. This is mainly what distinguishes functional explanation from functionalism. As he has noted, not only is there not a necessary connection between the two, but also

> functional explanation is compatible with rejection of the doctrine of functionalism, and functional explanation is not necessarily conservative. Functional explanation in historical materialism is, moreover, revolutionary... (G.Cohen, 1978: 284-5).

To show that functional explanation is not inherently conservative

(cf. also Stinchcombe, 1968: 91-93), however, does not gainsay that it is a valid mode of explanation nor that, for this reason, it is different from functionalism. In a monograph on .functionalism, Abrahamson has remarked that, "The bias has been there, even if it is not intrinsic to the approach" (Abrahamson, 1978: 47). A more precise correct statement would be that there is nothing inherently conservative in the approach, though some theories have exhibited a predilection against radical politics (cf. Giddens, [1977] 1979: 105). Moreover, functionalist assumptions can be (and have been) made for quite radical purposes. The different mood of 'left functionalism', however, could not avoid the essentially identical fallacies. It is hardly surprising, then, that they have been pinpointed in a way reminiscent of Merton's arguments. The extract below clearly exemplifies that. It is also of interest here because it is geared more towards the *explanatory* weaknesses of left functionalism. These are illustrated by the procedure adopted in order to explain the presentation of a deviant event X in the media:

> on one side a unitary ruling class interest is posited, on the other an internally coherent cluster of themes about X are constructed from the available media data. Explanation, then is an elegant solution to the puzzle of linking the two: how are ruling class interests facilitated by the negative way X is reported in the media? The problems with such an approach are manifold:
> i. even if the functionalist presumption were correct, this assumes that functional alternatives are unavailable, i.e. other ways of reporting X which would be equally functional.
> ii. inevitably given the functionalist premises, the themes are teased out from the data according to functionalist criteria, i.e. what are apposite examples of negative reporting which is functional to the ruling class and/or which help make an internally coherent picture. Thus examples which do not fit such a premise are disregarded.
> iii. the assumption of a unitary ruling class interest and the way in which X in a non-contradictory fashion violates it is extremely tenuous• (J.Young, [1981] 1982: 416-417).

From this follows that a simple reference to functionalist

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assumptions in critical or (certain trends within) Marxist sociology would not confirm the contention that functional explanation is legitimate. The recognition that similar errors are committed in several theoretical orientations cannot render them acceptable. It must be demonstrated, therefore, that this form of explanation is sound in its own right.

G.Cohen's argument is that one can offer a functional explanation while rejecting all functionalist postulates. Among the many views expressed in the long debate on functionalism, two basic opposing stances can be traced, between which he has mediated. We will examine them in turn. On the one hand, there is the view that the (demonstrated) [eu]functionality of an item *ipso facto* explains its existence. That is, 'function-statements', ascribing "one or more functions to something", amount to functional explanations which are thought to be answers to why-questions (G.Cohen, 1978: 253). This opinion is held by L.Wright (for fuller discussion of which, cf. G.Cohen, 1978: 253ff.) Merton has also been seen by G.Cohen as tending towards "the supposition that to establish that an item has functions is automatically to contribute to explaining it" (G.Cohen, 1978: 283; our exposition and partial revision of functional analysis here, however, does not endorse this reading of Merton: the specification of its cognitive utility and the suggested amendments have shown that, even if such a tendency could be detected, it has not been irreversible or fatal).

In order to provide functional explanation of an item, however, it does not suffice to identify some of its functions. It is one thing to explain the function of something and quite another to explain something by reference to its function. For the latter, further evidence and argument is required. Put it another way, to analyse the functions of an item does not qualify as an explanation why the item exists. On this

point, then, G.Cohen echoes the views of Merton who, in turn, followed Durkheim. It was one of Durkheim's methodological canons, that to show in what a social fact is useful, is not to explain how the social fact came about nor why it is as it is. The causes of a social phenomenon are independent from the purposes it serves[3] (cf. Durkheim, [1937] 1981: ch.5).

Statements ascribing functions, then, answer basically a what-question. To this type of enquiry corresponds functional analysis, since it is equivalent to a systematic search for objective consequences of selected social items. That such consequences cannot be treated always as causes, is obvious in the analysis of the 'Hawthorn Experiment' (cf. Merton, 1968: 120-121). This was a factory study looking at the effects of variously intensive lighting on productivity. The unexpected rise in the factory workers' morale and productivity regardless of variations in lighting was finally, after a long series of experiments, attributed to the study itself. The beneficial consequence of this 'contrived social situation' has been described by Merton as a 'latent function'. This statement, however, neither could nor intended to serve as an explanation of the experiment: Merton could not infer that "it was conducted because of its probable effect on factory morale" (G.Cohen, 1978: 258 fn.).

Functional explanation, in contrast, purports to answer why-questions. The range of this kind of questions, further, is not restricted to why a functional item 'is there'. "Why a certain event occurred, why a particular thing has a certain property, why something regularly behaves in a certain manner, and so on" (G.Cohen, 1978: 255-256), could also be explained. Functional explanation is "a consequence explanation in which the occurrence of the *explanandum* event (possession of the *explanandum* property, etc.) is functional for something or other, whatever 'functional' turns out to mean" (G.Cohen, 1978: 263).

Now, it is true that function statements (i.e. results of functional analysis) are sometimes intended or received as explanatory claims. This is possible, when the answers to what-questions can be answers to why-queries as well. But, as we have seen, this is not by definition so. In addition, the intent to investigate the one or the other category of queries carries distinct liabilities, which should not be confounded. Functional analysis, therefore, does not qualify as functional explanation as a matter of its meaning (cf. G.Cohen, 1978: 251ff.).

On the other hand, there are authors (cf. P.Cohen, [1968] 1973) who maintain that the assignment of a function to an item *cannot* be explanatory at all. The explanation of an item by reference to its functional consequences for another (or the whole) is said to be teleological and has been dismissed very often on this ground.

G.Cohen has pointed out that, because of the background conception of society as 'self-maintaining' or 'self-advancing', consequence explanation in social science is accepted in so far as it is also a functional explanation[4] (G.Cohen, 1978: 264). Functional analysis, however, allows for and reveals dysfunctional consequences too. Such consequences, then, can be approached in terms of functional explanation, only if they are simultaneously functional in some other respect. The activities of a revolutionary group, for example, may bring about social dysfunctions while being quite functional (i.e. instrumental) for the cause of changing the society.

It has been alleged that functional explanation would defy certain laws of logic, "for one thing cannot be the cause of another if it succeeds it in time" (P.Cohen, [1968] 1973: 48). This time problem, however, is only apparent. It has been demonstrated that there are cases of reverse causality (cf. Stinchcombe, 1968: 85ff.). For instance,

> Without planning, people may find consequences of behaviour satisfying. Thus, church services might be maintained without much planning to achieve theological ends, because people find the social interaction, or the respectability, satisfying (Stinchcombe, 1968: 86).

In many situations, behaviour tends to be selected by its consequences. In such cases, patterns of behaviour may be explained in terms of their effects (Stinchcombe, 1968: 87). According to G.Cohen, it is plausible to say that a religion, for example, develops and is sustained when it would contribute to the stability of a society. As he has argued,

> The religion of a society might, then, be explained in terms of this feature of the society: it requires a religion to be viable. That feature is not a consequence of having a religion, and there would be no contortion of time order in the explanation" (G.Cohen, 1978: 281).

The functional form of explanation does not propose that the cause *e* occurred because the observed effect *f* occurred, nor that *e* occurred because it caused *f*. Rather, it is suggested that *e* occurred because it would cause *f* - i.e. the reason why something happened is the fact that it had the propensity to cause the obtained effect (G.Cohen, 1982: 485-486). Behind this suggestion, however, must lie additional evidence and argument. By documenting the society's need for religion as a stabilising factor and finding out that it does have a religion fulfilling this need, we cannot automatically claim that religion is there *because* it is required. It may exist for some other reason. "Perhaps some sociologists mistake the need for further argument", G.Cohen has noted, "as a defect in functional explanation itself" (1978: 282). We can see this logic also in relation to the revolutionary group example above: a sabotage did not take place because it caused desired dysfunctions (perhaps it didn't); the rebels carried it out because of its propensity to cause these dysfunctions. This example involves purposive explanation which happens to be at the same time causal explanation. But the question is, can this

kind of explanation apply to society in general?

Moreover, when religion is explained by reference to its propensity to fulfil the society's need for stability, the question of functional requisites in abstract seems to be raised again. Consequently, G.Cohen's effort to defend functional explanation runs the risk of not meeting the valid criticisms of Merton and many others. Despite the contribution of religion to the stability of a society, the origin of religion may be explained otherwise. G.Cohen himself (1978: 281-282) has illustrated this by saying that people may have a religion, because they liked the looks of a prophet who visited them and decided to adopt his preaching. This, for G.Cohen, is a case where further evidence and argument is required in order to provide functional explanation. But if we enquire about the reasons religion emerged and we find exactly that the reason was the looks of the prophet, the explanation would not be functional, but simply causal and well evidenced. This means that, if we had applied a general argument linking the need of society for stability with the existence of religion, our functional explanation would have been proved false.

G.Cohen has gone even further and argued that one may be *certain* that an item is explained by its consequence without being in a position to answer the how-question. If, he has argued,

> the pattern of educational provision in a society evolves in a manner suitable to its changing economy, then it is reasonable to assert that education changes as it does because the changes sustain economic evolution, even when little is known about *how* the fact that an educational change would be economically propitious figures in explaining its occurrence" (G.Cohen, 1978: 286).

He has added that there are grounds for caution until a plausible fuller account is provided and that this caution is not peculiar to functional explanation. The requirement of further elaboration applies to other explanations too. It ought not to be overlooked, however, that,

although grounds for caution towards other types of explanation may well exist, the reasons are of a quite different nature. It is the particular assumptions implicit in this form of explanation that make it dubious, as they come dangerously close to the rejected functionalist postulates. So, in order to see what exactly is useful and acceptable in G.Cohen's version of functional explanation, some qualifications are needed.

G.Cohen has successfully argued that functional explanation differs from the functionalist thesis in that items are not assumed to be as they are because of their functional consequences, but they *may* be explained in terms of such consequences through additional evidence and argument. By this he has meant the collection of information about other cases where the same pattern has been observed in order to formulate consequence laws: every time A would be functional for B, A has occurred. From this can be suggested that B functionally explains A. To be sure, this form of causal explanation involves a notion of self-regulation of social systems. Self-regulation can be conceptualised without logical difficulties with regard to both intended and unintended consequences of action. Giddens has agreed that feedback loops that can be treated as outcomes of unintended consequences of action can be identified. He has also emphasised the increasing importance of 'reflexive self-regulation' in contemporary societies, whereby functional consequences are intended by strategic actors who have reasons and means to see to their realisation (Giddens, 1982: 531-532).

Although this conceptualisation legitimates the employment of functional analysis, it does not necessarily do the same for functional explanation. In order to claim that something occurred because of its propensity to produce the observed functional effects, a particular *theory* is indispensable. The connection of dispositions with final outcomes is

obviously not a matter of methodology or form. It is difficult to see how functional explanation can be applied, even in the light of suitable evidence, in advance or absence of an elaborating theory. G.Cohen, however, has argued: "We are frequently *certain* that *p* explains *q*, yet unclear *how* it explains it" (G.Cohen, 1978: 286; emphasis in original). That is,

> one can support the claim that B functionally explains A, even when one cannot suggest what the mechanism is, if instead one can point to an appropriately varied range of instances in which, whenever A would be functional for B, A appears (G.Cohen, 1982: 490).

But how can we be certain about it without an appropriate theory or general argument making the links? Functional causal assertions presuppose the elaborations (which, he agrees, are based on a theory), even if the elaboration follows chronologically (in reality, it does not). Such assertions, therefore, are theoretical, in a strict sense. The fact that they raise more questions than they answer is a problem of the particular theories and their verification. And his reading of Marx's theories, be it noted, is far from universally accepted. Marx's theories, as mentioned earlier, accept a certain interdependence among units of the society and that certain functions must be performed for a particular mode of production to exist. This, however, does not entail the assertion that once something is shown to be functional for this mode of production, it is explained (other possible causes may be legion): "Marx does not attempt to explain the origins or the persistence of some elements in terms of its being functionally required by some other element or by the structure as a whole" (Keat and Urry, 1982: 114). Furthermore, even if this were conceded, social or revolutionary changes would have to be considered as dysfunctional consequences. But this would require dysfunctional explanation which, G.Cohen has affirmed, is not accepted as a mode of explanation in social anthropology and economics.

G.Cohen has also attempted to back up his argument by referring to biology and the Darwinian theory of evolution: "Darwin showed how functional facts about the equipment of organisms contribute to explaining why they have it: the answer lies in the mechanism of chance variation and natural selection" (G.Cohen, 1982: 491). His point is that, even before Darwin's theory, one could suggest that the development of particular characteristics of organisms is explained in terms of their utility. Darwin offered a good elaboration of the mechanisms through which this was achieved. The distinction between why- and how-questions, however, is of little value and rather confusing in this context. It can be seen that these mechanisms have the explanatory power: chance variation and natural selection answer not only the how-question, but also the why-question. Without this elaboration, functional explanation was merely a *hypothesis* requiring validation.

This example helps clarify the role functional explanation can play in social theory. According to Roemer, functional explanation is an inductive method claiming that "certain correspondences hold on the basis of seemingly irrefutable and repeated historical evidence, in the absence of knowledge of the microfoundations of the correspondence" (Roemer, 1982: 513). The phrase 'in absence of knowledge' offers a clue as to the value of functional explanation. I would like to argue that it should not be taken to be a definite and indisputable causal explanation, and that its value is basically heuristic. When we are called upon to explain the origins or persistence of a social or cultural item and the materials at hand are scanty, we may venture a provisional account by reference to the functions of the item. If we had enough evidence, we would not need functional explanation. The link between functions and causes can be made when empirical evidence is lacking and by dint of some general argument

that we need to formulate. In the light of this, the provisional causal account cannot be but speculative. In this sense, G.Cohen is not right to speak of certainty. The heuristic value of this strategic device may be legitimately retained, but there is not enough reason for being certain. As Stinchcombe has put it, functional explanation can only be 'a good bet' (1968: 99). By this, we are to understand a tentative hypothesis helping to make sense of observed phenomena, within (or conducive to) a theory subjected to falsification. In the absence of conclusive evidence, a causal explanation founded on observed functional consequences in a variety of similar instances is as plausible as any other[55].

This type of procedure is not peculiar to functional explanation. Tilly, for example, has constructed what he termed a 'mobilisation model' in order to explain collective action. According to this model, 'interests', 'opportunity' and 'organisation' are crucial determinants of collective action. In historical studies, however, one is often confronted with the problem of limited sources and unreliable evidence. In such cases, Tilly has recommended that we infer the determinants (causes) of the collective action from the action itself as it occurred:

> In the absence of direct, solid evidence concerning interest, opportunity, and organisation, the indirect approach combining general arguments with observations from the action can serve us well. All we need are sound general arguments, well-documented actions, and the wit to correct the general arguments when the actions prove them wrong (Tilly, 1978: 233).

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that focusing on consequences in order to derive explanations does not negate the historical search for original causes. These causes may indeed be attributable to individual or collective (conscious or stated) aims. The valid point made by the social anthropologists, nevertheless, was that it may be the case that practices, patterns, etc. are *maintained* because of their consequences, regardless of

such original causes (often difficult to identify). In different terms, a phenomenon may be better explained by its consequences rather than immediate causes in the minds of particular people in the past. As Bloch has pointed out, "We should seriously misrepresent the problem of causes in history if we always and everywhere reduced them to a problem of motive" (Bloch, 1954: 195). Thus the fact that the specific functional alternative which is found in a society at a given time is determined by historical events (Stinchcombe, 1968: 105) is hardly denied: in order to reach a fuller account and explanation, these events must be considered.

So, to recapitulate, we have functional analysis which proposes a set of concepts and questions in order to study social phenomena and to establish the manner (manifest or latent) in which parts of a social system are interconnected. Through this mode of analysis certain phenomena which call for causal explanation are indicated. Until knowledge of the actual causes is gained, tentative functional explanations (hypotheses) may be plausibly put forward. To do this, a general argument and historical evidence on similar patterns are required.

The claims of a functional explanation, as of any other causal explanation, are subject to test against the facts (Stinchcombe, 1968: 91). As different and even conflicting theories may apply the functional form of explanation, no specific value commitments can be regarded as inherent to it. A variety of possible interpretations may ensue as, for example, concrete consequences can be regarded as serving 'ignoble ends' (Stinchcombe, 1968: 93). All this, however, should not cloud the similarity of the logic behind different analyses within different theoretical orientations. In order to further evidence this similarity we will now examine the prevalence of functional analysis and explanation in various social theories.

The Prevalence of Functional Principles in Sociology

It is maintained, therefore, that there is no necessary connection between *functionalism* on one hand, and *functional analysis* and *functional explanation*, on the other. As a result, when theorists employ a functional methodology or logic, it does not follow that they must be classified as functionalists. An overview of the literature shows that it constitutes a basic tool of large numbers of sociologists and criminologists. It is explicitly or implicitly utilised by social scientists affiliated with diverse theoretical orientations: not only by those allegedly functionalist theorists but also by some of the most fervent opponents to functionalism (such as 'new criminologists' and 'left realists').

That the critique of functionalism does not necessitate the rejection of functional analysis and explanation is illustrated by J.Young, who criticised mass media studies positing a unitary ruling-class interest. By noting that, this "method of characterising the portrayal of X in the media...inevitably plays down: contradictory reporting, variation between media synchronically and over time, and any dysfunctional tendencies which occur in its reporting" (J.Young, [1981] 1982: 417), he has implicitly joined the Mertonian spirit. His discussion of the role of mass media also highlights how the idea of correspondence is retained, without losing sight of contradictions, how interconnectedness does not imply perfect social integration:

> The importance of the mass media is that they *cater for* the desire for news stemming from *contradictions* at the heart of the system. The massive forces of control within the media *attempt to* deradicalise these anxieties by playing on only the most conservative elements in the accommodative culture (J.Young, [1981] 1982: 419; emphasis added).

In Greenwood and Young's study on the abortion law reform in 1967, in Britain, reference is made time and again to the 'needs of the system' and to ruling class interests, as factors shaping the relevant Act: "Of necessity reformism takes progressive demands and pegs them to the needs of the system" (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 108). Yet, since the variables of 'needs of the system' and 'ruling-class interests' are given careful consideration, the circularity of functionalist arguments is avoided (Downes, 1979: 8; there are, however, some problems with their argument and they will be discussed in chapter 7).

Elias has deplored the use of the concept of 'function' as "an expression for a task performed within a harmonious 'whole'". He has continued, none the less, to use it, on the condition that it, like the concept of power, "be understood as a concept of relationship". He has suggested that "We can only speak of social functions when referring to interdependencies which constrain people to a greater or lesser extent" and demonstrated how this conceptualisation connects 'function' "with power within human relationships" (Elias, 1978: 77-78).

To move to a different field, Weeks has posed the question 'why our culture has conceived of sexuality in the way it has'. He has not hesitated to agree with other social analysts that,

> All societies find it *necessary* to organise the erotic possibilities of the body in one way or another. They all *need*... to impose 'who restrictions' and 'why restrictions' to provide the permissions, prohibitions, limits and possibilities through which erotic life is organised... But they do so in *a wide variety of ways*" (Weeks, 1988: 6; emphasis added).

By adding that "The study of sexuality, therefore, provides a critical insight into the wider organisation of a culture" (Weeks, 1988: 6), he has conveyed the idea of (functional) interdependence (cf. also Weeks, 1988: 8, where mention is made of unintended consequences, planned

responses, power, and cultures of resistance).

Bowles and Gintis' ([1976] 1977) analysis of the North-American schooling system is a *par excellence* example of functional analysis and plausible functional explanation stressing both contradictions and integration. Characteristically, they have argued that,

> ...under corporate capitalism, the objectives of liberal educational reform are contradictory: it is precisely because of its role as producer of an alienated and stratified labour force that the educational system has developed its repressive and unequal structure. In the history of U.S. education, it is the integrative function which has dominated the purpose of schooling, to the detriment of the other liberal objectives (Bowles and Gintis, [1976] 1977: 48).

They have formulated, on several occasions, hypotheses of the functional form described earlier and proceeded to document them. Their arguments are often of this form:

> In sum, the available evidence seems to support our legitimisation hypothesis. The meritocratic orientation of the educational system promotes not its egalitarian function, but rather its integrative role. Education reproduces inequality by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure" (Bowles and Gintis, [1976] 1977: 114).

In his often cited 'Beyond Incrimination', Kennedy has offered a sociological account of crime and punishment from the 'conflict perspective'. By saying that "laws and judicial practices...serve only the interests of few" (Kennedy, 1976: 48), he has stated their functional consequences for particular groups. As such, the statement indicates functional analysis, without any causal implications. As he related that, however, to the State's 'causal role in crime', he provided a causal explanation of crime and punishment by reference to their consequences and on the basis of historical research and materials - whether his functional explanatory claims are true or false, is another issue; in any event, they constitute interesting hypotheses (For more examples of the

functional approach within the sociology of punishment, see among others: Rusche and Kirchheimer, 1939: passim and conclusion; Foucault, 1975: 277; P.Young, 1980: 121-126; Bottoms, 1983: 195).

The concept of dysfunction, further, is omnipresent in social theory. As Merton has remarked,

> Substantially, the same hypothesis about the dysfunctions of rapid and large-scale mobility for maintaining the solidarity and effective goal attainment of a working class was set forth by such ideologically opposed theorists as Karl Marx and Vilfredo Pareto" (Merton 1982: 97fn; on the affinities between functional methodology and Marxism, there is a rich literature: cf. for example, Merton, 1968: 93-96; Berghe, 1973; Sztompka, 1974: 168-178; Lipset, 1976; the debate on 'functionalism and Marxism' in the journal *Theory and Society*, 1982, Vol.11, No.4: 453-539).

The same jargon is used by contemporary 'left realist' criminologists focusing on Western societies: "To summarize briefly the processes of crime and crime control in the capitalist social formation, one might see it as a series of processes which are in a contradictory fashion both functional and dysfunctional" (J.Young, 1979: 21). Interestingly, the same author has argued:

> The prison, on one level, given its high recidivism rate, is a dysfunctional institution: it hardens and well nigh irrevocably stigmatises its inmates. But this feature is, of course, all the more effective in the control of those in work who have most to lose from such a stigma. Thus, the dysfunctional becomes *in part* the functional (J.Young, 1979: 22; emphasis in original).

In the sociology of deviance, where anomie theory belongs, the functional form of analysis is, indeed, impressively present (cf. Chambliss, 1975; J.Young, 1976: 18; Pearce, 1976: 57, 90, 101, 136 and passim). It is worth dwelling briefly upon Chambliss' (1976a) attempt to demonstrate the weaknesses of functional theories of crime, in contrast to the strengths of conflict theories. His critique of Erikson's (1966) analysis, however, shows his own (not admitted) preference for functional

analysis. In sum, Chambliss has dismissed Erikson's suggestion that several 'crime waves' in the 17th century among the Puritan settlement in New England "were in effect created by the community in order to help establish the moral boundaries of the settlement" (Chambliss, 1976a: 11). No doubt, if this consequence of deviance is presented as the cause of deviance as well, the explanation is open to challenge - perhaps (but not necessarily) through a better one. Chambliss has reinterpreted the available historical evidence to provide his own:

> Deviance was indeed created for the consequences it had. But the consequences were not 'to establish moral boundaries'; rather, they aided those in power to maintain their position. ...Puritan society created crime waves to help the ruling stratum maintain control of the community" (Chambliss, 1976a: 15).

It is clear as noonday that Chambliss' proposition is equally functional in form: the logic of the hypothesis is exactly the same, the only difference being in the general argument on the basis of which consequences are linked to causes. In fact, if he wished to argue that his alternative hypothesis is *the* explanation of deviance in that period (and in general), he may be rightly seen as 'covert' or 'left' functionalist (which is not the same as functional analyst). What he has actually succeeded in revealing is that the functional methodology underlies conflict theories and that it can and must be separated from the theory of functionalism.

These are but a few illustrations of the extent to which the functional mode of analysis and the formulation of tentative (or working) hypotheses on the basis of its results have pervaded contemporary social theories. This indicates its value and validity, and that the exclusion of all functional notions from social science would impoverish rather than benefit the latter.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind the distinction between the functional method and functional theories, the value of anomie theory can be better assessed. It can be seen that the questions it raises and the hypotheses it puts forward are based on functional analysis, rather than on the discarded set of functionalist assumptions. It involves no effort to explain deviance by its contribution to society. Rather, it seeks to reveal significant connections between certain features of the society and the fact that people deviate from prevailing values and norms. Deviance is analysed as a consequence of cultural emphases on goals, such as monetary success, while possibilities for achieving these goals are relatively restricted. The theory points to social processes conducive to situations, where the strength of established norms is weakened. Socio-cultural conditions are brought to the fore not only as sources of conformity, but of deviance as well - although the focus is primarily on the latter.

This approach, however, does not imply what Matza would call 'hard determinism', but a 'soft deterministic' view according to which, people "vacillate between choice and constraint" (Matza, 1964: 7). It allows for human freedom, albeit within certain limits, and offers an imagery of possible choices. It avoids an 'oversocialised conception of man', by concentrating on patterns of behaviour and by providing for a range of variability (cf. Merton, 1972: 27-28). Behind Merton's theory is the idea that "there is a *tendency for, not a full determination of*, socially patterned differences in the perspectives, preferences, and behaviour of people variously located in the social structure" (Merton, 1972: 27; emphasis in original). Thus, the theory does not exclude concerns about processes, whereby social structures are reproduced and/or changed.

Moreover, a careful reading of Merton's theory can show its compatibility with theoretical perspectives rejecting social integration models of society. As Moore has put it, the theory is "a profound disavowal of a social integration model, for it goes beyond a mere recognition of the propensity to sin and identifies society as an instigator of sin" (Moore, 1978: 330). It has been noted many a time that it does allow for certain analyses of conflict (cf. Downes and Rock, 1982: 103-104), and that it recognises social contradictions and discontent (J.Young, 1986: 18). Anomie theory is, in fact, an analysis of internal discrepancies, an (unintended) outcome of which is social deviance. As has been pointed out, "at the basis of the theory is the internal contradiction - a dialectical relation in that societal institutions provoke their antithesis in the form of departures from, and attacks upon, themselves" (Wright and Hilbert, 1980: 208).

It may be argued, therefore, that Merton's theory exemplifies a valid, respectable and legitimate mode of analysis in social science. The methodological framework underlying anomie theory is certainly functional in form, but this should be considered in isolation from functionalism as a theory or ideology. This essential distinction should allow for an open-minded and unprejudiced assessment of anomie theory, by freeing it from the shortcomings of the functionalist legacy. The fact that the theory is built on functional analysis is by no means a defect; on the contrary, it turns out to be one of its merits.

It may be suggested that a theory or study covering some, but not all, of the questions proposed by functional analysis, is not necessarily faulty. If its limited claims are valid, they may be compatible with those made in other studies and approaches. It is maintained throughout this thesis that, what anomie theory has achieved, is formulate some

hypotheses and set a research agenda with regard to socially produced patterns of deviance. The scope of the theory may be gradually enlarged, and the research agenda can be enriched, by means of consolidations with empirical data and the inclusion of additional variables.

Merton's writings on social structure and anomie have often been read not as a theory, in the strict sense, but as "a series of imaginative hypotheses which retain reasonable promise of further empirical and theoretical specification" (Mulkay, 1971: 112). Cole (1975: 185) has seen in it "a research programme which Merton developed over a thirty-year period". One of the principal aims is to show that the formulation of Merton's theory is still in progress, and to point to directions of further development and possible extensions. In the following chapter, then, the objective is to demonstrate the developing character of anomie theory and to prepare the ground for subsequent elaborations.

Notes

1. This bears upon the divide between the causal and the purposive approaches to collective behaviour in sociological analysis. Tilly has suggested that their synthesis is desirable, but has also emphasised how difficult this is to achieve (Tilly, 1978: 6, 228-231).

2. Arguing that functional analysis represents a valid methodological framework should not be taken to mean that research can start without any theoretical background. It is not to support an empiricist way of looking at society. What is suggested is that the puzzles offered by this mode of analysis are not to be ignored by social theories which can be then partially confirmed, amended or rejected. Instead of denying the necessity of interaction between theory and research, the proposed mode

of analysis is a tool reinforcing it.

3. It is interesting to note that (at least some of) Durkheim's work is not to be considered functionalist, because of his insistence upon the distinction between efficient cause and function (cf. Garland, 1983: 60-61; Durkheim, 1983: 117-118). Other commentators, however, saw him as breaching his own rule by analysing beneficial consequences of punishment, division of labour and religion so, as to partly account for their existence (cf. P.Cohen, [1968] 1973: 35-37; Abrahamson, 1978: 23).

4. Otherwise, plausible consequence explanations of dysfunctional consequences would necessitate a background conception of 'self-destructiveness', which may be posited as an unconscious drive in psychoanalysis.

5. It is noteworthy that, although generating this type of hypotheses is much in line with the modest ambitions of middle-range theorising, this mode of explanation is also relevant to the formation of more general theories.

CHAPTER 3

MERTON'S ANOMIE THEORY: A DISCUSSION

Introduction

The theory in question was originally set forth in the seminal paper 'Social Structure and Anomie' (Merton, 1938), which has been "probably been more frequently cited and reprinted than any paper in sociology" (Cole, 1975: 175; cf. also Sztompka, 1987: 1). Since then, however, Merton himself as well as others have made substantial contributions to it, so that it is best considered a *developing* theory. It would be mistaken, consequently, to regard this or later formulations of it as the definitive or final version. A failure to acknowledge its character of a developing theory is liable to entail a misrepresentation of it. In addition, the theory has rarely been examined in the context of Merton's general work. This is partly, I believe, the reason why, although anomie theory has become very famous, some quite important elements of it have been misconceived and misinterpreted, or have not received the required attention. There is always a place reserved for it in criminological textbooks, but reference is usually made only to this paper or to its revised version in Merton's *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Merton, 1968), and not much attention is paid to his other writings.

The first aim, therefore, of this chapter is to rectify this and to present Merton's anomie theory, not only as it was originally formulated in 'Social Structure and Anomie' (Merton, 1938), but as it now stands in

the light of subsequent amendments and extensions. It will be, thus, suggested that the formulation of the theory is still in progress, it is still unfolding and growing.

Parallel to the first, the second objective of the present chapter is to discuss briefly some relevant literature and critiques that the developing anomie theory has called forth. It is stressed that Merton's theory does not deal only with crime, as is often thought or implied. Its chief concern is to account for socially produced deviance. It can be applied to many particular areas (e.g. the institution of science, organisations, etc.), as well as to society in general. Because the whole body of empirical tests (in particular contexts) with positive results and theoretical contributions that have been attempted is both enormous and highly heterogeneous (for bibliography, cf. Cole and Zuckerman, 1964; also in Bohle, 1975; and in Orrú, 1987b), the review cannot be but limited and selective, and mainly those made or commented upon by Merton himself are taken into account for the present purposes.

Outline and discussion of the theory

Merton's anomie theory represents an attempt to determine how social and cultural conditions generate pressure for socially deviant behaviour upon people differentially located in the social structure. Socially deviant behaviour, it should be underlined, is considered "just as much a product of social structure as conformist behaviour" (Merton, 1968: 275).

Reacting against biological and psychological perspectives, Merton has dismissed the conception of deviance described as biological 'leakage'

(cf. Erikson, 1962), whereby social control fails to prevent biological impulses from breaking through. He wished his theory to be sociological, and declared: "we look at variations in *rates* of deviant behaviour, not at its incidence" (Merton, 1968: 186; emphasis in original). The bearing of biological and personality differences upon the incidence of deviant behaviour is not denied. But, this is not the issue here; the focus is rather on *patterns* of behaviour (Merton, 1968: 186). From this as well as from the fact that infringement of social codes is portrayed as 'normal', it appears that Merton is at one with Durkheim's notion of the 'normality' of crime.

For Durkheim, however, 1) criminality is normal, provided that it does not reach or surpass a certain level; 2) this, however, did not necessarily mean that the criminal is a biologically and psychologically normal individual (cf. Durkheim, [1937] 1981: 66). Merton shifted away from Durkheim's use of the term in both these respects evidently, when he maintained that breaking social norms is normal, in the sense that it constitutes an expected, if not culturally approved, response to particular social conditions (basically, he analysed the egoistic environment pertaining in the American and other societies). By positing that deviance is "the normal reaction of normal people to abnormal conditions" (Merton, 1968: 186fn), it is suggested that (1) even in periods of crisis, and all the more so then, when rates of deviant behaviour would be higher, it should be considered as 'normal', and (2) that it does not necessarily have to do with special characteristics of those who engage in such behaviour. Deviant behaviour, therefore, is regarded sociologically as "a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realising these aspirations" (Merton, 1968: 188), and this constitutes one of the

fundamental hypotheses in anomie theory.

In a sense, then, the theory is aetiological. It does not pose, however, the positivist question 'why do people become criminal', which carries with it the perception of public issues as private problems. Anomie theory is intended as a corrective to the reductionist tendencies of positivism, and is not based on the legal definition of crime; it does not conceive of deviants as a different sort of people. It centres on an analysis of deviance rather than crime and, to the extent that they coincide, endeavours to answer the question 'what are the social origins or causes of crime'. By establishing *socially produced deviance* as its object of study, anomie theory reverses the positivist tendency to individualise social problems. Although it is stated in terms of 'individual adaptations', it is a systematic imagery of possible responses to problems *engendered by the social structure*.

In recent times, a trend can be observed among criminologists to drift away "from making causal sense of criminological data and toward a direct concern for 'doing something' about crime" (Cressey, 1978: 176-7). Cressey went on to deplore the fact that,

> rather than trying to develop better ideas about why crimes flourish, for example, these criminologists...seem satisfied with a technological criminology whose main concern is for showing policy makers how to repress criminals and criminal justice workers more efficiently (Cressey, 1978: 179).

This kind of criminology, baptised as 'administrative', and 'left idealism' have been castigated for "attempting the impossible, to explain the crime control whilst ignoring the causes of crime itself - the other half of the equation" (J.Young, 1986: 20).

Further, as Platt and Takagi (1977) have pointed out, "a decline of interest in the causes of crime leads to penal policy which eliminates

sociological considerations from penal procedure, a characteristic of fascist states, not democracies" (quoted in Cressey, 1978: 177). In this light, anomie theory's concern with the causality of deviance and crime, which has been lacking yet much needed, should be regarded as a merit.

The theory is also concerned, admittedly much less explicitly, with issues of social dynamics and change. It embarks upon bridging the gap between statics and dynamics by the use of the concept of "strain, tension, contradiction, or discrepancy between the component elements of social and cultural structure" (Merton, 1968: 176). And, Merton has added, such strains may be "dysfunctional for the social system in its then existing form; they may also be instrumental in leading to changes in that system. In any case, they exert pressure for change" (Merton, 1968: 176). It is, of course, not suggested that these strains alone make for change in the social structure, but that they 'do represent a theoretically strategic course of change'.

Merton's general approach stipulates that "*social structures generate both change within the structure and change of the structure*" (Merton, 1976j: 35-36; emphasis in original). The question of social change is not ignored in his various analyses[4] (cf. Loomis and Loomis, [1961] 1965: 315; Sztompka, 1986: 200-202). It is true that his anomie theory does not address this question at length. Nevertheless, the theory does not deny its importance, given that it is "oriented towards problems of social dynamics and change" (Merton, 1968: 176; cf. Sztompka, 1987: 3 and 16-18).). In this sense, the charge that anomie theory only deals with statics and ignores or plays down the role of social change (cf. Schacht, 1982) is off the mark.

Nowhere in the theory is there a positive or negative evaluation of deviance in abstracto. This is so also in American subcultural theories,

which followed on the Mertonian framework and tradition (S.Cohen, 1980: xxv). And although one could find somewhat ambiguous passages that might create the opposite impression[2], this is indeed confirmed by Merton: "Now, it is not that...I construe 'deviant' (or nonconforming) behaviour as socially undesirable... Men honoured by posterity often were regarded by their contemporaries as dangerous deviants" (Merton, 1959: 181). To borrow J.Young's terms, the theory implies neither a positivist condemnation of the deviant nor a 'new deviancy theory appreciation' of deviant realities from the perspective of the controlled not the controllers (cf. J.Young, 1986: 7-8).

Social change that may result at any level from patterns of deviant behaviour is, thus, neither welcomed nor condemned; and this is typical of Merton with his avoidance of explicit social critique and his desire to analyse social issues and contradictions in a detached fashion (cf. Appendix: vi-vii). This, on the other hand, does not disallow one the possibility to carry through the analysis to its logical extent and exercise well evidenced criticisms.

Basic to Merton's scheme is an analytical distinction between social structure and cultural structure. Social structure is defined as "the organised set of social relationships in which members of the society or group are variously implicated". Cultural structure is then defined as "the organised set of normative values governing behaviour which is common to members of a designated society or group" (Merton, 1968: 216). It must be emphasized that the above distinction is analytical only; in reality the two are, of course, inter-connected and cannot be distinguished. Such a distinction is, besides, not peculiar to Merton; others have drawn it in similar fashions (e.g. Firth, 1951: 27, where he has distinguished between culture and social structure).

Lemert's point on the risk of reification of the concept of culture is a serious one and needs some consideration:

> The common tendency is to reify what can be no more than a mental construct and to give it properties appropriate to an order of phenomena, different from that which it describes, i.e., in Merton's usage, culture 'defines, regulates and controls'. Inescapable circularity lies in the use of culture as a summary to describe modal tendencies in the behaviour of human beings and, at the same time, as a term of designating the causes of the modal tendencies. The empirically more tenable alternative is that only human beings define, regulate, and control behaviour of other human beings (Lemert, 1964: 60).

But, it is submitted, it does not really involve a reification and circularity to say that the culture influences - rather than determines - people's reactions to situations in everyday life. Occasionally, in the face of the structural contradictions described by Merton, people take original initiatives, follow alternative options, and in turn reshape, to various degrees, that culture. Such interactional process does include the human factor. Merton can in fact be read as implying an ontological conception of society and culture as realities which amount to more than the aggregate of individuals, but definitely dependent upon individuals and groups (cf. Merton, 1972: 27-28; Sztompka, 1986: 125-126).

A distinction akin to the one above, indicating its methodological usefulness, is applied by Merton to the study of reciprocal influences between science and society, when he separated out "science as institutionalised ethos (its normative aspect) and science as social organisation (its patterns of interaction among scientists)" (Merton, 1979: 22).

Two elements of the cultural structure are further distinguished: 1) culturally defined goals, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of society; and 2) definition of acceptable modes of attainment of these goals - that is, regulatory norms and

institutionalised means (Merton, 1968: 186-7).

Now, goals and norms can vary independently, and this may bring about a malintegrated state of which two polar types can be conceived: One is a state in which particular goals are so heavily stressed, that there is comparatively little concern about the institutionally prescribed methods of reaching those goals. And the second polar type "is found where activities originally conceived as instrumental are transmuted into self-contained practices, lacking further objectives", and where "[s]heer conformity becomes a central value" (Merton, 1968: 187-188). These two polar cases are conceived and should be regarded only as 'ideal types', in the Weberian sense. As Merton has noted "between these extreme types are societies which maintain a rough balance between emphases upon cultural goals and institutionalised practices, and these constitute the integrated and relatively stable, though changing societies" (Merton, 1968: 187-8).

Anomie theory is principally concerned with the first kind of malintegrated society, trends towards which can be found in the contemporary American and other industrial societies (cf. Orrú, 1987a). In a society, where it is mainly the results that count, the line between legitimate and illegitimate means for 'getting ahead' tends to be obscured. It is not merely a 'lack of opportunity' that generates high rates of deviant behaviour; where class structure is combined with differential class symbols of accomplishment anomic strains towards deviance are minimal. It is by no means suggested simply that poverty and deprivation equal high deviance and crime rates. It is in a society which places a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent for *all* its members,

> when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain *common* symbols of success *for the population at large* while its social structure rigorously restricts or completely eliminates access to approved

> modes of acquiring those symbols *for a considerable part of the same population*, that antisocial behaviour ensues on a considerable scale (Merton, 1968: 200; emphasis in original).

This, of course, as will be stressed again and analysed in more detail in the subsequent chapters, does not imply that all members of the group or society will in fact adopt exactly the same cultural goals and to the same degree. The theory is concerned mainly with those who have actually set themselves targets beyond available legitimate means, as a result of such cultural messages. Merton has repeatedly underlined[9] that, "if the communications addressed to generations of Americans continue to reiterate the gospel of success, it does not follow that Americans in all groups, regions and class strata have uniformly assimilated this set of values" (Merton, 1968: 224). And later, "full or overwhelming consensus in a complex, differentiated society exists for *only a limited number of* values, interests, and derived standards for conduct" (Merton, 1971: 796; emphasis in original).

In addition, in his paper on 'Discrimination and the American Creed', Merton has remarked that even the American Creed is changeable and not accepted throughout his society:

> It would be a mistaken sociological assertion, however, to suggest that the creed is a fixed and static cultural constant, unmodified in the course of time, just as it would be an error to imply that as an integral part of the culture, it evenly blankets all subcultures of the national society. It is indeed dynamic, subject to change and in turn promoting change in other spheres of culture and society. It is, moreover, unevenly distributed throughout the society, being institutionalized as an integral part of local culture in some regions of the society and rejected in others" (Merton, 1976g: 190; cf. also at p.198).

Thus, criticisms maintaining that anomie theory depicts society as consensual and monolithic are, clearly, misplaced (e.g. Lemert, 1964: 64; Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 105; Schacht, 1982).

It is argued that *any* cultural over-emphasis on goals attenuates conformity to institutional norms governing behaviour designed to reach these goals. It is further argued that deviant behaviour may be viewed as a result or symptom of the disjunction between culturally induced goals and aspirations, and 'socially structured avenues for the attainment of these goals'. When the cultural structure calls for behaviour and attitudes that the social structure precludes, there is a strain towards the breakdown of the norms. Anomie, then, is "a breakdown in the cultural structure, occuring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals, and socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them" (Merton, 1968: 216). It must be underlined that anomie is not thought to be absolute; 'anomie' is shorthand for 'anomic trends' or tendencies, which may develop not only in society at large, but also in particular contexts and in relation to particular sets of values and norms.

It can be seen that the theory takes into consideration and analyses internal contradictions of the social structure. Anomie and high rates of deviant behaviour are viewed as induced by such contradictions. As has been pointed out (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 426; Gouldner, [1973] 1981: xi; Sztompka, 1986: 26-27), one of the merits of anomie theory is its affinity with Marxian assumptions, and its openness to the internal contradictions of capitalist culture, although Merton himself nowhere refers to capitalism as such.

Merton has noted that the disjunction mentioned above is not the sole process making for the social condition of anomie (Merton, 1968: 217). In another essay, he has suggested three more situations, which may be conducive to anomie: 1) where there is a system of contradictory norms; 2) where there are many values but individuals are not given any

way of determining which is appropriate; and 3) where some norms are insufficiently defined in relation to others so that this ambiguity may result in difficulties in predicting environmental responses (cf. Merton, 1956). This indicates that Merton's anomie theory does not visualise the individual as an "agent making adaptations pointed towards a consistent value order" (Lemert, 1964: 68). It is true that these sources of anomie and deviance have not been explicitly incorporated in the basic theoretical scheme. In his 'The Ambivalence of Physicians', however, Merton has illustrated the case of a system with contradictory norms:

> ...for each norm there tends to be at least one coordinate norm, which is, if not inconsistent with the other, at least sufficiently different as to make it difficult for the student and the physician to live up to them both. ...medical education can be conceived as facing the task of enabling students to learn *how to blend* incompatible or potentially incompatible norms into a functionally consistent whole" (Merton, 1976b: 66; emphasis in original).

The argument is not that there is an inevitable conflict within each pair of norms, but only a potential one. Even so, adds Merton, the "ability to blend these potential opposites into a stable pattern of professional behaviour must be learned, and it seems from the data in hand that this is one of the most difficult tasks confronting the medical student" (Merton, 1976b: 69). It is interesting to note that such difficulties may not lead to anomic trends, but they may help account for occasional deviations.

It is, anyhow, contended that it is principally the disjunction between the social and cultural structure that creates the strain toward anomie and deviant behaviour. But, what is after all meant by deviant behaviour? It is beyond doubt that it does not coincide with definitions of crime and delinquency: "the typology of deviant behaviour is far from being confined to the behaviour which is ordinarily described as criminal

or delinquent" (Merton, 1968: 235). In his article 'Social Problems and Social Disorganisation', Merton has made more explicit what he means by 'deviant behaviour': it

> refers to conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social statuses. The same behaviour may be construed as deviant or conforming, depending upon the social statuses of the people exhibiting the behaviour. ...deviant behaviour cannot be described in the abstract but must be related to the norms that are socially defined as appropriate and morally binding for people occupying various statuses" (Merton, 1971: 824).

It is noteworthy that this (somehow relativistic) definition of deviant behaviour shows some affinity with that adopted by labelling theorists, given that 'the same behaviour may be construed as deviant or conforming' (cf. also Merton, 1976g: 199). We will return to this point presently.

On the other hand, reference is made to behaviour, conduct and norms, but there is no mention of *attitude*. The theory, none the less, clearly deals with attitudinal deviance as well. This is manifestly the case, for example, in the analysis of the 'ritualist' type of adaptation (ritualist, as we shall see below, would be someone who abandons the cultural goal but continues to abide by the norms). Here Merton has appeared to hesitate: "Whether this is described as deviant behaviour or not, it clearly represents a departure from the cultural model in which men are obliged to strive actively, preferably through institutionalised procedures, to move onward and upward in the social hierarchy" (Merton, 1968: 204). According to the above definition of deviant behaviour it would not be described as such. But it does constitute a deviation, an attitudinal deviance.

The distinction between attitudes and behaviour is of great import and Merton is at pains on various occasions to get it across: "It should

not be forgotten that *overt* actions may deceive; that they, just as 'derivations' or 'speech reactions' may be deliberately designed to disguise or to conceal private attitudes" (Merton, 1976i: 261).

And again, in connection with the American Creed: "Stated in formal sociological terms, this asserts that attitudes and overt behaviour vary independently. *Prejudicial attitudes need not coincide with discriminatory behaviour" and further, "overt behavioural deviation (or conformity) may signify importantly different situations, depending upon the underlying motivations"* (Merton, 1976g: 192 and 197; emphasis in original). So, it is suggested to bear in mind that, when Merton refers to 'strain toward deviant behaviour', deviant attitude is included. It appears, therefore, that Lemert was not in actual disagreement with Merton (on this point) when he remarked, in his critical review of anomie theory, that two "resultant actions of conformity or deviation may be overly similar but subjectively quite different" (Lemert, 1964: 63). Furthermore, the above distinction between attitude and overt behaviour is helpful in further clarifying the concept of anomie.

There seems, in fact, to be some conceptual confusion: it has been quite explicitly stated that the framework set out in the essay 'Social Structure and Anomie' "is designed to provide one systematic approach to the analysis of social and cultural sources of deviant behaviour" (Merton, 1968: 186). In other words, anomie theory's primary aim is to account for deviant behaviour. Anomie, therefore, should be a factor contributing to deviance. But, if anomie is defined as the "withdrawal of allegiance from one or another part of prevailing social standards" (Merton, 1964: 218) and 'deviant behaviour refers to conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social statuses', how are the two concepts distinguishable? And, more importantly, which one occurs,

chronologically, first? If deviance comes first, because of the disjunction between cultural ends and available legitimate modes of advancement towards them, and widespread deviance ends up signifying anomie, then anomie adds little to an understanding of the former. In addition, if deviant behaviour is supposed to be a response (or a 'solution') to strains experienced by social actors, it could not occur before a problem is encountered; else, "the experience of anomie is pre-empted. It becomes a purely structural property without subjective counterpart" (Downes and Rock, 1982: 113; cf. also Lindesmith and Gagnon, 1964; Schacht, 1982). To avoid a 'chicken and egg' controversy and tautologies in the theory, some clarification seems to be on order.

The confusion is mainly due to certain ambiguities in Merton's condensed writings (and Sztompka's effort to identify 'the four concepts of anomie' brings in more clouds, instead of shedding light on this matter; cf. Sztompka, 1986: 174-177 and 1987). His own emphasis on the idea that socially generated frustrations lead to deviance has earned him the title of a 'strain theorist' (cf. Hirchi, 1969; Kornhauser, 1978), and has obscured the 'non-stress' implications of his conceptual framework. Cullen has pointed out that commentators, by "reducing his paradigm of social structure and anomie exclusively to a stress or pressure theory, [they] have overlooked Merton's distinct, *nonstress theory of the relationship of anomie to deviant behaviour*" (Cullen, 1984: 81; emphasis added). I would suggest that there are not two distinct theories, but two *components* of anomie theory which should be kept analytically separate. Implicitly contained in Merton's analyses are various complex processes of interaction, which can be roughly sketched as follows:

A) Certain features of the social structure - such as malintegrations between the cultural structure and the social structure,

or cultural over-emphases on particular goals entailing concommitant under-emphases on the means employed for their attainment - create pressures for deviations from established standards. Cultures, in which "the yardstick of 'success' is used to measure oneself as well as others", and "the ego of the 'unsuccessful'" is continuously battered, promote considerable stress and strain (Merton, 1946: 159-160; cf. also Faunce, 1970: 406). The first to withdraw their support from conventional standards are those "most vulnerable to *the stresses resulting from contradictions* between their socially induced aspirations and poor access to the opportunity structure..." (Merton, 1964: 235; emphasis added).

B) Once patterns of deviance emerge as alternative models of action, and become known, people's commitment to prevailing, but often violated, norms is weakened, and varying degrees of anomie ensue in designated social contexts (or in the society at large). Anomie does not represent pressures felt by the members of a collectivity, when they encounter problematic situations; rather, it describes a social environment, in which people's commitment to dominant values and norms has diminished, as this is perceived by social actors, who are implicated in processes of interaction:

> It is not one's private estrangement from the goals and rules laid down by society that constitutes anomie - that... is the individual attribute of anomia [this concept will be examined later in this thesis] - but *the visible estrangement from these goals and rules among others one confronts* (Merton, 1964: 234-235; emphasis added).

C) As the legitimacy of specific norms decreases, given the opportunity, people may engage in deviant acts, even without having to confront any stress-promoting problems. As Cullen has noticed, "*once anomie sets in* and controls break down, *a person need not necessarily experience the frustration induced by blocked aspirations to violate moral*

boundaries that have been rendered impotent" (Cullen, 1984: 82; emphasis added). This seems to be the gist in Merton's suggestion that,

> anomic individuals are more apt to engage in deviant behaviour, the higher the degree of anomie in the social system. *This is also true for the non-anomics...non-anomics in a collectivity having a high degree of anomie more often engage in deviant behaviour than anomics in a stably organised collectivity which lends psychological and social support to them* (Merton, 1964: 230; emphasis added).

It was A.Cohen's study of the *Delinquent Boys* (1955) that sensitised Merton to the "inter-play between anomie and deviant behaviour" (Merton, 1964: 233). It became clear, then, that the Mertonian scheme "*requires* [the] *study of the interaction between deviant and conforming* members of collectivities with differing degrees of anomie" (Merton, 1964: 235; emphasis added). The recognition of this 'requirement' provided a basis for consolidating Merton's theory with other approaches to deviance focusing on processes of interaction, such as Sutherland's 'differential association' (Merton, 1964: 233; cf. also Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 253-255; the feasibility of such a consolidation is evidenced by the work of Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

Moreover, this reading of Merton's theory is consistent with the general framework of functional analysis, which proposes that studies of social phenomena will have to consider, to borrow Berger's ([1963] 1988) terms, 'society in man' *and* 'man in society'. This reading, further, indicates that the analysis of social interactions is not merely complementary to anomie theory, but is an essential part of it; otherwise, its implications cannot be fully appreciated. Merton has pointed out the necessity of a development in this direction, and paved the way by briefly highlighting the inter-play between anomie and deviance. Some steps forward are attempted in the second part of the thesis.

For the moment, however, it suffices to summarise the point about

the 'anomic' or 'non-stress' component of anomie theory. The 'withdrawal of allegiance from one or another part of prevailing social standards' is basically *attitudinal*. Anomie is a 'statistical concept' (cf. Appendix: xiv) implying that a substantial number of people do not regard prevailing values and norms as binding. Sykes and Matza (1957) have observed that social norms and rules only constitute 'guides of action' and not 'categorical imperatives'. The concept of anomie is quite relevant in this respect, for it means that their guiding power is diminished, to various degrees. The higher the degree of anomie, then, the more frequently people should be expected to deviate from socially established norms and rules. On the other hand, this does not mean that the relation between anomie and deviance is conceived as linear and 'one way'. Rising rates of deviant behaviour may enlarge the extent of anomie by lessening the legitimacy of institutional norms for others in the group or society.

Although social control has not occupied a central place in the Mertonian scheme, its importance has not been denied. As he has noted, "anomie and mounting rates of deviant behaviour can be conceived as interacting in a process of social and cultural dynamics, with cumulatively disruptive consequences for the normative structure, *unless counteracting mechanisms of control are called into play*" (Merton, 1968: 234; emphasis added). It must be conceded, however, that Merton confined the role of social control mechanisms to counteracting this process. This highlights an important limitation of anomie theory, because, as labelling theorists have pointed out, such mechanisms may generate deviance as well. Following stigmatisation, occasional deviants may engage in deviant careers.

Merton has illustrated his theory mainly with the American Dream Ideology. The cultural accent on success serves as an "opening clue for

the sociological diagnosis of anomie" (Merton, 1964: 217). This goal is regarded as appropriate for *all* members of the society, regardless of their origins and position, and is significantly more widespread than in societies where ascribed status imposes certain limitations. The egalitarian discourse, the assertion that everyone can make it 'from the log-cabin to the White House', is an encouragement for indefinite striving for monetary-success, for strongly desiring 'just a bit more'.

It is maintained that the message that is being passed on by the "major agencies shaping the personality structure and goal formation of Americans" (Merton, 1968: 191) - i.e. the family, the school, the workplace and the mass media - is that it is not simply a right but, often, a duty to retain the success-goal even at the risk of repeated frustration (cf. Merton, 1946: 153). So, the three cultural axioms are: "First, all should strive for the same lofty goals since these are open to all; second, present seeming failure is but a way-station to ultimate success; and third, genuine failure consists only in the lessening or withdrawal of ambition" (Merton, 1968: 193). The main source of anomie, therefore, is this cultural exaggeration of the success-goal which "leads men to withdraw emotional support from the rules" (Merton 1968: 190).

It must be reiterated, incidentally, that, despite the fact that the chase of success goals is so crucial to the analysis, irrational behaviour is not left out. Merton has indicated that people's reaction to problematic situations and "acute pressures created by the discrepancy between culturally induced goals and socially structured opportunities ...may involve a considerable degree of frustration and of non-rational and irrational behaviour" (Merton, 1968: 232). Even when someone's action is or seems to be purposive, it cannot be logically assumed that it is always rational. "Above all", Merton has suggested, "it must not be

inferred that purposive action implies 'rationality' of human action (that persons always use the objectively most adequate means for the attainment of their end)" (Merton, 1976e: 147).

It is very often thought that anomie theory only deals with the monetary success goal; but this is surely not the case:

> The theory holds that *any* extreme emphasis upon achievement - whether this be scientific productivity, accumulation of personal wealth or, by a small stretch of the imagination, the conquests of a Don Juan - will attenuate conformity to the institutional norms governing behaviour designed to achieve the particular form of 'success', especially among those who are socially disadvantaged in the competitive race" (Merton 1968: 220; emphasis in original).

Merton himself has cited studies (1968: 235), which have found it applicable to a large range of fields: Interdisciplinary research in science (Bennis, 1956), mass-communications behaviour (Riley and Flowerman, 1951), deviations from religious orthodoxy (Rosenthal, 1954), conformity and deviation from social norms in a military prison (Cloward, 1956). More recently, Vaughan ([1983] 1985) has also employed the Mertonian conceptualisations in her analysis of unlawful organisational behaviour. And, to take an example from W.Germany, it has provided an adequate framework for understanding the formation of drug sub-cultures in the pursuit of non-material culturally induced ends, such as the development of personality, brotherhood and freedom (Bohle, 1983: 246-247).

Furthermore, anomie theory is not centring only upon society in general; it can be and has been applied to particular social institutions, which have their own characteristic values, norms and organisation. Merton has applied this theoretical scheme to the study of problems confronted by people working in the media:

> The practitioner in propaganda is at once confronted by a dilemma: he must either forego the use of certain

> techniques of persuasion which will help him obtain the immediate end-in-view or violate moral codes. ...The pressure of the immediate objective tends to push him toward the first of these alternatives" (Merton, 1946: 185).

Merton's analysis of the social institution of science has provided another illustration of the theory. In this context, he has argued that, the "institutional values of modesty and humility are apparently not always enough to counteract both the institutional emphasis upon originality and the actual workings of the system of allocating rewards" (Merton, 1957: 649). An over-emphasis on the goal of recognition for original discovery may "lead by gradations from these rare practices of outright fraud to more frequent practices just beyond the the edge of acceptability..." (Merton, 1957: 651). This "tension between these kindred values", which "creates an inner conflict among scientists who have internalized both of them" (Merton 1976a: 36), is the type of problems that anomie theory can account for (cf. also Merton, 1972: 18, where war is analysed as another source of stress, which leads to violations of the values and norms of universalism, as scientists allow "their status as nationals to dominate their status as scientists").

These statements seem to suggest that only those who experience frustration because of a failure to achieve a highly prized cultural end, the unsuccessful, are susceptible to respond by deviant behaviour. The theoretically significant deviance of the successful would not only be left totally unexplained, but it would also constitute evidence contradicting the theory. Although Merton has mainly stressed the problems faced by the under-privileged, and poor access to legitimate opportunities for success, some of his analyses have hinted at possibilities of extending his arguments for the successful. As he has remarked,

> it is not only that *their own* Faustian aspirations are ever escalating, becoming unlimited and insatiable, and so, even when achieved, landing them no nearer to heaven (the point that Durkheim seized upon). It is also that, under still poorly understood conditions, more and more is expected of these men by others and *this creates its own measure of stress. Less often than one might believe, is there room for repose at the top* (Merton, 1964: 221-2; emphasis added).

It is again not the frustration of the unsuccessful that is focused upon, when it is argued that

> the tide of expectations often rises disproportionately to each advance toward realizing collective values in practice. There develops an inflationary spiral of expectation, which makes for anomie and multitudinous expressions of discontent in a comparatively opulent society" (Merton, 1971: 818).

There are also references to the "history of great American fortunes", which is "threaded with *strains toward institutionally dubious innovation* as is attested by many tributes to the Robber Barons" (Merton, 1968: 195; emphasis added). It must be noted, however, that Merton has chiefly concentrated on the 'anomie of deprivation' (cf. Merton, 1964: 219), and that the potential relevance of his analysis to the deviance of the upper social strata is largely left unexplored. This has let commentators speak of a 'class bias' in the theory (e.g. Thio, 1975). Nevertheless, subsequent chapters will attempt to show that such a bias is not inherent in the theory.

An assumption made by default by anomie theory was that access to illegitimate means for reaching an enshrined goal is uniformly available, irrespective of position in the social structure. It was Cloward (1959) who inquired about variations in access to valued goals by illegitimate means. As Merton has acknowledged, Cloward "thus generalises the notion of social-structural differences in ease or difficulty of role-performance, to hold for both socially legitimate and illegitimate roles.

Pressures for deviant behaviour are construed as a function of access to both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity-structures". And further, Cloward's "concept of differential access to the illegitimate opportunity-structure should help explain differences in vulnerability to pressures for particular kinds of criminal behaviour" (Merton, 1959: 188). A year later, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) endeavoured to combine the 'anomie tradition' with the 'cultural transmission' and 'differential association' tradition. This was attempted by focusing on socially patterned differences in access to opportunity for learning how to perform particular sorts of deviant roles and of access to opportunity for executing them.

Merton has made reference to Durkheim to denote his indebtedness for the notion of 'anomie', and to endorse the view that there is a continuity between his theory and that of Durkheim: "The technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct. As this process of attenuation continues, the society becomes unstable and there develops what Durkheim called 'anomie' (or normlessness)" (Merton, 1968: 189). It is, however, very important to note here that, apart from other considerable differences between the two theories (cf. Horton, 1964; Chazel, 1967; Ritsert, 1969; Besnard, 1978 and 1987; Orrú, 1987b), it is worth noting their divergent views on how anomie and high aspirations are connected.

For Durkheim, anomie is a social state which results from an inability of society (*conscience collective*) to hold in check 'naturally' boundless human aspirations and demands. The society is temporarily not in a position to exercise control and set limits when it is disrupted, either by a severe crisis or by desirable but sudden transformations

(Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 280). A state of deregulation or anomie then follows and it is only enhanced by the fact that 'passions' are less disciplined precisely when the times require a stricter discipline (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 281). Put it another way, because individuals by nature wish to have more and more, the breakdown of the regulatory system sets free the drive of having exaggerated aspirations. This may well be one of the reasons why several commentators of Durkheim find it hard to distinguish anomie from egoism (cf. Johnson, 1965: 882, Pope, 1976: 201). *Anomie*, therefore, *makes for a disjunction between ends and the available legitimate means.*

For Merton, in contrast, as we have seen, this malintegration *is conducive to* anomie, and it is caused by a faulty coordination between culture and social structure. Innate human tendencies play a less important role in his theory. The culture promotes and inculcates goals that are in practice often unattainable because of socially structured obstacles. When the social structure disallows the consolidation of the two elements of the culture, society is in a state of anomie. Whereas Durkheim's anomie is an abnormal (pathological) phenomenon that occurs in modern industrial societies, Merton's concept denotes a rather 'normal' (i.e. expectable) state of things, which is treated without any moral evaluations (Orrú 1987b: 128), and which can be seen as a distinguishing trait of these societies (cf. Orrú, 1987a and 1987b). However, the two theorists converge in the point that anomie brings about higher rates of deviant behaviour. As has been pointed out, "For Durkheim, deregulation led to infinite aspirations; for Merton, infinite aspirations led to deregulation. *The result, for both, was the same: high rates of deviation*" (Downes and Rock, 1982: 102; emphasis added).

Having identified social and cultural conditions that give rise to

strain and anomie, the question is what are the responses of people occupying different positions in the social structure. A typology of individual adaptations is constructed for the systematic analysis of these social and cultural conditions, which combine to make for differing rates of various types of deviant behaviour. Merton has suggested that the following responses "occur with different frequency within various groups in our society precisely because members of these groups or strata are differentially subject to cultural stimulation and social restraints" (Merton, 1968: 194fn.).

	Cultural goal	Institutionalised means
I. Conformity	+	+
II. Innovation	+	-
III. Ritualism	-	+
IV. Retreatism	-	-
V. Rebellion	±	±

(+ signifies acceptance, - signifies rejection, and ± signifies rejection and substitution; Merton, 1968: 194).

It is emphasised that this typology refers to actions or 'role behaviour' in specific types of situations, not to personality (cf. A.Cohen, 1959: 464). This means that people "may shift from one alternative to another as they engage in different social activities. *These categories refer to role adjustments in specific situations, not to personality*"

(Merton, 1968: 194; emphasis added). However, this statement seems to clash with the previous one about class differences in frequencies of the various responses. As these responses refer to 'role behaviour' in 'particular situations', it is conceivable that problematic situations are confronted by people in all social strata. Although their concrete content may vary, strains arising from analytically similar discrepancies may bring about the same types of responses in all strata. The implications of this point are discussed in more detail, in chapter 5.

Turner's (1954) commentary on the Mertonian ends-means formulation has testified to the failure on his part to recognise that both these role-adaptations and the goals-means distinction constitute 'ideal types'. Turner has remarked that "...in American society the pursuit of money (an end) without respect to the approved means can be called an excessive emphasis on goals". And he went on to point out that, if money is viewed as means to other goals such as happiness, it can be held that "the excessive pursuit of money is a concentration on means at the expense of ends" (Turner, 1954: 305).

In other words, what Turner has argued is that, in the first instance American society would be characterised by high rates of 'innovation', whereas, in the second, by a considerable degree of 'ritualism'. In both cases an investigator may be right, depending on the level of analysis, the particular context and the specific questions the research is attempting to answer. Empirically, at any rate, whether regarded as a means or a goal, money is undoubtedly pursued and money-success is at its most potent when legitimised by 'higher' values (cf. Downes and Rock, 1982: 104). It is interesting to note that this is revealed by Lemert's statement that,

> compliance or noncompliance becomes purely a matter of dollars and cents; thus the cost of two trips to move

> freight from one terminal to another may be higher than the cost of one trip plus fines assessed at so much per pound. Evidence that illegal alternative is conceived in purely functional terms exists in the formalised arrangements whereby issuance of a certain type of 'trip ticket' insures that the driver's fines will be paid by the company (Lemert, 1964: 70).

Since the pursuit of money is so central, it is quite legitimate to consider it, in abstract, as an end - especially in societies where everything is monetised and where "a growth of 'practical morality', under the influence of the dominant world of business, industry, and large association" (Lemert, 1964: 71) can be observed.

The above types of possible responses are primarily considered in connection with economic activity "in the broad sense of 'the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services' in our competitive society, where wealth has taken on a highly symbolic cast" (Merton, 1968: 194-5). 'Conformity' is regarded as the only non-deviant adaptation. This is the most common and widespread type of adaptation. "Were this not so, the stability and continuity of the society could not be maintained...It is this fact alone which permits us to speak of a human aggregate as comprising a group or society" (Merton,. 1968: 195). Since deviant behaviour is the primary concern of the theory, not much would have to be said about it, in this particular context. Overconformity, nevertheless, might sometimes be perceived as deviant. As Merton has observed, "Overconformity and underconformity have the same functional basis for being experienced as deviant behaviour by members of a group: they are so regarded when they depart from group expectations to such an extent as to interfere with the relatively smooth operation of the social system" (Merton, 1959: 185). Furthermore, it may be 'dysfunctional' to the basic values and the realisation of primary goals of the group (cf. Merton, 1968: 236).

Dubin (1959), seeking to develop the above typology, provided us with fourteen types of deviant behaviour which, he argued, are an extention of, and supplement, the last four types of the Mertonian scheme. He set out to do so by distinguishing between attitudes and overt behaviour. He excluded from his analysis 'Conformity' on the grounds that it "is of no interest in examining the range of deviant behaviour" (Dubin, 1959: 147). Nevertheless, as Merton has remarked, to clarify and develop his typology, Dubin would need to distinguish between 'variant' behaviour - "*new* forms of behaviour that are well within the range of the institutionally prescribed or allowed" - and deviant behaviour - "*new* forms that are outside this range" (Merton, 1959: 181). The merit of this distinction is that, to the extent that it is built into "a typology of conformity, it will systematically indicate which kinds of social change are, and which are not, preceded by deviant behaviour" (Merton, 1959: 182). Furthermore, as again Merton has pointed out, Dubin has implicitly introduced another distinction within conformity: "variants that come to endure as a part of normative expectations and of culture, this being a process of social and cultural change (without antecedent *deviant* behaviour)", such as the case of Pasteur or Einstein, "and temporary variants that leave no residue in society and culture, this being a process of social and cultural fluctuation", such as the case of fads and fashions (Merton, 1959: 183),

'Innovation' is the adaptation, whereby individuals keep pursuing the culturally emphasised goals, while departing from culturally approved ways of doing so. This type of deviant adjustment comes very close to what might be legally qualified as crime. In fact, it seems to be the *par excellence* criminal category. This is implied by Merton, as he has argued that, "whatever the differential rates of deviant behaviour in the several

social strata, and we know from many sources that the *official crime statistics* uniformly showing higher rates in the lower strata are far from complete or reliable, it appears from our analysis that the greatest pressures toward deviation are exerted upon the lower strata" (Merton, 1968: 198; emphasis added). And again, "when poverty and associated disadvantages in competing for the culture values approved for all members of the society are linked with a cultural emphasis on pecuniary success as a dominant goal, high rates of *criminal behaviour* are the normal outcome" (Merton, 1968: 201; emphasis added). These statements would serve to remove suspicions that he relies on criminal statistics, and yet to indicate that they might represent a true pattern. In this way, Merton has shifted from an emphasis ~~from~~ on deviant behaviour to criminal behaviour, and has invited criticisms about his 'class bias' (cf. Thio, 1975). As will be argued, however, such bias is not inherent to the Mertonian conceptual framework. But, for this to become clear, further elaborations are required (cf. chapters 4 and 5).

So, the reason why lower strata are thought by Merton to be more vulnerable to pressures toward 'innovation' is that, although they are exposed to the cultural emphasis on pecuniary success (assuming that they have absorbed it), access to legitimate means for 'getting in the money' is limited for them by "a class structure which is not fully open at each level to men of good capacity" (Merton, 1968: 199). This contradiction might as well lead to 'rebellion', if those victimised by it located its source in the social structure and sought to change it. But it is suggested that the great majority of them "tend to put stress on mysticism: the workings of Fortune, Chance, Luck" (Merton, 1968: 202).

'Ritualists' are those who have internalised the cultural norms "to a degree that does not allow them to be violated" and, having dropped the

goal as beyond their reach, they abide almost compulsively by the norms and resort to routine. "They reluctantly abandon their aspirations while clinging, perhaps on that account all the more tightly, to the routines of their roles. These are the ritualists of our society, uncounted though probably legion: the organisation automatons, the routineers, the religious compulsives" (Merton, 1964: 218-9). This pattern is assumed by Merton to be more frequent in American lower-middle-class, because it is postulated that lower-middle-class parents exert more pressure on their children to abide by the moral mandates of society and "social climb upward is less likely to meet with success than among the upper middle class" (Merton, 1968: 205). This is a perfect example of attitudinal deviance which is expected to be fairly frequent 'in a society which makes one's social status largely dependent upon one's achievements'. For this ceaseless competitive struggle entails dangers and frustrations, a private escape from which is to lower one's level of aspirations (Merton, 1968: 204-5).

An instance of 'ritualism' can be found in Merton's 'Dilemmas in Value Association' (Merton, 1976d). Discussing democratic organisations, he has pointed out that excessive commitment to democratic values leads to

> what has been described as the *displacement of goals*: the organizational means become transformed into ends-in-themselves and displace the principal goals of the organization. There develops more concern with maintaining the democratic forms than with achieving the democratically defined goals (Merton, 1976d: 101-102; emphasis in original; the possibility of 'innovation' is also considered in this discussion).

Adaptation IV is, according to Merton, the rarest. 'Retreatists' are "*in* the society but not *of* it" (Merton, 1968: 207; emphasis in original). This type of adaptation includes some of the activities of psychotics, psychoneurotics, chronic autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards, drug-addicts, drop-outs, non-productive

individuals, those who escape frustration by avoiding competition (Merton, 1938; 1964: 219; 1968: 207). That is, individuals were perfectly socialised, both the cultural goal and the norms had been accepted, but all legitimate channels for attaining it were closed. As Merton has contended, this is

> an expedient which arises from continued failure to attain the goal by legitimate measures and from an inability to adopt the illegitimate route because of internalised prohibitions, *this process occurring while the supreme value of the success-goal has as yet not been renounced* (Merton, 1968: 207; emphasis in original).

"Essentially passive, they lead a hole-and-corner existence estranged from the widest range of social values. Some finally succeed in annihilating the world by killing themselves" (Merton, 1964: 219). It is noteworthy, however, that other types of retreatism - neglected by Merton - are more common and widespread. As has been pointed out (cf. Bohle, 1975), aging often leads to retreatism and old people could also fall in this category. Moreover, the examples of 'retreatists' that Merton has provided seem to contradict his contention that responses to pressures towards deviance and anomie are role adaptations; they appear to characterise people's overall and more or less 'chronic' reactions.

'Rebels', finally, attribute the causes of frustration to the social structure and seek to modify it having their own claims to legitimacy. "These include the dissenters who appeal to a higher morality, laying claim to legitimacy by drawing upon the ultimate values rather than the particular norms of the society" (Merton, 1964: 219). It happens what Max Weber and Karl Mannheim, among others, have pointed out: "the ethic of fatalism has often been replaced by the ethic of responsibility, in which knowledge of the sources of social problems and efforts to control them become defined as a moral obligation" (Merton, 1971: 815). The source of

dissatisfaction is not found in 'bad luck' or 'chance' but in the institutional system itself. An alternative structure is envisaged "which would not, presumably, give rise to frustration of the deserving" (Merton 1968: 210). This individual pattern can potentially turn into a collective one. And this is implied, when it is maintained that "it is typically members of a rising class rather than the most depressed strata who organise the resentful and the rebellious into a revolutionary group" (Merton, 1968: 211). Merton has offered the following illustration of 'rebellion', in a particular context:

> In our twofold racial-caste and open-class structure, all Negro-white marriages are cacogamous, that is they deviate from endogamous norms and are attended by the sanctions of ostracism and the ascription of lower-caste status to offspring. Within such a context, it is likely that pairing Number 10 [caste hypogamy] will be found among the pariahs of the society, among those persons who have become, as it were, 'cultural aliens' denying the legitimacy of much of the social structure in which they occupy disadvantaged positions. Interracial cacogamy is, in this instance, simply a special case of the larger repudiation of cultural means and goals" (Merton, 1976h: 234-5).

Merton has introduced a further distinction between the 'nonconformer' and the 'aberrant'. The aberrant violates the norms in pursuit of his/her own ends, but in no sense aim at changing these norms "though such change might very well be an unanticipated consequence of their cumulative deviance" (A.Cohen, 1965: 12). The nonconformer's objective is precisely to change the normative system itself. In more detail and in Merton's own words:

> 1. The nonconformer announces his dissent publicly; unlike the aberrant, he does not try to hide his departures from social norms. 2. The nonconformer challenges the legitimacy of the social norms he rejects or at least challenges their application to certain kinds of situations. ...The aberrant, in contrast, acknowledges the legitimacy of the norms he violates: It is only that he finds it expedient or expressive of his state of mind to violate them. He may try to justify his own behaviour, but he does not argue that theft is right and murder virtuous. 3. ...the nonconformer aims to change the norms he is denying in

> practice. ...The aberrant, in contrast, tries primarily to escape the sanctioning force of existing norms, without proposing substitutes for them. When subject to social sanction, the nonconformer typically appeals to a higher morality; except as an instrumental device, the aberrant does not; at most he appeals to extenuating circumstances. 4. ...the nonconformer is acknowledged, however reluctantly, by conventional members of the social system to depart from prevailing norms for disinterested purposes and not for what he personally can get out of it. Again in contrast, the aberrant is generally assumed to be deviating from the norms in order to serve his own interests. 5. Nonconformity is not a private dereliction but a thrust toward a new morality or a promise of restoring a morality held to have been put aside in social practice. In this respect again, the nonconformer is far removed from the other type of social deviant, the aberrant, who has nothing new to propose and nothing old to restore, but seeks only to satisfy his private interests or to express his private cravings (Merton, 1971: 830-831).

In a footnote, it is noted that this account of non-conforming behaviour is an elaboration of the 'rebellion' type of adaptation. "In that same typology, innovation, ritualism, and retreatism would comprise forms of aberrant behaviour" (Merton, 1971: 831fn). The implications of the concept of 'non-conformer', however, extend beyond the 'rebellion' type of deviance. This concept, in fact, highlights Merton's relativistic conception of deviance. As mentioned earlier, Merton has made the point that "the same behaviour may be construed as deviant or conforming" (Merton, 1971: 824). Non-conformity helps clarify this point. What distinguishes it from other types of deviance is that it is "conceived as typically being conformity with the values, standards, and expectations of reference individuals and groups" (Merton, 1968: 413). Logically, and depending on what these values, standards and expectations are, non-conformity may constitute not only 'rebellious', but also 'innovative' or any other sort of deviant behaviour. Moreover, it is not necessary that the non-conformer's purposes are disinterested and consciously geared towards a change of norms an morality. Again, this would depend on the particular values and

objectives of the group to which allegiance is given. This interpretation of non-conformity is important, because it allows the study of deviant patterns in diverse social contexts and sub-cultures. As we shall see, it is also helpful in revealing connections with variables employed in different theoretical perspectives.

Summing up

From the discussion in this first part of the thesis, it follows that anomie theory constitutes a sociological way of understanding how deviance can be a product of contradictions within the social structure (of the society at large or of particular social institutions); how people, who originally had internalised or accepted culturally promoted values and norms, sometimes tend to withdraw their commitment, thus contributing, deliberately or not, to a 'crisis' and/or change of varied impact and extent. It is assumed that this withdrawal is variously distributed among the different social groups or strata and a major aim is to determine the resulting patterns. For a systematic analysis of these patterns a set of 'ideal types' of individual responses to the disjunction between the highly valued goals and the legitimate means available is suggested. It does not offer the necessary and sufficient conditions for deviance to occur, but it represents a plausible theoretical account of the background and social conditions, in view of which diverse types of deviant behaviour are likely to occur.

It is interesting to point out that anomie theory's conceptualisations have been largely accepted and assimilated, if implicitly, by the 'left realist' understanding of deviance and crime in

contemporary Britain (cf. Lea and Young, 1984). Berghe, in his effort to synthesise dialectic and functionalism, has maintained that the following two elements of dialectic are most useful and valid:

> 1. Change is not only ubiquitous, but an important share of it is generated within the system; i.e., the social structure must be looked at, not only as the static framework of society, but also as the source of a crucial type of change. 2. Change of intra-systemic or endogenous origin often arises from contradiction and conflict between two or more opposing factors. These 'factors' can be values, ideologies, roles, institutions or groups" (Berghe, 1973: 50).

It takes no great effort, however, to see that anomie theory does not examine social structure as a static framework - as, according to Berghe, functionalism would. On the contrary, it is discrepancies between elements of the social structure that make for varying degrees of anomie and deviant behaviour. Internal contradictions and their analysis - in terms of objective consequences - constitute the centrepiece of anomie theory. This is precisely the point Gouldner has made by recording an analytical affinity of anomie theory with Marxism: "In its openness to the internal contradictions of capitalist *culture* few Lukacians have been more incisive" (Gouldner, [1973] 1981: xi; emphasis in original).

To be sure, such contradictions are scrutinised as conditions potentially conducive to anomie, which in turn is mainly considered as a social state leading to deviant behaviour. Nothing precludes logically, nevertheless, further elaboration on anomie and the resulting deviance, in order to show their relevance to the understanding of different forms of social change. The conceptual 'arsenal' of anomie theory - 'innovation', 'rebellion' and 'nonconformity', for instance - does seem to provide a basis for such an enterprise.

So, anomie theory can be read as applying the following schematically presented set of minimum postulates: Societies need to be

regarded as systems of interconnected elements; causation, then, "is multiple and reciprocal" (Berghe, 1973: 45). Integration is almost never complete or perfect and society finds itself in states of dynamic balance or provisional equilibrium. There is no intrinsic assumption that the tendency is towards stability and equilibrium or towards incessant change and disintegration. It is rather proposed that there is a succession of stages of equilibrium and change. The study of, say, contemporary societies and socially produced deviance, shows that both tendencies operate simultaneously and both are central to anomie theory. And this is achieved by dint of concepts such as 'dysfunction', 'tension', 'strain' etc., on the one hand, and 'function', 'adaptation', 'adjustment', or 'social control', etc., on the other.

Change can take place either progressively, in an adaptive manner - as a consequence of accumulated and patterned 'innovation', for example - or abruptly, in a revolutionary fashion - following successful 'rebellion' (cf. Powell, 1963). The main sources of social change that anomie theory focuses upon are located in the existing social structure. It can be suggested, however, that the theory could be extended without great difficulties so as to provide an analytical framework for the study of changes occuring under the influence of forces exogenous to a particular system. In addition, one might embark upon a synthesis of Durkheimian and Mertonian ideas and put forth a theory incorporating processes of social change *bringing about* anomie.

Finally, although societal consensus on general values and norms is considered as a major factor contributing to social integration, it is by no means assumed to exist. To note that to start the analysis by positing some degree of consensus in society, is not to ignore or underplay conflict and disorder, would not be a novelty (cf. Wright and Hilbert,

1980: 210-211). It is essential to stress, however, that this does not constitute an ontological claim, but only an analytical point of departure for the analysis of social problems. Plenty of room is provided for a positive evaluation of value differentiation and plurality, and their functionality either to specific parts of the society or to the society as a whole (or, indeed, to changes within it).

In conclusion, anomie theory by using the functional mode of analysis and by concentrating on the observable consequences of certain cultural and structural hallmarks of modern industrial societies offers a systematic way of looking at social processes making for diverse types of deviance. As such, it makes no identifiable ideological commitments. Neither positive nor negative value judgements germane to the desirability or necessity of the social and cultural characteristics under study, of anomie, or of different sorts of the resulting deviant behaviour are contained. These questions are left wide open and, more importantly, they can be answered in diametrically opposed ways (see, for instance, Orrú, 1987a and 1987b for an argument of the desirability of anomie, which is viewed as an essential ingredient of modernity and as a requirement of advancement and progress).

Notes

1. In another essay on 'The Ambivalence of Organisational Leaders', for example, he shows that social change is hardly beyond his analytical framework: "And sooner or later, contact with the world of reality forces the prideful leader and his followers alike to discover that both utilitarian and moral assets waste away if they are not energetically renewed and extended. For the rest of the social system will not stand

still. And so organizations which would move with it must continue to engage in both innovative and adaptive change" (Merton 1976c: 77-8).

2. As for example: "The distribution of the statuses through competition must be so organised that positive incentives for adherence to status obligations are provided *for every position* within the distributive order. Otherwise, ...deviant behaviour ensues" (Merton 1968: 188; emphasis in original). But again, this is a statement about the conditions, which give rise to deviant behaviour. As such, it does not imply negative or positive evaluations of deviance or of the deviants.

3. In Merton's discussion of 'Social Knowledge and Public Policy' the theme of lack of overall value consensus in American society is reiterated: "For in a society structurally differentiated as ours is, conflict *must* result from the groundplan of a commission that authentically represents people located in diverse strata and sectors of the social structure, with their distinctive and often incompatible interests and values" (Merton 1976f: 163; emphasis in original).

PART II

INTRODUCTION

In the first part, the general methodological framework and the particular propositions of Merton's theory of anomie and deviance have been discussed. This second part is an attempt to elaborate on this theory, by means of a series of case studies. Account will be taken of Merton's own contributions, empirical material relevant to his hypotheses, and valid points made within different theoretical traditions. The case studies undertaken here are meant to be in the tradition of anomie theory as elaborated by Merton. That is, they follow on Merton both in terms of method in theory construction (i.e. middle-range strategy) and in terms of the substantive concepts employed. This introduction to Part II briefly discusses this method, the importance of the concept of anomie - in general and as utilised by Merton - and outlines the contents of the chapters to follow.

Middle-Range Strategy of Theory Construction

To be sure, this strategy is not universally accepted and has received many criticisms. Mulkay (1971), for example, has examined Merton's anomie theory to highlight its methodological and empirical shortcomings. He argued that this theory has not done justice to the complexities of American culture and social structure (Mulkay, 1971: 107). More significantly, he contended that, although "it can be argued that the limited scope of the study makes possible a closer link with empirical research and consequently makes more likely a rapid and detailed theoretical specification", this remains an assumption rather than a

demonstrated principle (Mulkay, 1971: 110). This attacks the idea of middle-range theorising as much as pointing out limits in its empirical content.

There is evidence, however, that this strategy can bear significant fruits. We have seen that the theory has been developing for a long period and that the original essay 'Social Structure and Anomie' is best regarded as a 'theoretical prelude' (Merton, 1938: 682) for subsequent work. Other studies have developed or elaborated anomie theory into new areas, sometimes seeking for connections between it and other theoretical traditions. Cloward and Ohlin (1960), for example, have developed Merton's anomie theory further, by drawing on their empirical analyses as well as on ideas derived from the 'Chicago school' and the theory of 'differential association' (Cullen, 1984: 41-42). They were also able to apply the theory to an area that Merton had not explored: collective adaptations. In a similar fashion, I propose to extend the theory to new empirical areas and to revise it in view of research findings, which may question earlier or 'simpler' hypotheses.

This exercise involves the effort of highlighting suggestions arising from anomie theory that are not in conflict with those of other theories or approaches. It has been remarked that, quite often, the numerous theories of deviance "simply emphasise different aspects of the same phenomena without denying the existence, or even importance of other aspects" (Los, 1979: 248). Owing to its boundaries, anomie theory has left out questions that are addressed by other theories. This does not imply that the various theories can be put together to form a single theory of deviance. It cannot be denied that they adopt different points of departure. Rather, the point I wish to make is that certain propositions of other approaches are compatible with those of anomie theory. The

complex phenomenon of deviance - understood as departures from established standards - cannot be exhaustively accounted for by any one theory. Each focuses upon some aspects and neglects others. In this sense, all theories are partial and entail a degree of simplification. My objective is to show that, by consolidating empirically validated knowledge with anomie theory and by pointing out certain interconnections between the issues tackled by various approaches, its simplifications can be minimised and a relatively fuller picture of processes making for deviance be provided.

But, the question arises of how one can consolidate middle-range claims or findings without resorting to a grand theory, which furnishes the links? As Mulkay (1971) has noted, Merton resolved this problem in two ways. The first consists in the use of substantive concepts borrowed from a limited range of theorists, in particular from Durkheim and Weber. "In this way, he establishes a degree of conceptual continuity among his own theories as well as forging conceptual links with other theorists...who have drawn on the same sources" (Mulkay, 1971: 98). A case in point is the concept of anomie. Lukes has argued that anomie, like alienation, refers to phenomena, which have many aspects: some of them being universal and some others specific to designated societies or institutions. The study of their causes, therefore, must be undertaken at various levels of abstraction:

> We may attempt to identify new forms of these phenomena, using these concepts and the hypotheses they embody in the attempt to describe and explain them. *They are in this sense concepts of the 'middle range'. They allow for specific new hypotheses to account for particular new forms, or they may account for them by means of the existing, more general hypotheses.* In general, the contemporary forms of alienation and anomie are best approached on the understanding that their causes are multiple and to be sought at different levels of abstraction (Lukes, 1977b: 89; emphasis added).

Following Merton, apart from employing the 'middle-range concept' of anomie, the second way of going about the proposed consolidations is the resort to the functional mode of analysis. He uses "the same *functional method* to guide each of his analyses"; for Merton, functional analysis constitutes "a method by means of which the empirical data involved in a series of specialised and partly independent theories can be systematically gathered and interpreted" (Mulkay, 1971: 98; emphasis in original). The discussion of functional analysis in chapter 2 concluded that it remains a significant guide to sociological enquiry (cf. also Downes and Rock, 1982: 92-93), which is not employed only by those tagged as functionalists.

Although enough has been said about it, it is worth reiterating that functional analysis does not lead to purely structural explanations, in the sense that people are compelled or determined to act exactly as they do. Lukes has remarked that, "to the extent to which the explanation of a given outcome is structural, the claim being made is that to that extent the agents involved in bringing about it are powerless to act otherwise" (Lukes, 1977a: 9). As has been maintained, functional analysis does allow for freedom and choice, albeit within limits. Merton's anomie theory deals with structural sources of deviance, but offers an imagery of a range of possible responses by the agents involved. 'Innovation' and 'rebellion', in particular, represent not only or simply adaptive choices, but may be translated into courses of action instrumental to social changes. So, my reading of Merton's theory and the way I envisage to develop it further is quite in line with Lukes' thesis that

> social life can only properly be understood as a dialectic of power and structure, a web of possibilities for agents, whose nature is both active and structured, to make choices and pursue strategies within given limits, which in

consequence expand and contract over time (Lukes, 1977a: 29).

The Utility of 'Anomie'

Many scholars would agree that anomie is one of the central or key concepts in contemporary social science (cf. Seeman, 1982: 121; Orrú, 1987b: 1). Its relevance to the study of contemporary industrial societies and to social change is indicated by many sociologists of varying theoretical persuasions (cf. Duvignaud, 1970; Marcson, 1970: 1; Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 224-225; Klages, 1975 and 1984; Lukes, 1977b: 91; Dahrendorf, 1985; Sztompka, 1987: 16-19; Orrú, 1987a). To be sure, it is not to be regarded as *the* central concept, but it is certainly one of the few contenders deserving serious consideration. Another powerful contender is, for example, 'alienation'. As elaborated by Durkheim and Marx respectively, anomie and alienation are socio-psychological concepts, which embody "hypotheses about specific relationships between social conditions and individual psychological states" (Lukes, 1977b: 74).

In spite of diverse usages and different hypotheses underlying the concept of anomie, it "always focuses on the relationship between individuals and the constraining forces of social control" (Horton, 1964: 285). More specifically, anomie "refers to the problems of social control in a social system. Cultural constraints are ineffective: values are conflicting or absent, goals are not adjusted to opportunity structures or *vice versa*, or individuals are not adequately socialised to cultural directives" (Horton, 1964: 285). Durkheim has suggested that the rapid industrial growth, combined with a less speedy growth of forces that could regulate it, has been a source of anomie. Among many anomic

characteristics, he pointed to greed, competitiveness, status-seeking, limitless aspirations, emphasis on consumption and pleasure (cf. Lukes, 1977b: 89-90), which ensued and could reinforce the state of anomie. Merton, on the other hand, focused upon such characteristics and proposed that, as they are institutionalised and culturally promoted, they can be viewed (by themselves) as sources of anomie. He concentrated on cultural emphases on 'getting ahead' and money-seeking, which, given structural limitations of opportunities, can bring about anomic breakdown. Although he may have not shared Durkheim's idea of human nature, there are some lines of continuity between the analyses of the two theorists.

As was mentioned above, anomie is a 'middle-range concept', which allows for the development of new hypotheses at various levels of abstraction. The object of analysis may be a given society at a given period of time, as it may a particular section of the society, such as the 'business world' or the social institution of science. The major objective here is to try and develop new hypotheses upon a review of Merton's theory and to see how they link up with other specific or general propositions. As Sztompka has observed, Merton's theory and concept of anomie has 'large potentials of relevance', as it "turns our attention to significant areas of research and application". In addition, it has important 'potentials of integration', because it "provides bridges between various one-sided perspectives on social processes, and various separate fields of sociological study" (Sztompka, 1987: 2).

It must be added, however, that the exercise is not without limits. I make no claim that all aspects of deviance will be covered by this development of anomie theory. It concentrates on possible outcomes of cultural and structural discrepancies, of socially induced role conflicts and of processes lessening the strength of social control. Thus, the

analysis of the implications of social control itself in generating or shaping deviance is neglected and remains the domain of the labelling perspective. Moreover, anomie theory is helpful in studying problematic situations, which may give rise to deviant behaviour. Nevertheless, no necessary deterministic relationship is posited between such situations and the specific forms of deviance. What anomie theory can offer, is an imagery of the range of expectable responses to them. In this sense, as Cloward and Ohlin have put it, "As long as there are at least two conceivable deviant outcomes to a given problem of adjustment, the problem of adjustment cannot be said to determine the outcome" (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960: 41).

Outline of Chapters

The particular areas, for which the relevance of Merton's theory is to be explored, have been selected because of personal interest and because they have been neglected by the theory so far. In addition, the issues to be discussed correspond to what can be regarded as the most significant criticisms the theory has received. Namely, (1) it does not take sufficiently into account processes of social interaction; (2) it over-simplifies matters by concentrating on *the* success-goal; (3) it tells us little about middle-class deviance and predicts too much proletarian crime; (4) it does not pay enough attention to social dynamics.

In the fourth chapter, an attempt is made to consolidate anomie theory with reference group and relative deprivation analysis. In this way, research findings relevant to culturally propagated themes of success and their effects on people's ambitions can be taken into account, and Merton's hypotheses can be re-formulated. It is argued that the ideal

of 'getting ahead' may be widely accepted, in general, but people's specific goals and perception of acceptable means for attaining them vary according to the comparative and normative referents they adopt in social interaction. Given that 'success' and 'failure' do not have the same meaning throughout the society and that opportunities to reach standards desired by those at the top may be limited, it cannot be assumed that strains towards deviance and anomie are stronger in the lower social strata.

This revision of anomie theory lays the basis for an assessment, in the fifth chapter, of its alleged 'class bias'. It is suggested that, though such a bias can be found in Merton's formulations (e.g. Merton, 1968: 198), it is not inherent to the structure or logic of the theory. Contrary to much opinion, it is contended that anomie theory is helpful in understanding the processes leading to forms of deviance characteristic to people belonging in the upper strata. Evidence for this contention is provided in the sixth chapter, which endeavours to analyse 'high status occupational deviance' and 'corporate deviance' and points to some of their wider implications for the social order.

The seventh chapter consists of a case study on the conditions and forces that led to the abortion law reform (1967) in Britain. It is hoped to document the applicability of Merton's analytical scheme to issues other than 'monetary success' goals and lack of opportunities to achieve them. It is proposed that people's responses to anomic situations are not restricted to destructive deviant behaviour. Anomie may constitute a transitional period, which engenders various possibilities. Social changes may take place as a consequence of the 'innovative' action of individuals and groups, who are willing and able to shape things, within the limits of structurally available alternatives.

CHAPTER 4

ANOMIE, REFERENCE GROUPS AND RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

Introduction

Despite the considerable amount of amendments that have significantly added to the clarity of anomie theory, there is room for further development. As A.Cohen has pointed out, one of its important limitations is that the "bearing of others' experience - their strains, their conformity and deviance, their success and failure - on ego's strain and consequent adaptations is comparatively neglected" (A.Cohen, 1965: 6). Merton has conceded that "the early formulation of the theory of ['Social Structure and Anomie'] amply justifies this criticism" (Merton, 1964: 231). His essay on 'Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction' (Merton, 1964) paved the ground for an extension of the theory, which would take care of this problem.

A.Cohen continued, however, to be one among very many who believe that, on the one hand, we have anomie theory which asks 'what people want? What are the rules regulating their choice of means? What means are, in fact, legitimately available to them? How does deviance reduce the strain resulting from wanting something that is not legitimately obtainable?' On the other hand, we have theories and approaches which ask 'How do deviance and conformity depend on what *other* people think, say, feel, and do?' (A.Cohen 1966: 84; emphasis in original).

As was indicated in the previous chapter, although analyses of social interaction processes is, in a sense, required by Merton's

theoretical framework, their implications have not been fully explored. Furthermore, Merton has remarked that among the issues calling for further research is 1) the extent, to which people "in different social strata have in fact assimilated the *same* culturally induced goals and values"; and 2) "the operation of social mechanisms, such as social differentiation, which minimise the strains resulting from these seeming contradictions between cultural goals and socially restricted access to these goals" (Merton, 1968: 177; emphasis in original).

The task in this chapter will be precisely to address these problems and to relate the question of 'what other people think, say, feel, and do' to anomie theory, by bringing in the concept of relative deprivation and reference group theory - working to a large extent on the shoulders of Merton. Moreover, this synthesis is intended to help account for the phenomenon, observed in industrial societies, that rising standards of living are sometimes accompanied by rising rates of deviant behaviour. That links between anomie theory and relative deprivation could be plausibly established has not escaped the attention of Runciman. He has noted that Merton advanced his arguments about deviance as a result of the cultural theme of success "without recourse to the notion of reference groups - *which is surprising, in view of their relevance to [these arguments]* and Merton's own discussion of reference group theory" (Runciman, 1966: 27-28; emphasis added). He has also pointed out that, had Merton done that, the implications of his theory about relative levels of ambition according to class would have been different (cf. also Downes and Rock, 1982: 105). This exercise has been applauded by Merton, for, as he revealed to me, his writings on reference group theory and relative deprivation 'echoed' what was neglected in the 'Social Structure and Anomie' essay (cf. Appendix: xi).

Given that labelling theorists also deal with processes of social interaction, the enquiry into the relevance of such questions to anomie theory becomes even more significant. It is contended that their work is not as irreconcilable with anomie theory as it seems. By revising anomie theory, so that it takes into account the interaction of individuals with others and the influence of other individuals and groups upon one's attitudes and behaviour, certain compatibilities between the two perspectives may be pinpointed. It must be made clear at the outset that the purpose of the whole enterprise is not to claim that anomie theory can or should be formulated in a manner that it becomes an all-inclusive theory of deviance, rendering other perspectives redundant. Neither perspective is given precedence over the other. Reference group theory, in other words, can serve as a bridge between these approaches to deviance because of its affinity with both.

The connections between anomie theory, reference group theory and relative deprivation are outlined at first on a general level. The implications of the consolidation of these theories are then discussed separately, following on Merton's analytical distinction, for the cultural level - that of the cultural goals and normative values regulating behaviour - and the social level - "the organized set of social relationships in which members of the society or group are variously implicated" (Merton, 1968: 216). Finally, processes making for deviance and anomie are considered in conjunction with the concept of 'anomia'.

The aim, then, here is to bring out some of the links between the theories of reference group and anomie and to introduce the notion of relative deprivation, with the belief that anomie theory could thus be extended and enriched. Given that the idea of relative deprivation is

central to recent analyses of deviance and crime (cf. Lea and Young 1984), the continuing relevance of anomie theory will be further highlighted.

Reference Groups and Anomie Theory

Reference group theory directs attention to the fact that people relate themselves to groups of which they may or may not (but wish to) be members. The concept was coined by Hyman (1942) in an analysis of how individuals form a conception of their status in society. It is posited that one's attitudes and overt behaviour are influenced and oriented in terms of both membership and non-membership groups and individuals who are selected as points of reference and comparison. The referents may be 'positive' or 'negative', depending on whether people want to emulate and associate themselves with them or dissociate themselves from them (cf. Newcomb, 1950).

A significant distinction has been established between normative and comparative reference groups. The normative reference group denotes a group, which lays down standards (group norms) for the individual who wishes to gain or maintain acceptance in it. By contrast, the comparative reference group denotes a group (a referent), which is used by the person as a yardstick in making self-evaluations (or in judging others). The two, of course, may overlap. It is, however, analytically essential to keep them apart, as they make explicit the two main aspects of reference group theory: the motivational and the perceptual (cf. Kelley, 1952; we shall see one of its implications below).

Incidentally, it should be noted that, as it has been repeatedly pointed out by many writers, the referent is not necessarily a group; it

may also be an individual, a 'reference idol', or even an abstract idea (cf. Eisenstadt, 1954: 213; Shibutani, 1955: 565; Turner, 1956: 328; Merton, 1968: 353 and 356-358; Hyman, 1968 and 1975; Sztompka, 1986: 230).

Reference group analysis, which is obviously significant for the study of attitudes and behaviour in contemporary complex societies, is congruent with the symbolic-interactionist perspective. Further, as Urry has argued, "A sociological condition for the development of this ['reference group'] concept was the emergence of the interactive perspective and its emphasis upon symbols and language for the genesis of social interaction and role-taking" (Urry, [1973] 1978: 18).

Anomie theory, on the other hand, deals with potential and patterned outcomes of possible discrepancies between culturally induced ends and norms regulating the means of attaining them, and socially structured access to opportunities for doing so.

Two points are to be underlined here. First, for anomie theory, it is essential to take into account how people *themselves* perceive the whole situation (this is implied in the theory and also pointed out in Merton, 1964). It is one thing to have in a social group or society an objective and readily observable disharmony between cultural ends and socially determined avenues leading to them; but it is quite another to have a group or society where people are aware of this or a subjectively felt (but equally structurally patterned) or even, to some extent, imagined ends-means discord. It may also be the case that a real and discernible discord of this type is not perceived as such.

The implications are of paramount importance as far as the strains towards anomie and deviance are concerned. It seems obvious that the more the discrepancy is felt as such by the people involved, the higher will be the degree of strains in a group or society. The gravity, however, of such

subjectively experienced discrepancies depends on what the specific goals and the actual position of the individual in the social structure are. And these goals depend in turn on the frame of reference within which they are conceived.

The second point (and this is an empirical point) is that what people desire and strive for, as well as the ways which they envisage in order to acquire it, are not conceived in a social vacuum, but depend on people's interaction and partial or full identification with others. This suggestion seems reasonable in the light of the theoretically ascertained and empirically corroborated thesis (e.g. Newcomb, 1952) that people's attitude development reflects the way in which they relate to particular reference groups. As has been noted, "Numerous studies coming from both psychologists and sociologists have shown that the major sources of the individual's weighty attitudes are the values or norms of the groups to which he relates himself, that is, of his reference groups" (Sherif, 1969: 286). Turner (1964: 129-130) has pointed out that reference groups affect a person's ambition, playing an important role both in the selection of particular goals and the setting of standards. That is, reference group analysis helps clarify processes by which 1) a goal - for instance, material success - is adopted; and 2) the level of attainment is set - how much wealth - for it to be perceived as success by different individuals. These considerations are crucial for anomie theory, which has appeared "to assume a zero-relation between aspirations and social class: All members of the society feel the same pressures to succeed" (Hirschi and Selvin, 1967: 259), and can lead to a formulation in accord with empirical data that refute this assumption.

As Turner has added, ambition "also implies some assessment of the means. Persons who have immediate contact with other people, who have

achieved a given level, are more likely to feel that they understand how to get there and consequently are willing to set their standards accordingly" (Turner, 1964: 130). This is not to deny that in a process of social interaction people also choose their reference groups according to their own values and norms. It is, rather, to emphasise that the 'significant others' are not selected at random or idiosyncratically, but are, to a considerable degree, determined by the social structure; in other words, the selection of reference groups and individuals is largely shaped and patterned by one's established social relationships in a particular cultural context.

One of the major contributions of reference group theory is to direct attention to non-membership reference groups. This means that there may exist significant and varied social distance between a given person and her or his referent. A consequence of such a social distance may be the incitement of lofty aspirations and goals for the realization of which there are no means available, given a particular individual's comparatively lower position in the social structure. The selection of one's referent affects (may attenuate, aggravate or indeed create), therefore, the disjunctions between cultural goals and socially available means which are so central to the conceptual framework of anomie theory.

Further, the more socially remote (upwardly) and the fuller the identification with one's referent, the more arduous will be the attainment of the goals because of likely limited opportunities. From this it follows that, the higher (up to a certain point of remoteness) the referent is located in the social structure and the more the referent operates as an anchoring agent, the more low status and discontent will be produced (Hyman, 1968: 165), the more likely will be the subjective

experience of an ends-means discrepancy, the higher the strain towards deviance and anomie.

Relative Deprivation

The concept of relative deprivation has been used in various ways, often signifying very different things. Runciman's definition seems, however, the most appropriate. He has suggested that,

> we can roughly say that A is relatively deprived of X when (i) he does not have X, (ii) he sees some other person or persons, which may include himself at some previous or expected time, as having X (whether or not this is or will be in fact the case), (iii) he wants X, and (iv) he sees it as feasible that he should have X. Possession of X may, of course, mean avoidance of or exemption from Y (Runciman, 1966: 10).

Relative deprivation, then, means that someone might feel deprived though he is not 'objectively' deprived, in the sense that he is demonstrably lacking something. It also means that this sense of deprivation is a result of a comparison with the real or imagined situation of another person or group (referent). This highlights both the connection between relative deprivation and reference group theory, and the central importance of the distinction between normative and comparative reference group. As noted above, there may be overlaps between the two; but it is mainly the latter which is linked with relative deprivation. When the reference group is only normative, since this typically involves the adoption of certain values and outlooks, and leaves out the crucial aspect of comparison, relative deprivation can scarcely ensue. Where the reference group is comparative (and, it goes without

saying, positive), however, comparisons are typically generated and, if unfavourable, they can lead to relative deprivation. Runciman has argued that normative reference groups may also generate relative deprivation if they embody an unfavourable comparison (Runciman, 1966: 12). But, when normative reference groups have this effect, we are merely confronted with situations where they also perform the comparative function; in other words, these are cases in which a referent performs both normative and comparative functions.

As relative deprivation is used for an individual or collective *feeling* of deprivation (Williams, 1975) and involves some sort of comparison, it must be distinguished clearly from two types of 'non-relative' or 'absolute deprivation'. The first sort of 'absolute deprivation' refers to an 'objectively ascertained need, whether felt as such or not by the people concerned'. To use Runciman's example, "we might wish to speak of a Mexican village as absolutely deprived of sanitation even if its inhabitants refuse the offer of it". The other type of absolute deprivation is a felt need not dependent upon comparison with some other person or group (e.g. hunger), an "affective deprivation, whereby people are only deprived (even non-relatively) if they feel that they are" (Runciman 1968: 71).

Further, it is essential not to lose sight of the difference between relative deprivation and observable conditions of inequality and injustice (a negative consequence of failure to keep them separate is that relative deprivation becomes restricted to individual or collective feelings obtaining only in lower classes). The latter may lead to relative deprivation and discontent, but only when they are perceived as such by the people concerned:

> Discontent is a product of *relative*, not *absolute* deprivation. ...Discontent occurs when comparisons between

> comparable groups are made which suggest that unnecessary injustices are occurring. If the distribution of wealth is seen as natural and just - however disparate it is - it will be accepted. An objective theory of exploitation, or even a history of increased exploitation, does not explain disturbances. Exploitative cultures have existed for generations without friction: it is the perception of injustice - *relative deprivation* - which counts" (Lea and Young, 1984: 81; emphasis in original).

One of the merits of the notion of relative deprivation is that it connects subjective feelings of individuals with culturally and socially patterned comparisons made through the selection of reference groups. The psychological dimension of relative deprivation notwithstanding, there are two important sociological dimensions. The first is related to an individual's feelings and relative deprivation within the group of which he sees himself as a member; the second has to do with one's satisfaction with the (perceived) position of this group in the social structure in general (Runciman 1968: 72).

Further, to the degree that inequalities and injustices do occur and conditions favouring awareness of them through the encouragement of social comparisons do obtain, the origin of feelings of relative deprivation must be sought in the specific socio-cultural environment. Having reviewed a body of empirical studies on relative deprivation, Williams has noted that "the more universalistic the normative structure of a society (or other collectivity), the greater the likelihood of relative deprivation" and that "an achievement-oriented system tends to generate feelings of relative deprivation" (Williams, 1975: 364 and 365).

Anomie theory points to consequences, namely higher rates of deviant behaviour, of cultural overemphasis on success combined with structurally limited opportunities. Reference group theory and relative deprivation can be helpful in further specifying how the American Dream (which promotes such cultural overemphasis) and, more generally, egalitarian discourses

affect and influence people differentially situated in the social structure and how *they* define success. In addition, the perception of structural inequalities by the actors would be more explicitly taken into account by anomie theory. The probable outcomes are undoubtedly very different when existing structural inequalities of opportunity are or are not experienced as such by members of the group or society. It is plain that in order that anomie and the resulting various types of deviant behaviour occur, these inequalities must be somehow felt, seen or judged as undesirable and/or unjustified. Actors may or may not perceive them as such. Failures to live up to culturally induced standards may be attributed to the social structure itself or to other factors such as bad luck, lack of necessary contacts in high places or personal shortcomings. The expectable responses, in terms of the Mertonian typology, would differ accordingly. This, however, should not shift attention away from the fact that such failures involve, by definition, disagreeable comparisons and are likely to lead to feelings of relative deprivation.

So, Merton's theory of deviance and anomie can be further developed and enriched, as it will be more informed about the processes making for the perception of existing or even imagined cultural ends-available means discrepancies.

The Cultural Level

Merton's theory underlines that the structure of the society, its culture and social organisation, pose for people at each position of the system characteristic problems of adjustment and provides them, adequately or poorly, with some means for coping with them. The means

available for coping within the framework of particular sets of institutionalised norms, however, may prove to be insufficient, or the incumbents of these positions may be so disadvantaged that they cannot benefit from them. In such cases, they would tend to reject those aspects of the culture that contribute to the creation of the problems or the barriers to their solution, and to substitute them with ambitions and norms they can live with more comfortably.

Now, according to Durkheim, the less one has, the less one aspires to, while the less limited one feels, the more intolerable any and all limitation appears (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 282). As the horizon of the lower classes is limited by those above them, their desires are restricted (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 287). The American Dream ideology, however, to the extent that it is accepted or internalised, widens the horizon of all classes by inculcating and often imposing high ambitions, aspirations and expectations for *all* Americans regardless of their position in the social structure. The cultural value of success and material wealth is open to all members of the American society and often considered as a duty. Consequently, all are encouraged to participate in an endless race towards monetary success.

The dominant economic system in USA, and the way it interacts with the American Dream is also important and should not be neglected or missed out. The American Dream and the cultural dictates that are embodied in it are not to be considered in abstract and in isolation from the wider socio-economic and historical context in which they obtain. An advantage of broadening the scope of the analysis is that interesting and telling interconnections may be brought out. Elements of the American Dream may, thus, turn out to be intrinsic to the contemporary North-American and other societies. The encouragement of high levels of

aspiration and ambition may be shown to correspond to specific socio-economic demands and to be part of processes making for social integration or for discrepancies and contradictions. Indeed, as has been observed,

> The whole thrust of contemporary western capitalist societies is upon industrial growth; and this has two implications. The first is that in some sense or other, economic expansion provides an increasing supply of goods and services to most individuals so that their welfare is enhanced. The second is that to bring about such expansion it is necessary for individuals to widen their aspirations and to seek to acquire greater and greater supplies of such goods and services. Thus the contradiction that the latter is necessary to bring about the former which is only necessary because of the latter" (Urry, [1973] 1978: 71).

Further, in a recent analysis of 'Law and Order' issues in G.Britain, the incitement of lofty aspirations via comparisons has been connected with the capitalist system and modes of its legitimation.

> And a major source of one's making comparisons - or indeed the feeling that one should, in the first place, 'naturally' compete and compare oneself with others - is capitalism itself. We are taught that life is a racetrack: that merit will find its own reward. This is the central way our system legitimates itself and motivates people to compete" (Lea and Young, 1984: 95).

Incidentally, it becomes clear that, to say that Merton did not make these connections explicit and thus failed to "explain the primacy of such ideals as symptomatic of capitalist economic structures" (Muncie and Fitzgerald, [1981] 1985: 408; cf. also Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 101), does not tell against the validity anomie theory. Rather, it applies to Merton's exposition of his theory (cf. Downes and Rock, 1982: 105) and it describes the boundaries of the developing theory which can be expanded as indicated above.

An egalitarian ideology, which does not distinguish among various strata in society, according to which all can 'make it' and all should

incessantly try to make it, paves the way for comparisons virtually with any other member of the society. It can be maintained that certain (status or other) similarities are thus encouraged to become bases for comparisons while others are played down (cf. Merton, 1968: 296-297fn.), so that referents are selected out of broader fields such as 'collectivities' and 'social categories' (cf. Merton, 1968: 353-354). In this way, the referent may often be some 'other', with whom one is not in sustained social relations. Runciman has remarked that "it may be that only where opportunity is believed to be equal do higher strata come to be taken as positive referents" (Runciman, 1968: 73). To the extent that this proposition is correct, egalitarian ideologies enlarge significantly the range of possible reference individuals and groups one may adopt. To be sure, the media of mass communication have a pivotal role in this process. It does not suffice that, at least some, opportunities exist and that some people have made good use of them. Others have to *know* about it. On the other hand, it is true that, if not from 'the log cabin to the White House, individuals have often made it from 'rags to riches'. This fact as well as the influence and the 'status-conferral function' of the mass media (cf. Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1952: 76) is illustrated by the following:

> Every year, the American Schools and Colleges Association polls thousands of 'college leaders' to select a few men for public acclaim who have risen from humble origins to great success. When the final tally discloses the names of these fortunate few, they are summoned to New York City to receive the Horatio Alger award. Great businessmen and potent industrialists interrupt their affairs to gather for the ceremony. They are tendered a banquet in the course of which each is presented with a bronze plaque testifying that he has 'climbed the ladder of success through toil and diligence and responsible application of his talents to whatever tasks were his'. Newspaper photographers snap their pictures, press releases are handed out, and the next day's newspapers hold up the winners as the cynosure of a nation's admiring eyes (Wohl, 1967: 501).

It would be false, nevertheless, to regard the range of possible referents as unlimited. Although high ambitions may characterise, as a result of 'egalitarianism, large numbers of individuals, it does not follow that their particular goals and standards of success will be identical or that they are not shaped by specific social networks (the implications of this crucial point for anomie theory are discussed in the following chapter). Aristotle has pointed out many centuries ago that,

> We do not compete with men who lived a hundred centuries ago, or those not yet born, or the dead, or those who dwell near the Pillar of Hercules, or those whom, in our opinion or that of others, we take to be far above us. So too we compete with those who follow the same ends as ourselves. We compete with our rivals in sport or in love, and generally with those who are after the same things; and it is therefore these whom we are bound to envy beyond all others" (Aristotle, 1942: 1388a, 8-15).

Duesenberry (1967) has argued that the American society is classless and that, as a consequence, the whole income distribution can be taken as the frame of reference relevant for each person. Urry has pointed out that his analysis fails to consider the normative-comparative (and audience) reference group distinction and rightly argued that "there are both classes and status groups such that the patterning of reference orientations will be variable as between different sectors of that society" (Urry, [1973] 1978: 71). What makes Duesenberry's argument interesting, however, is that it reflects the impact and influence of the egalitarian ideology and the American Dream in American society.

It certainly is an open question calling for considerably more research whether a restricted frame of reference would tend to reduce one's aspirations and goals, or because one's aims are limited, the referents are more restricted. In any event, it seems reasonable to suggest that it is a reciprocal process. But, more importantly for our purposes here, from our analysis it appears clearly that in American

society the success theme makes for ever-rising aspirations and thus facilitates wider frames of reference and that it should cause little surprise if similar tendencies are found in other contemporary societies (for W.Germany, cf. Bolte and Hradil, 1984: 284ff.).

The Social Level

But this is only part of the whole; thus far we have concentrated mainly on the analytically distinguishable level of culture. The other level is the social: the network of social relationships in which members of the society or group are variously involved. Among other things, this refers to the actual distribution of power and differentiated access to opportunities for the realisation of cultural ends.

The discord between the cultural and social levels brings about problematic situations. In reality, opportunities to achieve cherished goals of success are not available to all members. Inevitably, many will never be able to attain highly valued goals as they are culturally defined. The realisation of such a failure is very likely to give rise to tensions and frustrations. These in turn are likely to lead to the "withdrawal of allegiance from one or another part of prevailing social standards" which Merton has described as anomie (Merton, 1964: 218). Anomic situations produced by and inherent to capitalist societies continue to be viewed as a background against which deviance and crime can be understood. 'Left realist' accounts of crime in Britain today can be seen adopting, if implicitly, the Mertonian idea of this type of disjunctions, while exercising a critique of both orthodox criminology and existing structural arrangements:

> The values of an equal or meritocratic society which capitalism inculcates into people are constantly at loggerheads with the actual material inequalities in the world. And, contrary to the conservatives, it is the *well*-socialised person who is the most liable to crime. Crime is endemic to capitalism because it produces both egalitarian ideals and material shortages (Lea and Young, 1984: 95-96; emphasis in original).

Shortcomings of the welfare state in Britain have also been described in D.Smith's study, who concluded that "Inner-city deprivation may thus have to be accepted as one of the inevitable consequences of the maintenance of capitalism in Britain in this particular period of its historic evolution" (D.Smith, [1979] 1985: 213). The gravity and weight of anomic tensions is likely to increase, to the degree that others, to whom one relates directly or indirectly, may have done better. In other words, when people and groups who constitute one's referents do better, one might feel relatively deprived.

Merton has put forward the hypothesis that "social systems with relatively high rates of social mobility will tend to make for widespread orientation to non-membership groups as reference groups" (1968: 359). On the other hand, we do know that the United States is among the countries with the highest social mobility rates (cf. Lipset and Zetterberg, 1967: 565-570; Heath, 1981: 193-223), and that the American Dream is more than just a fiction. A good deal of social mobility has been the common feature of contemporary Western societies. Britain, in particular,

> showed rather more inter-generational mobility across the line between manual and non-manual labour, according to survey data from around the middle of this century, than other capitalist countries including the United States. Recruitment to the small élites at the top, at the same time, was tighter and more exclusive than in several other comparable societies, America among them (Westergaard and Resler, [1975] 1982: 302).

More recent surveys have revealed that, although one's position in

the British class structure is not fixed at birth, 'silver spoons continue to be distributed' (Heath, 1981: 75-77). This indicates that, in some 'mobile' societies, the movements up and down the occupational structure are more moderate than in others. These differences in patterns of mobility may have a significant impact upon one's choice of referents. Following Merton's logic, it may be hypothesised that the 'social distance' between one's actual position and one's referent will tend to be longer in social systems where high rates of social circulation also involve frequent movements across the range of social structure (e.g. 'rags to riches' and 'riches to rags'), than where these appear to occur more seldom. In any event, we are reminded that social mobility should not cloud the existence of sharp inequalities, the fact that capitalist societies pay lip service to the ideal of equal opportunity (Westergaard and Resler, [1975] 1982: 312).

On the basis of the definition of relative deprivation that has been adopted here, it can be assumed that the larger the social distance between a given individual and his/her comparative reference group, the higher the likelihood and degree of his/her relative deprivation. As was noted above, an egalitarian ideology leads to the selection of referents with whom the individual does not interact directly. One of its consequences may be that obstacles to wide-ranging comparisons are decreased or removed: "Feelings of relative deprivation are encouraged by any social process that diminishes barriers to comparison and emulation between the advantaged and the less advantaged" (Williams, 1975: 362). In this sense, the American-Dream type of ideology, by motivating people to try and secure success and higher positions in the social hierarchy, favours the selection of high-range reference groups which may bring about higher rates of relative deprivation.

Egalitarian discourses may thus indirectly contribute to the creation of relative deprivation which, in turn, with the strain it entails, may be conducive to more acute anomic tendencies and thereafter to increasing rates of both attitudinal and behavioural deviance. A cultural context which appears "to approximate the polar type in which great emphasis upon certain success-goals occurs without equivalent emphasis upon institutional means" (Merton, 1968: 190), can but provide fertile ground for such a process. As deviant behaviour may also be criminalised, this process can lead to high crime rates.

Indeed, as Shelley has observed, the crime problem is aggravated where "as in the United States, ...advertising through the mass media fosters the feeling of deprivation among large numbers of less affluent members of the population" (Shelley, 1981: 142). In an essay on mass communications, Eco has stressed the 'variability of interpretation' to which their messages are subject. The meaning conferred to the same message or image varies according to the codes operating in distinct 'sociological situations', where the recipients are located:

> For a Milanese bank clerk a TV ad for a refrigerator represents a stimulus to buy, but for an unemployed peasant in Calabria the same image means the confirmation of a world of prosperity that doesn't belong to him and that he must conquer. This is why I believe TV advertising in depressed countries functions as a revolutionary message (Eco, 1987: 141).

Eco's last sentence points to intriguing questions and matters of international, comparative inquiry. However, as indicated by his example, the argument also pertains to more limited areas of investigation, such as one country, city or even community, within which discordant interpretations can occur. Existing deprivations and inequalities may be *experienced* more strongly as such, through mass advertising, by underprivileged individuals within a country. Incessant bombardment of

information about the fact that other members of a group or society can and do enjoy higher standards of living facilitates upsetting comparisons. More generally then, mass advertising in depressed areas may 'function as a revolutionary message'. It must be immediately added that this is only meant to draw attention to potentialities. Smelser (1968) and Tilly (1978), among others, have pointed out that it takes more than just a message for collective responses and behaviour, let alone revolution. What is more important for our purposes here is that mass-media messages can produce feelings of relative deprivation and strains.

To be sure, such feelings and tensions may motivate people to increase their efforts and strive for advancement through legitimate channels. However, our concern being with deviance, the focus is on the impact of mass advertising and relative deprivation, in terms of deviant patterns and anomic trends. The emphasis is not on admirable achievements, but on departures from conventional standards, which tend to result from widespread messages, 1) nurturing people's awareness of material shortages and inequalities, and 2) legitimating, encouraging or creating wishes and needs that cannot be met easily, if at all. People are constantly reminded of what 'is missing' in their house or in their life. And, as Easterlin has put it, individuals "assess their material well-being, not in terms of the absolute amount of goods they have, but relative to a social norm of what goods they ought to have" (Easterlin, 1973: 4).

The spectacular growth of credit-card systems of payment in contemporary societies can be cited as a symptom of situations, where everyone is called upon to spend and buy beyond affordable levels. Loan-advertisements and 'buy now, pay later' signs are omnipresent. An incentive for getting a housing loan from the Royal Bank of Scotland has

been the possibility of 'winning' a car. Borrowing constitutes for many people an appealing short-term solution. At the same time, the economy's growth and companies' profit-requirements may be satisfied.

In the long run, however, these processes are impregnated with risks. Interest rates are frequently preposterous and make the final settlement look quite remote or, sometimes, impossible. For those led into debts that cannot be paid back, further borrowing may be required. Not surprisingly, there are agencies undertaking the payment of debts, yet another intermediary (and a product of these processes), but not for nothing. This illustrates a vicious circle and an unenviable position to be in. In Britain, for example, the consumer and household debt at the end of 1987 has been estimated at about "£200-225 billion, or an average of about £11.000 per household. Within this decade, household debt has risen from the equivalent of roughly six months' to a year's disposable income" (Shields, 1988: 48). This trend and "...the speed at which the aggregate debt indicators have risen has led to assertions that lenders are acting imprudently" (Dicks, 1987: 231).

Significant numbers of individuals, especially young, unemployed and low-paid, occasionally victims of exploitation, find themselves in difficult financial situations. Inland Revenue surveys suggest that

> it is younger and poorer households that face the highest debt-service ratios, so that much of the increase in the aggregate measures is likely to reflect decisions by such households to take on more debt (some encouraged by the government through their being offered the chance to buy council houses). Concerns about the build-up of debt have also been fed by *a sharp increase in the number of households facing severe debt problems in recent years* (Dicks, 1987: 232; emphasis added)

Addressing the issue of the credit and lending boom in recent years, the Governor of the Bank of England has pointed out

> ...the problem of the easy availability of credit from a multiplicity of sources to the individual borrower, who may

> thereby be tempted to take on more debt than he or she can handle. There have been a number of well publicised instances in recent months, which have quite properly given rise to concern. Because of the real personal suffering which can be involved, it is perhaps this aspect of personal credit which gives me the most immediate anxiety (Governor of the Bank of England, 1988: 49).

In view of these facts, it may be conjectured that those trapped in such situations will try and think of all ways and means likely to resolve the problems. And that, given the opportunity, they might resort to deviant methods. Their responses may be expected to be not only rational or instrumental, but also irrational or 'retreatist'. At any rate, these are questions requiring further investigation.

Nevertheless, some empirical support for this hypothesis is provided by Friedrichs' study on criminality and the socio-economic structure of W.German cities. He has found that per capita indebtedness as well as social assistance expenditure (used as an indicator of relative poverty) are highly correlated with crime rates. 'Thefts from houses' and 'thefts of cars', in particular, rise with per capita indebtedness (Friedrichs, 1985: 57 and 61).

The impact of secularisation, affluence, mass media and relative deprivation on deviance has been recorded long ago. As Toby has put it, "the distribution of goods and services here and now is a more important preoccupation than concern with eternal salvation" and

> the mass media...stimulate the desire for a luxurious style of life among all segments of the population. These considerations explain why the sting of socioeconomic deprivation can be greater for the poor in rich societies than for the poor in poor societies (Toby, 1967: 143).

In contemporary industrial societies, massive borrowing can be interpreted as an indicator of the desire for immediate gratification. Although this may be achieved up to a certain point and for a period of time, the end-result may be an unpleasant return to a situation, similar

to which borrowers were able to escape temporarily. As for many individuals the problem is only postponed or rendered more acute, Toby's argument is still valid'. Thus, in the effort to avoid marginality, one may be moving head-on towards it. Merton has noted that,

> The marginal man pattern represents the special case in a relatively closed social system, in which the members of one group take as a positive frame of reference the norms of a group from which they are excluded in principle. Within such a social structure, anticipatory socialisation becomes dysfunctional for the individual who becomes the victim of aspirations he cannot achieve and hopes he cannot satisfy. But...precisely the same kind of reference group behaviour within a relatively open social system is functional for the individual at least to the degree helping him to achieve the status to which he aspires. The same reference group behaviour in different social structures has different consequences (Merton, 1968: 320).

Such dysfunctional anticipatory socialisation, however, may occur also in relatively open social systems. The American Dream, for instance, encourages hopes and aspirations that objectively cannot be attained by all to whom it is addressed. We are, indeed, dealing with a comparatively open social structure. None the less, the degree, to which these aspirations are culturally inculcated, is disproportionate to the existing opportunities, 'even in a rapidly expanding economy' (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960: 119-121).

Furthermore, as we saw, relative deprivation and strains towards deviance and anomie may arise in other societies, in which the American Dream does not operate as extensively as in the USA, but which are characterised by egalitarianism and consumerism. Both relative deprivation and anomie refer to phenomena intrinsic to developed and affluent societies. Shelley has argued that, in agrarian society, individuals expecting to maintain a traditional life-style had few reasons to raise their aspirations and little opportunity to experience discrepancies between their achievements and their aims. From this, she concluded that

"anomie is a new phenomenon unique to the conditions of modern society" (Shelley, 1981: 11). Social problems can be identified as disjunctions between what is actually offered by a society and what wishes people have. Processes of deterioration as well as of raising of standards may produce this effect. There is little paradox, therefore,

> in finding that some complex, industrialised societies, having a comparatively high plane of material life and rapid advancement of cultural values, may nevertheless be *regarded by their members* as more problem-ridden than other societies with substantially less material wealth and cultural achievement. Nor is there any longer a paradox in finding that as conditions improve in a society (as gauged by widespread values), popular satisfaction may nevertheless decline (Merton, 1982: 64; emphasis added).

Merton has added that, as the so-called 'rising tide of expectations' advances unmatched by actual achievement, "there tends to develop a sense of collective 'relative deprivation'" (Merton, 1982: 64; for empirical support, he has referred to a study describing urban racial disturbances a response to 'multiple deprivations and frustrations' suffered by blacks). In addition, the 'urban environment of industrialised societies' has been regarded as conducive to relative deprivation and property crime:

> The city provided increased exposure to material possessions and greater financial expectations for those who resided there. Therefore, one of the unfortunate consequences of the increasingly urbanised society was a growth of property crime as individuals attempted to compensate illegally for their perceived deprivation (Shelley, 1981: 13).

According to Friedrichs' findings, the rates of horizontal mobility and of social assistance expenditure have a significant impact on the frequency of criminal offences (all offences). Further, the combination of lower social control and higher poverty leads to criminality. He has thus suggested an interpretation in terms of relative deprivation: beneficiaries of social assistance have partaken unequally in society's prosperity and, on the basis of a previously better economic position,

perceive inequalities more strongly (Friedrichs, 1985: 60). Finally, Shelley, adopting a Mertonian language, has remarked that "developed societies have attained an overall level of societal affluence that makes those members of society who lack the tangible signs of success more likely to resort to illegal means to acquire them" (Shelley, 1981: 84).

All this, however, should not be taken as a mere elaboration of Merton's hypothesis that "the greatest pressures for deviation are exerted upon the lower strata" (Merton, 1968: 198). When this statement is related to his overall concern with comparative rates of deviant behaviour, the impression is conveyed that his theory can only predict a distribution of deviance in line with official accounts of it (cf. Box, 1971: 104-105), despite his awareness of the incompleteness and unreliability of official crime statistics (cf. Merton, 1968: 198).

Instead of reiterating this theoretically and empirically disputable proposition, an objective of my analysis is to give more careful consideration to the way in which one's position in the social structure can affect attitudes and behaviour (deviant or conforming). This aim underlies the attempt to synthesise Mertonian insights and to link them with other relevant theories and perspectives. More specifically, and with respect to the issue of the distribution of deviance and crime in society, a consolidation of anomie and reference group theories should enable the study of middle- and upper-class patterns of deviance, and lead to the suggestion that tensions and pressures conducive to anomie and deviance are, in general, relatively evenly spread throughout the population.

It is not hard to see that the line of argument put forward in this chapter does not pertain only to the analysis of lower classes. According to Heiland, for instance, the fact that central aims of affluent societies - welfare and justice - are regarded by the actors as unfulfilled or

insufficiently materialised accounts for both the rising figures of property crime and the wider share in these figures of members who have participated in society's prosperity (Heiland, 1983: 195). This clearly concerns relatively well-off citizens. Friedrichs has commented that, although Heiland does not discuss it explicitly, his point implies that, in such situations, property crimes are also committed by people who used to belong to the middle and upper strata (Friedrichs, 1985: 52; this also hints at the importance of past/present comparisons: cf. M.Taylor, 1982).

More importantly, however, as developed here, the theory allows for the study of qualitative differences in tensions and anomic strains obtaining in various structural locations. Reference group analysis helps clarify not only processes, whereby culturally prescribed goals are actually adopted by individuals, but also what these goals may be in various contexts and what they signify for persons diversely located in the social structure. This mode of analysis, then, is a tool essential for the interpretation of empirical data showing that 'material success', for example, does not represent the same thing for every member of a given group or society. It is posited that the problems encountered by actors in their daily lives and their expectable responses would vary accordingly. Recent W.German studies employing the concepts of anomie and relative deprivation have pointed out differences in problems faced by people in different classes and shown, at the same time, how anomic tendencies are widespread across social classes (e.g. Klages, 1975: 12, 14ff.; Klages, 1981; Klages, 1984: 8-9; Klages and Herbert, 1983). Further, as has been argued, "since the last war the growth of the Welfare State has combined with the mass media and mass secondary education to produce a steady growth in relative deprivation" and "the phenomenon of 'over-education' is beginning to appear" (Lea and Young, 1984: 222). An effect

of these developments in contemporary societies is thus the raising of 'minimum expectations'. However, as these expectations can be interpreted in diverse fashions, people in all parts of the social structure may be confronted with strains and tensions.

The implications of this synthesis of reference group and anomie theories for the middle classes are followed up in the next chapter. It is essential to underline, however, that this consolidation can shed some light into the problem of how social class may be an antidote to, as well as a basis for, deviance and anomic tendencies[2]. Class can be regarded as an antidote, in the sense that, to the extent that ambitions are determined by membership reference groups, structural inequalities will have a less important role to play. It is of importance not to ignore the possibility of having societies, where discrepancies do exist but, because they are not perceived as such, relative deprivation is almost absent. Such situations can be found in societies, where there is a great deal of traditionalism (cf.Keller and Stern, 1968), with a comparatively rigid stratification system considered as legitimate by its members (cf. Coser, 1965: 140). In this type of societies, according to Merton's theory, the pressures leading to deviance and anomie would be less significant.

On the other hand, social class can be seen as a basis for strains towards deviance and anomie, in the sense that there are structural barriers for the realisation of valued goals. This may be the case in societies where goals are more universalistic, cutting across classes. Where social mobility is relatively high and adoption of non-membership referents more frequent, inequalities are likely to lead to relative deprivation and anomic situations (more acute for those in the lower ranks).

These opposite types of societies, however, are best conceived as

ideal types. Although today's societies - especially the USA - seem to be closer to the latter type, it would be mistaken to neglect that the way success is defined and expectations concerning the level of well-being are largely affected by the positions held by various individuals in the social structure (cf. chapters 5 and 6). Discrepancies between specific ends and available legitimate means are not necessarily felt more acutely by members of lower classes, who do not compare themselves with 'dukes' (cf. Runciman, 1966). On the other hand, it ought not be overlooked that, in an environment promoting success (however understood by different persons), competition, consumerism and immediate gratification, comparisons with not too distant - but still non-membership - referents are fostered. The urge to 'get ahead' may bring with it a willingness to break from conventional standards. Multi-national surveys have shown that

> Growing numbers of young people feel the need to forge ahead and determine their own identity and future. ...most young people are content to accomplish this task within traditional institutional channels. *A few youth, however, are willing to risk achieving their goals by working outside acceptable institutional channels* (Braungart and Braungart, 1986: 376; emphasis added).

Merton, referring to earlier empirical findings, he has noted that "At each income level...Americans want just about twenty-five per cent more (but of course this 'just a bit more' continues to operate once it is obtained)" (Merton, 1968: 190; about the significance of the word 'more' in the affluent USA, cf. Eco, 1987: 7-8). But if this is so, relative deprivation and anomic tensions are not to be expected only in the lower classes.

Matters are, in fact, more complicated by recent developments. The primary goal may not always be success, but rather maintenance of current standards. With the advancement of technology and continuous economic pressures for efficiency and profit, companies tend to resort to

redundancies. As a consequence, employees reasonably fear that they might lose current positions and salaries (cf. Bolte and Hradil, 1984: 286). These trends, instead of weakening the argument of this chapter, reinforce it: they underline the prevalence of competition and the strains that may easily ensue. They are additional processes potentially making for anomie. People may strive for different things: unemployed for satisfactory, meaningful jobs and better incomes; employed for preservation of levels of achievement and for possible strengthening of their position; those safe in their posts, comparing themselves with more successful peers, for advancement. The potential for relative deprivation, tensions and non-observance of established norms is far from unique to any single segment of the population.

The withdrawal of allegiance from one or another part of prevailing social standards (anomie) refers to attitudes as opposed to overt deviant behaviour (cf. Appendix: xiv). But according to Merton's typology, the possible responses to strains and anomie, apart from conformity and ritualism, may entail deviant behaviour. So, in contemporary societies, relative deprivation, strains, anomie and deviant behaviour are interconnected.

At this point, it is appropriate to dwell briefly on Box's reading of Merton's theory. By arguing that anomie in the Mertonian scheme is "no longer a condition of deregulation or normlessness, but one of relative deprivation" (Box, 1971: 105-106), he wished to highlight Merton's departure from Durkheim's formulation. Although his argument might have alluded to possible links between relative deprivation and anomie, it could not be received as an encouragement to bring them together. For he maintained that Merton's 'anomie' amounted to relative deprivation and proposed that "instead of operating with reified notions of 'objective

levels of relative deprivation' - an obsession which has blighted many sociologists - we should instead (*sic*) adopt a much more subjective approach" (Box, 1971: 146). From the foregoing analysis, however, it must be clear that what is being attempted here, is not far from his proposition.

Firstly, the two concepts have quite different meanings and refer to different things. Relative deprivation is regarded as an intermediary variable, as part of processes potentially *conducive* to deviant behaviour and anomie. Merton has postulated that disjunctions between valued goals and socially available means for their attainment together with cultural emphases on success make for strains towards anomie, a social state of things where the guiding power of established norms is diminished and people tend to think that 'everything goes'. For such trends to come about, it is necessary that the actors themselves experience these discrepancies, judge them undesirable and/or unfair, and engage in deviant actions, which become known to other social actors. It is the historically specific socio-psychological mechanisms making this possible that relative deprivation helps bring to the fore.

Secondly, it has been stressed that relative deprivation is not an 'objective', but a subjectively felt condition. Nevertheless, structural sources of subjective (and, at least potentially, patterned) feelings should not be disregarded. Else, psychological reductionism will be difficult to avoid. On the other hand, no charges of reification should be brought against the present analysis. It is quite consistent with the model implied by functional analysis: humans produce, reproduce and change socio-cultural settings, but their attitudes and actions are also influenced and constrained by these settings.

However, structural features of societies or collectivities

constitute a strategic site and a legitimate point of departure for sociological theorising and research. Therefore, one can start by examining prevalent cultural ideas in designated structural contexts, patterns of inequality or injustice, and conditions favouring comparisons, perception of disjunctions and feelings of relative deprivation. Then, one may try to assess the likely responses, patterns of conformity and deviance from particular values and/or norms, which can affect, in various ways, the social unit under consideration. Consequently, speaking of socially 'constrained comparisons' or treating relative deprivation as a 'structural effect' (cf. Williams, 1975: 358) does not necessarily involve reification.

Enter Anomia

By contrast to the sociological concept of anomie, 'anomia' refers to a *state of mind*, to the "breakdown of the individual's sense of attachment to society" (MacIver, 1950: 84; cf. also Riesman, [1950] 1953: 278-282; Srole, 1956a and 1956b; Merton, 1964; McClosky and Schaar, 1965). With the introduction of this psychological concept, the connections between reference group analysis and anomie theory can be further highlighted. In a very condensed paragraph, Merton has described how disjunctions between cultural goals and legitimate means, anomia, anomie and deviance are linked up:

> The men most vulnerable to the stresses resulting from contradictions between their socially induced aspirations and poor access to the opportunity-structure are the first to become alienated[3]. Some of them turn to established alternatives (Cloward's illegitimate opportunity-structure) that both violate the abandoned norms and prove effective in achieving their immediate objectives. A few others actually innovate for themselves to develop new

> alternatives. These successful rogues - successful as this is measured by the criteria in their significant reference groups - become prototypes for others in their environment who, initially less vulnerable and less alienated, now no longer keep to the rules they once regarded as legitimate. This, in turn, creates a more acutely anomic context for still others in the local social system. In this way, anomie, anomia, and mounting rates of deviant behaviour become mutually reinforcing unless counteracting mechanisms of social control are called into play (Merton, 1964: 235).

In the light of what has been said, the above paragraph can be somewhat extended and clarified. The American Dream egalitarian ideology and a social context where high rates of social mobility indicate a relatively open class structure not only allow for, but also facilitate and foster, broad orientations in terms of reference group selection. People's referents may be sought in non-membership groups. Consequently, the cultural goal of success is, to a certain degree, defined more uniformly across class barriers, compared to other types of society. Because people are unequally equipped with the means to achieve this end, those with poorer access to the opportunity structure are more likely to feel relatively deprived. The higher the sense of relative deprivation resulting from culturally promoted comparisons and an ends-means discrepancy, the more likely it is for one's commitment to prevalent social standards to be weakened.

Members who do not have easy access to the kinds of opportunity suggested by their referents, may 'innovate' for themselves, engage in deviant behaviour, and thus develop new alternatives. These new alternatives may prove to be successful. 'Success' is certainly measured by the criteria in their significant reference groups.' But as non-membership reference groups are not uncommon and 'success' is defined to a *considerable* extent (*but, of course, not absolutely*) uniformly, they become referents ('prototypes') for others in their environment who,

initially less vulnerable and less anomic, now feel relatively deprived. The sense of relative deprivation increases their degree of anomia (the psychological counterpart of anomie) and they no longer keep to the rules they once regarded as legitimate.

As a consequence of that, and given the relative underemphasis on the legitimacy of the methods employed, some others may opt for existing illegitimate alternatives (cf. Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). These alternatives involve violation of the (at least, temporarily) abandoned norms and prove effective in the realization of the actors' immediate objectives.

The breakdown of the culturally prescribed ways for attaining the valued objective is aggravated and this signifies a more acutely anomic context for still others in the local social system. People cannot any longer "rely upon a high probability that the behaviour of others will be in rough accord with standards *jointly* regarded as legitimate" (Merton, 1964: 227; emphasis in original). It is by no means implied that it is only anomic individuals who engage in deviant behaviour; it is assumed that they are more likely than non-anomics to do so (and this, again, is less probable, the lower the degree of anomie in the social group or society). But, it is suggested that *both anomic and non-anomic individuals will engage more often in deviant behaviour in contexts having a higher degree of anomie* (cf. Merton, 1964: 230).

So, the growth of patterns of deviant behaviour and illicitly achieved success gradually accentuates anomic trends in society; it creates an anomic situation for still others who, although have not reacted to the lower degree of anomie with overt deviant behaviour, may do so now. As Merton has remarked, "The increasing frequency in certain groups and areas of departures from institutional norms reduces, if it does not eliminate, the legitimacy of those norms for still others"

(Merton, 1956: 37-38). Further, the weaker the social norms, the stronger the impact of relative deprivation on deviance and crime (cf. Friedrichs, 1985: 53). In this way, socially favoured comparisons, relative deprivation, anomia, mounting rates of deviant behaviour, and anomie 'become mutually reinforcing unless counteracting mechanisms of social control are called into play'.

Some others, moreover, because of the overemphasis on success, the influence of illicitly successful referents, and easy access to illegitimate opportunities, will turn to these alternatives perhaps without undergoing relative deprivation and without considering the legitimate opportunities at all. This implies the existence of a pre-established subculture - formed through these processes of interaction and feed-back mechanisms - which is deviant by the prevailing standards of the society. Such subcultures surely are manifestations of anomie, but they also represent forces, if not accentuating, maintaining existing levels of anomie and particular patterns of deviant behaviour. As was emphasised in the previous chapter, anomie theory should not be categorised as a simply strain theory of deviance. It does attempt to account for deviance, in terms of culturally and socially induced strains, but this is not all. The 'stress component' of the theory can be distinguished from its 'anomic component', as the latter refers to deviance not preceded by overwhelming strains. People under strain, in an anomic environment, will turn to deviant adaptations more easily than in a less anomic environment. It must be impressed, however, that in an anomic environment strain is not required for the adoption of deviant means. When a significant diminution of the guiding power of prevailing values and norms obtains, people may be expected to be less committed to them. As a consequence, they may engage in deviant behaviour, whenever an

opportunity is offered.

An anomic environment favours the establishment of deviant normative structures and life-styles. Through socialisation and social interaction, then, people may adopt deviant normative referents, and may engage in deviant practices without having experienced relative deprivation or pressures (which may have contributed to the creation of the deviant sub-culture in the first place). In such cases, we are confronted by 'non-conformity', conceived as typically "conformity with the values, standards, and expectations of reference individuals and groups" (Merton, 1968: 413). These suggestions find empirical support in Lewis' study of the 'hustle':

> We can accept Merton's notion that such behaviour is deviant in that it violates legal specifications about what *is* and what *is not* a legitimate way of pursuing success goals. Structurally, the hustler *is* an innovator, a deviant; but it would be an error to equate this *structural deviance* (violation of the law) with the presence of deviant social meanings in the behaviour. In terms of its social meanings for those who participate, hustling is more *imitative* than *innovative* (Lewis, 1970: 183-184; emphasis in original).

The Mafia family business and the way it reproduces itself is another good example of 'non-conformity'. The *mafioso*-entrepreneur is someone born in a family and context providing a specific type of referents and is considered as the holder of a special position in society: 'this is *don* A's son', 'this is *don* B's nephew' (Arlacchi, 1986: 122). It is hardly surprising that this person joins the powerful subculture without experiencing stress or relative deprivation:

> He soon finds a niche in some profession or career - unlike many of his contemporaries, who under present conditions in southern Italy may face long years of youth unemployment. Mafia firms are family firms, and *everyone gets a chance to play their part. From adolescence onwards, he earns - and spends - a lot.* His psychological profile reveals only faint traces of the deviant and the outsider" (Arlacchi, 1986: 122; emphasis added).

This puts in relief the significant difference between the concepts of 'anomie' and 'anomia'. Merton's article on 'Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction' (1964) has been received by Schacht (1982) as blurring this distinction and giving prevalence to 'anomia'. This analysis, however, leaves no doubt about the primacy of the sociological concept, while not ignoring the frame of mind of individuals and their interaction. It may be added, nevertheless, that, just as the distinction between sociological and psychological ambivalence "is sometimes obscure because the two are so often empirically connected" (Merton et al., 1983: 40), that between the social state of anomie and the psychological state of anomia are difficult to separate out empirically.

The above quotation also illustrates how patterns of conformity to a given set of values and norms may at the same time be patterns of socially defined deviance. As Becker has pointed out, "A person may break the rules of one group by the very act of abiding by the rules of another group" (Becker, 1963: 8). Bearing in mind that Merton has also argued that "what is nonconformity to the norms of one group is often conformity to the norms of another group" (Merton, 1982: 74), a significant convergence of theorists espousing different perspectives emerges. The relevance of reference group analysis to the study of conformity - which is as problematic as deviance - is reiterated in the sociological literature. But the primary concern here is with what constitutes deviation from prevailing standards and with processes by which it is produced and reproduced (cf. also chapter 6).

It cannot be emphasised too strongly, however, that 'innovation' (which can be simultaneously 'conformism' from another point of view) - involving law breaking or not - is only one response to structural disharmonies and contradictions making for anomie. Shelley has contended

that, "Relative deprivation is not an explanation of all forms of crime but only those offences related to property" (Shelley, 1981: 10). Her remark probably reflects a large body of research carried out chiefly in North America which provided fairly uniform support for a positive association between property crime and relative deprivation - measured mainly by income inequality (cf. Eberts and Schwirian, 1968; Danziger and Wheelers, 1975; Danziger, 1976; Braithwaite, 1979: 211-220; Jacobs, 1981; DeFronzo, 1983). However, Merton's typology of responses to strains and anomie - in the making of which, as I have tried to show, relative deprivation may play a crucial role - offers a wider range of possibilities. According to our analysis, therefore, relative deprivation may be followed by a variety of responses, under different circumstances.

Interesting attempts have been made to generate theoretically based hypotheses with regard to likely responses to feelings of relative deprivation, individual and collective (cf. Runciman, 1966: 33-35; Williams, 1975: 366-373). Although their suggestions might be helpful in further clarifying Merton's typology, such exercise is beyond the scope of this thesis. At any rate, a comparative study of sixty-two nations has found that property crime increases with economic development, but also that the former is not necessarily connected with income inequality. It concluded with the suggestion that relative deprivation stemming from income inequality can lead to numerous alternative responses besides crime, such as alcoholism and suicide (i.e. 'retreatism') or social movements aiming at the reduction of inequality (possibly 'innovation' or potentially 'rebellion') (cf. Stack, 1984).

The results of another recent study (Ross and Mirowsky, 1987) also warn against a firm anomia-leads-to-'innovation' and to law violation postulate. It was found that subjective 'normlessness'

> does not lead to trouble with the law among persons who also believe they are powerless to achieve their ends. It is only among persons who do not believe they are powerless - who see themselves as active and effective forces in their own lives - that normlessness is related to trouble with the law (Ross and Mirowsky, 1987: 272).

In line with the analysis of the above authors is the proposition that structural conditions and discrepancies may promote 'emotional distress' or even mental ill-health - in cases of 'normless' (i.e. anomic) individuals who feel they have little control over their lives - as well as criminal activities - in cases of anomics who feel more 'instrumental' (cf. Ross and Mirowsky, 1987: 273-274fn. and 275-276). It may be further conjectured that the perception of the power one has to achieve valued ends depends largely upon one's knowledge that others have suceeded, opportunity to associate with them and to use the same means. Moreover, when the available means are illicit, their use would depend on what control theorists have called 'commitment to conformity' (cf. Briar and Piliavin, 1965; Box, 1971), and willingness to take risks is low. This brings us back to reference groups (comparative and normative). It also highlights the relevance of Sutherland's theory of 'differential association', which has been seen as "a special case of the more general theoretical framework of reference group theory" (Clark, 1972: 91).

Moreover, the political situation and the perception of possible political solutions to problems may have an impact on likely outcomes (cf. Stack, 1984: 236 and 251-252). The reactions then can be collective and 'rebellious', as the means of protest may "explicitly challenge the system itself and 'its rules of the game'" (S.Hall, 1974: 271). Hall's reasoning, despite his rejection of the 'Mertonian variety of theory of deviance', is quite congruent with our analysis:

> The attainment of a *par excellence* democratic goal (freedom of expression of political views, respect of dissenting ideologies and practices, pluralism) is, in fact,

> sometimes impossible if the rules laid down by democratic theory are to be followed; in other words, *access to legitimate avenues leading to the materialization of a legitimate cultural goal is structurally denied* (S.Hall, 1974: 266; emphasis added).

That the responses to such conflicts making for anomie (in this case, between democratic theory and practice) can be expected to be collective is confirmed by the observation that "the early Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland articulated the structural discontents of the poor, disenfranchised Catholic minorities of Ulster" (S.Hall, 1974: 270).

Summarising, then, cultural and material conditions of today's societies seem to have in-built tendencies towards deviance and anomie, which can lead to a wide range of outcomes determined by specific patterns of interaction. So, we can expect (given specific conditions) anything from quiescence, fatalism and mental illness to "discontent; and in the absence of politics, crime" (Lea and Young, 1984: 74). As a consequence, the sketchily outlined dynamic processes might lead not only to maintenance and reproduction of existing arrangements, but also to some sort of social change.

Concluding

It must be underlined again that the development and elaboration of Merton's theory is not geared towards any claim that it can become an all-inclusive, grand theory of deviance. The project is rather to assess the possibility of building bridges among various, equally significant, theoretical perspectives. In this respect, the question is: to what extent could a minimum common language improve the communication among

different contributions, so often juxtaposed in a 'belligerent' mood, rather than for the purpose of 'peaceful' conversation.

It is beyond doubt that, for a more complete understanding of deviance, it is indispensable to take more extensively into account the crucial role of social control in the dynamic processes briefly described above. Analyses of the informal control of normative reference groups is surely insufficient and must be complemented with more formal controls operating in groups or in the society. The effects of social control itself on the shaping of deviant behaviour and 'deviancy amplification' (cf. J.Young, [1971] 1982) ought also to be included. In that, the 'labelling perspective' has indeed much to contribute.

This chapter was chiefly an attempt to connect the developing anomie theory with this question: what is the impact of social interaction and the influence of others on the ways, in which people differentially located in the social structure may be expected to respond to disjunctions between lofty cultural aims and socially restricted opportunities. A dynamic process has been outlined, in which egalitarian ideologies, material shortages, relative deprivation, stress, anomia, deviant behaviour, and anomie are inter-connected.

Merton's anomie theory has traditionally been read and used for the analysis of lower-classes crime and deviance. It is suggested that, in view of this elaboration, it can contribute to the understanding of middle and upper-class deviance and crime as well. This implication of the consolidation of anomie theory with reference group analysis, is examined in detail in the following chapter, where I attempt to rebuke the allegation that a 'class bias' is inherent in Merton's theory.

Notes

1. One might object that people often deal with this problem with a degree of indifference, as to how and whether debts will be paid. They may simply carry on borrowing and enjoying goods and services without experiencing any (severe) tensions. This, however, represents an 'innovative' response which deviates from economic and social rules governing transactions and the maxim 'neither a borrower nor a lender be'. Further, if this attitude spreads and this 'innovation' occurs on a large scale, the effects are likely to be deleterious to the borrowing system and the economy in general.

2. I owe this formulation of the problem to a personal communication with David Downes.

3. Merton's usage of the notion of 'alienation' in this context may cause some confusion, as it is treated as synonymous to 'estrangement' and 'anomia' (the psychological counterpart of 'anomie'). Confusions have been fostered, especially in USA, by attempts to operationalise Marx's concept for the purposes of empirical research. There is an interesting literature on the connections and divergences between 'alienation' and 'anomie' (e.g. Seeman, 1959; Horton, 1964; Lukes, 1977b; Shoham and Grahame, 1982; Besnard, 1987; Orrú, 1987b), but their analysis would take us far afield. In Merton's use, the terms 'alienation' and 'alienated' refer to particular individuals' estrangement from prevailing social standards. For the sake of clarity, in his discussion, I use only the concept of anomia.

CHAPTER 5

ON ANOMIE THEORY'S 'CLASS BIAS'

Introduction

Merton has made two assumptions germane to the relationship between class and deviance, in contemporary societies. He has suggested 1) that pressures making for deviations and anomie are stronger among the lower social strata, and 2) that higher rates of 'innovation' may be expected in these strata (cf. Merton, 1968: 198 and 220-226). Many scholars have contended that these assumptions are inherent in his *theory*, which inevitably neglects deviance that occurs in the upper social ranks and 'bourgeois criminality' (cf. Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 106-107). Sutherland's work (1940; 1945; [1949] 1961) on 'white-collar crime' has directed attention to the prevalence of unlawful behaviour of respectable and high-status persons. By now, there is a large number of studies (cf. Kramer, 1984; Box, 1987) indicating that, in general, rates of illegal behaviour are not too differentiated by class (although this is not so, when it comes to specific offences).

Empirical data relevant to the frequency and importance of law violations in the upper classes and to the social distribution of criminal deviant behaviour are examined extensively in the next chapter. This chapter concentrates more on the logical structure of the theory under revision, in order to see what assumptions or propositions follow from it.

In other words, the question is: what are the 'theoretical expectations' (cf. Merton, 1987) about the relationship between class and deviance that flow from Merton's writings?

The objective is to show that, in contrast to common representations of Merton's theory as intrinsically 'class biased', the blending of anomie theory with reference group analysis renders the above assumptions redundant. It is suggested that this synthesis facilitates the task of reformulating the theory, in accordance with empirical findings. It is maintained that structural discrepancies and tensions may permeate all parts of contemporary societies. Feelings of relative deprivation and lack of gratification are not necessarily experienced more frequently by members of the lower classes. It is pointed out that, according to Merton's own broader analytical and conceptual framework, there is no reason for assuming that those comparatively well-off are less affected than the underprivileged. In this way, the theory can help account for relative deprivation, anomic trends and deviant patterns - which may or may not be against the law - likely to occur both in the higher and the lower social ranks.

It is argued that both the specific form of structural discrepancies and contradictions, and the actors' reaction to them, depend largely upon the particular social context, in which the actors find themselves. Since the chief concern is with differing types of deviance occurring in diverse positions of the social hierarchy, the analysis shifts away from Merton's objective to account for differing rates of deviance among social strata. Indeed, a major implication of this analysis is that no significant variations in rates are to be expected among social classes, when non-criminal deviant behaviour is taken into account.

Finally, it must be noted that the terms class, stratum, rank etc.

are used interchangeably, as there is no concern with some sociological conception of 'class'. Braithwaite (1979: 9) has used the terms lower class and middle class to denote "those relatively low in wealth and power and those relatively high in wealth and power". In a similar fashion, these terms will refer here to prestige, wealth and power as continua.

Is Merton's Theory Class-Biased?

Before discussing in detail Merton's *assumptions* by contrast to Merton's *theory*, it is worth noting that the concept of relative deprivation has also been applied mainly to the study of deviance among lower-class individuals and groups (cf. Eberts and Schwirian, 1968; Shelley, 1981; Lea and Young, 1984). This may be an important reason why it is frequently associated with the notion of inequality and confused with people's objective deprivations - i.e. gauged by the yardstick of the observer. It is certainly true that, when one's reference groups are non-membership groups, the lower one's position in the social hierarchy, the higher will be the possibility of feelings of relative deprivation. We have seen that the American Dream and egalitarian ideologies tend to promote the adoption of non-membership reference groups. To the extent that *inter*-group comparisons are made, relative deprivation can be expected to be higher among the less privileged strata.

While it is essential to record and take account of such patterns and their possible outcomes, their importance should not be overstated and, thus, cloud that of other processes. Discourses of equal opportunity and social justice and their various effects should not be considered in

isolation from wider structural changes and contexts, in which they originate and operate. As was reiterated in the previous chapter, certain features of modern and contemporary societies - such as the development of the welfare state, economic growth and unending demands for further growth, technological advancement and the increased impact of the media of mass communication - have led to a 'tide', 'inflation' or 'revolution' of rising ambitions and expectations (cf. Shelley, 1981; Klages, 1975 and 1984; Merton, 1982: 64; Lea and Young, 1984).

All this contributes to, and reproduces, an environment characterised by consumerism and competition, where stress and pressures may obtain at all levels of the social structure. In achievement-oriented societies - including the USA and other industrial societies - the omnipresent spirit and, in a sense, necessity of competition may manifest themselves in diverse ways, in different structural situations. That is, although people are encouraged and expected to compete, they do not compete for the same things: some are trying to find a job, others to excel and stay in their job, while still others may be concerned with how to make an extra million for themselves or their company. Comparisons making for relative deprivation and stress need not involve socially distant referents. In a highly competitive environment, even *intra*-group comparisons (with more successful peers) may be upsetting and generate strong feelings of relative deprivation.

Merton's anomie theory, on the other hand, has been interpreted largely as postulating an association of low status or strata with higher pressures for deviance and criminality (e.g. Box, 1971: 104-106; Thio, 1975; McCaghy, 1985: 59-60; Ross and Mirowsky, 1987: 273). It is commonly classified among the criminological theories that have been put forward to explain why crime rates are higher in the lower classes (cf.

Braithwaite, 1979: 70-74). It has been remarked that, "because Merton restricts his concept of strain to the strain experienced by lower-class individuals, he predicts too little of the lawbreaking that is actually occurring", and therefore, his anomie theory "stands accused of predicting too little bourgeois criminality and too much proletarian criminality" (Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 106 and 107; cf. also Braithwaite, 1979: 71).

Since Merton himself has not agreed with such interpretations (cf. Appendix: x), it is worth examining the extent to which they may be justified. I would like to argue that, although these views are correct at least in part, some basis can be found in Merton's own writings for further elaborations which could clarify existing but avoidable ambiguities. Put it another way, the critics are right in identifying and dismissing certain unwarranted Mertonian assertions, while they fail to acknowledge that these analytical problems can be resolved (e.g. Taylor et al., [1973] 1981: 109). Indeed, what was said above about relative deprivation, can be shown to hold for processes conducive to anomie and deviance, in general.

As mentioned above, there are two assumptions that lend support to the arguments of critical commentators. First, that the strain towards anomie and deviant behaviour "does not operate evenly throughout the society" (Merton, 1968: 211); since the goals/opportunity disjunction - which exerts pressure for deviations and may produce anomie - is likely to be more frequent in the lower strata, this is where the strain must be at its strongest. Second, that lower social strata are most vulnerable to pressures towards 'innovation' (cf. Merton, 1968: 198), the type of deviant behaviour which, as we saw in chapter 3, often overlaps with legal definitions of crime. Both assumptions, however, are empirically disputable and theoretically damaging, as they are inconsistent with other, crucially

important elements of the developing theory of anomie. These two points of Merton's analysis will be examined in turn, following up at the same time the elaborations of the previous chapter.

Are Strains Towards Deviance and Anomie Weaker in the Upper Social Strata?

As research has shown long ago, although the success theme is addressed to all members of the society and may be assimilated in general (and abstractly) by a large number of people, the particular form it takes does vary from one structural position to another (e.g. Kahl, 1953; Empey, 1956; Hyman, 1967). This fact appeared to challenge Merton's hypothesis, that pressures to deviate are more acute in the lower strata, to the extent that it depended upon the actual internalisation of the success goal by lower-class individuals (e.g. Parkin, 1971: 80; note, however, that Merton has qualified his hypothesis: cf. Merton, 1968: 224 and Merton, 1976g: 190). Merton's (1968: 224-230) response to such findings and to Hyman's (1967) study, in particular, has been received as a mere shift of attention from proportions to absolute numbers (Hirschi and Selvin, 1967: 259; Besnard, 1987: 286). Indeed, Merton has stressed that

> *it is not the relative proportions of the several social classes adopting the cultural goal of success that matter, but their absolute numbers.* To say that a larger *percentage* of the upper social and economic strata hold fast to the cultural goal of success is not to say that larger *numbers* of them than of lower-class people do so" (Merton, 1968: 228; emphasis in original).

The difference between proportions and absolute numbers, however, does not refer to deviant behaviour, but to adoption of lofty goals. Further, it is not the adoption of the success goal itself that makes for deviance, but the *discrepancy* between this goal and available legitimate

means for its attainment. What is 'of theoretical moment', for Merton, therefore, is the relative frequency of this discrepancy, rather than the relative frequency of the assimilation of the success-goal (Merton, 1968: 229). Given that members of upper strata have more access to legitimate opportunities to succeed, this disjunction, assumes Merton, is probably less acute. As he has put it, his hypothesis

> does not require that larger proportions or even larger numbers in the lower social strata be oriented toward the success-goal, but only that a *substantial number* be so oriented. For it is the *disjunction* between culturally induced high aspirations and socially structured obstacles to realisation of these aspirations which is held to exert distinct pressure for deviant behaviour (Merton, 1968: 228; emphasis in original; the same point has been made by Cloward and Ohlin, 1960: 88).

However, to speak of '*the* success-goal' in abstract (as if it were one goal) is, by definition, to underplay or even obscure the fact that this goal may be variously concretised in the minds of different people, as they are influenced by their distinct reference groups. Despite his careful language and consistently with his major aim to account for diverse rates of deviant behaviour among social groups, Merton has proposed that the ends/means *disjunction* will be more frequent in the lower than in the middle and upper strata (cf. Merton, 1968: 228-229). While admitting the lack of adequate empirical data, he has speculatively suggested that

> this disjunction is more frequent in the lower strata than in the middle strata, since the evidently larger number of middle-class Americans adopting *the success-goal* may include a sufficiently smaller proportion who are seriously impeded in their efforts to reach out toward *this goal* (Merton, 1968: 228-229; emphasis added).

Given that this disjunction may also make for anomie, Merton was led to assume that (not only stress-produced deviance, but also) anomie is unevenly distributed and to "counter any unthinking tendency to assume

that American society is *uniformly* riddled with anomie" (Merton, 1968: 230; emphasis added).

It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that similar conclusions can be reached, even when some consideration is given to the differences in levels of aspiration. Following a review of several studies, Cloward and Ohlin have noted that, although the desired absolute increase in income is clearly greater among the wealthy than among the poor, "the proportion of current income that this increment represents decreases with each upward step in the social scale". From this, they concluded that "persons in the lower reaches of society experience a relatively greater sense of position discontent despite the fact that their absolute aspirations are less lofty" (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960: 89). As position dissatisfaction is combined with less access to legitimate ways of changing their status, lower-class people "should experience greater pressures toward deviant behaviour" (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960: 90). It has also been observed that findings about comparatively lower levels of aspiration among the underprivileged do not exclude the possibility that they experience an acute means/ends disharmony: even if their ends are lower, the distance that separates them from their achievement may be longer than for those in other social strata (Besnard, 1987: 286).

The value of the above suggestions, however, is limited. They may only constitute working hypotheses that ought to be abandoned, when they conflict with valid empirical data. They should not be regarded as assumptions necessary for, or inherent in, the theory under review. Once acknowledged that patterns of the level and type of ambition vary from one social situation to another, the sources of potential tensions and feelings of relative deprivation should be expected to vary accordingly. As a consequence, claims as to actual variations in the degree of such socially

induced strains and pressures towards deviance and anomie are empirical.

There is no intention to deny that people in higher social ranks are absolutely less deprived, more wealthy, better educated, have better and more gratifying occupations, and opportunities seem to be plentiful for them. The point is rather that, as Keller and Zavalloni have observed, "for these very reasons, should middle class individuals fail to realise these things, they will suffer greater relative deprivation by comparison with their successful peers" (Keller and Zavalloni, 1964: 69). This highlights the fact that people's comparative and normative standards are largely shaped by their position in the social hierarchy and that research, employing relative measurements of achievement and strain, may cast doubts on inflexible assertions as to where we are to find stronger pressures for deviation.

Further, success does not only signify money, but also prestige, power, and other things. It has been observed that lower classes appear more preoccupied with economic success and 'security' (Parsons, 1954), whereas upper classes, having achieved certain economic success and security, strive more for prestige and respectability (cf. Williams, 1960: 419; Keller and Zavalloni 1964: 64-66 who summarised empirical support; Mizruchi, 1964a and 1964b). Within limited space boundaries and for the sake of simplification, the emphasis on the pursuit of monetary gain and profit by way of illustration of the Mertonian scheme is, as will be shown below, aptly selected. Nevertheless, these variations can be ignored only at a grave theoretical risk.

Merton himself, evidently aware of that, has applied the same analytical scheme to the institution of science (Merton, 1957). He has focused on norms and values that develop specifically in scientific settings. Among them, the value of originality, which does much to advance

knowledge, stands out and is central to the system of allocating rewards to scientists. This value, however, may be overemphasised - especially, one might add, when the institution of science is considered as part of a wider environment, where competitiveness reigns. All manner of deviant behaviour, then, can be regarded as a response to "a discrepancy between the enormous emphasis in the culture of science upon original discovery and the actual difficulty many scientists *experience* in making an original discovery" (Merton, 1957: 659; emphasis added). 'Retreatism', for example, is described as

> the abandoning of the once-esteemed goal of originality and of practices directed toward reaching that goal. In such instances, the scientist withdraws from the field of inquiry, either by giving up science altogether or by confining himself to some alternative role in it, such as teaching or administration. (This does not say, of course, that teaching and administration do not have their own attractions, or that they are less significant than inquiry; I refer here only to the scientists who reluctantly abandon their research because it does not measure up to *their own standards of excellence*) (Merton 1957: 655; emphasis added).

The italicised parts of the above quotations indicate once more Merton's belief in the necessity to integrate the 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' analyses of social phenomena and to consider them as complementary (as mentioned earlier in chapter 2). It is, thus, reiterated how essential it is for anomie theory that actors do perceive discrepancies and experience difficulties, when they fail to live up to the goals they set themselves.

Merton himself, again, has quoted empirical findings (in USA) supporting the view that, given a "flux of shifting standards, there is no stable resting point, or rather, it is the point which manages always to be 'just ahead'" (Merton, 1968: 190). The cultural message of 'getting ahead' may be interpreted simply in terms of improving one's situation.

For automobile workers, for example, it may mean 'the progressive accumulation of things' (Chinoy, 1955: 126). But, since it is addressed to all members of the society and not adopted only by the underdogs, it may operate as a constantly renewed invitation to have 'a little bit more' successful referents. Merton has quoted the 'anguished words' of a relatively well-to-do "victim of the American Dream: 'In this town, I'm snubbed socially because I only get a thousand a week. That hurts'" (Merton, 1968: 190). These are clear hints that, studying the possible effects of the American Dream and egalitarian ideologies, it cannot be assumed that they operate in the same way in all situations and at all income levels. Particular contexts offer, and often impose, specific (additional) reference groups, for they involve special expectations. In the effort to succeed or simply to avoid failure, one's *type* and *level* of ambition is expectably affected.

An implication of all this is that, as people's referents and specific goals depend largely upon the setting in which they find themselves, they often strive for different things. Even if they strive for the same goal in abstract (e.g. monetary success), their levels of aspiration are likely to be diverse. As a consequence, people in all positions may face problems in terms of finding legitimate routes leading to the realisation of their concrete objectives. In any event, it would run against empirical evidence to suggest that the distance between a person's actual situation and the desired situation is always longer for those near the bottom. On the basis of research carried out in France and the USA, Runciman has remarked that this distance may be equally large whether the person "is a labourer's son who wants to be a craftsman or a solicitor's son who wants to be a high court judge" (Runciman, 1966: 27).

Moreover, given the cultural accent on achievement and the pervading

spirit of competition in contemporary societies, one's comparative referent need not be socially remote, in order for one to feel relatively deprived and to experience tensions. It is not unreasonable to suggest that two similarly ambitious individuals (both following the 'rythm of the times'), who belong to different social strata and have membership groups as points of reference, pursuing their distinct aims, might experience strains and frustrations equally difficult to handle: they may have to run a similar 'relative distance' between their social rank and the aspired goal (cf. Keller and Zavalloni, 1964: 60-62). So, it may well be "that the magnitude of the relative deprivations which are felt by the underprivileged is no greater than the magnitude of those felt by the very prosperous" (Runciman, 1966: 27). Strain and frustrations may, thus be experienced in all social strata. A.Cohen has pointed out that, "it has been plausibly argued by some students of social class in America that growing up in the middle class is, on the whole, more frustrating than growing up in the working class" (A.Cohen, 1955: 73).

The same conceptual framework, therefore, can account for processes conducive to deviance among both deprived and affluent members of the society. Thio was right when he pointed out that, had Merton seen the connection between social class and relative deprivation and had he applied it to his anomie theory, "he would have found untenable his assumption that lower-class persons are more likely than upper-class persons to experience obstacles to the realisation of high aspirations" (Thio, 1975: 148) and to engage in deviant behaviour'.

So, it is suggested that an immediate effect of these conditions and strains may be deviant behaviour (apart from harder effort within a legitimate framework). This, however, refers to the 'stress component' of the theory under review. The disjunctions between the social and cultural

structures also make for anomie which, be it reiterated, represents a distinct, 'non-stress' source of deviance. Once a degree of anomie has set in, people may engage in deviant behaviour without undegoing strains or relative deprivation. That is, to the extent that the guiding power of prevailing values and norms diminishes and institutional controls are attenuated, people's commitment to them decreases and the only regulating agencies become "calculations of personal advantage and fear of punishment" (Merton, 1968: 211).

As was mentioned earlier (chapters 3 and 4), one of the conditions conducive to anomie is the presence of successful deviant behaviour itself, which tends to "eliminate the legitimacy of the institutional norms for others in the system" (Merton, 1968: 234). Anomie can be produced and/or intensified through the growth of patterns of success via illicit channels (cf. Merton, 1956: 37-38). Deviant, but successful, individuals establish new alternatives, which may become prototypes for others in their environment, who may follow the same paths; the consequence is a more acute anomic context for still others (cf. Merton, 1964: 234-235). In brief, when it is seen that illegitimate methods can secure success, without serious risks of apprehension and/or punishment, the processes of interaction described in the previous chapter are likely to be set in motion.

As malintegrations between the social and cultural structures may occur at the bottom as well as at the top of contemporary societies, the assumption that the degree of anomie will be lower in the upper reaches is unwarranted. There are, however, further reasons for disputing this unnecessary Mertonian postulate, some of which are implied in Merton's work. Apart from those malintegrations, relative deprivation and stress, additional sources of anomie and deviance may be identified, such as

success itself.

At first glance, Merton's own analysis of the 'anomia of success' (Merton, 1964: 219-222) seems to clash with his suggestion that anomie is widespread in the lower social ranks. This analysis has extended the boundaries of anomie theory and can be viewed as a basis for further elaborations. But, it is striking that he chose to use, in this respect, the psychological concept. In trying to understand why he spoke of anomia, rather than anomie, of success, it is helpful, as we shall see, to have in mind that two analytically different (stress and non-stress) sources of deviance can be brought out of Merton's writings.

Merton's original formulations on deviance concentrated chiefly on responses to a cultural under-emphasis on normative means for reaching valued goals combined with a lack of access to legitimate channels leading to success. This helped convey a disadvantaged image of the deviant and obscured the potential bearing of his analysis upon the ways, in which anomie can infiltrate in the upper world - and operate as a factor enhancing deviance. According to some theorists, an important reason for this, was the fact that his ideas were formed in the context of the depression - and immediate post-depression - years: scarcity of resources was thought to have been more problematic for the less privileged members of the society (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 357; Abrahamson, 1980: 50). From Merton's later essay 'Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction', however, more of that potential can be ferreted out. In this essay, Merton has focused more explicitly on problems and strains that may attend success. Incidentally, it is instructive that Merton did so when it became clearer that the developing theory of anomie not only implied an analysis of processes of social interaction, but also *required* it (cf. Merton, 1964: passim).

In his words, contrasting with the 'anomie of deprivation', "is the anomia that at times attends success, when men apparently respond to the socially legitimate achievement of a highly prized goal by deviant behaviour"; and these cases are "statistically rare but theoretically significant" (Merton, 1964: 219-220). Illustrating this paradox, Merton has referred to a businessman's despair after a financial coup, a scientist's psychic collapse after a basic discovery, and a writer's suicide after the publication of an acclaimed novel (Merton, 1964: 220). He thus came closer to the Durkheimian theme of anomic suicide and to what has been termed the 'anomie of affluence'. According to Simon and Gagnon (1976), this characterises developed societies, where the main problem is lack of sufficient gratification from the realisation of valued goals, rather than of the availability of means. It is puzzling, however, why Merton chose to juxtapose '*anomie* of deprivation' to '*anomia* of success'. Why did he prefer to use the psychological concept at the point of the most manifest convergence with Durkheim (cf. Besnard, 1987: 261)?

It may be conjectured that the main reason was his concern to be consistent with his assumption that anomie is unevenly distributed: that it is more acute in the lower strata. This interpretation receives support, if one reverses Merton's statement about the importance and occurrence of the 'anomia of success': it is theoretically significant, but statistically rare. In view of the relatively lower frequency of such problems, both rates of deviance and degrees of anomie can be assumed to be lower in the higher strata. Merton's contribution to a new phase of development of the anomie theory is such, that it does not neglect strains and pressures specific to comparatively advantaged members of the society, without having to question the said assumption. That is, these strains may be conducive to considerable incidents of deviance among the

privileged, but *not significant enough to bring about anomie*. This is the reasoning that can be inferred from - as well as explain - Merton's reluctance to talk about anomie in this context.

If we subscribed unreservedly to this reasoning, we could agree with those who have regarded the Mertonian 'social topography' of anomie as the inverse of Durkheim's (e.g. Mizruchi, 1964b: 255; Besnard, 1987: 264). The difference between the two sociologists in this respect, however, is not so radical (or, more precisely, between Durkheim and what can be made out of Merton's writings). Durkheim has contended that the state of crisis and anomie is chronic in the sectors of trade and industry (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 283), and noted that it is the most fortunate and well-off who suffer most from the state of anomie (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 287). Nevertheless, while arguing that an effect of the industrial development and the expansion of the market is to unleash limitless appetites, to free them from all type of authority that keeps ambitions in control, he has pointed out that such processes have affected the rest of the society too (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 284-285). Furthermore, he has noted that the state of deregulation that results from economic disasters or sudden increases in power and wealth over-excites ambitions and triggers off a struggle in which participate *all classes*, because there is no established classification (Durkheim, [1930] 1983: 281). For Durkheim, therefore, anomie was not a uniquely upper-class phenomenon.

Although Merton, on the other hand, has overtly insisted on the presumption that the degree of anomie is higher among the lower-class strata, the underlying logic of his contributions has often suggested - if implicitly - that this may not be so. It must be underlined that, in spite of his reference to Freud and his use of the concept 'anomia of success', Merton's analysis remained sociological as to the sources of 'paradoxical'

behaviour on the part of successful individuals. The idea that he has conveyed is that, in contemporary societies, it cannot be taken for granted that the race ends with the achievement of a long-valued goal. In a world of ceaseless competition, the possibility that the aspirations of successful individuals may be ever escalating cannot be ruled out. Moreover, by incorporating in his scheme the environmental pressures (from one's associates) for additional achievements, which constitute further sources of strains, he made a step further than Durkheim:

> it is not only that *their own* Faustian aspirations are ever escalating, becoming unlimited and insatiable, and so, even when achieved, landing them no nearer to heaven (the point that Durkheim seized upon). It is also that, under still poorly understood conditions, more and more is expected of these men by others and this creates its own measure of stress. Less often than one might believe, is there room for repose at the top" (Merton, 1964: 221; emphasis in original).

Commenting on the results of Reissmann's (1953) study on 'Levels of Aspirations and Social Class', Runciman has also observed that success "can itself provide the external stimulus by which comparisons are heightened..." (Runciman, 1966: 29). Expectations from, and pressures on, the successful for further achievements are not created only in the fields of business, trade and industry. To take an example from the realm of science, "scientists who have published significant work are actively solicited for still more publications" (Merton, 1965: 83).

Such tensions are, for Merton, sufficiently strong to induce anomia to individuals, who may then engage in deviant behaviour. At this point, however, the relevant question is: could the impact of the pressures on the successful and their deviance be powerful enough to set in motion processes of interaction making for anomie? In that case, further deviance may ensue not only under the influence of strain, but also because deviant, albeit accessible and promising success, *modi operandi* will be

created? As we saw above, to limit the analysis to the 'anomia of success', is to imply that the cultural breakdown and the weakening of the legitimacy of institutional controls signified by anomie (cf. Merton, 1964: 227; Merton, 1968: 211, 217, 223-4) is not very likely to obtain in the circles of successful members of the society. This is due to the fact that Merton's discussion of the 'anomia of success' centres on the socially produced problems of those, who have reached 'the top' through *legitimate avenues* and who *infrequently* react in deviant manners (cf. Merton, 1964: 220-221). For Merton, therefore, such deviant cases neither reflect nor are conducive to a social state of anomie: they are to be accounted for by the 'stress' component of his theory.

It is essential, however, to bear in mind that these cases represent conforming members of the society - i.e. they have attained culturally promoted ends by using approved means - who are vulnerable to pressures for deviance. Precisely this paradoxical phenomenon has been addressed by Simon and Gagnon (1976) in terms of the 'anomie of affluence', characteristic of the higher social strata. These authors have argued that the attainment of goals ceases to confirm 'competence, moral worth, and/or good fortune', "precisely when the objects or experiences that have been symbolised achievement become part of the easily accessible and therefore unspectacular, everyday quality of life that characterises, as it were, 'the anomie of affluence'" (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 361). Their analysis builds on Durkheim's attention to anomie among the prosperous. But, they differ from Durkheim, in that they consider more crucial the fact that goals cease to be 'experienced as rewarding', rather than that the goals may be ever escalating (cf. Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 361-362). They have also stressed their departure from Merton's formulations, since central to the notion of 'anomie of affluence', is the 'overly easy access' to

institutionalised means for the attainment of cultural goals. It is in such situations that "commitment to goals, which is essentially a question of values...emerges as problematic", and "the ability of goal achievement to generate adequate levels of gratification" is weakened (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 369).

In spite of their clear divergence from the early Mertonian essays, there are lines of continuity, as they went on to construct a typological 'imagery' of possible adaptations to the 'anomie of affluence' "along the lines of Merton's" (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 369ff.). Further, their contribution may be regarded as an extension and elaboration of Merton's (1964) discussion of the 'anomia of success' (although they did not refer to it) and of 'retreatism' (cf. Merton, 1968: 241-244). It is true that Merton (1964) has described the 'retreatist' behaviour of successful individuals as a result of 'anomia'. But, in his more general discussion of the sources of 'retreatism', he has also referred to Durkheim's idea of 'anomie of prosperity' (cf. Merton, 1968: 242). A line of continuity between Merton and the authors of the 'anomie of affluence' is that they are all concerned with the question of how conformity may induce deviance, a concern that motivated Merton to embark upon the study of deviance in the first place (Appendix: 111).

But what is most important, is that Simon and Gagnon have shown that anomie - in the sense of low commitment to prevailing cultural values and norms - does obtain in the upper social strata, as a consequence of 'overly easy success'. Further, their Merton-like typology[2] is designed to be an imagery covering not only 'retreatist' responses, but a whole range of "the largely neglected and largely unexplained deviance of those in the higher economic and education strata" (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 369).

Furthermore, Gouldner has remarked that the 'utilitarian culture' of the middle classes, with its stress on the final outcome of behaviours and activities, has in-built dispositions towards anomie (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 67). Gouldner ([1970] 1977: 324-326) has also pointed out that the institutionalised transmission of private property can be a source of anomie among those who *benefit* from this institution too. He has argued that "values will be conformed with to the extent that men are given gratifications for doing so" (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 324). As possessions are allocated irrespective of merit and achievements, the support to prevailing values may weaken from all sides. The disadvantaged, who attempt to abide by the value system, may become demoralised both by their own lack of means (Merton's main point) and by the fact that they witness the success of others, who lack the required qualities. There is, however, neither evidence nor reason to believe that social conditions at the top are less conducive to anomie, in the sense that there is "more of a genuine belief in and devotion to the culture's moral values" (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 325). The commitment of the privileged to those values is equally undermined by the testamentary or hereditary transfer of wealth and the power it confers. This because they have seen from birth that the realisation of cultural goals "is possible to them without conformity to the society's values" (Gouldner, [1970] 1977: 324).

So, processes conducive to anomie and deviant behaviour may result both from blocked legitimate possibilities to reach particular cultural goals and easily achieved success. Analytical similarities of such processes in various social strata, however, should not cloud their significant differences in *content*. Moreover, the resulting patterns of deviant behaviour are structurally differentiated. Just as the access to legitimate opportunities is socially structured, so is the access to

illegitimate opportunities. Cloward (1959) - whose analysis has been regarded as an extension of anomie theory (cf. Merton, 1959) - has drawn attention to this almost self-evident but, until then, neglected point.

Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) attempt to synthesise Merton's anomie theory with the Chicago tradition and the theory of 'differential association' has reiterated this point and incorporated it to the analysis of lower-class juvenile delinquency. Their notion of 'illegitimate-opportunity structure' implied a collectivity or environment which can provide models of successful deviant behaviour, the chance to associate with those who perform them, and the opportunity to learn and practice them rewardingly. Cullen, a student of Cloward's, has also theorised in this tradition and introduced the notion of 'structuring variables'. Underlying this notion is the idea that, given the motivation or strain towards an infringement of established norms, the type of deviant behaviour to be expected will depend on the specific socio-cultural context of the actor and the models of deviance it offers (cf. Cullen, 1984).

The implications of these analyses go well beyond the field of disruptive youths and crime. They can be applied to the study of processes making for anomie and deviant behaviour at the top of the social ladder as well. They can contribute to the understanding of the different patterns of deviance - not only crime - that are more characteristic of, and 'possible' for, those situated in relatively high social positions. To illustrate this, we can turn to the realm of science.

Scarcity of resources and pressures for publications represent two major sources of problems and tensions for academics, especially those at the beginning of their careers, in most contemporary societies. It is not unreasonable to assume that the limited number of available posts

intensifies the competition among academics striving to secure a position, get tenure or promotion. An important (not the sole) means for achieving such goals is the publication of papers and books. Additional pressures are generated by the expectations of others: it is common knowledge that, in many departments, especially in USA, a minimum *number* of publications are expected from their members per year. Merton has noted the tendency, "in many academic institutions, to transform the sheer number of publications into a ritualised measure of scientific or scholarly accomplishment" (Merton, 1957: 655). An easily conceivable consequence of such pressures is, among others, more numerous publications, but of relatively lower standard. Any over-emphasis on quantity cannot but affect the quality of what comes into print. My own, however limited, experience from several national and international conferences, as well as 'unpublished' observations of others, confirm a deterioration of the level of papers delivered - sometimes, they simply provide a pretext for expense-free travels!

Furthermore, this stress on quantity may induce a marked eagerness to have as many publications on one's record, rather than - whatever the number - good substantive publications. There is another element that reinforces such attitudes and practices, particularly for young scholars. It is known that most recruiting committees will not have the possibility or time to go through the candidates' publications. It will be very difficult, therefore, to detect cases in which essentially the same paper has appeared in two journals and was presented at a conference under different titles. The success of academics who employ such methods, seen by others starting their careers, can have the effect of offering a prototype to be followed. Whether one is under low or strong pressure, in this case, will not matter so much: the technically most efficient means

for making an (artificial) impact may be used.

So, this may bring about both 1) higher rates of deviance from principles of the scientific community - i.e. disinterested commitment to the advancement of knowledge (cf. Merton, 1957: 659) and publication of good-quality work - and 2) an anomic trend: weaker institutional control over quality and relative absence of established and widely accepted criteria of scholarly success and worthiness. This is a highly speculative and rather exaggerated hypothesis, but it illustrates the point that in specific contexts, specific contradictions and role conflicts exert pressures for specific patterns of deviance and anomic situations.

That this hypothesis is not too over-stretched, none the less, is indicated by Klima's (1976) observations about W.German sociology. He has argued that W.German sociology is anomic because of the absence of a consensus on a methodological paradigm, of recognised criteria for scientific quality and of a system of professional control. Conflicting expectations and roles, with which the sociologist is confronted, and the lack of shared scientific standards have led to a situation, where there is no control

> based on the rewarding of 'good' scientific achievements by means of professional recognition, improvement of social status etc., and on the punishment of 'bad' contributions through professional critique and the deprivation of professional reputation (Klima, 1976: 94)

It should be clear by now that the first Mertonian assumption - that strains conducive to deviance and anomie are stronger in the lower strata - is untenable. It could hold true only if the levels and types of aspiration were identical for the whole population, in which case privileged individuals would have, by definition, more access to opportunity. But since people's ambitions are shown to be diverse, and since members of higher strata also confront difficulties in attaining

their goals, the assumption has to be abandoned (both on empirical and theoretical grounds). Furthermore, it may be suggested that processes conducive to deviant behaviour and anomie are rather homogeneously spread, though the content of expectable deviations are likely to vary from one structural location to another.

It might be objected that to suggest that strains towards anomie and deviance are rather evenly distributed in industrial societies, is to make an insufficiently supported empirical claim. But, even if this distribution proves not to be absolutely even, the point remains that the foregoing analysis, informed to a great extent by Merton's own ideas, enables the study of observed departures from institutional norms in various structural locations. This takes us to the second objectionable Mertonian assumption, that 'innovation' is a more typically lower-class response.

Is 'Innovation' a More Typically Lower-Class Response?

What has been shown so far is that there are good reasons for expecting deviance in all social strata. The question now is: are lower-class people more likely to 'innovate'? It is important to clarify whether this hypothesis is indispensable for Merton's theory because, to the extent that 'innovation' is law-breaking behaviour, the question becomes: are lower-class people more likely to infringe legal norms?

In chapter 3, it was pointed out that, for Merton, 'innovation' is the sort of deviance which comes closest to legal definitions of crime (cf. Merton, 1968: 230). In contrast to 'ritualism' and 'retreatism', this type of adaptation is active and involves overt rejection of established legitimate means for the realisation of a cultural goal. This may be a

reason why criminologists (mainly concerned with overt behaviour and law violations) have paid much attention to this part of Merton's theory. It is, in fact, in his analysis of 'innovation' that Merton has stated that:

> whatever the differential rates of deviant behaviour in the several strata, and we know from many sources that the official *crime statistics* uniformly showing higher rates in the lower strata are far from complete or reliable, it appears from our analysis that *the greater pressures toward deviation are exerted upon the lower strata* (Merton, 1968: 198; emphasis added).

Apart from official crime statistics, most studies support the view that lower-class people perpetrate more often deviant acts defined as criminal, handled by the police and dealt with by criminal courts (cf. Braithwaite, 1981). If the scope of Merton's analysis were limited to this type of deviance alone, this assumption would have been plausible. Merton, however, has expressed his opposition to the confusion of legal definitions of crime and delinquency with the sociological concept of 'deviant behaviour' (interestingly, in a discussion of 'innovation'). He called the former 'blanket concepts' which "may serve to obscure rather than to clarify our understanding of the numerous variety of deviant behaviour to which they refer" (Merton, 1968: 230). 'Innovation', therefore, is one distinct type of deviant behaviour, which does not always coincide with what the authorities classify as crime. 'Innovation' refers to departures from any conventional and institutional norms in the pursuit of culturally approved goals. Such departures may represent harmful behaviour sanctioned by civil and administrative laws. If this type of deviance is frequent and committed disproportionately by upper-class actors, Merton's assumption would not fit the facts. Indeed, a comprehensive survey of available evidence has concluded that

> lower class people do commit those direct interpersonal types of crime which are normally handled by the police at a higher rate than middle class people. If, however, we are talking about those less directly interpersonal forms of

> crime which involve the abuse of power inherent in occupational roles (and which are normally policed by special regulators of commerce), then, of course, the reverse is true (Braithwaite, 1981: 49).

Such violations of legal norms and 'innovations' will be examined, in detail, in the next chapter. For the moment, Braithwaite's report can serve as an indication that Merton's contention is empirically unwarranted (note that earlier studies to this effect have been mentioned by Merton himself; cf. 1968: 198).

Why is it then that Merton has insisted on this assumption? It seems that the hypothesis leading Merton to the controversial statement quoted above is that the means/ends discrepancy is more frequent in these strata. Lower-class people have ostensibly a longer distance to run in order to achieve success and their access to conventional means is structurally obstructed. From the analysis put forward here, however, based on the consolidation of reference group and anomie theories, it appears that this hypothesis is both theoretically and empirically erroneous. What follows from our analysis is that, contrary to Merton, 'innovation' is no more typical a response of the lower than of the upper social strata. For, as we have seen, cultural messages of (monetary and other) success are addressed to all members of the society, but they operate differentially in diverse social situations, so that the 'relative distances' are not as dissimilar as Merton has hypothesised. In this light, we should be hardly surprised by such findings as the following, which 'troubled' Merton:

> The role of the Negro in this connection raises almost as many *theoretical* as practical *questions*. It has been reported that large segments of the Negro population have assimilated the dominant caste's values of pecuniary success and social advancement, *but have 'realistically adjusted' themselves to the 'fact' that social ascent is presently confined almost entirely to movement within the caste* (Merton, 1968: 200fn.; emphasis added).

It has been suggested long ago that lower-class people are often compelled by reality to reduce their aspirations (cf. Gould, 1941: 468). Empey's data have shown that "while the lower-class youngsters *aspired to get ahead*, they aspired to occupations at *different status levels than those from higher strata*" (Empey, 1956: 708-709; emphasis added). In that, they are assisted by reference groups 'closer to home'. As Runciman has noted,

> The studies of Reissman [1953], Chinoy [1955] and Lane [1959] all show that even in the United States, where the goal of success is felt as mandatory, people often choose reference groups closer to their actual circumstances than those which might be forced on them if their opportunities were better than they are (Runciman, 1966: 29).

Given that ambitions in the lower strata are frequently modified in the face of adverse experiences, it may be argued that 'ritualism' - understood as "...the scaling down of the lofty cultural goals of great pecuniary success...to the point where one's aspirations can be satisfied" (Merton, 1968: 203-204) - is quite a common response in those strata. Moreover, seen from a different angle, the reactions of the underprivileged to social conditions may be described as 'retreatist'. Willis' ([1977] 1981) study of British 'lads' has elucidated processes, whereby groups of troublesome working-class kids, despite their 'rebellious' culture which 'penetrates' school values and norms, contribute to their own damnation and the reproduction of established arrangements (cf. also Downes, [1966] 1973: 94-95). No attempt is made here to even summarise Willis' sophisticated analysis. What can be extracted without de-contextualising his arguments, however, is this: the 'counter-school culture' involves, among other things, a rejection of success as defined by the school (e.g. getting skilled, white-collar jobs) and of the institutionalised means (i.e. getting qualifications through conformity,

diligence, hard work etc.). *In this respect*, then, the lads' attitude to school values and norms may be described as 'retreatist'.

There is another important implication of Willis' work and of the British sub-cultural studies, in general (cf. Hall and Jefferson, 1976). What may be described, from certain points of view, as 'ritualism' or 'retreatism' in Mertonian terms, involves deviant *overt behaviour* as well as deviant attitudes. Merton had a point when he wrote that 'ritualism' is, "in effect, an internal decision and since overt behaviour is institutionally permitted...it is not generally considered to represent a social problem" (Merton, 1968: 204); and also that 'retreatism' represents "forms of behaviour which are sociologically though not legally departures from accepted norms" (Merton, 1968: 230). This is true on one condition: that we are dealing with a single set of goals and means (e.g. monetary success and educational qualifications). This procedure contributes to the analytical and expositional clarity of the theory, but reduces the complexity of social life.

It must be stressed that processes of interaction do not cease with the adoption of a type of response to one set of goals and means. That is, while people may be 'ritualists' or 'retreatists' with respect to this set of goals and means, they interact with other people who find themselves in similar situations and are like-minded. This is likely to entail the formation of, or association with, groups the standards of which may be deviant from the point of view of the conventional society. Some patterns of behaviour in accord with the standards of these groups may be unlawful. Such sub-cultural responses to social conditions, then, are better described as 'non-conforming'. They represent, at the same time, deviant and conforming behaviour; deviant (or even criminal) by prevailing standards and conforming by the standards of their peers and

reference groups.

'Non-conformity', however, does not seem to be a more frequent response among lower-class juveniles, than in other parts of the society. As we shall see in the next chapter, 'non-conformity' involving 'innovation' is frequently inherent in organisational behaviour and it is quite common in the world of business. Furthermore, Merton's propositions with regard to class differences in types of expectable deviance clash with his valid reminder that the typology of adaptations should be considered as referring to "role behaviour in specific types of situations, not to personality" (Merton, 1968: 194). Since there is admittedly "a streak of the innovator, of the ritualist, retreatist, and rebel in most of us" (Merton, 1964: 219) in diverse situations, it is not possible to make generalisations of this sort in connection with the social stratification.

Merton himself has offered an illustration of this point, while reiterating that deviance is not always unlawful behaviour. He has described deviant behaviour of scientists as "responses to excessively emphasised goals...verging toward deviance though still *well within the law*" (Merton, 1957: 654; emphasis added). Merton has, further, pointed out that it is

> the institutional norms of science itself...that exert pressure upon scientists to assert their claims, and this goes far toward explaining the seeming paradox that even those meek and unaggressive men, ordinarily slow to press their own claims *in other spheres of life*, will often do so in their scientific work (Merton, 1957: 639; emphasis added).

These points are also illustrated by a W.German study (Hansen et al., 1975) on the emergence and perpetuation of the 'Repetitor system' (a private institution - outwith the official, state-controlled educational system - which offers concise courses based on the university syllabi and

geared towards the preparation of students for their university examinations). In trying to answer the question, why law students at Hamburg make use of the 'Repetitor', the authors have employed Merton's conceptual framework. They have argued that this parasitic institution is a consequence of a disjunction between the official achievement expectations from students and the means available within the university. That is, the university brings about anomic situations, as its teaching system cannot prepare students adequately for the performances that it expects and demands (Hansen et al., 1975: 238 and 246). In these conditions and under the pressure to succeed, large numbers of students resort to the 'Repetitor', an alternative teaching system that represents a way of acquiring knowledge relevant to examinations in a short period of time and promises better marks (Hansen et al., 1975: 238, 241). In other words, ends/means discrepancies and anxieties created by the university setting make for a special type of 'innovation': students who wish to succeed by university standards reject the officially defined methods and turn to unofficial ones.

In an achievement-oriented and competitive society, however, where over-emphases on final outcomes may lead to a relative neglect of the moral rightness of the methods employed, the attitudes of students who wish to 'get ahead' may involve a preparedness to 'innovate' in other spheres of their lives too. Writing about the American society, Merton has referred to a study supporting this hypothesis.

> But such a society tends to obscure the lines between legitimate and illegitimate avenues to self advancement, since it is mainly the results that count. Given this context, we are prepared for the finding of the Cornell sociologists that in American colleges, students most devoted to 'monetary success' and to 'getting ahead in the world' maintain far more than others that they 'can't afford to be squeamish about the means' they use (Merton, 1964: 218).

This can serve as an indication that people who occupy respectable positions in society may exhibit a high degree of ruthlessness when it comes to money and success. After all, it is mainly ambitious and well qualified individuals who will be recruited by prestigious organisations which seek profit and provide internal job-ladders (i.e. possibilities of promotion). Given that this type of socially induced ruthlessness may be found in high places, it would be hardly surprising to find that serious and frequent deviations from institutional and legal norms are not a phenomenon peculiar to the lower strata. This may be assumed in view of our elaborations of Merton's theory of deviance and anomie (cf. also chapter 6). But again, 'innovation' refers to role behaviour.

A.Cohen has highlighted the way in which different responses may be expected, as particular discrepancies between cultural goals and normative rules are connected with specific roles:

> Where there is a disjunction between goals and means, businessmen may defraud their customers, professors plagiarise, ballplayers cheat. They covertly deviate from part of the role demands in order to fulfil another part. However, there is another way sometimes open to them: they may reduce the disjunction by abandoning the role for another role. They can quit the game, so to speak, and find some other game at which they can win without violating the rules (A.Cohen, 1966: 102).

The former responses exemplify the differences in the content that 'innovation' may have in various contexts. The latter adaptation, on the other hand, shows how an originally 'retreatist' response may lead to 'conformity' (given that the idea of 'winning the game' is retained). This is an instance of what Merton has referred to as 'role-sequences': "Conforming striving, for example, may be followed by a ritualist adaptation and this, in turn, by retreatism" (Merton, 1968: 242; though the order of the role-sequence in his example is the reverse of that above). Interesting as it is, a systematic enquiry into such role-

sequences is beyond our scope here. On the basis of what was said above, however, it may be conjectured that, having adapted their expectations more or less realistically, people in the lower strata may not be subject to overwhelming pressures for deviation from the established standards.

W.German studies have shown that industrial workers, for example, 'have at their disposal a series of (sub-) cultural alternative goals that allow for norm-conforming behaviour' (Haferkamp and Heiland, 1984: 83). To the degree that lower-class people have a disillusioned attitude from the start and they select 'appropriate' (rather than 'fantasy') reference groups for comparison, as they move towards adulthood, (Parkin, 1971: 64), they are in a position to experience gratification from their - 'objectively' minor - achievements. As Willis has put it, there is a sense in which

> despite the ravages...manual work stands for something and is a way of contributing to and substantiating a certain view of life which criticises, scorns and devalues others as well as putting the self, *as they feel it*, in some elusive way ahead of the game (Willis, [1977] 1981: 113; emphasis added).

This can make for a passage from deviant responses (even from 'rebellion') to 'conformity'. Incidentally, such passages may enhance the understanding of empirical findings showing a lessening of deviance among youngsters with increasing age (cf. West, 1982: 78).

In this way, Merton's contention that 'conformity' is the most widely diffused response (Merton, 1968: 195) gains plausibility. Since the most likely situation is that people's referents are 'close to home' (Runciman, 1966: 28), be it because they have re-adjusted their expectations or because they have 'sensible' ambitions from the start[4], 'conformity' may be expected to be the modal response.

However, as our principal concern is with deviance, our attention is

directed to the question of how socio-cultural conditions also tend to induce departures from widely accepted norms. It must be impressed, therefore, that the fact that most people's assessment of what they can achieve and their choice of reference groups is reasonable and pragmatic, does not preclude pressures conducive to deviance and anomie in the lower strata. A study of Greek society, for example, has shown that shrinking opportunities for occupational mobility have resulted in more compressed aspirations among the less powerful. Nevertheless, the idea of social ascent is so strong, that another prototype of success has emerged: increased consumption of goods (cf. Karapostolis, 1984: 243-251).

This may represent a more accessible type of goal. But, under the influence of continuous mass advertising, it becomes ever-escalating. The actual level of attainment is often below the desired, and this may give rise to relative deprivation and strain. Moreover, as Faunce has remarked, the shift from the 'heroic producer' to the 'heroic consumer - the big spender', which has been observed especially among "people in working- and lower-class positions" in industrial societies, is deviant itself (Faunce, 1970: 407).

So, given the overall cultural climate of success and 'getting ahead' in whatever is chosen as one's goal or vocation (cf. above and Willis, [1977] 1981: 86-87; cf. also his distinction between individual and group logics of the counter-school culture: 128-129), 'innovation' and other types of deviance can, indeed, be expected to be frequent among the socially handicapped. The suggestion, however, is that such pressures are not necessarily more frequent at the bottom than at the top of the social hierarchy.

Three points may, thus, be made: 1) 'innovation' is not the only type of deviant response that represents breaches of institutional and legal

norms; 2) 'innovation' is not the response most commonly exhibited by the lower strata; and 3) there is no compelling reason for assuming that these strata are likely to have higher rates of deviant behaviour.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis suggests that the association of deviance and anomie mainly with the lower strata is not inherent in Merton's theory. From these elaborations on Merton's own basic conceptual framework, it follows that rates of deviant behaviour (in general) are not expected to vary significantly from one social rank to another. It must be underlined that this framework does account for different rates of deviance: it sheds light into the background against which higher or lower rates of deviance may be expected in a group or society. The objection to Merton's emphasis on rates has been simply that such variations do not occur as much as he assumed *between classes* in contemporary societies. Means/ends discrepancies and normative under-emphases on institutional procedures, inherent to generally competitive environments, may affect the whole society. This is the reason why some theorists have been in a position to argue that Merton's theory does suggest that all social strata are vulnerable to pressures to deviate (Hilbert and Wright, 1979: 151).

We have also seen that various structural locations can be expected to involve diverse types of problems or strains leading to deviance and anomie. In a similar fashion, one would expect differences in the types of (deviant) alternatives offered to people variously implicated in the social structure.

As Stinchcombe (1975) has demonstrated, the core theme of Merton's

overall work has been 'the choice between socially structured alternatives'. According to Cullen (1984: 86), on the other hand, it is regrettable that Merton has not explored the implications of this theme for his theory of deviance. Such a theory would have to try and specify differential deviant responses in various positions of the social structure not only in terms of rates, but also of qualitative differences.

Merton's theoretical scheme may prove to be appropriate for the analysis of specific patterns of deviance. His application of the same scheme to the institutional setting of science and its own conflicts and tensions making for specific departures from accepted standards (Merton, 1957) may be interpreted as geared towards this kind of specifications. The main bulk of his theory of anomie and deviance, however, has concentrated on other questions: which strata are more vulnerable to deviant behaviour? Which strata are more likely to exhibit 'innovation'; and, as this type of response may overlap, to a considerable extent, with crime: Which strata are more susceptible to commit criminal offences?

It can be argued, then, that Merton's predominant interest in different rates of deviant behaviour, in terms of types of adaptations by people diversely located in the social structure, has obscured the complexity of the theory and its potential explanatory relevance to other questions: what *content* are the various types of adaptation likely to take in different positions of this structure? Has the 'innovation' or 'non-conformity' of a manual worker or unemployed the same significance as that of a scientist or businessman? What are the actual and/or potential consequences of deviant acts of the powerful and prestigious? In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to go some way towards answering such questions by focusing primarily on the extent, content and

impact of departures from institutional norms of those occupying respectable and influential positions.

Notes

1. What Thio failed to realise, however, is that the only merit of his paper is an unintended one. Because he clearly used Merton's own conceptualisations and logic (not always well) in order to refute his anomie theory and show his class-bias, Thio unwittingly suggested that a consolidation of the theory with relative deprivation analysis would render the above problematic assumption redundant. His paper, in other words, is only interesting if read as supportive of the basic theoretical framework and a critique of that particular assumption, and not because he thought he might convince anyone that a parallel can be drawn between Merton and Nazi racial theories! Otherwise, I would agree with Besnard (1987: 256) that Thio's paper is worth citing only for reasons of completeness and that the banality of his critique hardly justifies his excessive aggressiveness.

2. Their typology of adaptive responses among the upper strata is as follows:

Type	Commitment to Goals	Gratification by Goal Achievement
1. Optimal conformist	Plus	Plus
2. Detached conformist	Minus	Plus
3. Compulsive achiever	Plus	Minus
4. Conforming deviant	Plus	Innovative

5. Detached person	Minus	Minus
6. Escapist	Minus	Innovative
7. Conventional reformer	Innovative	Plus
8. Missionary	Innovative	Minus
9. Total rebel	Innovative	Innovative

(Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 370).

3. It is also possible to have as an object of study 'innovations' (deviance) *within a sub-culture*. These may be considered as either indifferent or perfectly legitimate patterns of behaviour by conventional standards.

4. For studies demonstrating that large segments of the British working class do not wish to acquire more than what they have and are committed to prevailing standards and institutions 'which sanction inequality', cf. Parkin (1971: 84).

CHAPTER 6

PATTERNS OF DEVIANCE IN THE UPPER SOCIAL STRATA

Introduction

An implication of the analysis in the preceding chapters is that certain socio-cultural conditions in industrial societies exert pressures towards deviance and anomie both in the lower and the upper social strata. It has been suggested that those belonging to higher social ranks are far from immune to the dynamic processes of interaction outlined in chapter 4 (processes in which egalitarian ideologies, the emphasis on success, the relative under-emphasis on normative means, relative deprivation, anomia, deviant behaviour and anomie, are implicated). According to the elaborated version of Merton's theory of anomie and deviance, departures from institutional norms can be expected to occur frequently among respectable citizens. It has been argued that, although structural discrepancies and contradictions may occur at all levels of the social hierarchy, the problems they represent for individuals and groups are not everywhere the same. Also, the likely content of an actor's deviance should depend largely upon the particular opportunities available in their environment. This chapter focuses upon types and patterns of deviance characteristic of the privileged and prosperous members of society, and attempts to assess their impact and significance.

In the first section, some preliminary evidence of the extent of upper-world illegal deviance is outlined. Given that the concept of

'white-collar crime' is defined and used in more ways than one, in the criminological literature, the terms employed in this chapter are clarified.

In the second section, the analysis concentrates on patterns of deviance typically committed by people occupying high-status positions. Attention is paid mainly to departures from legal norms, in general. That is, the concern is with breaches of criminal, civil and administrative rules.

The third section examines the relevance of Merton's theory to the analysis of deviations committed by corporate actors. It is suggested that the Mertonian analytical scheme can elucidate the background against which corporations are likely to evade institutional and legal norms.

Finally, some implications of the analysis of these deviant patterns are briefly discussed. It is argued that the structure of contemporary societies contains contradictions conducive to anomie. That is, certain characteristics of contemporary societies make for processes whereby the lines between legitimate and illegitimate behaviour and acts are blurred.

Deviance in the Upper World

I would like to reiterate two points from the outset. First, not all deviant behaviour is criminal or unlawful. Second, describing people as 'innovators' or 'non-conformists' (whether they are serious criminals or simply acting in a wayward manner) in one instance, does not mean that 'innovation' or 'non-conformity' characterises them in all instances or roles that they have to fulfil. This note is perhaps necessary, because these points may not be always obvious in the analysis below, which

concentrates upon particular roles, disjunctions and, at times, grave rule-breaking behaviour.

Before embarking upon the analysis of the deviance and crime of the powerful, it is essential to pause for a while and have a brief look at existing data. As elaborated here, Merton's analytical framework involves a modified assumption about the relationship between class and deviance: there is not as much difference in rates of deviant behaviour among various social strata, as in the patterns of deviations, that may be expected in today's industrial societies. Since this 'theoretical expectation' seems to run counter to a large body of criminological literature concentrating on the low-class criminal (cf., for example, Chapman, 1968; Braithwaite, 1979; cf. also the analyses of Wilson, 1975; Lea and Young, 1984), some supporting factual evidence is required. In order to avoid possible exaggerations of the importance of deviance by high-status actors based on 'theoretical expectations' alone, it is necessary to 'establish the phenomenon' and to see if 'it is really so' (cf. Merton, 1987: 2-6). In this way, an effort is made to observe Merton's methodological advice as to the inter-play between theory construction and research (cf. Merton, 1968: chapters IV and V).

As early as 1872 E.C.Hill in a paper entitled 'Criminal Capitalists' had noted the "growing significance of crime as an organised business requiring the cooperation of real estate owners, investors and manufacturers...and other 'honest' people" (quoted in Barnes and Teeters, [1959] 1965: 41). Hill's observation has received confirmation by frequent scandals highlighting links between organised criminals and respected citizens (cf. Wilson, 1963). Chambliss has provided data showing not only that 'very important people' make use of the goods furnished by organised vice, but also that "the people who run the organisations which supply

the vices in American cities are members of the business, political, and law enforcement communities - not simply of a criminal society" (Chambliss, 1976b: 182).

In 1895, it was shown that banks lost more from fraud and embezzlement than from bank robberies (Barret, 1895). The situation has hardly changed in this century. Sutherland (1940, 1945) has introduced the notion of 'white-collar crime' to describe offences committed by business and professional men and argued that these offences "should be brought within the scope of the theories of *criminal behaviour*" (Sutherland, 1945: 132; emphasis added), although they may not be processed by criminal courts. His study of seventy large corporations has illustrated the disquieting volume and cost of this type of deviance (cf. Sutherland, [1949] 1961).

Pearce (1976) has employed a strictly legal definition of crime "in order to demonstrate that the U.S.A. (and capitalist societies generally) do not even abide by their own criteria of reasonableness". Using the government's own criteria of the cost of crime to the community, he has pointed out that "the $284 million worth of goods stolen in 1965 represent only 3 per cent of the estimated annual profits of 'organised crime' (conventionally defined), and only 3 per cent of the money gained by the tax frauds of the wealthiest 1 per cent in 1957"; furthermore, "officials of the Federal Trade Commission itself have estimated that in 1968, when robbery netted $55 million, detectable business fraud netted in excess of $1 billion" (Pearce, 1976: 79 and 93). As was recently reported in the first page of *The Financial Times* (1988, Tuesday, November 1), "£14 million a day is stolen in Britain by white-collar criminals including executives, bank managers and accountants".

It is not only the financial and social cost of offences committed

by upper-class actors that is quite extensive, but also their number. Merton (1968: 195-199) himself has referred to the 'Robber Barons' and Sutherland's documentation of the prevalence of white-collar crime. He has also cited Wallerstein and Wyle's (1947) pioneering study which suggested that serious unlawful behaviour was very common among the middle classes (although he made little out of these findings; for this reason he has been severely criticised by Matza, 1969: 96-97). International research has pointed out that crimes "committed by businessmen, politicians and government employees are common in many developed highly industrialised countries" (Clinard and Abbott, 1973: 50). In a study of used-car fraud, it has been estimated that ϕn over a third of used cars sold in Brisbane in 1974, odometers were tampered with to show a lower mileage reading; this represented 70.000 offences annually in Queensland, where the total number of all types of offences reported to the police was 80.181 (excluding only offences against the public order). The author has subsequently commented:

> It is shown in the used-car study that it is mostly proprietors, managers, or other middle-class people, who are responsible for used-car fraud, and there are normally several offenders who break the law for any one offence. Thus, on the basis of this single small area of commercial fraud, one could propose the converse of the conclusion from police statistics that more offences and offenders are lower class than middle class (Braithwaite, 1979: 181).

The above studies are but a small part of a body of literature on the respectable 'law-abiding law-breakers'. Despite the tendency of most criminologists to neglect or ignore white-collar crime (Braithwaite, 1979: 179), there is a considerable and growing number of studies which, at least, indicate its extent, cost and importance (even when its strict definition, which limits it to offences legally defined as criminal, is applied). (For more analyses, evidence and references cf. Jaspan and Black,

1960; Monteino, 1966; Caplovitz, 1968; Geis, 1968a; Magnuson and Carper, 1968; Oughton, 1971; Lieberman, 1973; Pearce, 1973; Krisberg, 1975; Bequai, 1978a and 1978b; Box, 1983 and 1987; Kramer, 1984; Braithwaite, [1984] 1986; Levi, 1987.)

It may be contended that a great deal of studies on the deviance and crime of the powerful are based on estimates and evaluations of the 'dark figure', so that they do not demonstrate that the rates of such behaviour are higher among the more advantaged strata than the underprivileged. As was said in the previous chapter, this is an empirical issue. The point is rather that serious deviant behaviour *is* a frequent phenomenon in the upper strata. On the other hand, although the theory under revision does not contradict reality, it has yet to be demonstrated whether it does account for it too. That is, the factors leading to upper-class deviance and crime may be different from those stipulated by the theory. The task at hand, then, is to examine the extent to which the Mertonian analytical framework is helpful in understanding this phenomenon - no matter what the comparative rates between different strata prove to be.

It must be noted, however, that neither the precise definition of 'white-collar crime' (cf. Vold and Bernard, 1986: 329-338), nor whether it represents infringements of norms that are or should be regarded as crimes (cf. Burgess, 1968; Caldwell, 1968; Tappan, 1968), are settled issues. Sutherland has tentatively defined it is "a crime committed by a person of respectability and high status in the course of his occupation" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 9). He has stated that the acts discussed in his book as 'white-collar crimes' "have the general criteria of criminal behaviour, namely, *legal definition* of social injuries and *legal provision of penal sanctions*. They are therefore cognate with other crimes"

(Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 52; emphasis added). Consequently, those interested in theories of criminal behaviour should not refrain from regarding them as such, just "because the administrative and judicial procedures have been different for these violations of criminal law than for other violations of criminal law" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 52; cf. also at 30).

Sutherland was clearly at pains to show that 'white-collar crimes' were breaches of the criminal law and, as Cressey (1961: iv) has also pointed out, did not wish to extend or change the legal concept of 'crime' through the use of any extra-legal criteria. Whatever Sutherland's intentions were, his work can be read as an extension of the legal definition of 'crime'. To his admission, most of the laws supplementing the Sherman Antitrust Law did "not make explicit the criminality of the violations of law" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 34). In addition, he withdrew the original manuscript of his book, where the names of the corporations involved were disclosed, when he was adviced by attorneys that "a corporation might sue the publisher and author on the ground that calling its behaviour 'criminal' was libelous" (Cressey, 1961: vii). This may be seen as an indication of Sutherland's own uncertainty about the tenability of his argument before the courts.

In any event, by demonstrating the similarities of rule-breaking behaviour in the world of business with other types of crime, he has prepared the ground for sociological analyses of a broader scope. On the basis of such similarities (cf. Chapman, 1968: 85) and without stretching too much the legal definition of crime (as, for example, Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1975), it has become legitimate for the student of 'white-collar crime' to "embrace behaviour which is not contrary to the criminal law" (Carson, [1971] 1975: 223-224).

Indeed, for the purposes of this chapter, unlawful acts need not be officially defined and treated as crimes. The analysis will focus primarily upon processes and conditions making for deviant and unlawful behaviour characteristic of people in high socio-economic positions, which may result in grave and avoidable harm. Such behaviour will be examined irrespective of whether the rules that are broken are technically criminal, civil or administrative.

Although Sutherland failed to use the concept consistently (cf. Kramer, 1984: 16; Gibbons, 1987: 290), it is clear that his aim was to attract attention to violations of regulatory norms designed to control the activities of people in high-status occupations and corporations. Taking this into account, 'white-collar crime' will be used here as a generic term describing illegal acts of *ommission or commission* in the course of professional and business operations'.

A distinction will be drawn between two types of 'white-collar crime': high-status occupational deviance and corporate deviance. The former will refer to deviant acts committed by high-status individuals *for themselves* in the course of their occupations, which involve illegal abuse of power and prestige (comp. Clinard and Quinney, 1973: 188; Braithwaite, 1979: 187). The latter will cover illegal acts of corporate officials *for the corporation* and in accordance with its goals, and offences of the corporation itself, which entail serious physical, economic or social costs (comp. Clinard and Quinney, 1973: 188; Schrager and Short, 1978: 411-412). As a consequence, violations of the law by individuals in their pursuit of personal gain, such as embezzlement, belong to the first type, whereas an individual or collective decision not to withdraw from the market a profitable, but dangerous, drug or car will fall under the second one.

Obviously, this attempt to classify various kinds of deviant and illegal behaviour suffers from the shortcomings characteristic to most typologies in this field. Surely, occupational deviance occurs in all structural positions (cf., for example, Henry, 1978; Mars, 1982). To an extent, the category of 'high-status' occupational deviance is arbitrary and it is introduced simply because of our concern with the upper strata[2]. Further, overlaps between high-status occupational deviance and corporate deviance will unavoidably occur. Empirically, it might be quite difficult to distinguish between law violations on behalf of an employer and those perpetrated for personal gain, as "the individual employee may benefit from these violations too" (Gibbons, 1987: 291). Analytically, however, they may be kept separate: the former has typically little to do with the interests of the organisation and will render the perpetrator an 'enemy within', whereas the latter constitutes action deemed necessary for the maintenance and growth of the organisation. As Leigh would put it, given that there is no terminological consensus in this area, the above terms will be used as "rough imagery rather than as fixed definitions within the confines of which research must be conducted on pain otherwise of incurring the penalties for heresy" (Leigh, 1980: xi). Bearing this in mind, we can proceed to examine how our theoretical framework can account for existing data relative to these types of deviance.

High-Status Occupational Deviance

We have seen that certain cultural and structural features of contemporary societies are conducive to deviance, on one hand, and - through processes of interaction - to a weakening of people's commitment

to prevailing standards, on the other. As illegitimate alternatives become known and established, more people who enter the circle may opt for them and adopt existing rationalisations justifying further deviations. With institutional means receiving less emotional support than the goals, people's behaviour is "limited only by considerations of *technical expediency*" (Merton, 1968: 189; emphasis added). In extreme cases, situations may emerge, "in which *calculations of personal advantage and fear of punishment are the only regulating agents*" (Merton, 1968: 211; emphasis added). It will not be surprising, then, to find that illegal methods are employed when they facilitate achievement of valued goals, especially when the chances of apprehension and/or punishment are not very high.

On the other hand, people's choices with regard to legitimate *and* illegitimate courses of action are socially structured. By dint of their position, those of high standing have at their disposal distinct opportunities not only to abide by, but also to break, institutional norms. A consequence of problems and strains arising from the pursuit of status-related goals, as well as the individuals' over-commitment to the cultural motto of ceaseless striving for 'more', may be the illegal misuse of the possibilities inherent to their positions. As a concern with money underlies quite often high-status occupational deviance, the analysis below focuses upon the illegal gain and use of money. This is not to deny the fact that people pursue diverse goals. However, whether considered as a goal in itself or a means to other goals, the concern with money is central in modern societies. As Downes and Rock have pointed out, to "pursue a variety of goals is not...to transcend the goal of 'money-success', which is at its most potent when legitimised by 'higher' things" (Downes and Rock, 1982: 104).

A common characteristic of all violators of financial trust examined by Cressey (1953), for example, has been that they faced financial problems, while being "concerned with status seeking or status maintaining activities" (cf. Cressey, 1953: 35-36). According to Cressey, when financial problems constitute a 'non-shareable problem', they become a necessary part of the conjuncture that leads to this type of deviance: "trust violation takes place when the position of trust is viewed by the trusted person according to culturally provided knowledge about and rationalisations for using the entrusted funds for solving a non-shareable [financial] problem" (Cressey, 1953: 139). This theory of embezzlement - still influential in the 1980s (cf. McCaghy, 1985: 213) - is quite consistent with Merton's theory, as elaborated in the preceding chapters. There is a certain degree of complementarity, as Cressey did not devote much attention to wider socio-cultural situations making for his subjects' status- and money-related (non-shareable) problems (cf. Clinard, 1954). Nevertheless, the data (interviews with convicted offenders) that he has furnished and some of his comments offer some clues, for they describe likely effects of a success-oriented cultural surround, in near-Mertonian terms. The following problems eventuating, given the opportunity, in embezzlement can be singled out:

Cressey has remarked that, "Trusted persons frequently do not report financial failures to persons who could help them for the reason that they are similarly *ashamed for their failure*" (Cressey, 1953: 44; emphasis added). That is, they opt for embezzlement with all the further risks it entails, rather than admit their 'sin': failure.

A businessman has summarised well his experience of the continuous urge to achieve, which leads to non-observance of rules:

> I think that in all embezzlements, like in my own case, we are trying to do something in a quick period of time and

> *all legitimate channels seem to be closed. Something has to be accomplished. It isn't necessary, but it appears to be so because there is no other way...I knew it was wrong, but I didn't think.* When you are in one of these [situations] you don't think; you are in another world (Cressey, 1953: 48-49; emphasis added).

Cressey has also pointed out that: "*Values in regard to success and profit-making are such* that some individuals cannot even think of revealing a shaky business condition to anyone" (Cressey, 1953: 50; emphasis added). In other cases,

> ...a problem appears when the individual realises that he does not have the financial means necessary for continued association with persons on a desired status level, and this problem becomes non-shareable when he feels that he can neither renounce his aspirations for membership in the desired group nor obtain prestige symbols necessary to such membership (Cressey, 1953: 54; emphasis).

Problems that may spring from situations promoting specific reference groups, expectations and difficulties to cope with them in a legitimate manner are well expressed by an ex-bank president, who accounted for his embezzlement thus:

> ...*a person who works in a bank is generally regarded as wealthy*, no matter how small his salary. *He is expected to* subscribe to everything, and I do not think I ever failed to pay my share on every such subscription affair that came around. Also, a person who works in a bank *must, because of this expectation, live on a fairly high standard.* He is *compelled to look prosperous* for the sake of the bank. He has to 'live up to his position'...Then, also, *everyone else was spending money lavishly and we felt we ought to keep up. It was in the air.* Boom times were on (quoted in Cressey, 1953: 56-57; emphasis added; cf. also pp.60-62, for the problems faced by a bank employee 'trying to keep up with the Joneses').

Moreover, Cressey has furnished illustrations of a cultural environment, which 'enables' the realisation of legitimate ends through devious means. This is, for example, the commentary of a newspaper editorial upon the conviction of a 'husband and father of three children' for an embezzlement of $25.875 over a period of fifteen years: "*It was*

illegal for him to supplement an insufficient salary with funds belonging to the bank. *It was also immoral. But when he goes to prison the Board of Directors ought to volunteer to go along and keep him company*" (quoted in Cressey, 1953: 172; emphasis added). The publication of stories about people who bend or break rules in order to attain valued goals offers ready-made justifications for doing so and increases the public's knowledge of the spread of illegal practices. According to Cressey, numerous such stories featuring in newspapers and journals,

> like many of the popular and semi-popular reports on studies of embezzlement, acquaint the public with the fact that trust positions are frequently violated (hence, they *can* be violated), and to some extent indoctrinate it with ideas in regard to the conditions under which such violation is *expected*. As a result, trusted persons in our culture are not 'neutral' in regard to trust violation, even when they accept positions of trust in genuine good faith. They know that positions of trust are violated" (Cressey, 1953: 79; italics in original, underlining added).

A cultural climate providing - directly or indirectly - 'excuses' for law-breaking behaviour under certain conditions, however, may pave the way for further violations under different, but (at least in the minds of people) similar circumstances, too. Combined with the general cultural over-emphasis on goals, to which Merton has drawn attention, this climate may foster the formation of structured beliefs which allow for illegal deviations, while keeping the actors from seeing themselves as 'criminals'. Such beliefs may, in turn, undermine people's firm commitment to certain norms. When excusing or attenuating circumstances are culturally underpinned and extended by individuals (or groups) to cover their cases, the lines between right and wrong become blurred, and anomic situations emerge for still others. Thus, conficting (sub-)cultural guidelines become available to people, who can resort to them in order to solve their financial and status problems without experiencing strong feelings of

guilt.

Indeed, Cressey's subjects were able to consider themselves as a special kind of 'borrower', 'businessman', or even 'thief' (Cressey, 1953: 99). They were able to find cultural support for not being honest at all times:

> The rationalisations used by trust violators...reflect contacts with cultural ideologies which themselves are contradictory to the theme that honesty is expected in all situations of trust...Trusted persons with non-shareable problems utilise rationalisations in order to select means, which otherwise would not be available to them, for solving those problems (Cressey, 1953: 99).

Since Cressey has underlined that the trust violators' justifications are not fabricated *ex post facto*, and interesting parallels can be drawn with Sykes and Matza's (1957) 'techniques of neutralisation', his argument may be relevant to other forms of law-breaking, too (Gibbons, 1987: 305). What matters most for our present purposes, however, is that Cressey's theory seems to be complementary to both the stress and anomie components of Merton's theory (as reconstructed here). In brief, the processes conducive to illegal acts can be described as follows: people's pursuit of status is often hampered by financial problems. Supplementary amounts of money are needed in order to achieve higher status or keep up with expectations by their reference groups. Successful (at least, to an extent) as they are, they feel that they ought to preserve and/or further enhance their image. Socially and culturally induced expectations are sometimes disproportionate to what they can achieve through legitimate channels and situations arise in which all legal ways of acquiring the necessary money are or seem (to them) to be blocked. Given the opportunity to exploit their position of trust for personal reasons, and a cultural climate that makes it 'easier' (by accentuating success and fostering rationalisations), they illegally take away other people's money.

This analysis can be applied to other types of offences as well. The Vice-President of the USA, S.Agnew, for instance, resigned in 1972 after evidence was produced that he was accepting bribes from construction firms. He was receiving them while he was Baltimore's county executive, and continued to do so even while Vice-President. His resignation followed a plea bargaining arrangement, whereby he was able to plead *nolo contendere* (I do not wish to contend) and avoid imprisonment for tax evasion. According to Little, "Agnew, who was not independently wealthy, once indicated that he continued to take bribe money as Vice President *because he needed supplementary income to keep up with the high life-style of Washington's political luminaries*" (Little, [1983] 1985: 220; emphasis added).

It must be impressed, however, that the processes of interaction outlined in the previous chapters make for deviance not only derived from stress-situations, but also from anomic situations. The point of separating them analytically is that, in the latter case, no special stress or problem is postulated as necessary for the commission of deviant acts. For Cressey, a financial problem (perceived as 'non-shareable' by the actor) is among the pre-requisites. According to the theoretical framework developed here, once a degree of anomie has settled in, actors need not be preoccupied by serious problems in order to deviate. Prototypes of successful deviance which seem to entail low risk and short-term results already exist. Given the opportunity to follow such models, people may break legal rules in order to acquire the money needed for the attainment of their ultimate objectives. As noted above, people's behaviour would be limited only by 'considerations of technical expediency'. In the light of that, we would expect to find illegal activities inspired simply by the wish to have more money and the opportunity to get it in a relatively

'safe' way. As a study in Canada has shown, there is indeed 'embezzlement without problems' (Nettler, 1974). Five out of the six embezzlers examined in that study could be

> described as individuals who wanted things they could not afford and who were presented with (or who invented) ways of taking other people's money. Consistently there was *desire - things one could do with the money.* Consistently there was *opportunity - ways to take the money with little apparent risk* (Nettler, 1974: 75; emphasis added).

To be sure, it would be unfounded and thoughtless to claim that anomie, rather than *eunomie*, dominates contemporary societies. Just as the Mertonian mode of analysis is helpful in accounting for deviance in the realm of science without postulating a predominantly anomic scientific community (e.g. Merton, 1957), so it is for deviance in the world of the professions and business[3]. None the less, it would be equally wrong not to acknowledge that inherent in many of today's societies are discrepancies and contradictions which make for deviance and anomie *of varying degrees*. It is essential not to overlook that 'anomie', as employed here, is shorthand for anomic trends or, to paraphrase Dahrendorf (1985), for 'the road to anomie'. Such trends or tendencies may also obtain in particular sections of the society and with respect to particular sets of norms. Given social interaction, however, they may affect other sections or the whole society. In his preface to the second edition of *The Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim has reiterated the observation that a state of anomie characterises the economic world, but it has expanded beyond it:

> The most blameworthy acts are so often absolved by success that the limit between what is permitted and what is prohibited, what is just and what is not, has nothing fixed any longer, but seems to be able to be shifted almost arbitrarily by the individuals. ...the absence of all economic discipline cannot to fail to spread its effects beyond the economic world itself and result in a lowering of public morality (Durkheim, [1930] 1978: ii and v; translated by me).

The continuing relevance of Durkheim's remarks is beyond doubt. So is Merton's suggestion that cultural over-emphasis on success - and monetary success *is* a good illustration - makes for deviance and promotes anomie. In the recent and quite popular film *Wall Street*, Michael Douglas portrayed a ruthless tycoon, who publicly (speaking to employees of a company that he wishes to take over in order to destroy) states: 'greed is my creed'. An article in *The Guardian* has reviewed a sample of recent books representing a hymn to greed. The reviewer, having noted that, "to say that the uninhibited pursuit of serious money has lost its old stigma already sounds trite", has pointed out that

> *The building of the enterprise economy has been accompanied by, if it hasn't actively promoted, the most swinish behaviour* - one of the ugliest examples of the swinishness in question being the occasion last year when Roy Hattersley was pelted with glasses by yappy yahoos for challenging the *prevailing beggarthy-neighbour mores* (Berry, 1988: 23; emphasis added).

With greed institutionalised and culturally nourished, money-seeking illegal behaviour cannot be restricted to only one segment of the population. The form illegalities may take, however, will depend largely on the occupation-specific opportunities to use illegitimate means. A great deal, then, of upper-class rule-breaking behaviour can be attributed to socially induced, ruthless commitment to monetary success. It is not that such law-breakers are unsuccessful. Not infrequently, it is that they cannot be satisfied with the measure of success they have already attained; in tune with cultural messages, they want 'more'. As Braithwaite has argued, when we study 'white-collar crime', "we are dealing with crime arising from an unprincipled overcommitment to [the] success goals [of the capitalist system] among people who are in fact successful" (Braithwaite, 1979: 191).

These contentions are not empirically unfounded. A Nigerian study

has employed the Mertonian framework to account for corruption of high-status officials. It was reported that, following the oil boom, the 'obligation' to achieve monetary goals was strongly emphasised in the press, education and mass media, and "money became consecrated as a value in itself over and above its use simply for necessary consumption" (Oloruntimehin, 1986: 7). According to this report, under the influence of a cultural demand to succeed by all means, and in absence of any guideline as to 'what is success' and where to stop, top officials manipulated the power and opportunities of their positions to excessively increase their own (and their family's) wealth at the expense of the wider society. An impressive and shocking list of examples of apprehended offenders - "dealt with administratively or by special commissions of inquiry" - is presented to demonstrate that "politicians, governors and public servants...have in different ways used their privileged positions to illegally achieve some symbols of 'success' which have been prescribed by society" (Oloruntimehin, 1986: 13 and 20).

To move to a different setting, the data of a French study have shown that "the moral attitudes of businessmen towards the business world seem prone to foster delinquency" (Delmas-Marty, 1980: 96). More interestingly, a third of the interviewed businessmen "had no hesitation in declaring that *illegal acts can be absolved by success*" (Delmas-Marty, 1980: 89; emphasis added).

According to most businessmen and responsible government officers interviewed by R.Lane, on the other hand, businessmen run afoul of the law because they want to 'make a fast buck' (R.Lane, 1968: 89). In the words of the director of the Bureau of Industrial Economics of the Federal Trade Commission (USA), although "there are some cases where the law is difficult to obey, these seem to me to be relatively few compared

to those in which *it is merely more profitable not to obey*" (quoted in R.Lane, 1968: 101; emphasis added).

In the legal profession, Reichstein has investigated 'ambulance chasing' (i.e. solicitation of cases), actions contrary to both ethical and legal rules against advertising, soliciting and stirring up litigation (Reichstein, 1968: 221). He has noted that there were lawyers who "offered their own commonsense interpretation of Merton's Theory of Anomie as their justification of solicitation" (Reichstein, 1968: 226). A lawyer's statement is quite telling: "*There is nothing reprehensible* about personal injury solicitation *if a young lawyer has no other way to get enough cases*. The people with wills and corporations just won't do business with you'" (cited in Reichstein, 1968: 226; emphasis added).

A 'frightening extent of illegalities' in the medical profession has been stressed by Little. He has further pointed out that

> performing unnecessary surgery, ordering excessive laboratory tests, fee padding or fee splitting (referral of a patient to a high priced specialist who then pays off the referring physician) appear to be motivated *primarily by greed* (Little, [1983] 1985: 215; emphasis added).

The estimated annual cost of excessive and fraudulent medical charges in USA has been between $2.5 and 6.25 billion (Siegel, 1983: 327-328). In the same country, the cost of unnecessary surgeries has been recently estimated to be over $3.5 billion per year (Eitzen and Timmer, 1985: 190-192). As another example of occupation-specific and money-oriented illegal behaviour (from Britain this time), the case of Patterson may be cited. He is a blood specialist,

> who was convicted for stealing large quantities of blood from the National Health Service for resale by conspirators abroad, netting £158.700 over a four-year period. ...(The blood had been separated to make plasma by unqualified people in unhygienic conditions including a washroom and a garage!) (Levi, 1987: 323).

A study of prescription violations has concluded that they are "related to the structure of the occupation and the differential orientation of retail pharmacists" (Quinney, 1968: 215), a conclusion thought to be in line with both Sutherland's and Merton's propositions (Quinney, 1968: 212). More specifically, Quinney has argued that there is structural strain in the occupation because of the divergence between the professional and the business roles. Business oriented pharmacists, who "stress the merchandise aspects of pharmacy and are *primarily interested in monetary gain*" (Quinney, 1968: 214; emphasis added), were found to be far more uninhibited to engage in this kind of occupational deviance. Quinney has further suggested that similar situations can be expected to arise in other occupations, including dentistry, optometry, real estate and accounting. Dansereau (1974) has also pinpointed the persistent "competition between the business and the professional ethic" as a major source of occupational deviance. It is in this context that people succumb to "the temptation to serve Mammon". He has concluded that, "as long as professional attention is...oriented more toward the dollar than toward service, a favourable climate for professional deviance exists" (Dansereau, 1974: 89).

A study of British incarcerated white-collar offenders has shown that there was

> a kind of ruthless determination in some of the sample to achieve their goal. One man, an estate agent, said, 'I would say I am amoral. Is this going to be good for Joe? I can smell money and I can buy brains - professors are as cheap as peanuts. Everyone can be bought - at a price' (Spencer, 1968: 343).

Other offenders of the same sample resorted to illegal behaviour under the threat of failure and financial problems. Spencer has remarked that it was "certainly not difficult to see the reasons which led to

reckless behaviour in businesses where either the gains were considerable or finance was plentiful until a national 'credit squeeze' was suddenly applied" (Spencer, 1968: 344).

Incarcerated upper-world offenders, however, are only the 'unlucky few' to be apprehended and treated by the criminal justice system. Although the analysis here is primarily concerned with deviance, the importance of social control cannot be downplayed or ignored. Aubert (1968) has argued that in the area of 'white-collar crime' one must take into account the interaction between social control and the law violators. This requires a study of the law and "the machinery of enforcement, as well as the study of individual motives, attitudes, and social situation of offenders" (Aubert, 1968: 183). As Rock has more generally pointed out, portions "of the cycle can be prised out for purposes of analysis, but the residue must not be forgotten nor must the portions be taken for anything but incomplete items" (Rock, 1973: 205).

This is certainly the case with Merton's theory, which neglects the issue of possible effects of social control itself on deviant behaviour. Social control, however, is not totally ignored by Merton, as he proposed that anomie-promoting processes bring about situations in which behaviour is calculated on the basis of gain and anticipation of sanctions. This means that, in such situations, the more the actor believes the risks of being caught and severely punished are low or negligible, the more enticing the commission of (profitable) illegal acts becomes[4].

Recent British studies have indicated that this is often the case. Levi has defined 'long-firm' (LF) fraud as

> a business which obtains or attempts to obtain on credit, substantial quantities of goods for which the effective owners either (1) know that they will be unable to pay, or (2) irrespective of whether or not they are able to pay, have no intention of paying" (Levi, 1980: 57).

The sheer existence of this type of offence testifies to the 'reckless' or thoughtless engagement of white-collar people in illegal activities (problems in deterring such acts are discussed by Levi, 1981). The perception of low risk, however, ought not to be overlooked in attempts to account for this kind of fraud. Here is what interviewed offenders had to say:

> - *You can make a hell of a lot of money from LFs and the sentences are low* because it's got no violence...
> - When we were thinking of running an LF, *we reckoned that even if we got done, fuck all would happen to us.* You get less for an LF in toiletries than you would for knocking off a bog roll from Woolies [i.e. stealing toilet roll from Woolworth's (quoted in Levi, 1980: 75; emphasis added).

The same author, in a more general study on fraud, has observed that potential offenders who consider participating in such illegalities "are influenced in their decision to go ahead or not by their subjective perceptions of the risk from the criminal justice system and by the salience to them of the expected consequences of involvement in crime" (Levi, 1987: 110; cf. also pp.330-334).

Subjective perceptions of low risk for much of occupational deviance are not far from what happens in reality. An example may be taken from a *par excellence* contemporary type of offence, only made possible by the advancement of technology, computer crime. As has been observed, it is only a matter of time before organised criminals get involved in it. At present, however, "we are dealing with a group of felons who are well educated, sophisticated, and constitute the cream of our technological world" (Bequai, 1978b: 45). This is the case of one of them:

> In 1972 California authorities arrested a student of engineering *on charges of stealing more than $1 million* in electronic equipment from the state's largest telephone company. Using only a telephone and the computer's secret entry code, he placed orders with the firm's computer. ...He was found guilty of grand theft and sentenced to *60 days in jail and 3 years probation. He later went into the consulting business to advise firms how to avoid attacks*

on their computers (Bequai, 1978b: 1; emphasis added).

The lack of strict enforcement of rules relative to the occupational deviance of physicians and lawyers referred to above is also well known. As Lewis and Lewis (1978) have pointed out,

> the privately practicing physician is largely a free agent, scarcely subject to regulation. ...There are few statutory standards he must meet, for the laws are generally silent as to what constitutes acceptable performance by physicians. *Even where restrictions are clear, enforcement is spotty; the state boards charged with overseeing the profession are seldom active on matters of discipline. Within the profession itself the disciplining of colleagues has little support* (quoted in Little, [1983] 1985: 215; emphasis added).

Further, Reichstein's research on 'ambulance chasing' has revealed that lawyers brought before the Illinois Supreme Court were treated relatively leniently and that "as long as personal injury lawyers did not overreach their clients, the court took a tolerant attitude toward solicitation" (Reichstein, 1968: 228). Moreover, not all of the lawyers in his sample had unfavourable opinions of personal injury solicitation (cf. Reichstein, 1968: 223-226). To Gibbons, this "suggests that *the line between proper and improper behaviour in the legal profession is a fuzzy one*" (Gibbons, 1987: 307; emphasis added). Situations, in which these lines are blurred, constitute fertile ground for further deviance, and can be described as anomic.

Boyd has provided evidence that ignominious and transparently fraudulent methods employed by American politicians are, in the aggregate, quite efficacious, rewarding and ensure re-election. It is an anomic climate that he has depicted by concluding that "in American public life there is no sense of honour, no concept of it, no reward for it" (Boyd, 1974: 216-217). Although this might be an over-statement, which should not be generalised for all professions and people within them, it appears

that one may plausibly maintain that culturally induced over-commitment to success goals entails both deviance and anomie among the upper classes. Existing data support the view that,

> White-collar crime is likely to be with us *as long as we literally reward achievement of economic and political success over and above any pretentious regulation of means of achieving that success* (Shoemaker and South, 1974: 200; emphasis added).

Before we turn to corporate deviance, it must be stressed, yet again, that not all role conflicts and problematic situations eventuate in the types of deviance examined above. Strains and anomic tendencies do not affect in the same way conscientious individuals who derive sufficient satifaction from the measure of success they have achieved or who are genuinely committed to conventional values *and* norms. People's decisions in daily and professional life are not always and exclusively based on considerations of technical efficiency and ruthless exploitation of their positions. Rather, the purpose was to examine certain conditions making for various patterns of considerable deviations. It must be clear that, just as different social positions entail various reference groups, expectations, problems and strains, so they offer different illegitimate possibilities for coping with them. The argument is that the conceptual framework elaborated in this thesis is useful in understanding high status occupational deviance. Further, given the pressure or motivation to adopt illegal methods for the solution of a problem or achievement of a cultural goal, people's choices as to which *particular* deviant method to employ are socially structured. To borrow Levi's (1987: 2) metaphor, not all crimes are 'equal opportunity crimes'. As Wheeler and Rothman have put it, the organisation "is for white-collar criminals what the gun or knife is for the common criminal - a tool to obtain money from victims" (Wheeler and Rothman, 1982: 1406).

An additional characteristic of people in high social ranks is that the chances of 'getting away', while 'getting ahead', are often higher than for those in lower positions. "Wealth", it has been remarked, "insures a protective primary group *as well as differentially protective social responses*" (Simon and Gagnon, 1976: 372; emphasis added), which reduces the risks of serious sanctions. In this respect, it may be suggested that the variables proposed by control theorists do not conflict with those of Merton's theory and may be employed for a fuller understanding of this (as well as other) type(s) of deviant behaviour.

Corporate Deviance

As defined above, corporate deviance refers to illegal acts of corporate officials for the corporation and in accordance with its goals, and offences of the corporation itself, which entail serious physical, economic or social costs. One might ask whether the Mertonian framework, originally designed for individual responses, could be adequate for the study of this type of organisational behaviour. Merton himself, however, has indicated that this is feasible and commendable. In his analysis of the political machine and the racket, he has pointed out that they "represent a special case of organisational adjustment to the conditions described in [the chapter on social structure and anomie]", and that "other types of organisational adjustment sometimes occur" as a result of socially induced tensions and problems (Merton, 1968: 132fn.). More recently, a number of scholars have found Merton's framework useful for attempts to account for corporate deviance (cf. Vaughan, 1982 and [1983] 1985: 54-87), including earlier critics (cf. Box, 1983: 34-35; Braithwaite,

[1984] 1986: 368). The task at hand, then, is to explore its relevance to the study of corporate deviance.

It is essential to note that the maxim◉ of ceaseless striving for success - especially monetary success - is not simply a cultural message which happens to obtain in contemporary societies. It is also reinforced by the prevailing capitalist mode of production in Western societies. It is inherent to this mode of production and, one might argue, it corresponds to a 'condition of its existence'. This is not to say that the one exists *because* of the other, but rather that they are mutually supportive. In this context, some of the prominent goals set for business and organisations in general are profit, growth and efficiency. Although large corporations

> may have other goals, such as the increase or maintenance of corporate power and prestige, along with corporate growth and stability, their paramount objectives are the *maximisation of profits* and the general financial success of the corporation..." (Clinard, 1983: 18; emphasis added).

So, it is not only that profits have to be made; the target is *maximum* possible profits (obviously, this is a simplification for analytical purposes, and it should not be taken as an empirical assertion that this is *always* so; but, one may plausibly assume that this is *frequently* the case). There is no defined and definite stopping point, the target is a moving one; the game chased by capitalists and capitalist corporations is typically Hydra-headed. As Bowles and Edwards have put it,

> Those capitalists who succeed (and survive) in one period are like runners who are ahead half-way through the race; the leaders maintain the lead only by continuing to run, and those who stop see the race go by. There are, however, two peculiar features to this capitalist 'race'. The first is that new competitors keep jumping into the race from the sidelines as the race progresses. So even as some firms fall behind or drop out of the race, new firms enter afresh, and even the leaders must worry about this potential competition. The second peculiar feature is that *there is no end to the race: for capitalists, it goes on*

forever (Bowles and Edwards, 1985: 88; emphasis added).

Thus, cultural prescriptions correspond, in a sense, to necessities in the realm of business and corporations. Never-ending achievement, mostly measured or measurable in terms of money, is 'required' for the participation in this race. These aims which shape and determine to a great extent the functioning of the organisations can be best achieved when they are passed on to those working in and for them, especially to those who occupy the higher ranks. A certain degree of harmony between organisational values and goals, and those of the organisation's members can be, thus, secured. Apart from training classes, socialisation processes are promoted to attune members to the organisational goals, because, as "business firms depend on their members' skills to attain goals, they must ensure that members' motivations and values are consistent with the organisation's needs" (Vaughan, [1983] 1985: 69; cf. also Peters and Waterman, 1982; Ermann and Lundman, 1982: 7-8).

The members' commitment to their firm's goals is further enhanced by the realisation that the attainment of their own ends depends largely on the prosperity of the firm. People's involvement in high positions in organisations, corporations, industry etc. not only facilitates and 'requires' such a commitment, but may also be seen as instrumental to their personal success. It is not only in the scientific community that "the institutional goal and the personal reward are tied together" (Merton, 1957: 659). In a similar manner, the personal interests of highly placed individuals are connected with those of the corporation - although they need not always coincide, as Vaughan ([1983] 1985: 70) has asserted. Thus, a combined effect of culturally propagated themes of success and continuous striving, the peculiar 'business ethic', and organisational demands may be that, as Gross has found upon a survey of various data,

people at the top of organisations tend to be 'ambitious, shrewd and possessed of a nondemanding moral code'. He has also observed that:

> Their ambition will not be merely personal, for they will have discovered that their own goals are best pursued through assisting the organisation to attain its goals. While this is less true, or even untrue at the bottom of the organisation, those at the top share directly in the benefits of organisational goal achievement, such as seeing their stock values go up, deferred compensation, and fringe benefits (Gross, 1978a: 71).

Speaking of intellectuals in a public bureaucracy and socially induced rates of patterned choice, Stinchcombe has maintained that

> Repetitive situational adaptations form character. Thus, the timidity and narrow-mindedness of a bureaucracy are not only maintained because the situations that produce timidity and narrowness are continuously present. They are also maintained because over time the people in them become timid and narrow (Stinchcombe, 1975: 26).

This argument is relevant, *mutatis mutandis*, to businesspeople, who are 'trained' to be ruthless at work, in relation to their distinct patterned choices. Bradley and Wilkie (1974), for instance, have recounted the story of a Business School, where students were divided into competing teams, simulating rival firms, and asked to deal with a set of problems, in order to assess 'how successful the teams were at the end of the term'. The winning team, it was subsequently discovered, had cheated by collecting the notes thrown away in paper bins by their opponents, and were thus in a better position to beat them. Although some of the teaching staff thought that the students ought to be penalised for their 'offence', others "affirmed that the students had performed exceptionally well and *behaved as they would want them to behave as businessmen hell-bent on maximising their opportunities and taking every possible advantage*" (Bradley and Wilkie, 1974: 90; emphasis added).

Nevertheless, as with other types of deviance, such responses to environmental encouragements to succeed, even through 'innovation', can be

best understood as role-behaviour. Merton's statement, that "certain phases of social structure generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes 'normal' (that is to say, an expectable) response" (Merton, 1968: 185-186), has been endorsed by students of 'white-collar crime' (cf. Aubert, 1968: 177; Spencer, 1968: 337). Organisations constitute themselves distinct social structures, the members of which are confronted by special behavioural expectations (cf. R.Hall, 1977: 26). They should not be considered, however, in isolation from other social structures and the wider society. So, the same actor under different conditions and in different roles may behave in very different manner. It would be erroneous to assert that people who engaged in 'reckless' activities at work and in certain conditions will do so always and at every phase of their daily life. According to Braithwaite, "Rather than think of corporate actors as individual personalities, they should be viewed as actors who assume certain roles. ...Understanding how 'ordinary men are led to do extraordinary things' can begin with role-playing experiments" (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 2).

In support of this argument, Braithwaite has cited a study of management students from ten countries carried out by Armstrong (1977). The students were asked to play the roles of board members of a pharmaceutical company and decide whether to withdraw from the market a drug which evidently endangers human life. 79 per cent of them acted in exactly the same way as a company (Upjohn) did, in real life: they refused to remove the drug *and* "undertook legal or political manoeuvres to forestall the efforts of the government . to ban it". On the other hand, when the structural setting was modified for them, and they were asked to play roles in boards including public-interest directors, more "socially responsible decisions resulted" (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 2 and 389). Such

behaviour and decisions, can be seen as adaptations to both cultural and organisational expectations - though other factors, such as perceived state of the environment, personal beliefs and idiocyncracies would have to be taken into account for a fuller picture (cf. Simon, 1976: 43-44).

Multiple and contradictory as organisational ends may often be, the goal of profit cannot be overlooked. Moreover, this goal may have to be attained *by all means*, particularly when the continuation of the corporation is at stake. As Scherer has stated,

> No matter how strongly managers prefer to pursue other objectives and no matter how difficult it is to find profit-maximising strategies in a world of uncertainty and high information costs, failure to satisfy this criterion means ultimately that a firm will disappear from the economic scene (Scherer, 1980: 38; cf. also Box, 1983: 35; that this also applies to non-profit organisations has been argued by Vaughan, [1983] 1985: 63).

Uncertainty, competition, technological improvements adding to the efficiency of other more powerful firms, and pursuit of parallel goals render the task formidable. In addition, anti-trust and other legislations disallow certain manoeuvres. The state has been increasingly intervening (at least, in the books) by stipulating acceptable standards by which legitimate economic objectives should be pursued (Carson, [1971] 1975: 225) and official attitudes towards the regulation of the upper-world are recently changing (Levi, 1987: 15). As a result, the legally prescribed channels leading to the realisation of corporate objectives are relatively restricted. The employment of deviant methods, therefore, may be the only possible way of dealing with problematic situations, or may be perceived as such.

Finney and Lesieur's conclusion, that "organisations...*commit crimes to achieve their objectives and solve their problems* and that commitment to deviant courses of action involves normal processes of decision making

under conditions of limited rationality" (Finney and Lesieur, 1982: 289; emphasis added), suggests that corporate deviance can be described in terms of organisational 'innovation'. Box has also argued that, being a 'goal-seeking entity' makes a corporation "inherently criminogenic, for it necessarily operates in an uncertain and unpredictable environment such that its purely *legitimate opportunities for goal achievement are sometimes limited and constrained*" (Box, 1983: 35; emphasis added). In these cases, there is a strain towards innovative solutions, ranging from acceptable practices to illegal 'innovation' (cf. Box, 1983: 36). The 'incredible' electrical conspiracy (cf. R.Smith, 1970), which received a great deal of publicity in the USA back in 1961 and resulted in prison sentences for businessmen, has been a clearly illegal means towards the reduction of such uncertainty and profit (Geis, 1968b: 116). Geis has noted, these are motives behind much human activity, not only deviant. The cultural accent on success and money, however, omnipresent in the business world and thereby strenghtened even more, makes for 'innovation' rather than 'conformity', particularly in competitive conditions.

The continuing uncovering of price-fixing and other often 'calculated, expensive and dangerous' corporate illegalities in various industries (McCaghy, 1985: 224-225) indicates that they are, in fact, anything but rare (most presidents of the thousand top manufacturing firms have supported this view; cf. Green, 1972: 149-150 and 472). A study of a large number of trade violations has further indicated that they are related to the environmental scarcity of resources (Staw and Szwajkowski, 1975). This highlights the fact that the pursuit of money (whether it represents a means or a goal in itself) can be regarded as a goal, the over-commitment to which is responsible for many a deviant act. In this way, one need not give the impression of squeezing complicated social

facts into the Mertonian framework, as Vaughan might have done. She has convincingly argued that scarcity of resources leads to unlawful organisational behaviour, but has unnecessarily referred to a scarcity of means *and* ends (and 'scarcity of ends' is difficult to conceive as conducive to 'innovation', which pre-supposes the retention of a legitimate goal):

> The structural availability of both ends and means can be limited...not only by insufficient supply, but also by the inability or unwillingness to obtain a commodity at a given price. Thus, some scarcity can always exist. And when the competitor is threatened with potential loss in that legitimate competition due to scarcity of means or ends, innovation may result (Vaughan, [1983] 1985: 58).

In any event, the point is that one would expect a high rate of deviance among the corporations facing difficulties. Indeed, Clinard and Yeager's extensive study has found an association between financial performance and illegalities, as "firms in depressed industries as well as relatively poorly performing firms in all industries tend to violate the law to greater degrees" (Clinard and Yeager, 1980: 129). Nevertheless, it is not only problematic or unsuccessful firms which violate the law (and only a theory based solely on 'objective deprivation' would expect this to be the case). The same authors have also found that some well established industries (e.g. oil, pharmaceutical and car industries) are more deviant than others, and added that a firm's size, growth and success cannot provide, by themselves, a sound basis for predictions of illegal behaviour (Clinard and Yeager, 1980: 104-107 and 132; cf. also Braithwaite, [1984] 1986). Subjective - or, more appropriately for organisations, internal - considerations may construct situations as problematic, even if they are not 'really' so. Furthermore, with the continuous renewal of goals once the previous ones have been achieved, strains can always arise. Vaughan has contended that "competitive necessities and the cultural emphasis on

success exert pressure to achieve new ends, converting any achievement into simply another rung on the long ladder of success" (Vaughan: [1983] 1985: 62). Although such anthropomorphic metaphors run the risk of oversimplifying organisational complexities and decision making, such necessities and emphases have to be taken seriously into consideration in attempts to account for corporate deviance.

Highly placed individuals, under these combined pressures, whose success is related to that of their firm, may perpetrate offences in their firm's interest. According to Gross, "persons who will engage in crime on behalf of the organisation will most likely be the officers of the organisation, its top people" (Gross, 1978a: 71). None the less, a large proportion of corporate deviance is *actually committed by middle-range officials*, and results from *pressures from the top*. That is, personal ambitions of those at the top as well as organisational demands may create internal pressures on those less highly located, possibly independently from external pressures. A possible reaction of those in the middle, who strive for upward mobility within the corporation and are committed to it, is to bend or break ethical and legal rules. Thus, Gross' argument that people violate the law, "should it seem to be required in order to enable the organisation to attain its goals, to prosper, or, minimally, to survive" (Gross, 1978a: 72), may be applied both to those at the top and to those who aspire to get there.

Box has reviewed literature supporting the view that higher officials create conditions, under which it is hard for their subordinates to refuse participation in illegal activities. He has argued that it is not only or simply that subordinates receive 'offers they can't refuse', but that "corporate officials are frequently placed in a position where they are required to choose between impairing their career chances or being a

loyal organisational person" (Box, 1983: 42). Under these circumstances, either because of fear to lose their jobs or because they have a strong desire to 'get ahead' and advance within the company, the recipients of such pressures are likely to do 'the dirty work'. This is congruent with some evidence cited by Box (cf. Box, 1983: 42-43).

In addition, here are the words of a cashier who broke the law without informing his superiors: "There is no doubt that I juggled the books, but I was under orders to balance the books *no matter what means*" (quoted in Cressey, 1953: 63; emphasis added). Among the details of a fraud known as the 'Equity Funding Case' in the USA, which "resulted in losses estimated at $2 billion, the victims being the company's insurance customers", Clinard and his colleagues have reported that, "*At company direction*, one computer specialist created fictitious insurance policies with a value of $430 million, with yearly premiums totalling $5.5 million" (Clinard et al., 1979: 15; emphasis added). A pharmaceutical executive has pointed out that, if a lower level executive goes to the president to consult him about the solution of a problem, and the president says "'Look, it's your concern to get around this problem the best way you can. *I don't want to know how you do it, but just get the job done*', then the lower level executive will go and bend the rules" (quoted in Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 322; emphasis added).

In a paper entitled 'Some Middle Managers Cut Corners to Achieve High Corporate Goals', G.Getschow has observed that sometimes

> goals are set too high or are simply unreasonable. Then, an employee often confronts a hard choice - to risk being branded *incompetent* by telling superiors that they ask too much, *or to begin taking unethical or illegal shortcuts* (quoted in McCaghy, 1985: 234; emphasis added).

Clinard's survey has revealed that "middle management was clearly of the opinion that the very nature of top management's position and its

actual behaviour is largely responsible for unethical or illegal corporate behaviour" and that it "sets the ethical tone of the corporation" (Clinard, 1983: 71 and 89). According to Clinard's respondents, middle management works under many pressures, the most important being pressures to show profits and to keep costs in line, time pressures, and production and sales quotas (Clinard, 1983: 91). 90,6 per cent of the executives said that "they felt such pressures do lead to unethical behaviour within a corporation" (Clinard, 1983: 95; cf. also 140-144). In brief, Clinard's subjects believed that, although external forces are not negligible, internal pressures, individual ethics and personal ambitions contribute greatly to corporate deviance.

Aubert has analysed his data from research conducted in Norway, in terms of 'universalistic' and 'particularistic obligations' (cf. Stouffer and Toby, 1951). He has pointed out that people's roles as members of the business community, on the one hand, and as law-abiding citizens, on the other, are often in conflict (cf. also Baumhart, 1968: 129-130). When the former takes precedence over the latter, law violations are likely to occur:

> The felt universalistic obligation is to obey the law, an obligation which finds some support in the 'general sense of justice', *but which is not fortified by very strong or efficient sanctions against breach.* The felt particularistic obligation implies avoidance only of certain blatant offences and, on the other hand, resistance to these laws in general. *This is an obligation to business colleagues, supported by their ideology and frequently also by profit motives* (Aubert, 1968: 179-180; emphasis added).

But, not all businesspeople will attempt to resolve such a conflict in the same fashion. An implication of this is that systematic inquiry into the conditions, under which allegiance to this or that reference group prevails, may enhance our understanding of both deviance and conformity. Much of corporate deviance can be described as 'non-conformity', in the

sense that breach of legal norms constitutes, at the same time, behaviour conforming to standards and procedures prevalent in the corporate world. Such standards may emerge out of efforts to deal with problematic situations and structurally generated strains. They may be further promoted and maintained, however, through processes of interaction leading to widespread rationalisations, which 'excuse' or even 'legitimise' illegal practices. We have already seen how verbalisations enabling illegalities and preserving respectability (at least, subjectively) are used by individuals acting for themselves. In the context of corporations, where personal and organisational interests often go hand in hand, the significance of such 'excuses' is even greater. Self-esteem is more easily maintained as deviant acts are committed on behalf of the firm, though these are also instrumental to the achievement of personal ends. This has been encapsulated very well in a statement (describing what we would call 'non-conformity') made by Judge J.Cullen Ganey's, before he passed the sentence to participants in the electrical conspiracy in USA:

> They were torn between conscience and an approved corporate policy, with the rewarding objective of promotion, comfortable security, and large salaries. They were the organisation, or company, man; *the conformist who goes along with his superiors and finds balm for his conscience in additional comforts and security of his place in the corporate set-up* (quoted in Geis, 1968b: 111; emphasis added).

Grown out of the general cultural emphasis on success and organisational necessities and/or pressures to ensure profits, rationalisations and systematised beliefs about the 'business-like' way of dealing with things may come together and form deviant sub-cultures. While such sub-cultures or 'ideologies' may come into existence - within a corporation or, more generally, among businesspeople - as structural strains persist or take new forms, they are also transmitted "as a

generalisation by phrases such as 'we are not in business for our health', 'business is business', or 'no business was ever built on the beatitudes'" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 240). As a consequence, their respect for, and commitment to, the law (or, more accurately, particular laws) is decreased. Anomic trends may, then, ensue as the use of profitable and effective but illegal techniques becomes widespread, and conveys the impression that successful business and law are sometimes incompatible. As a convicted corporate official characteristically put it,

> No one attending the gathering [of the conspirators] was so stupid he didn't know the meetings were violations of the law. *But it is the only way a business can be run.* It's free enterprise (quoted in Clinard and Yeager, 1980: 298; emphasis added).

This may be genuinely believed by those who engage in illegal behaviour. This very fact, nevertheless, illustrates the degree of anomie in the realm of business, since law-breaking and respectability are not thought to be mutually exclusive. Business represents a legitimate activity and, to be sure, benefits society in many ways. But, when the cliché 'business is business' is uttered in defence of law violations, the lines between what is legitimate and what is illegitimate are blurred. In anomic situations, offenders are in a better position "to neutralise or rationalise their behaviour in a manner keeping with their image of themselves as law-abiding, decent, and respectable persons" (Geis, 1968b: 116). With weakened support for lawful behaviour, considerations of cost and profit take precedence over others. As Clinard has observed, one may expect that

> ...a corporation is most likely to engage in unlawful conduct *when support diminishes for legitimate procedures to be used in reaching the profit goal.* Under these conditions, firms may violate anti-trust laws and the regulations of the FTC, OSHA, EPA, and other agencies *if, by complying, the costs to the corporation will be too high* (Clinard, 1983: 18; emphasis added; FTA= Federal Trade Commission, EPA= Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA=

Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

Matza has introduced the concept of 'drift' to describe the "episodic release from moral constraint", which is "a crucial part of the process culminating in delinquent action" (Matza, 1964: 69). He has avoided the related term 'anomie', partly because of its polysemy and partly to "suggest the episodic rather than constant character of moral release" (Matza, 1964: 69). Given that 'anomie', as employed here, is a matter of degree and refers to trends or tendencies towards the weakening of people's allegiance to prevailing social standards, Matza's contribution is relevant and may be regarded, to a certain extent, as complementary. It may be proposed that cultural messages of success, structural strains, neutralisations converting "infraction into mere action" and enabling 'drift' (Matza, 1964: 176), and anomie may be part of a complex circle conducive to deviant behaviour.

It must be stressed, however, that we are not dealing here with juvenile 'drifters', but with respected adults in powerful and influential positions. Similarities in the *mechanisms* leading to deviance, in general, ought not to cloud the differences in the *extent, content and consequences* of neutralisation techniques and rule-breaking behaviour in diverse structural locations. Slogans, such as 'I didn't do it for myself', which prepare the ground for law violations (cf. Sykes and Matza, 1957), are not only available to young delinquents, but also to company executives. However, the demands of the larger society are not sacrificed for those of a gang or friendship clique, but in the interest of small and large corporations and their shareholders. Furthermore, unlawful practices are known and common enough for corporate officials to resort to them as the only way of coping with competition. The wider environment and economic necessities may jointly make for deviance and anomie, since

highly placed managers sometimes operate on the assumption (if not certainty) that other companies do break the law. As a study of top executives among the Fortune 500 corporations has revealed, they feel that, when the interests of their shareholders are concerned, they have no right to 'wrap themselves 'in the mantle of moral philosophers and judges'. More interestingly, some argued that the economic survival of the corporation "sometimes dictated that they violate the law; if they did not, *their stockholders would suffer*, and *other firms 'with less scrupulous management' would win out*" (Silk and Vogel, 1976: 228; emphasis added).

Sutherland has pointed out that, while perpetrators of 'white-collar crime' do not see themselves as "conforming to the stereotype of 'criminal', they do customarily think of themselves as 'law violators'" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 223). This is confirmed by a high-rank official of a distilling company, whose comment also indicates the degree of anomie and disrespect for the law (or specific laws):

> We break the laws every day. *If you think I go to bed at night worrying about it, you're crazy. Everybody breaks the law.* The liquor laws are insane anyway (quoted in Denzin: 1977: 919; emphasis added).

The development of such attitudes intensifies existing anomic trends, and illegalities are perceived as an often indispensable part of the ordinary way of going about business. Once the degree of anomie has become relatively acute, deviant acts may be committed even in absence of particular problems or pressures. "Carried to the extreme", Vaughan has remarked, "norm erosion might become so extensive within an organisation that unlawful conduct occurs *regardless of resource scarcity*" (Vaughan, [1983] 1985: 61; emphasis added).

The anomic climate may be illustrated by some practices of large

corporations, the complexity of which makes it difficult or impossible to identify concrete individuals as responsible for corporate offences. Corporate deviance, then, may be either directly or indirectly traceable to corporate élites. That is, deviance may be an *intended* or *unintended* consequence of the pursuit of high goals, as the responsibility for their achievement has been delegated to subordinates, who might bend the rules without informing the top officials (cf. Ermann and Lundman, 1982: 10-11). Furthermore, in big companies, as in all bureaucratic structures, the implementation of decisions involves several stages, tasks are fragmented and delegated to many different units, and people are separated from the ultimate consequences of their actions. In such inherently 'criminogenic' situations (cf. Gross, 1978a; Jackal, 1980), the "larger the corporation and the more complex the corporate crime the greater the distance which can be placed between the criminal mind and the criminal act" (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 308). This, however, does not mean that corporate officials are unaware of the fact that illegal acts are being committed. Instead of establishing procedures and controls in order to prevent them, some of these companies not only tolerate them, but they create a special post for the person to be blamed, in case serious offences are discovered. As Braithwaite has reported with amazement,

> ...two American executives I interviewed explained that they had held the position of 'vice-president responsible for going to jail' and I was told of this position existing in a third company. Lines of accountability had been drawn in the organisation such that if there were a problem and someone's head had to go on the chopping block, it would be that of the 'vice-president responsible for going to jail' (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 308).

In an environment dominated by concerns of costs and benefits, a lack of effective social control is bound to promote rather than hinder processes resulting in deviance and anomie. Despite its enormous and

multiform cost to the community at large, and the fact that societies dedicated to 'law and order' have penal policies "based largely on deterrent principles, it appears that corporate crime gets left out of the arena of legal and social control" (Box, 1983: 44). This is not surprising, given that those implicated in such activities belong to a "group of great social significance outside the sphere of criminal activity - usually a group with considerable economic and political power" (Aubert, 1968: 177). The relative immunity and impunity of executives (especially those at the top), which has been found to be a factor clearly contributing to corporate deviance (cf. Clinard and Yeager, 1980), and the complicated issues involved in the legislation and implementation of laws regulating corporations are reiterated in the literature (cf. Carson, [1971] 1975; Pearce, 1976; Conklin, 1977; Tiedemann, 1977; Carson, 1982; Box, 1983; Braithwaite, [1984] 1986), and we need not go into detail.

It is essential, however, to note that the laxity of authorities, which fails to deter corporate deviance, is a consequence of structural contradictions. With rapid social changes, aided by technological advancements, some patterns of corporate deviance seem inevitable. This, as well as the 'non-conformity' of corporate officials, can be analysed in terms of what Merton has called 'institutionalised evasions of institutional norms'. These develop "when practical exigencies confronting the group or collectivity (or significantly large parts of them) require adaptive behaviour which is at odds with long-standing norms, sentiments, and practices" (Merton, 1968: 372). Merton has also outlined processes of interaction between controllers and controlled, whereby the extent of unavoidable deviations from rules and their degree of visibility are continuously re-arranged, so that the maximum objectives of both groups can be attained. The unrestricted observability of role-performance is

resisted because strict conformity is often made difficult by situational demands, and because the interests involved are often divergent. Illustrating this, Merton has remarked that, "The strong hostility toward 'close supervision' in business and industry evidently expresses this doubly reinforced objection to the surveillance of role-performance" (Merton, 1968: 397).

Complete visibility will disrupt the functioning of the corporations and, as their social and economic importance is anything but negligible, it may negatively affect the whole society. In a statement about the *Ancien Régime* in France, but relevant to contemporary societies as well, Foucault has noted that each social stratum had its own margin of tolerated illegality. He has pointed out that "the non-enforcement of rules, the non-observance of innumerable edicts and ordonnances were a *condition of the economic and political functioning of the society*" (Foucault, 1975: 84; emphasis added), holds for many institutional norms regulating today's business activities. Moreover, the undesirable consequences of excessive social control are not only described in G.Orwell's *1984*, but also realised by criminologists recommending 'minimal policing' (albeit for working-class crime; cf. Kinsey et al., 1986). On the other hand, lack of visibility of law-violations and enforcement of the rules promotes deviance and anomie. The target, therefore, would be a compromise on the 'functionally optimum degree of visibility' (cf. Merton, 1968: 398-400). All this may help understand how laws and regulations are not strict enough or strictly enforced. Existing evidence and estimates of the extent and cost of corporate deviance and crime, however, suggest that such optimum has not been reached. It seems that, in contemporary societies, it is hard to conciliate certain conflicts in a satisfactory way. Economic national and trans-national concerns often clash with other

serious concerns, such as civil rights, health, safety etc. Many contradictions and radically opposed values and demands are inextricably linked with prevailing cultural axioms and the capitalist mode of production.

The argument that "*the world of the giant corporations does not necessarily require illegal behaviour in order to compete successfully*" (Clinard et al., 1979: xix; emphasis in original) has been challenged. As Gibbons has observed

> They based that claim on the fact that 40 percent of the corporations did not have a legal action taken against them in the two-year period [they have examined]. However, that conclusion seems weak, given the possibility that many of the forty 'non-criminal' corporations may have been involved in *undetected* violations or may have had legal actions taken against them in earlier years (Gibbons, 1987: 296; emphasis in original).

The 'dark figure' of corporate deviance is indeed impossible to calculate with any precision, but there are good reasons to believe that it is immense (cf. Pearce, 1976: 90-97; Box, 1983: 44-47; Kramer, 1984). An important factor contributing to the 'dark figure' is also the fact that members of controlling and controlled bodies belong to the same circles, which may partly account for the reluctance of authorities to bring charges (Tiedemann, 1977: 25). Further, Carson's study of the *Other Price of Britain's Oil* has documented how a policy of speedy extraction of reserves, necessary for Britain's position in the world economy, superceded concerns with the workers' safety and led to a high rate of deaths that could have been avoided. One of his central arguments was that,

> North sea's poor safety record has to be viewed against the background of persistent preoccupation with rapid exploitation...The preoccupation with haste also permeated the practice of enforcement, contributed to the maintenance of a 'privatised' relationship between controllers and controlled, and became one of the main bones of contention in the internecine wrangling which came to surround the

> administration of offshore safety in the second half of the 1970s. ...Ere long, the United Kingdom would have to face up to the economic discipline imposed by a refurbished system of international finance which no longer automatically concurred in the view that her aspirations to a major world role warranted special treatment (Carson, 1982: 9 and 10).

Szasz has also demonstrated how illegal and dangerous actions are sometimes 'necessary' for the national economy. He has explored the complex relationship between corporations generating hazardous waste and organised crime participation in its disposal. Following a period of inattention and lack of interest (on the part of the industries concerned) in developing an adequate method of handling hazardous waste, if legislators - preparing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act 1976 - had insisted on an immediate shift to proper disposal, a major crisis would have resulted. Representatives of large corporations warned of the risks to the industry that strict measures would entail, and succeeded in shaping the Act, so that their companies would not be liable for the ultimate fate of their wastes (Szasz, 1986: 12-14). As Szasz has commented, "Neither individual officeholders nor whole governments stay in office long *if they pass legislation which, even for the best and most popular of reasons, brings to a halt industrial sectors central to the national economy*" (Szasz, 1986: 15; emphasis added). An unintended consequence of the Act has been the entry of organised crime elements with whom corporations contracted for the treatment and disposition of these wastes.

In brief, as Levi has concluded his study of fraud regulation, "whether they are market-makers, first-class chefs, or Presidential advisers, those who are socially useful and create our wealth have to be allowed the occasional peccadillo" (Levi, 1987: 356-357). Nevertheless, the complexity of processes relative to legislation, control and crime show

that it would be simplistic and erroneous to argue that there is some sort of collusion in the ruling classes culminating in corporate deviance, and that "the point of forming a corporation is to avoid personal liability for criminal liability" (T.Young, 1981: 328-329). It is also unfair to reproach criminologists (those, who contributed to the 'Clinard Report': Clinard et al., 1979) for 'not understanding' this and for suggesting measures "well calculated to be ineffective" (T.Young, 1981: 328). Contradictions, such as those sketched above, are inherent in capitalist societies (cf. Krisberg, 1975; Pearce, 1976; Box, 1983), but not only in them.

Our analysis has concentrated on Western societies, where cultural and economic demands nourish incessant striving for success, often *by all means*. Braithwaite has pointed out, however, that, taking into account the different priorities set by corporations in Eastern countries and the equally heavy pressures to meet their own goals, the Mertonian type of analysis is enlightening for processes making for evasion of established standards there, too. Gross' (1978b) thesis has been that the mechanisms leading to corporate deviance are the same, in both capitalist and socialist societies: the pursuit of important goals (cited in Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 368). In this light, Braithwaite has remarked:

> In a capitalist society, an organisation might be set the goal of achieving a certain level of profit; in a socialist society, the goal might be meeting a production target set by the state. *Under both systems there will be occasions when organisational actors are unable through legitimate means to achieve the goal. They will be under pressure, as Merton...first pointed out, to resort to illegitimate means of goal attainment.* The socialist manager must meet performance standards, just as much as the capitalist. If a socialist manager is told to cut costs, s/he may be under as much temptation as the capitalist, for instance, to reduce costs by cutting corners on quality control (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 368; emphasis added).

Apart from the potential relevance of this theoretical framework to

Eastern societies, Braithwaite has thus indicated that the type of problems discussed above are not unique to the West, and that no ready-made solutions are available.

On the other hand, these processes making for deviance and anomie have wider implications and go beyond the white-collar world. In Western societies, and especially in North America, there is evidence of an increasing public awareness and concern about upper-world deviance and crime (cf. Braithwaite, 1979: 186; Cullen et al., 1982; Box, 1983: 65-66; Daskalakis et al., 1983: 271ff.; Cullen et al, 1984: 107-111; Kramer, 1984: 27-30; Braithwaite [1984] (1986): 6-7). The growing public consciousness and sensitivity may create a social climate favourable to more effective regulations and control. In addition, a "forceful demonstration that the law is failing to realise its own professed principles may have the beneficial effect of shaming it into action" (Box, 1983: 66). However, as the legitimacy of legal institutions and the state may be thus undermined (Box, 1983: 67), another (perhaps, parallel) effect may be the creation of a wider anomic context. This is a question requiring further research, but it seems that, in many cases, the gap between principles and practices is difficult to close effectively without disrupting economic life.

There are also social and technical-legal difficulties when it comes to sanctions against law violations of large corporations. When the company itself is sentenced, its members *and* the public at large may be affected. Fines, for instance, may be included in the cost of production and result in increased prices of final products or services. To cite a concrete example, top executives of the companies involved in the electrical conspiracy and fined a total of $1.8 million, "persuaded the Internal Revenue Service that all legal expenses, fines, and damages could be written off as 'ordinary and necessary' expenses of doing business"

(McCaghy, 1985: 226). Further, it may not be possible to identify guilty individuals. Inaction, on the other hand, or perceived lenience can bring about anomic attitudes. As has been pointed out,

> The imprisonment of people who lack criminal intent seems a sound way of undermining public commitment to the moral force of the criminal law. *At the other extreme, when ordinary citizens see unemployed people going to prison for minor theft and large corporations endangering the public health with rodent-infested warehouses going unpunished, this also undermines respect for the law* (Braithwaite, [1984] 1986: 321; emphasis added; cf. also Clinard and Abbot, 1973: 57).

In his pioneering work on 'white-collar crimes', Sutherland has also maintained that they "violate trust and therefore create distrust; this *lowers social morale and produces social disorganisation*" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 13; emphasis added). It is not surprising, then, that he saw the analysis of processes of 'differential association' as complementary to analyses of "*anomie* or the lack of standards which direct the behaviour of members of the society in general or in specific areas of behaviour" (Sutherland, [1949] 1961: 253; emphasis in original). Dahrendorf's (1985) recent analysis of 'Law and Order' has also suggested that disregard of the law, patterns of impunity and relaxation of normative constraints bring the society 'on the road to Anomia' (though, being chiefly concerned with the 'underclass', he did not bring out the significance of this argument for the upper world). Moreover, anomic tendencies may spread, as people from all strata know about serious deviant acts committed in the upper world. As Gibbons has remarked,

> Perhaps, *because of their perceptions that businesspeople often fail to observe proper standards of business conduct, many citizens show less allegiance to the law than they might otherwise.* Although definitive evidence on this matter is lacking, it is possible to gather an abundance of statements by articulate criminals and delinquents which allude to business crime as one basis of their own grievances against society (Gibbons, 1987: 297; emphasis added).

Conklin has further pointed out that not only upper-class deviance (especially, if it goes unpunished) offers rationalisations for the lower classes to justify their own criminal behaviour, but also

> Unpunished violations by white-collar offenders *create disrespect for the law* and *engender a desire for revenge* against those who protect their own but punish society's outcasts. For example, consumer fraud and exploitation was one underlying cause of the frustrations which led to the riots in black ghettoes during the 1960s (Conklin, 1977: 8; emphasis added).

It ought not to be overlooked, however, that processes conducive to deviance and anomie are not originating only in the upper world. Similar mechanisms operate in the under-world and bring about organised crime. Merton's analysis of the political machine has shown how it represents an alternative route to success for those "excluded from the more conventional avenues for personal 'advancement'" (Merton, 1968: 130). Organised crime provided another channel for those socially disadvantaged. As Whyte (1943) has observed, politics "and the rackets have furnished an important means of social mobility for individuals, who, because of ethnic background and low class position, are blocked from advancement in the 'respectable' channels" (quoted in Merton, 1968: 132). In this light, and given the economic (not moral) identity of both legitimate and illegitimate businesses, it is not surprising that the political machine has dealings with both. The two constitute responses to similar cultural and economic demands:

> In both instances, many features of the structural context are identical: (1) market demands for goods and services; (2) the operator's concern with maximising gains from their enterprises; (3) the need for partial control of government which might otherwise interfere with these activities of businessmen; (4) the need for an efficient, powerful and centralised agency to provide an effective liaison of 'business' with government (Merton, 1968: 134).

There are by now several studies documenting inter-relationships

between respectable people and organisations with organised crime, which is fostered by structural discrepancies, responds to societal demands, adapts to social changes, is 'stratified' and operates in a way similar to legitimate business (cf., among many others, Lewis, 1970; McIntosh, [1971] 1982 and 1975; Chambliss, 1976; Arlacchi, 1986; Szasz, 1986; A.Smart, 1988). An important implication of studies on high-status occupational deviance, corporate deviance, and organised crime, therefore, is that structural contradictions and anomic trends permeate the whole society. The (analytically) same mechanisms operate in the upper and the lower social segments of contemporary societies. The outcomes are, however, different, as they depend on the particular opportunities offered to people to act in legitimate or illegitimate manner.

Conclusion

Durkheim has stressed the chronic state of anomie in the realm of industry and trade, whereas Merton emphasised the pressures leading to high rates of deviance and more acute anomie in the lower strata. The foregoing analysis suggests that the writings of each of them helped illuminate parts of the same social phenomenon. It is suggested that the processes leading to deviance, anomie and further deviance can be 'thought', schematically, as follows: structurally induced problems and strains make for deviance; when situations calling for problem-solving departures from institutional norms persist, social interactions foster the development of deviant but effective patterns of action, along with (sub-cultural) rationalisations 'justifying' them. Given the existence and 'legitimation' of such practices, more of them can occur even in absence of any compelling pressures. Additional contradictions, leading to a

relative immunity of upper-class individuals and legitimate corporations, sustain and perpetuate such an anomic climate affecting not only the social groups examined in this chapter, but (at least, potentially) the whole society.

The fact that upper-world deviance is not always labelled and punished as criminal does not stop it from being economically and socially undesirable and costly. It is in view of these facts that official statistics and research show higher rates of *crime* among the lower classes have to be considered. Data relative to what is defined by the authorities as *crime* do not reflect rates of *deviant behaviour*. We have seen that departures from institutional norms occur in all structural positions. If their importance and seriousness is to be gauged by the social and economic cost to the society, the deviance of the powerful (however officially defined) is more dangerous and disquieting, as the raising levels of public sensitivity also testify. This is not to underplay the significance of predatory street-crime. It does represent a grave social problem, and it has to be 'fought against' (Wilson, 1975; Lea and Young, 1984; Kinsey et al., 1986). It appears, however, exaggerated to argue that it constitutes *the* crime problem and that it is "a far more serious matter than consumer fraud, anti-trust violations, etc" (Wilson, 1975: xx). Meaningful human communities are jeopardised also by 'white-collar crime': a study of "over 1.000 individuals found that more than 60 per cent of those sampled felt that they were consistently being sold shoddy products and had little or no faith in the marketplace. They felt that no one really cared about the consuming public" (Bequai, 1978a: 12).

In any event, from the preceding analysis it follows that 'white-collar crime' *is* a very serious problem. In spite of difficulties in controlling it effectively and the costs of control itself to the society,

our priorities may have to be re-evaluated. One has to pose questions, such as: what are the acceptable limits of tolerance? What are the available functional alternatives? What structural alternatives could be worked out realistically? (e.g. Braithwaite, 1982 and [1984] 1986: ch.9).

In this chapter, we have seen how conditions enabling technological achievements, economic prosperity and growth, also make for anomie and the commitment of harmful and, sometimes, frightful deviant acts. The responses to social changes, socio-cultural discrepancies, strains towards deviance and anomie, however, may also be organised and directed towards further (desirable) social changes. This hypothesis is the subject matter of the next chapter.

Notes

1. Because these acts may not be officially defined and treated as criminal, 'white-collar crime' will remain in inverted commas.

2. What is 'high status' is very unclear and empirically difficult to establish. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that lawyers, physicians, businessmen and politicians - on which the analysis will focus - are among the most respected members of the society.

3. As is the case, in fact, with social deviance in general. Not only is there no such society known as yet, but even if a society were absolutely anomic, there would be no established norms to depart from and, therefore, no deviance.

4. Incidentally, the consistency of Merton's theory with the 'economic theory of crime' and cost/benefit analysis has been demonstrated by Frey and Opp (1979).

CHAPTER 7

ANOMIE AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE ABORTION ACT (1967)

Introduction

As was noted in the introduction to the second part of this thesis, the concept of anomie is helpful in analysing relations between the society and individuals, but also in studying social change (cf. Lukes, 1977b). Durkheim has described anomic tendencies as an outcome of industrialisation and other social changes. Merton, on the other hand, has hinted at the relevance of his anomie theory to social change as a consequence of strains, discrepancies and, contradictions between culture and social structure. He has pointed out that these concepts serve to bridge the gap between statics and dynamics in functional analysis. He argued, thus, that such "strains may be dysfunctional for the system in its then existing form; they may also be instrumental in leading to changes in that system. In any case, they exert pressure for change" (Merton, 1968: 176). Sztompka has also maintained that Merton's anomie theory suggests processes of 'structure-building' (Sztompka, 1987: 16-19). Merton has admitted, however, that he has not addressed this question at length, and that this problem needs further investigation (Merton, 1968: 177).

Further, most attention has been paid (both by commentators of Merton's theory and Merton himself) to the means/ends disjunction as a

source of deviance and anomie. The significance of other sources, such as socially induced normative contradictions, value and role conflicts (cf. Merton, 1956) have been comparatively neglected. As a result, the explanatory power and relevance of Merton's theory has not been fully explored.

The objective of this chapter is to try and develop the theory in this direction, by focusing on a particular type of deviance - abortion - in a particular society - Britain, from the 1930s to the 1960s. It is argued that anomie theory can contribute to our understanding of the high rates of illegal abortion over that period and of the legislative change relative to abortion. The argument develops as follows.

In the first section, it is suggested that significant social changes in British society brought about tensions and strains conducive to a trend towards moral anomie. Social changes entailed the increase and diffusion of shifts and ambiguities in relation to several moral issues. This section examines, in particular, a decline of the authority of traditional ethical norms and values germane to the family, the role of women, birth control and sexuality.

In the second section, an effort is made to account for high rates of (then) illegal abortion, as a result of material conditions and cultural emphases on conflicting roles (especially married) women were called to fulfil, on the one hand, and of the general climate of anomie, on the other.

In the third section, it is argued that the trend towards moral anomie provided an impetus for social change. In a society possessing 'numerous channels for the effective expression of grievances', this was likely to take place through reform (Smelser, 1968: 205-206). The direction of social change in the 1960s was greatly determined by

organised groups exercising pressure in order to promote, counter, or limit the scope of specific reforms. Particular attention is paid to the decisive role of the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA). Its members had perceived, and responded to, the tensions and problems many women faced as abortion was illegal. It is maintained that their 'innovative' and 'non-conforming' actions were crucial factors in bringing about change, as they proposed remedies and shaped to a considerable degree the Abortion Act 1967.

Anomic tendencies, then, describe a general background, against which the formation, activities, and (at least partial) success of ALRA, can be appreciated and understood. No claim is made that anomic strains can, by themselves, explain the specific abortion law reform. As Merton has remarked, it cannot be said that such "strains are alone in the making for change in a social structure, but they do represent a theoretically strategic source of change..." (Merton, 1968: 177). Rather, the purpose is to point out that the Act was neither the mere expression of a newly emerged consensus on this issue, nor just a reflection of the needs of capitalism and the material interests of the ruling classes. It was also a consequence of the concerted efforts of 'non-conformists'.

Social Change, Morality and Anomie

No doubt, prevailing moral values and standards have been often resisted by parts of the population. When we turn, however, to the post-war British society, we can see that previously dominant moral codes about procreation, family and sexuality were challenged in an unprecedented manner. It could be said that this was the continuation of

a historical trend, which first emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, towards "a gradual relaxation of moral codes and greater openness in the acknowledgement of sexuality" (S.Hall, 1980: 18). In any event, in the 1960s, the questioning of older principles and the emergence of conflicting views and attitudes led to a moral crisis, a climate of moral uncertainties about what is right and what is wrong or, to paraphrase Dahrendorf, to the road to moral anomie.

By studying the social transformations that took place during the period under study, the deeper sources of such an anomic environment may be revealed. Full account of these changes cannot be given here. The principal objective is to look at significant changes in the situation of women and at shifting attitudes towards birth control and sexuality, in the context of processes of secularisation and welfarism, in order to see how they constituted factors making for the creation of an anomic climate.

Women, Family and Work

The beginning of this century saw no spectacular change in the position of women in the family. There was, however, a noteworthy partial ideological remodelling of their domestic responsibilities in that renewed and strong emphasis was placed upon their role as mothers. This was not unrelated to fears about declining birthrate, the reproduction of a race with 'imperial duties', the influence of the eugenics movement and the threat of war. As has been observed, a partial shift was taking place "... in the dominant ideology, away from the nineteenth-century stress on woman as wife towards an accentuated (though not of course new) emphasis on woman as mother. Women's traditional domestic responsibilities were

being ideologically reshaped to accord with new perceived problems" (Weeks, 1981: 126).

Femaleness, motherhood and marriage continued to be viewed as inextricably linked. Although these close links were constantly stressed in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, some tensions began to arise. In the 1940s the ideal of a 'complementary family', assigning different roles for men and women, seemed to be dominant. Femininity was construed in terms of motherhood and domesticity. The highly normative content of the Beveridge Report (1942) laid down principles and values characteristic of the Welfare State. It voiced serious concerns about the "adequate continuance of the British race and of British ideals in the world" (HMSO, 1942: 53) and the future of the family. According to Weeks, marriage was encouraged and reinforced to a degree "amounting to an ideological reconstruction of marriage as a vital occupation and career" for women. Furthermore, "[t]he growth of 'social work' was explicitly related to the need to reinforce traditional forms of family life, which was curiously seen both as 'natural' and permanent and as fragile and threatened" (Weeks, 1981: 235).

The threat was coming mainly from the war and its disruptive consequences, indicated by rising divorce and illegitimacy rates (C.Smart, 1981: 47). On the other hand, given the shortage of labour and economic necessity, large numbers of women started working outside the home and had to reconcile marriage, motherhood and paid employment. In 1943, "over 40 per cent of all married women were in paid employment compared with one in seven in 1939. This included one in five of married women with children" (Land, 1976: 116). The social climate was more favourably disposed towards working women and wives, and children's nurseries enabled them to find more time for work by resuming part of their duties.

The significant move of women into the labour market continued even

after the end of the war and, at least in the 1940s, no deliberate and coherent strategy to send them back to the home can be discerned (Weeks, 1981: 233). "By the end of 1946", Land has pointed out, "there were still 875.000 more women in the working population (700.000 of them actually employed in industry) than in 1939" (Land, 1976: 116-117). In conditions of continued shortage of labour in the 1940s, the government encouraged women to stay in employment and invited more to join the labour force:

> The need to increase the working population is not temporary, it is a permanent feature in our national life ...women now form the only large reserve of labour left and to them the government are accordingly making a special appeal (HMSO, 1947: 183).

The Family Allowance Act 1945 indicated some change in attitudes by providing that the allowance could be cashed by either parent and that the allowance book belonged to the mother. Maternity benefit was no longer "treated as a 'benefit for the husband' and paid to him!" (Land, 1976: 116). In addition, the National Assistance Act 1948 placed equal maintenance obligations on both husband and wife so that, "the working wife of a man who becomes dependent upon supplementary benefit can be forced by the Supplementary Benefits Commission to pay him maintenance..." (Land, 1976: 121).

In the 1950s the emphasis on motherhood and domesticity persisted and became, perhaps, even stronger. There were attempts to send women back into the home; good motherhood and work were considered incompatible: "The working mother was seen as a major factor in the causation of juvenile delinquency, as 'latch-key' children became a potent source of moral panic, while the working wife's contribution to family income was culturally diminished as 'pin money'" (Weeks, 1981: 257). It is essential to note that this cultural under-valuation of women's labour has to be understood in terms of the patriarchal relations within the

family (C.Smart, 1981: 41).

In spite of such attempts, it was female part-time workers who provided the labour very much needed at the time, apart from black immigrants. The numbers of (chiefly married) women in employment during the following decades represented a long-term and consistent upward trend (S.Hall, 1980: 22). This trend was helped by increasing numbers of 'less skilled' posts in the public sector and decreasing numbers of predominantly male industries (Land, 1976: 117). The post-war affluence also fostered this trend, if indirectly. As S.Hall has pointed out, women had a very special and augmented role "in the rapidly expanding surge of domestic consumption which underpinned the productive growth of the mid-fifties - a phase and type of selective economic expansion specifically aimed in their direction, at the 'consuming housewife'" (S.Hall, 1980: 22). But, the increasing rate of consumption could not be sustained without women's extra earnings.

On the other hand, although working women and wives had achieved 'an economic status of their own', this status was clearly unequal to that of men; women's full-time wages were half those of men, and discrimination against them was far from eradicated (Land, 1976: 117). Despite "a considerable shift away from early twentieth-century domestic ideology in its crudest form" (Weeks, 1981: 236), psychological and welfare discourses emphasised motherhood, while economic and consumerist ideologies portrayed them in their 'little domestic kingdom' (S.Hall, 1980: 23).

Several scarcely manageable demands were, thus, made of women: they were asked to be at the same time good mothers and wives, consuming home-makers and part-time workers (S.Hall, 1980: 23). Apart from onerous, these multiple roles were potentially conflicting too. Full commitment to

one or two of them could easily entail neglect of the other(s). Certain tensions could be expected as an outcome of such often (if not always) contradictory tasks (particularly married) women were called upon to carry out.

All the more so, as such contradictions became stronger and more apparent in the 1960s, when the 'symmetrical family' (cf. Young and Willmot, [1973] 1984), grounded on equal participation in both work and domestic labour, began to take precedence over the 'complementary family' ideal. The changing situation of women and the importance of their work were more widely recognised. But the reality of this new ideal was "undermined by a continuing tradition that women were chiefly responsible for childrearing, and by a social-security system that was based on female dependence" (Weeks, 1981: 257-258). Carstairs has also argued that "women are being asked to play roles which are as yet, in our society, in conflict" (Carstairs, 1964: 69). As a result, when - for financial or other reasons - work and motherhood were in conflict, no clear principle was there to set the priorities. In fact, the clash between career and motherhood was officially acknowledged as early as in 1949 by the Royal Commission on Population. This, however, "did not lead to any widespread interest or support in socialising child care, nor to any fundamental questioning of sex roles, but on the contrary to renewed emphasis on motherhood" (Weeks, 1981: 236).

In the 1960s, rising percentages of women were marrying and at a younger age, as a consequence of higher numbers of males than of females in the population, earlier puberty and greater affluence (Weeks, 1981: 256-257). They were also increasingly engaging in activities outside the home - in 1972 there were two and a half million married women more than in 1951 in the working population (Land, 1976: 117). We saw that the

most demanding tasks were placed on the shoulders of married working women. In view of the above patterns, the scope of those affected by the outlined socially induced tensions and dilemmas in the 1960s was significantly widened. It is hardly surprising that there were many cases of mental ill-health among married women. It has been noted that

> Doctors have long been aware of the frequency of neurotic ill-health among young and middle-aged married women, who attend their surgeries and hospital out-patient departments with many vague complaints: if they have anything in common, it is that they feel tired and are unhappy (Carstairs, 1964: 63-64).

Birth Control

At the beginning of this century discourses bearing on birth control were shaped by the population problem, the eugenics movement and the renewed emphasis on motherhood. In the 1920s birth control constituted a fringe movement, which slowly managed to achieve respectability. An important contributor to this was Dr Marie Stopes, who established the first birth-control clinic in 1921, published several widely read books and succeeded in conciliating traditional anti-birth control eugenic arguments with the population and health issues of the time (Weeks, 1981: 188-193).

The legitimacy of birth-control methods was officially recognised (by Memorandum 153/MCW) in 1930, when the Labour Minister of Health allowed existing Maternity and Child Welfare centres to inform and advice *married* women about contraception, when further pregnancies would be detrimental to their health. This set in motion a process of institutionalisation of birth control, as local authorities and regional hospital boards were empowered "either to set up birth-control clinics

themselves or to assist the [National Birth Control] Association in providing voluntary clinics" (Weeks, 1981: 195). This process was further enhanced by the National Health Service Act (1948), which provided additional support for birth-control activities, and the Royal Commission's suggestion in 1949 that birth control become part of the health service' (Weeks, 1981: 234).

By the 1950s, demographic changes and booming birthrates generated fears about overpopulation in lieu of earlier concerns with population decline. Against such background, the expansion in the provision of birth-control facilities, was hardly surprising. Indeed, the number of birth-control clinics rose from 65 in 1948 to 400 by 1963. In England and Wales, the figure for abortions on the NHS rose from 1.600 in 1958 to 9.700 in 1967 (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 49), while around 10.000 per annum were carried out in private clinics and the estimates for illegal abortions fluctuated between 15-100.000 per annum (Weeks, 1981: 259).

The use of contraception gained more respectability as the Anglican Lambeth Conference in 1958 gave it a Church blessing - considering it a 'right and important factor in Christian family life' - and the birth rate continued to increase in the 1960s, feeding official worries about overpopulation (Weeks, 1981: 259). Advances in technology played also a part, namely the introduction of the oral pill. While it offered a material basis for challenging the link between female sexuality and compulsory child-birth (S.Hall, 1980: 24), it fostered a great deal of discussion about this and other contraceptive methods. The Catholic Church was split on this issue, and its authority was undermined as a substantial number, if not a majority, of the laity were in favour of birth control (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 87-88). A consequence of all these changes was that birth-control practices became almost universal among young married

couples by the end of the 1960s (Weeks, 1981: 260).

In spite of this tendency towards a wider acceptance of birth control, however, attitudes had not changed dramatically. Resistances to this trend and antithetical views, which constructed a picture of dissensus rather than of a newly established consensus on this issue, should not be ignored. The traditional Roman Catholic teaching concerning artificial birth control was reiterated in the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of 1968 and remained hostile to it: contraception continued to constitute a grave sin (and even for the present Pope it amounts to 'denial of God'; cf. Kenyon, 1986: 67). Furthermore, as Weeks has observed, despite the multiplication of birth-control clinics, only a minority had access to them and to relevant information, while the use of the pill was strongly resisted by men. And this applied mainly to the lower classes, where this resistance was most prevalent and formal birth control was less frequently practiced (Weeks, 1981: 259-260).

Sexuality

In the realm of sexuality, significant shifts took place too. Several factors contributed to a substantial revision of sexual imagery and roles, primarily of women. By the 1940s, previously widely held views about differential sexual needs of men and women lost most of their impact. In the 1940s and 1950s, the idea that sexual pleasure is mutual, that sex is to be enjoyed by both partners, gained ground and became generally accepted (Weeks, 1981: 237).

The effects of the war were quite central to this development. Family and social life were greatly disrupted, and the scope of people's sexual experiences was enlarged. The disturbed equilibrium in many

families and the new importance attached to sexuality contributed to the spectacular growth of the marriage-guidance movement witnessed in the 1940s and 1950s (Weeks, 1981: 237).

This accent placed upon sexuality could not but clash with parallel emphases on the monogamous family. The tensions became more apparent in the 1950s, when the links between sex and reproduction began to weaken (C.Smart, 1981: 48) and pre-marital sexuality was a major topic of discussion. Liberal discourses suggested that it could consolidate future marriages. They pointed out that, as it was mostly future spouses who engaged in pre-marital sex, it did not really menace the sanctity of the family; on the contrary, it could establish a sound basis for sexual harmony within the couple (Weeks, 1981: 238).

As Smart has argued, sex was romanticised and "became tied to sustaining the monogamous nuclear family" (C.Smart, 1981: 48). But liberal justifications of pre-marital sex did not resolve the (at least potential) tensions. However partial and limited their revision was of earlier strict canons of sexual conduct, they undermined them by allowing for exceptions, which once introduced and legitimised could be extended. And, in any event, if pre-marital sex was regarded and tolerated as a sort of acceptable pre-trial, what should happen in cases of timely recognition of likely future failure? The contradictions between the encouragement of sexuality on one hand, and the efforts of its accommodation and confinement within monogamous marriage on the other, were bound to have an effect on people's attitudes.

Furthermore, the eroticised mass advertising and sexually valorised commercialism that came along with the post-war consumerism contributed greatly to an ideological reconstruction of female sexuality, in the 1960s, independently from reproduction and domestic duties (cf. S.Hall,

1980: 25; Weeks, 1981: 258). The portrait of an enjoying/pleasurable feminine subject/object, however, makes clear that it cannot be inferred that such redefinitions were unambiguously liberating for women. But, even if no sexual revolution took place in the 1960s and irrespective of the degree of stability in actual behaviour, a 'remarkable liberalisation' and a relaxation of views on several sexual issues was registered, particularly among younger people (Weeks, 1981: 254). The very fact that there was no revolutionary and overall change in sexual mores; that no new principles replaced completely older ones; and the attitudinal permissiveness observed especially among those under 30, indicate that in the 1960s the lines between legitimate and illegitimate, deviant and non-deviant sexual conduct were blurred.

Shifts in official religious opinion were also crucial in adding to such ambivalences. *The Problem of Homosexuality*, for instance, prepared by the Moral Welfare Council of the Church of England in 1954, though still considering it a sin, distinguished the ecclesiastical from its legal aspects and favoured legislative reform (Weeks, 1981: 242). This can be seen as a precursor of the Wolfenden Report on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (1957), where the divorce of illegality from immorality was stated more firmly. It is noteworthy that this report's articulation of a clear-cut private morality/public order distinction and its tendency "towards the privatisation of selective aspects of sexual conduct" (S.Hall, 1980: 13) was also exhibited by the reforms of the 1960s.

A number of publications in this period signalled modifications of attitudes within organised Church as, for example, Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God* (1963) and the Quakers' *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* (1963), which challenged earlier indisputable assumptions about homosexuality, pre-marital and extra-marital sex (Kenyon, 1986: 75) and

represented "a radical break with moral authoritarianism" (Weeks, 1981: 261).

The decline in religious weddings and Church of England attendance (Kenyon, 1986: 75) is probably connected with such shifts in religious views. However, whether they reflected an effort of adjustment to a climate of secularisation or an independent re-examination of official attitudes, is not of cardinal importance for our purposes. The fact remains that by revising older orthodoxies, these shifts further undermined them. They inevitably affected both official debates and popular moralities and paved the way, directly and indirectly, for the legal reforms on issues such as homosexuality, sexual offenders, divorce and abortion (cf. S.Hall, 1980: 4-5).

Most importantly, the changes within the Churches unintentionally induced more uncertainties and, thus, reinforced a process towards an anomic moral climate. Innovations (greatly influenced by middle-class opinion), far from establishing a new consensus, were resisted by fundamentalist groups drawing large support from low middle and respectable working classes (S.Hall, 1980: 4), while, as has been remarked, "...the bishops no longer had a single standard to offer" (Weeks, 1981: 261). Interestingly, the organised resistance of fundamentalist groups to cultural innovations, could be also described by H.Becker's notion of 'normative reactions to normlessness'. According to Becker (1960: 805), processes of secularisation lead to normlessness; the normative reactions that follow are an important part of processes of 'sacralisation' (which may also be the point of departure [Becker, 1960: 804]). His concept of normlessness is, however, different from Merton's or Durkheim's anomie. The situation is defined as such by the acting subjects, rather than the observer. In other words, it is the 'zealots' or, in our case, the

fundamentalist groups responding to innovation, who define the social context as normless and "attempt to restructure it in accord with explicit normative patterns", with 'the worthy normative system' (Becker, 1960: 805-807). Becker's conceptual tools direct the analysis to different questions (and findings). They may constitute a worthwhile project, but they are not central to our present concerns.

One might contend that the above description is one of a pluralist society, where divergence of opinions is not only quite normal, but also desirable, stimulating and beneficial. Without denying this in the least, I would like to propose that it is one thing to have different and conflicting values *in abstract*, which co-exist without much difficulty, because they are acted out in seggregated situations. This is what Merton has referred to as 'sociological ambivalence', which does not necessarily make for anomie (cf. Appendix: xviii). It is quite another thing, however, to have situations, in which these *abstractly* contradicting values and roles are also *actually* conflicting. As Merton has put it, the "pressure toward anomie occurs when the organisation of [these roles] is such, that you cannot insulate one from the other, temporarily or situationally" (Appendix: xviii). The suggestion here is that the organisation of married women's roles was such, that it could exert this pressure towards anomie.

Moreover, Lukes has pointed out that, in industrial societies "one can plausibly argue that *some* degree of...anomie is inseparable from life" and that, in a sense, "some anomie must exist wherever hierarchies disintegrate and social control is weakened" (Lukes, 1977b: 91). It can be maintained that the structural changes in Britain after the war, as well as the resulting tensions and conflicts outlined above, in a sense weakened social control, as they brought about a climate of ambivalence

and uncertainty about the rightness or wrongness of many practices and activities central to everyday life. Older and deeply rooted ethical principles were, thus, at least partly, challenged. Many no longer supported, or withdrew in practice their allegiance from, official and hard-line religious canons.

An unintended consequence of the changes in the social structure has been the creation of "a sense of moral collapse" (Weeks, 1981: 260). As Carstairs has remarked,

> Popular morality is now a waste land, littered with the debris of broken convictions. Concepts such as honour, or even honesty, have an old-fashioned sound; but nothing has taken their place. The confusion is perhaps greatest over sexual morality; here the former theological canons of behaviour are seldom taken seriously" (Carstairs, 1964: 54).

This moral climate can be appropriately described as anomic. It must be stressed, however, that anomie is not and should not be regarded as necessarily negative and undesirable[2] (e.g. Tiryakian, 1981). In addition, it has been underlined that to describe a social group or individual as anomic does not always have negative connotations (cf. Riesman, [1950] 1953: 278; Duvignaud, 1970). I would not go so far as to argue that anomie is not only inherent to modern societies, but also *indispensable* for advancement and progress (cf. Orrú, 1987a). But I would suggest that it *may* have positive consequences, as individuals and groups respond actively to it. In this sense, anomie may be instrumental to ultimately desirable social changes.

So far we have seen how social changes and developments in post-war Britain have been conducive to moral anomie. The ambiguities, tensions and strains that went along with this trend, correspond to Smelser's (1968) notion of 'impetus to change'. This impetus to social change alone could not account for the reforms of the 1960s, as they are not to be viewed

as automatic responses to it. To do this, additional factors have to be taken into account, such as the campaigns of influential groups and movements favouring or opposing reform.

We will now turn to the issue of abortion and examine it as an instance of this anomic pattern, which provided a background for high rates of deviance, pressure-group activities and a significant change in legislation. It is interesting to note that, in a similar fashion, the collapse of feudal institutions constituted the background against which a 'conflict theorist' understood the emergence of a new ethic replacing the ethic of collective (shared) responsibility for deviant behaviour, in the end of the Middle Ages. In an often cited article, Kennedy has noted that "anomie *created* the ethic and the institutions of individualism" (Kennedy, 1976: 51; emphasis added). In this statement, anomie seems to be the decisive factor. The present analysis, however, has more affinities with his more carefully stated argument which, in analysing change, takes into account the human actors too: "In the midst of feudal anomie, [the ethic of individual responsibility] - expressed institutionally in market contracts - finally supplanted the cooperative ethic. *It did so with the eventual alliance between European monarchs and the rising merchant class*" (Kennedy, 1976: 44; emphasis added).

Anomie and Abortion

In Scotland, before the 1967 Act, abortion was a common law offence. When performed for 'reputable medical reasons', it was rarely investigated or prosecuted, for which a definite complaint was required (MacGillivray and Horobin, 1973: 4). Although doctors were free to terminate pregnancies

for therapeutic reasons and did so in some areas (especially in the north-east), in other parts they were left with the impression that abortion was a crime unless the mother's life was at stake (MacGillivray and Horobin, 1973: 5). The question of what exactly constituted 'reputable medical reasons' was unsettled and vague (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 14).

In England and Wales, under the Offences against the Person Act 1861, abortion was unlawful in all circumstances and punishable with life imprisonment. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 legalised a, by then, accepted practice of carrying out the operation, when necessary to save the mother's life (Pipes, 1986: 149; Hindell and Simms, 1971: 13). The meaning of this statute was stretched by the ruling on the Bourne case (in 1938) to cover the preservation of the physical and mental health of the mother too (and thus further 'medicalised' the issue). This judgement, however important, instead of definitely clarifying the law, increased legal uncertainties (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 21). Because of doctors' fear of prosecution - due to the relative uncertainty of case law compared to it being incorporated in a statute - and, perhaps more importantly, their belief that abortion was morally wrong, it was not very widely used (MacGillivray and Horobin, 1973: 5).

The lack of reliable data makes it impossible to reckon the prevalence of induced abortion before the 1967 Act with any certainty. The estimated figures for criminal abortions varied from 10.000 to 250.000 annually (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 32). There are indications, however, that by the end of the nineteenth century not only the number of abortions rose dramatically, but also that abortion "changed in those years from a desperate expedient of unmarried servants and child-weary forty-two-year-olds to a common means of birth control" (Shorter, 1984: 191). In the face of the testimony of numerous observers, it seems

undeniable that the rates of (mainly unlawful) abortion remained very high indeed throughout the period under examination (cf. HMSO, 1939: 9; Hindell and Simms, 1971: 33, 223; Aitken-Swan, 1973a; Weeks, 1981: 72, 191, 259; Shorter, 1984: 196ff.).

In any case, even if one accepted the lower estimates, the absolute numbers of induced abortion every year are quite significant for an offence carrying life-imprisonment. Analyses of women's underlying motives leading to abortion in the latter part of the nineteenth century (but relevant also for this century) reveal no signs of pathology or marginality (in contrast to official views). Middle-class women used it as means of birth control in order to limit their families, reduce the (rising) cost of domestic service, and thus preserve their living standards (Weeks, 1981: 46-48). Working-class (especially factory) women, largely unaware of its illegality (even within the period before quickening) as late as in the 1930s, facing material hardships, and not being able to cope with too many children, sought out abortion as a solution. According to Weeks, "if, as suggested, the working woman's goal was one of maintaining and protecting her family, abortion could be one means of attaining that end" (Weeks, 1981: 71).

Far from being an easy decision - particularly (but not only) at the beginning of our century, when morality and legality were going to a larger extent hand in hand, fears about population decline were prevalent, and feminists were (at least publicly) more concerned with other issues - abortion does seem to have constituted a sensible way out of problems and dilemmas confronted by (pregnant) women.

Eugenic reasons, such as the fear of giving birth to severely handicapped children (based, for instance, on contact with German measles early in pregnancy), or of transmission of hereditary diseases (see

Hindell and Simms, 1971: 18-21), as well as ill-health of the prospective mother, but not serious enough in terms of the existing law, can account for many cases of criminal abortion. As has been admitted, however, "Often the condition of health of the woman cannot be clearly separated from her economic circumstances, and it is impossible to say whether she has been influenced mainly by her financial position or by considerations of health" (HMSO, 1939: 38). The Birkett Report, while echoing concerns about the population size (HMSO, 1939: 83), recognised as early as in 1939 that economic, marital and other social or personal reasons had been quite determining (HMSO, 1939: 37-41; cf. also Hindell and Simms, 1971: 22-23; and Aitken-Swan, 1973b: out of a sample of 85 married women seeking abortion in Aberdeen right after the 1967 Abortion Act, only 12 had a strictly medical reasons).

An analysis of a series of cultural and structural discrepancies experienced by women can reveal how high rates of (unlawful) abortion was an expectable and understandable outcome. It requires no great effort to see that abortion - albeit prohibited by law, official, religious and popular moralities - frequently represented the only available means for the realisation of highly valued cultural ends or in order to avoid foreseeably distressing and painful (socially caused) consequences.

As we have seen, motherhood was continuously emphasised; in spite of the emergence of new patterns in the family, welfare ideologies assigned the prime responsibility for childrearing to women. In conditions of bad housing, over-crowding, or under difficult financial circumstances, the size of the family had to be held in check. After some point, another child would jeopardise the living standards of the whole family. (In the 1930s, most families did not want a third child [Shorter, 1984: 197].) Working-class wives had no reserves of strength and affection left for

any more children - especially with 'difficult' (alcoholic, violent, or criminal) husbands.

As women were joining the workforce in rising numbers and - though under-paid - contributing to the family income, a further pregnancy and child birth would create additional problems: while they would be driven out of work, at least temporarily, the economic burdens would be further increased and their energy diminished, very likely causing a neglect of the rest of the children. And all this in a period when more money was necessitated, for the powerful consumerist ideologies created and sustained new needs and called them to spend more and more[3]. Additional conflicts began to emerge between motherhood and career for obvious reasons, involving issues which later on became central to the realisation of feminist aims, such as financial independence from men and access to job opportunities (Kingdom, 1985: 152; such dilemmas are prevalent in contemporary society: Pipes, 1986: 39-40; Gilligan, 1982).

As much emphasis was placed upon (female) sexuality, also underpinned by commercialism, birth control would seem an appropriate practice for control over reproduction. But birth control, as we saw, was half-accepted and half-resisted, especially in the lower classes. And even when actually practiced, the chances of failure were often quite high. In these cases, a further pregnancy would have to be terminated. But it was strictly illegal and against moral principles. This was by no means an easy dilemma: either solution entailed infringement of cultural prescriptions. Paradoxical as it might appear, concerns about family maintenance (re-defined by consuming imperatives) and good motherhood were frequently conducive to law violation and evasion of moral principles (i.e. to abortion).

Illegitimate pregnancies and the attendant problems should be seen

in the light of these contradictions as well. Although sexuality was mostly emphasised within the framework of marriage, certain concessions were also made for extra-marital and pre-marital sex. The chances of illegitimate pregnancies for those engaging in it were considerable, as birth-control facilities were chiefly available for married women (with children). But with motherhood and marriage inextricably linked (Busfield, 1974: 14), unmarried mothers could not be 'good' mothers.

This could easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy by the prevailing hostile attitudes towards unmarried mothers and their well-known consequences for them and their children. These are exemplified by practices to shut away in sub-normal institutions young mothers for their 'feeble mindedness' revealed by 'having a baby without securing a husband first'. We are reminded that, "Some such women were released only in 1973, having been shut away for thirty years for their 'crime'" (Rose and Hanmer, 1976: 208). Interestingly, the ambivalent attitudes of the medical professions towards the link between femininity and motherhood became clearer after the Abortion Act 1967, when unmarried women could be advised to have their pregnancy terminated. As has been pointed out, "To the question - 'Who wants babies?' - their response on the one hand is that 'all women want babies', but on the other, that 'only married women want babies'" (Macintyre, 1976: 168).

The list of women confronting strains conducive to abortion and anomic situations becomes even longer, if we add the victims of rape and incest. Irreconcilable demands were made upon them, as the pursuit of cultural ends was practically at loggerheads with others and/or hampered by material conditions. In view of these disjunctions, abortion expectably represented a means towards the attainment of highly valued goals or the fulfilment of culturally induced roles. This option, therefore, far from

evincing frivolity or need 'to have their head examined' (as some have put it; cf. Macintyre, 1976: 155), was both understandable and meaningful.

Further, as Dahrendorf has argued, where "impunity prevails, the effectiveness of norms is in jeopardy"; in this sense, his concept of 'Anomia' "describes a state of affairs in which breaches of norms go unpunished" (Dahrendorf, 1985: 24). And this is precisely what was happening with abortion law. As Gerald Gardiner, Lord Chancellor, had admitted, "Those who are prosecuted are the unlucky few" (quoted in Hindell and Simms, 1971: 41).

Widespread contempt for the law was even less surprising, as moral restraints were loosened. The divergence of views within and among the Churches as well as between Churches and laity on the issue of abortion shook the faith in (earlier more influential) religious proclamations of its absolute immorality. The practices and attitudes of a substantial number of Roman Catholics were at odds with the strict - but less than consistent (Kenyon, 1986: 66ff.; Minson, 1985: 169ff.) - position of their Church on the sacredness of human life per se (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 87-90). Protestantism, though more flexible, could propose no single guideline, as Methodists supported liberal laws (Kenyon, 1986: 75) and the Anglican Church was deeply divided over its acceptability and its limits, while the laity strongly favoured reform (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 90ff.). Judaism was also split and embraced a wide range of views (Kenyon, 1986: 79).

However, without advances in technology and medical knowledge the possibility of meeting the needs would not have existed. The demand for abortion was, indeed, substantially enhanced by technological innovations (asepsis, techniques for inducement of premature labour, rubber syringe bulbs, sterilisable rubber catheters, uterine curette and graduated

dilators that opened the cervix), which rendered the operation safer and supplied the material basis for the 'abortion revolution' (Shorter, 1984: 207). But not all women could benefit equally from these advances. Gradually, they abandoned self-help methods and drugs, and relied more on professionals (Shorter, 1984: 223) - thus, inevitably handing more powers to medical professions.

Doctors, however, refused to carry out abortions on legal and moral grounds. Even after the Bourne case, few doctors accepted to perform it. And those who did, were receiving handsome amounts of money in return (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 40). Consequently, only middle-class women could afford Harley street operations. In this sense, the Bourne case did promote certain inequalities. Working-class women had to resort to unqualified practitioners and back-street abortionists who, acting out of compassion or for making money, could not provide the required hygienic standards. That the problems affected mostly working-class women is also clear from the fact that resistances to birth control were more prevalent among them and their male partners.

In the 1960s, when rising numbers of women were having abortions in private clinics and on the NHS, the obsolescence of the law was widely and officially recognised (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 41-42). The sheer discrepancy between law and its enforcement or enforceability had existed, nevertheless, since the nineteenth century. The fact that it became more of a public issue then, reflects the relaxation of previously stricter official and popular attitudes, the prevailing moral ambivalence and anomie brought about by structural changes, which also intensified, made more visible and created additional contradictions germane to the question of abortion.

In the following section, the task is to show that this fact was

also due to the well-organised and collective effort to articulate, publicise and defend arguments for reform. It is suggested that a group of people, ALRA, represented a force geared towards a legislative change. They perceived the problems, responded collectively in a 'non-conforming' manner, and shaped the final Act. The anomic moral climate, however, facilitated a wider discussion of the issue, in which the reformers' voices could gain a hearing. The social environment became, thus, more positively disposed towards calls for reform. In this sense, these anomic tendencies are of importance, in that they are to be considered as one of the factors determining the relationship between the reformers and the world around them - which is what Tilly has called 'opportunity', a major component of collective action (cf. Tilly, 1978: 6 and 55).

Anomie, ALRA and Change

The analysis of structural and cultural discrepancies in terms of moral anomie may be relevant to several reforms of the 1960s, such as obscenity, homosexuality, divorce and abortion laws. But, without negating an overall concern to adapt laws to perceived social changes, these were neither the outcome of some systematic planning or strategy nor an automatic adjustment to change; they all started as private members' bills and had their distinct history (cf. Weeks, 1981: 263ff.).

The various socio-cultural disjunctions and the resulting moral anomie could not account by themselves for the specific legal change of 1967, which was shaped by various forces. These conditions made, as we have seen, for high rates of deviance. But, "not every form of deviance generates structural change" (Sztompka, 1987: 16). According to the

Mertonian scheme, it is particularly 'non-conformers', who "initiate fully self-conscious paths of normative innovations", affirm new norms and values, and enhance "their dissemination, legitimisation and finally - incorporation into modified normative structure" (Sztompka, 1987L 17). As Merton has pointed out,

> unwanted discrepancies between social standards and social reality qualify as manifest social problems *only when people believe that they can do something about them. The discrepancies must be perceived as corrigible.* It must be thought possible to cope with the problem, to reduce its scale if not to eliminate it altogether. (Merton, 1971: 814; emphasis added).

In the long-overdue reform of the archaic abortion law, the role of a pressure group, the Abortion Law Reform Association, was crucial. ALRA was formed in 1936, by middle-class women involved in the birth-control and suffrage movements (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 61), aware of the problems and contradictions around abortion. They had perceived the problematic situation in which many women were caught. The envisaged remedies, though not formally suggested, were as radical as abortion on demand (L.Smith, 1980: 373). They constituted an 'innovative' force, in the sense that, while accepting some prevailing cultural goals, their objective was to promote the de-criminalisation of abortion: an illegal and (widely regarded as) unethical means to attain them. They regarded law reform as a solution for less deformed and illegitimate children, and better motherhood (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 42), but were also inspired by feminist objectives in connection with control of reproduction (L.Smith, 1980: 65). Thus, they are best described as 'non-conformers', acting in public, declaring their dissent, and aspiring to a new morality.

The subject, however, was taboo, their influence very limited and, against a background of falling population, economic uncertainty and threat of war (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 63), the climate of opinion was

clearly inimical to their proposals. After the war, ALRA's main task was propaganda. It was from the 1950s onwards that the group's educational activities gradually gave place to direct political action, through the encouragement of resolutions favourable to reform within women's organisations and parliamentary lobbying (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 75-76).

In the early 1960s, the thalidomide tragedy came to the aid of the reformers. This drug was used by many pregnant women and caused an 'epidemic' of grossly deformed children. This made an extraordinary impact on both press and public and the question was raised, whether women who took the drug could have an abortion - making it, thus, a public-health issue (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 108-112), central to a Welfare State.

The thalidomide accident and the rejuvenation of ALRA's Executive Committee in 1964 were followed by a steady increase in its membership. Financial injections from members, sympathisers and the Hopkins Donation Fund of Santa Barbara, California, allowed further expansion. The formation of five local groups contributed to the group's cause by undertaking research, drawing public attention to the need of reform and by writing to M.P.s (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 121).

As moral values, attitudes and rules of conduct were re-explored and challenged, the social climate facilitated ALRA's efforts to build up support in the country, to focus public (and mass-media) interest for action, and to keep the issue alive in the Parliament. Its role, however, was not limited to the identification of a problem area. ALRA did not only increase awareness of the reasons for reform, but also set the agenda of the debate with specific suggestions and active involvement in the drafting of Bills. As has been contended, by "providing the [David Steel's] Bill, ALRA set the terms around which other groups had to argue..." (Pym, 1974: 116).

Apart from the strong opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, fundamentalist groups and, particularly, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, formed in 1967 to combat the Bill - the 'conformists' of our case - the climate of opinion was favourable to reform. The *measure* of reform, however, was largely disputed. The Church of England and the medical professions - headed by the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists - although ununited, were the most powerful sources of pressure for restrictive clauses and for the profession's retention of the decision about abortion (Hindell and Simms, 1971: ch.7).

Dahrendorf has suggested that "If abortion...[is] no longer prosecuted, this does not signify an intrinsic weakness of social order, but a process of changing values which will sooner or later be translated into an adjustment of valid norms" (Dahrendorf, 1985: 28). Although this particular statement could not make Dahrendorf a 'consensus theorist' despite himself, it does express the 'consensus approach' to the issue of abortion law reform. Abortion law, however, was not strictly enforced since the beginning of this century (Hindell and Simms, 1971; Simms, 1981). If its non-enforcement simply signified a process of changing norms, the law would have been reformed much earlier. But we have seen that the social and cultural climate was generally hostile to any change before and immediately after the war. Even in the 1960's, when reform was more widely accepted, there was no consensus on its specific form and extent. In any event, a weakness of social order can be observed in periods of transition, and anomie can be employed to describe this period. But, the point remains that changes do not always happen by widespread consensus, and it is the activities of people, responding to this anomie, that contributes to social changes.

Close examination of the Abortion Act 1967 makes plain that it did not mirror any overall consensus of values but a compromise. ALRA, however, with intensive lobbying succeeded in shaping this Act to a quite considerable degree, as it reflected many of its objectives (cf. L.Smith, 1980: 419 and passim). If the success of a movement is to be gauged by the actual adoption of its proposals (Banks, 1972: 55), the fact that despite some concessions, "the Act incorporated a large slice of its programme" and that "[n]o other group had quite the same success although BMA and RCOG interventions were almost as important" (Pym, 1974: 116), leaves little doubt about it.

The reform surely fell far short of abortion on request, but this was not because ALRA opposed such a notion. It has been pointed out that its aims should not be taken at face value (as, for instance, by Greenwood and Young, 1976), for they represented a tactical compromise. In order to obtain legitimate status and achieve at least some of the objectives, demands had to be moderated in a manner that they were not to be seen as at variance with existing values (Smith, 1980: 396). A meticulous study of the group's history and intentions has demonstrated that

> what ALRA always wanted, as opposed to formally demanded, was abortion on request and that its more modest official position was consciously settled on for purely tactical reasons, since the mood of the Parliament was not receptive to its more far-reaching demands (L.Smith, 1980: 373).

To be sure, the Abortion Act 1967 continued to reflect patriarchal values and has served interests of the ruling classes (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 108-109). It has to be understood in terms of 'a balance of liberalisation and control' (Weeks, 1981: 252). This, however, does not deprive the action of ALRA of its significance. A great deal of their

ultimate objectives have been realised, through the Abortion Act 1967. An assessment of this Act and its observed consequences may draw a picture far more complicated than what Chambliss's argument would allow for. He has contended that

> the history of the criminal law is everywhere the history of legislation and appellate-court decisions which in effect (if not in intent) reflect the interests of the economic elites who control the production and distribution of the major resources of the society (Chambliss, 1973: 430).

Greenwood and Young's monograph has given "more careful consideration...to the 'ruling-class interests' variable" (Downes, 1979: 8) and to some welcomed effects of the Act. But they have stressed the emergence of new inequalities, due to structural deficiencies (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 33-34), and based their interpretations on the erroneous assumption that the reformers' objectives were accurately represented in their public statements. So, their central argument has been that reformist legislation "reflects the ruling class material interests and is phrased in terms of reformist ideas as to the nature of the society" (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 119).

However, as we have seen, the situation prior to the Act affected primarily lower-class women. After the Act, women could consult their G.P.s and be referred to local hospitals (Hindell and Simms, 1971: 214); the suffering of thousands of women was undoubtedly alleviated. Despite the existence of inequalities after the Act, as Simms has more recently pointed out, "class differences in access to legal and safe abortion...are now rapidly being eliminated" (Simms, 1981: 182).

Furthermore, that the issue of abortion may transcend analyses in terms of class is indicated by Greenwood and Young themselves, as they noted that, "[a]fter all it is in the interests of the working class and

women as a whole that abortion should be freely available" (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 121; emphasis supplied). The Act allowed considerations of 'the pregnant woman's actual or reasonably foreseeable environment' and termination of pregnancy when its continuance would involve more risks than termination. As abortion was a safe operation and became still safer, these clauses could justify it virtually in all cases. This allowed, indeed, higher liberalisation and led to a 'growth of abortion-consciousness' (Greenwood and Young, 1976: 33). In addition, thousands of women who benefited from it were outwith the intended range of the Act, which has provided a possibility of self-determination on the part of women (Pym, 1974: 128) - although the power in the hands of doctors and structural defaults and inequalities should not be neglected. However, as was the case with other compromises made during the era of reformism, it triggered off much more discussion, in which "more radical pressures were able to emerge" (Weeks, 1981: 268).

Some positive consequences of ALRA's action and of the final Act are recognised by Greenwood and Young, but are treated as unintended. This is consequential, not in relation to the actual effects of the group's action, but because they would have to be excluded from the explanation of the collective action itself. Tilly has suggested the exclusion of unintentional effects from the definition of collective action, which "has the advantage of focusing the analysis more clearly on the explanation of the action itself, instead of aiming at its outcomes" (Tilly, 1978: 86). An important implication of L.Smith's (1980) study, then, is that the above consequences were part of the real aims of the reformers and that they must be incorporated in the analysis of ALRA's collective action.

All this is not to deny the shortcomings of the reform, nor the importance of counter-pressures and the existence of new problems. It is

not suggested that the Abortion Act 1967 was the solution to all problems. This is indicated by the fact that the controversy over abortion law is still topical today. However, it must be emphasised that in the light of many - intended or unintended - desirable consequences of the Act, it can be regarded as a significant and positive change, to which ALRA made an important contribution.

Conclusion

In this chapter, Merton's analytical scheme has been employed to study certain social and cultural characteristics of British society over the period of the 1930s to 1960s. It has been argued that these characteristics have tended to produce strains and anomie. People's responses to socially induced strains and anomie have been analysed in relation to the issue of abortion. It has been suggested that these conditions made for high rates of illegal abortion, but also for a type of social change. A trend towards moral anomie created a favourable climate for reform, facilitating the realisation of ALRA's particular objectives.

This analysis indicates that legislative reform, at least in the case of the Abortion Act 1967, may not be explained fully by models portraying it simply as the result of ruling-ruled struggles, as following the needs of the economic elites, or as a reflection of a transformed societal value-consensus. The central part that ALRA played has been also underlined. ALRA has not been viewed as an epiphenomenon, as achieving something that would have occurred in any event, without its intervention. Rather, it has been acknowledged as a group of people reacting constructively to structural problems, albeit within certain limits.

This chapter, then, reveals that Merton's theory - and the functional mode of analysis underlying the theory - implies a concern with social structure, but also with dynamic processes, and does not ignore the important role of individuals and groups. It also illustrates the fact that the possible responses to strains and anomie are not restricted to crime and disruptive deviant behaviour. In short, it is proposed that Merton's theoretical model offers itself for the analysis of a wide variety of social phenomena and questions.

Notes

1. The growing acceptance of birth control, however, did not entail the realisation of some feminist objectives in the minds of earlier birth controllers, such as the woman's freedom to control her own fertility. The National Birth Control Association changed its name in 1939 to Family Planning Association. This reflected its shifting role towards the social planning of reproduction that became prevalent from the 1940s (Weeks, 1981: 195).

2. Tiryakian, (1981) has been at pains to avoid the term 'anomie', every time the possible effects of anomie might be welcomed.

3. As Downes and Rock have pointed out, the Merton's theory is relevant to the analysis of how these conditions brought about higher rates of deviance in general.

CONCLUSION

My interest in the 'anomie tradition' - broadly defined as a significant body of sociological work, in which the concept of anomie is central - and in Merton's anomie theory in particular has motivated me to undertake the present project. The overall objective has been to highlight the continuing relevance of the theory for the study of deviance in contemporary societies. Concluding this thesis, I do not intend to summarise its contents, but rather to reflect a little on its methodology, its main implications and limitations.

I set off with the belief that Merton's theory of deviance and anomie contained a neglected or unexplored potential. I have treated the theory as one of the middle range, which addresses a limited set of questions, and does not claim to provide an exhaustive, all-encompassing account of deviance. Its presumed advantage is that it can promote theoretically based research, on one hand, and it may be reformulated and further developed in the light of empirical knowledge, on the other.

In the first part, I examined its mode of analysis and its substantive propositions. I argued that the functional method of analysis, which underlies Merton's anomie theory, must be distinguished from the doctrine of functionalism, as well as from functional explanation - a method of deriving hypotheses about causes of designated social and cultural items from their observed consequences. Functional analysis, a useful and commonly employed method in sociology, furnishes a systematic set of concepts and suggests strategic questions relevant to the study of social phenomena. It directs attention to discernible consequences of items of sociological interest - such as, institutions, cultural values and

norms, patterns of behaviour - and to the ways in which the items under consideration relate to each other and to more inclusive social structures.

The relation that Merton's theory sought to establish was between certain cultural values and structural conditions, on one hand, and various patterns of deviant behaviour, on the other. I have shown that parts of Merton's theory are spread in a wide range of his writings. Given that it has been refined and extended by Merton and others over many years, it is best considered a developing theory. Its main proposition is that cultural emphases on goals and success, combined with structurally restricted opportunities to attain them, lead to stressful situations and to anomie, whereby norms or sets of norms loose part of their legitimacy or authority. As a result, not only 'conformity', but also diverse types of deviant responses may be expected, portrayed as 'innovation', 'ritualism', 'retreatism' and 'rebellion'. During its development, several additional variables have been incorporated in the theory, such as access to illegitimate opportunity-structures, and socially engendered conflicts of norms, values and roles.

The second part of the thesis has been an exercise in middle-range theory construction, aimed at an elaboration of Merton's theory through reformulations required in view of empirical findings challenging some of its hypotheses, consolidations with other theories, and extensions into new areas. A parallel objective has been to reveal compatibilities and connections with other approaches to deviance, and to furnish fresh puzzles for research. In other words, I have tried to explore the extent to which the purposes and promises of this level of theorising may be fulfilled.

In a middle-range fashion, I pursued the above objectives through a series of case studies. I attempted to 1) consolidate anomie theory with reference group analysis, 2) to revise it so that it can account for lower and upper-class deviant behaviour, 3) to analyse patterns of upper-world deviance, such as 'high status occupational deviance' and 'corporate deviance', and 4) to indicate how strains and anomie may be instrumental in bringing about social change. In order to achieve a degree of continuity and consistency, following Merton's practice, I used the concept of anomie and referred to the principles of functional analysis.

Moreover, three points have been illustrated throughout the second part: 1) while investigating processes conducive to deviance and anomie, the scope of the analysis can vary from the whole society to small sections of it; 2) Merton's theory is more than a purely strain theory, for it points to two related, but analytically distinct, sources of deviance; and 3) a better understanding of these sources can be arrived at, when structural analysis is accompanied by an analysis of interactive processes. My attempt to develop Merton's theory and to elicit new hypotheses, its major implications and limitations, can be examined around these three points.

Firstly, as Lukes (1977b) has remarked, anomie is a 'middle-range concept', which allows for the development of hypotheses at various levels of abstraction, referring to relations between social control and individuals. I endeavoured to show how these relations can, indeed, be studied at a societal level as well as in specific contexts within a society. I identified diverse processes making for deviance and anomic trends, while the focus of attention shifted from particular institutions or groups of people to the whole society.

It is certainly no novelty to argue for the applicability of the Mertonian framework in many areas. It has been employed in the analysis of phenomena ranging from deviant acts committed by scientists (Merton, 1957) to juvenile delinquency and collective deviance (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). My contribution, in this respect, was to point out its relevance to issues and areas that have been neglected or not fully explored by theorists in this tradition: deviance in university settings, in high status professions, in the world of business and corporations. I also concentrated on a concrete type of deviance, abortion, in conjunction with anomic currents in post-war British society. At the same time, I examined anomie as a consequence of important changes in this society, and as a condition facilitating efforts to bring about social change.

At all levels of analysis, the concern was with patterns of deviance and not with its incidence. Nor have I inquired into comparative rates of deviance among the social strata. That the rates of crime are higher in the lower than in the upper strata seems to be a matter of fact (cf. Braithwaite, 1981). The object of study in Merton's theory, however, is deviance - departures from established standards. When it comes to deviance, whether officially defined as criminal or not, existing evidence indicates that the differences in rates between social classes are not so significant as the differences in patterns. So, my main preoccupation was to pinpoint sources of strains and anomie leading to various patterns of deviance, in the social locations that I dealt with. I maintained that essential to the understanding of such variations is the variable of opportunity. The types of deviance observed in different social positions depend, to a considerable extent, on possibilities inherent in these positions. It must be admitted, however, that although Merton's theory

allows for a wide range of ideal-typical responses to strains and anomie, I devoted most attention to 'innovation'.

It must be impressed, nevertheless, that to focus on the content that various responses may take in different situations, is not to deny the utility of Merton's explanatory scheme in accounting for rates. The general suggestion was and remains that, the stronger the strains and the higher the degree of anomie, the more likely it is to have high overall rates of deviance, in a given social system.

Secondly, I contended that Merton's theory should not be classified simply as a strain theory, for this totally ignores its anomie component or variable. It does suggest that discrepancies between culturally promoted goals and available legitimate means give rise to frustrations and exert pressures towards deviance. In highly competitive environments, where people are continuously encouraged to 'get ahead', where people are bombarded with advertisements fostering new needs, desires and consumption, such discrepancies are anything but rare. As a result, members of the society or group may seek to achieve their goals through illegitimate channels available to them. It is not surprising to find that rates of property offences are high, or that students cheat, scientists plagiarise, professionals and politicians misuse or abuse their power, and corporations cut corners.

An interesting question, upon which I touched only briefly, is the potential impact of massive borrowing. In Britain, for example, people are constantly invited to spend money, even beyond the limits set by their income. The 'buy now, pay later' message has driven many of them into debts difficult or impossible to manage. The difficulties and stress resulting from inability to pay back credit-card debts and mortgages are

already reported in the media. A hypothesis arising from this thesis, the details of which might be worthy of further investigation, is that a consequence of such problems will be higher rates of deviance among those so affected by the consumption boom.

Apart from ends/means disjunctions, normative and value conflicts may also induce strain and deviance. Technological and social changes increase the complexity of social life and the likelihood of such conflicts. Incompatible or onerous demands are often made on people and the fulfilment of one role may entail the (possibly, only temporary) neglect or abandonment of another. Women in post-war Britain, for instance, were encouraged to be consumers, wives, caring mothers and part-time workers. In large families with relatively small income, these tasks were hard to carry out, if a child were to be added. The response to an unwanted pregnancy, then, could understandably be illegal abortion.

But, while socially induced tensions can be expected to lead to infringements of established values and norms, they do not exhaust the sources of deviance accounted for by Merton's theory. I maintained that commentators seeing in the theory only strain variables (e.g. Hirschi, 1969; Kornhauser, 1978) have interpreted narrowly and overlooked an important part of its explanatory power. It is true that structural contradictions and strains are proposed as forces conducive to anomie, at a higher level of abstraction. However, once a degree of anomie has set in, strain is no longer a necessary condition for deviance. Moreover, an effect of deviance itself may be the reinforcement of anomie, by undermining the legitimacy of institutional rules. But, the point is that, in anomic situations, where values and norms have lost (to various degrees) their guiding power and authority, departures from them may

occur as a matter of course. A case in point is the person born in a mafia family and socialised into a Mafia way of life, who engages in deviant behaviour under no influence of particular tensions or stress.

Anomic situations can also be detected in groups or circles, which foster verbal justifications aimed at condoning deviations. Certain circumstances are, thus, perceived as excusing deviance, although they are not recognised as such by the rest of the society or the legal system. The analysis of such cases served to illustrate the compatibility of Merton's theory with the points about 'techniques of neutralisation' made by Sykes and Matza (1957). Moreover, I attempted to enlarge the scope of analysis and show its relevance, beyond the field of juvenile delinquency, to upper-class adult deviance. I suggested that, in an anomic climate, procedures contravening moral and legal codes come to be seen as a normal or the only way of going about business. The higher the degree of anomie, the more likely people are to offer 'excuses' - such as 'I didn' t do it for myself, but for the company', 'everybody breaks the law', 'laws are insane anyway', and 'business is business' - which are crucial to the inderstanding of certain patterns of 'white-collar crime' (cf. Sutherland, [1949] 1961; Cressey, 1953).

To be sure, the strain and anomic sources of deviance cannot be seggregated in reality as easily as in theory. It is quite possible to have deviance partly due to strains and partly because particular norms are not regarded as terribly significant. Nevertheless, this distinction between the two components of Merton's theory is important, for it helps account for patterns of deviant behaviour in the absence of serious problems or pressure.

Thirdly, I tried to show that the study of processes making for

deviance and anomie is enhanced by a conception of structural analysis which allows for human choice, albeit within limits, and for considerations of interactive processes. It is important to identify features and contradictions of social structures, which help explain rates and patterns of deviant behaviour. But, it is equally important to recognise that contradictions are perceived, felt or experienced by individuals through processes of social interaction. Members of the society or group are not absolutely determined, but respond to structural disjunctions in a variety of ways. It is, in the end, individuals who reproduce, shape, and change cultures and social structures.

These observations are anything but new and are based on Merton's general work. Nevertheless, he did not integrate them sufficiently in his theory of deviance and anomie. My effort to consolidate anomie theory with reference group analysis was intended as a step towards such an integration. This consolidation also enabled me to revise hypotheses of anomie theory that were not in line with empirical findings. It made it possible to see how cultural messages of success and encouragements to 'get ahead' are differentially received and interpreted in various positions in the social structure. The fact that levels of ambition vary greatly and that success represents the attainment of different concrete goals could be taken into account.

I suggested that an effect of certain characteristics of advanced industrial societies - such as economic growth, increases in general affluence, visible rates of social mobility, advertising, and invitations to consume - is to heighten aspirations and promote non-membership reference groups. Egalitarian ideologies, not matched by real opportunities, and competition making advancement or even preservation of

existing standards hard to achieve, make for strain and feelings of relative deprivation. However, as people tend to compare themselves with their peers or not very distant referents, the assumption that there are stronger pressures towards deviance and anomie in the lower than the upper strata was dropped. Informed by reference group analysis, anomie theory could be applied to upper-class deviant patterns.

Another advantage of this consolidation is that it helps clarify the processes whereby deviance emanates from the two sources singled out above. These can be described in an ideal-typical manner. A) Socially induced comparative referents raise one's level of aspirations and expectations. In cases of failure to reach the desired ends, relative deprivation, stress and role conflicts lead to deviant behaviour. To the degree that deviance is successful, in the sense of contributing to the solution of the problem, others, with whom the deviant interacts and who have a similar problem, may follow suit. As a deviant *modus operandi* develops into an illegitimate opportunity structure, the strength of the broken norm(s) decreases and an anomic trend ensues. B) Those engaging in this *modus operandi* become normative referents to others, who do not necessarily face the problem that led to weakened authority of the norm(s). Given the opportunity to associate with these normative referents and to acquire the necessary skills or position facilitating the specific type of deviance, the pattern is reproduced. That is, deviance is not preceded by any compelling pressures.

This crudely outlined model is quite consistent with hypotheses of Sutherland's differential association theory. Moreover, it seems possible to integrate variables put forward by control theories. Strains may undermine the strength of social bonds. Illegitimate opportunity

structures and anomie do refer after all to a social state where commitment to conformity is weaker. Undoubtedly, the background assumptions of control theorists posing the question 'why don't we all break the rules?' are impossible to marry with those underlying Merton's question: 'what is it that makes some of us break the rules?' Empirically, however, the search for motivations does not exclude the concern with situational controls (cf. Downes and Rock, 1982: 201). In order to move towards building some theoretical bridges between the two approaches, a relevant question to ask might be: 'Why, given strains, anomie and opportunity, don't we all break the rules?' My attention being directed to deviance, I neglected the issue of conformity. Merton has remarked that, conformity is the modal response (Merton, 1968: 195). If it were not, no pattern would exist, from which to observe and study deviance. At any level of analysis, it is a minimum degree of social order or standard which enables one to talk about deviance. I have suggested, however, that further investigation into the conditions under which precedence is given to this or that normative reference group may shed some more light to that integrating question.

Another valuable contribution of reference group analysis is the concept of 'non-conformity'. Defined as rule-breaking behaviour, but also "conformity with values, standards and expectations of reference individuals and groups" (Merton, 1968: 413), it is a concept essential to the understanding of the maintenance and reproduction of deviant patterns (and sub-cultures). It can be employed for the analysis of the Mafia as well as of the institutionised evasions of institutional rules in business networks. But it can also be used for the study of organised efforts to bring about a desired social change. This was the case of ALRA, who

lobbied successfully in favour of the Abortion Law Act (1967).

In addition, the above definition of 'non-conformity' underlines the relativistic conception of deviance in Merton's approach. In this way, the theory can be applied to sub-cultures and processes within them making for deviance, which is viewed as conformity by conventional standards. More importantly, by essentially acknowledging that what is defined as deviance in one group is regarded as conformity in another, a convergence with the labelling perspective is revealed (cf. Becker, 1963: 8). Nevertheless, a serious shortcoming of my thesis, as well as of Merton's theory, is that social control is considered only as a mechanism blocking processes of deviance and anomie and not as a force generating or shaping deviant behaviour too. Questions can be posed, however, which reduce the gap between the issues addressed by the two perspectives: What links are there between the dynamic processes described in this thesis and that of 'deviancy amplification'? How does the label of 'deviant' affect people's selection of reference groups and their bonds with conventional society? What is the impact of labelling on the accessibility to legitimate and illegitimate opportunities? Does the stigmatisation of deviants favour associations with existing sub-cultures or the formation of new ones? Would this take place differently in differing contexts of anomie (which could be measured by the number of individuals not attaching much significance to values and norms, in a designated social context)?

On the other hand, an issue I raised here was that of absence of effective social control and its consequences in terms of demoralisation and anomie. The very fact that deviant actions by influential individuals and groups are not defined and punished as crimes may be a source of

further deviance and anomie. In this respect, conflict theories have a great deal to contribute. Merton's theory is only able to point to potential outcomes of situations, where vested interests and powerful individual and collective actors are able to shape legislation and law enforcement to their advantage. It is essential, none the less, to bear in mind that contradictions in the culture and social structure are often deeply rooted, and that it is not only the interests of the powerful that are served. Criminalisations of business and corporate offences and harsh sanctions may eventually harm the whole community, or affect other widely enshrined cultural values and standards. Moreover, in the analysis of the efforts and consequences of ALRA's activities, I tried to highlight the fact that conflict theorists occasionally exaggerate their claims.

Moreover, as I tried to connect forces conducive to deviance and anomie with features of Western societies and the capitalist mode of production, it appeared that the developing anomie theory is not inconsistent with 'left realist' or 'radical' accounts of deviance. But, no 'total inter-connectedness' is asserted between deviance and capitalism. Although my thesis was confined to the Western world, it has not denied the relevance of the theory to other types of societies. I indicated that it may be applied to the analysis of corporate deviance in socialist societies, but I have not explored the issue in any detail. Another point that would be interesting to pursue is the following. I conjectured that high rates of social mobility foster lofty ambitions. As these ambitions are frequently frustrated, deviance may be expected. Studies of socialist societies have pointed out that there is high mobility, which does foster high aspirations, but the opportunities to get white-collar posts are relatively restricted (cf. Parkin, 1971: 154-159). There also exist

inequalities and differential prestige and rewards in different strata (cf. Lane, 1971; Katz, 1972; Matthews, 1972), and distinctive patterns of deviance related to private gain (cf. Grossman, 1977; Connor, 1987: 164). Research and reliable material would be required to assess the extent to which the Mertonian frame of analysis might be of relevance. The same holds for societies of the Third World. The Nigerian study I have referred to (Oloruntimehin, 1986) suggests that certain patterns of deviance in developing countries may be accounted for by this theory. But again, this is beyond the scope of my thesis.

In brief, the thesis put forward here is that, despite undeniable shortcomings, Merton's theory of deviance and anomie contained a considerable potential for further development. In my task to explore this potential, the middle-range strategy of theory building has proved helpful. Employing this method and following the guidelines of functional analysis, I endeavoured to show that many of the theory's problems were not fatal or irreparable. This does not mean that the theory can or should displace other approaches to deviant phenomena. Rather, my claim is that it is relevant to the study of deviance in contemporary societies: it addresses issues of great importance, it raises pertinent questions, and it is able to furnish fresh puzzles for research. It points out that social conditions integral to well-being and advancement, which are supported by widely accepted values, also give rise to undesirable deviant behaviour. Therefore, the search for new ideas and theories ought not to entail its rejection.

It must be stressed that the field of the sociology of deviance is not exhausted by questions of social control and labelling, commitment to conformity, the capitalist mode of production, power relations, or the

interests of the ruling classes. The importance of these issues can be neither denied nor exaggerated. Furthermore, the variables proposed by Merton's theory are, to a significant extent, compatible with those of other perspectives.

As Rock has observed, "The central terrain of the sociology of deviance is no longer subject to bellicose dispute, most criminologists having become more conciliatory and catholic, engaging in a reasonable civil trade in one another's ideas. It is about the margins that skirmishes are now being fought" (Rock, 1988: 193). In this light, my thesis may be regarded as a fruit of its times. Anomie theory is certainly not the victor over other approaches. But, I hope to have shown that it is a serious contender.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW WITH R. K. MERTON

[This tape recorded interview took place in London, in the summer of 1986. Parts of it have been entirely ommitted, as they contained background information, which was not to be referred to. Other parts have been edited.]

RKM: I'm very glad you came by here at the Connaught Hotel. Yes, I have no objection to recording our conversation. As I began to say, however, I do have high regard for the English language; I don't like to see it battered. In the give and take of conversation, syntax is typically forced by the wayside. The result that any transcript gives, especially for Americans, is a sense of total ignorance of the language. And that I will not put up with. So, any direct quotations from our interview, are subjected not to censorship, but to grammatical syntactical verdict. That is understood.

Second, though I have no reason to know that this will be the case, from prior experience I assume it will, there may be occasions where I am prepared to give you information for background purposes, but not for direct quotation or paraphrase, but just to enlarge your access to certain facts that may not be publicly accessible. You are free to, so to say, absorb those into your thinking, but I may reserve the right to ask you not to refer explicitly to them. Those will be the only two conditions. How did you think we might proceed?

NP: There are many things that I would like to discuss with you. I did not have in mind a structured interview, but rather an open discussion. However, I do have some particular questions.

RKM: Yes.

NP: To start with, I would be very interested to know what motivated you to formulate a theory on deviance, to write the paper 'Anomie and Social Structure' in 1938. What was it that made you relate Durkheim's concept of anomie to deviant behaviour, and extend it and use it the way you did?

RKM: The titles of most of my papers are designed to give cues to what I regard as the essential of the paper. It is not casual or external that when I first started thinking about this problem, I reiteratedly focused on deviant behaviour in relation to social structure. So you need historical context to gather the significance of the terminology. Social structure was not a standard term in the 1930s. That title represented for me a symbol of a theoretical commitment, namely that I would be devoting myself for the indefinite future to the effort of interpreting human behaviours and human conducts *always* in relation to social structure, *whatever* the substance or substantive behaviour in question. So that I cannot in truth now reconstruct what led me to an interest in deviant behaviour, but I can at least give you some of my quasi-memories.

Throughout my life I have had an enormous interest not only in my own work but in the work of my colleagues, those nearby and at a distance, and so, one of my collateral existences or roles is as an editor. That began almost in my earlier student days. It happens that there was a residual member of the department of Social Ethics at Harvard, the department that was displaced, in 1931, by the new-fangled department of Sociology, headed by P.A.Sorokin. That residual member, his name Ford, coming from the Department of Social Ethics, was interested in criminal behaviour and the whole array of problematic behaviours that, in

the early thirties, were thought of as constituting the social problems of the time. He decided to write a textbook. I edited that textbook. I do not have a copy of it, I am sure copies of it exist at least in the library of Congress. The idea of incorporating in its title or in the text, I don't remember, the notion of deviant behaviour was this: it was a conceptual formulation, which would avoid the - at that time - common practice of condemning the behaviour under inspection and, consequently, muddying the analysis.

When I began to give my first graduate-cum-undergraduate course at Harvard in 1936, I considered that each lecture or set of lectures would be the basis of a paper that,in turn, would represent the beginning of an intellectual tradition. That was the modest aspiration I set myself. And indeed, for better or for worse, that is how the course in truth developed. If we had not just two hours but several days, I would now turn to bibliography and check up for you the dozen or so papers that emerged out of this course. That set of lectures or subset of lectures was a result of intellectual marination; you know what it is to marinate in cooking.

Now, it is important to underline my life-long commitment to the notion of social structure as the key concept, not the exclusive basic concept in sociological analysis, but a central one. When I began to ask myself the question what makes for conformity, what makes for structure, what makes for repetitive patterns of behaviour and for the reasonable predictability of behaviour, that commitment led me to complement it always with the question, what makes for departures from social patterns, socially expected behaviours. You can see, given that commitment, then I *had* to raise the question for myself, how was deviant behaviour derived from social structure - a rather ironical and almost paradoxical

formulation - how does conformity induce non-conformity. That is as far as I can go by way of reconstructing the origins. That the roots of course but led me to think in terms of anomie clearly again my prior belief that, of all modern sociologists, Durkheim had best combined, for his time, deep theoretical questions with an effort at some systematic empirical inquiry. To put that together, that was the context of that paper.

NP: You see anomie theory as an example of middle-range theories.

RKM: Oh yes.

NP: Are middle-range theories only a methodological device, given the state of sociology nowadays, or something else?

RKM: Well, I meant nothing beyond it. What I had in mind was, in response to my sense that my mentor, Talcot Parsons, was doing immensely important work of a certain kind, but that, if one continued to focus on the level of theorising which he found most congenial, this could divert attention from what seemed to me to be the quintessential interaction, self-conscious interaction, between theoretical analysis and empirical knowledge, empirical inquiry. And it was in connection with that, that I found myself saying, well and good, there are these general orientations, theoretical orientations, but unless one sets oneself intermediate objectives - which are still quite comprehensive and theoretical - we would find ourselves not emerging from the antecedent condition of sociology. This was going on at the time when, as you know, at least in American sociology there was a great deal of empiricism, *sheer* empiricism. And so this represented my effort, if you will, to mediate between exceedingly abstract theorising, not then and there linked to empirical enquiry, and mediate between that on the one hand and sheer empiricism on the other. You ask whether I think it is a methodological device. I should

say, I believe in a degree of intellectual honesty; that is a self-serving term. That was my effort to achieve. In order to get on with systematic empirical inquiry, that be informed by general ideas, one could not confine perspectives to the Parsonsian level.

NP: And what do you think now; do you think that sociology is developed enough now or is it still in need of middle-range theorising?

RKM: Yes, I think we are still in that, and that we still badly need it, and where one detects what I consider significant development, it has been along those lines.

NP: It has been argued [cf. Stinchcombe, 1975; Sztompka, 1986; Crothers, 1987] that you have developed a general, full-fledged core theory. Does that contradict your thesis on middle-range theorising? Or is it that, on one hand you have middle-range theories, like anomie, and on the other hand there is a coherence in everything you have written?

RKM: Well, that is what I would like to think. You see, the greater part of my lifework still exists in the form of what I describe as oral publication, rather than printed publication. My lectures on structural analysis in sociology, which, if put in print, would run into several volumes, so that much of this work has been disseminated among my students. I mention that now because, so to say, all you have to go through, is the printed publications. And there is no way, it seems to me, that in this short conversation of an hour or two that I could convey, in a sense, what is there: hundreds of hours of lectures. It is fair that I see the continuities, theoretical continuities by the way, but very few of which I have put into print.

NP: A distinction is often drawn between 'describing' and 'explaining', or between 'what and why questions'. Do you think this is a necessary or helpful distinction?

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RKM: There is a lot of sociological work that is not fully caught up under the tag 'describing' or under the tag 'explaining'. This is the issue that I have referred to as 'establishing the phenomenon' [cf. Merton, 1987: 2-6]. What I mean by this is that in every science, humanistic or physical science, one is, in the end, obliged to establish as existing the phenomena that one is undertaking to explain or to interpret. That seems self-evident. However, it can be shown that much of the time, particularly in social sciences, one largely *assumes* the phenomena, rather than establishes them. I think, there is a long tradition in Biology, in which one may spend 10, 20, 30 years, simply to establish the phenomena one tries eventually to explain. By establishing a phenomenon one is continually putting in question its existential being. One is trying to develop tests as to whether it exists or not. In the case of anomie theory, for example, one is raising the question: is there a sub-phenomenon, such as 'retreatism'? If so, what are its characteristics? In my opinion, one has to enquire at both the empirical and analytical levels, *long* before one is ready for a deep explanation. One can gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, by having tried to see what its limits are, what its character is, and whether its implied variables may be its character. In that process one begins to prepare oneself for explanation.

NP: One of your methodological canons is 'detached enquiry'. However, particularly in dealing with why-questions - e.g. why does this or that social structure exist? - it seems that sociological analysis cannot be value-free. So, what do you mean exactly by 'detached enquiry'? What do you think of a distinction allegedly implicit in your work: that between *understanding* society and *criticising* society. For instance, your anomie

theory can be seen as an analysis, as well as a critique, of a particular social system.

RKM: Precisely. I don't know how much time you have been able to devote to reading what I have put in print. The long discussion of value-free sociology is a very modern one. Of course, any sociological understanding of what is going on in some sectors of society, or in some aspects of society, or within a concrete society, represents a basis for moral judgement. The more thorough the understanding, the deeper the moral judgement can be. So I do not accept the notion that, unless one uses a lot of moralising language in the analysis proper, one must somehow be naïve, positivist, or one does not have a deep understanding that there are moral aspects to all social phenomena. To me, that is a trivial but deeply established convention within social science.

So, of course, if you take the interpretation seriously, you can ask, what are the moral implications, let us say, of anomie theory. It is saying, we are not apportioning praise or blame, but we do need to consider that there are identifiable conditions that make for behaviours that are morally repugnant. And that is not a simple matter of individual blame or responsibility, nor does it adopt the biased view that, therefore, we are all victims, since we are influenced by the social structure. There are degrees of freedom within these constraints. So, if you detect a certain impatience in my voice [talking about the reiterated question of value-free sociology], it stems from that I take it as given, that sociological understanding involves, leads to, provides basis for, helps form moral judgements. I do not take kindly to the piety that says, unless you state all this in your analysis, you are naïve. One rather ancient chapter you might look at some time, would be the last chapter of a little book, I did back in the 1946, called *Mass Persuasion*. I think, if

you read the final chapter, you will find it relative to your questions.

I have a sense that I should be much briefer in responses, because I would like to try to be helpful to you by running through your excellent, really excellent outline. I think, if we reserve some time for my making running commentary on it, that may be of use to you. Let us try to run through your outline, and use it as a basis for some remarks.

In your very introduction, it seems to me that you may be introducing a tone that you might better avoid. What I would describe as a defensive tone, defending anomie theory from its critics. That does not mean that you necessarily change the substance of your thinking at all; I repeat I am referring to the tone. That appears in the very first sentence of your introduction of this outline, where you refer to your intention to re-examine and *defend* anomie theory. It also recurs, on page two, when you say 'review of the literature and *criticisms*'. And it is significant, you see, that you elect there almost to begin, having scetched out the theory, with criticisms. I think if you ask yourself, as a historian of science, in this case a historian of social science: how do you reconstruct the place of this theory over the past, now, fifty years? And have a brief section, it may be a matter of pages, in which you orient yourself by saying, well now, this seems to have been or be the course of this mode of thinking about deviant behavior. And that you then by-pass the tone of defensiveness and the tone of accepting, so to say, or rejecting certain kinds of criticisms. You deal with them, but the tone is not defensive. And above all, you do not join in this mock battle between critics of certain kinds, critics and defenders of the faith. You transcend it really. You get a degree of detachment without having abandoned any of the basic cognitive ideas you have.

I note on your references to A. Cohen [1955], Cloward and Ohlin

[1960]. It might be of background interest to you that there is direct continuity. You may know that A.Cohen was a student of mine at Harvard. Further, if you look at the dedication of the Cloward and Ohlin [1960] volume - dedications can be not perfect, but useful indicators - you will see that it is dedicated to Sutherland and me. And that is symbolic, quite symbolic. I think there are very interesting lines of continuity, and I gather you are aware of them. [...]

Now, I have long agreed, though I do not think I have ever corresponded with G.A. Cohen. There is a fundamental distinction between what is *called* 'functionalism' and 'functional analysis'. I never accepted myself the very term 'functional-ism', but employed those of 'functional analysis', 'functional theory' or 'functional interpretation'. That is more of a terminological attitude, simply because what is described as 'functional-*ism*' is so often, to my mind, a simplified caricature, which is then imputed, in the large, to an anonymous group of stars. And it does not serve a terribly useful purpose. You can see that, if you take your quite excellent summary of G.Cohen's summary, my paper 'Manifest and Latent Functions' [cf. Merton, 1968] was introduced in order to reject all these postulates. And so, you cannot call that [i.e. what is put forward in this paper] 'functional-ism', as well as what is being rejected in it [i.e. the problematic postulates of certain functional theorists] - for example, the notion that every element is as it is, *because of* its contribution to the whole. Dysfunctions, deviant behaviors, etc. are not ordinarily thought of as contributory. So, this is rectified by turning to the distinctions between functionalism and, what I call, functional analysis. The essential, you see, in functional analysis is to identify the mechanisms that make for the persistence of a pattern, for its development or for its disappearence; and that is interpretation. It has to do with the ways in

which the pattern under examination relates to concrete social structures.

NP: Sztompka [1986] has argued that a distinction can be drawn between functional analysis and structural analysis. He has also argued that you are applying both, and that anomie theory is a good illustration of that.

RKM: Yes, absolutely.

NP: What is exactly the difference between functional analysis and structural analysis?

M: Structural analysis, in my terms, involves relating that which is to be interpreted, to be explained, to some defineable, identifiable structure. The problem is then to identify the processes connecting that structure with the given pattern, which is to be explained in terms of structure. And that will involve functional analysis. It will involve the analysis of its consequences, the way in which it feeds back into the social structure, etc. The difference between the two is a matter of focus at any given time. But it is not as though one has to adopt one *or* the other, as though they were somehow polar opposites.

I move now to your section five, which is on middle class deviance. As I see it now, glancing over it again, I think you have an excellent substance there, but, again, it is defensive. I see why you are drawn into that. But if you do not concern yourself with a charge against anomie theory, but rather with various interpretations of anomie theory (that you find in the literature), you are not in any way changing the substance; but the tone will be different. Now, it is an interesting question you pose there: is there anything in this mode of analysis, functional analysis and anomie theory, that leads to a biased perception of kinds and rates of deviance in one part of the social structure or in another part of it? That is an interesting question. I agree with what

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you have to say there. I never understood this interpretation [of a class bias], but I think you will find yourself doing a more effective analysis, if you make that slight modification. I am simply repeating what I have said earlier.

I see that you are bringing in the notion of relative deprivation. It is very ingenious and completely sound. This notion has a long history, which we cannot discuss because of limitations of time. The basic idea of relative deprivation derived from S.Stouffer and his talented team's very intensive work on the *American Soldier*. In [my] reference group paper [cf. Merton, 1968: 279-440], I simply pulled that out and made it central. And, indeed, the reason it seemed so central to me is that it echoed what had not been developed in the original 'Social Structure and Anomie' paper. So it is very perceptive of your part. You could not have known that. And, I think, the more you can develop what you have in your section on 'Reference Groups and Relative Deprivation', the more valuable your analysis will be.

NP: As you have pointed out, whatever the percentages of lower class individuals who engage in deviant behaviour, their absolute numbers there are higher than those in the upper classes.

RKM: Yes.

NP: And this is essential. But on the other hand, if one considers the cost of crime, then the upper-classes law-breaking becomes more serious. So, it is worth focusing on that as well, and stressing the qualitative difference of law-breaking between the various strata.

RKM: Absolutely. You see, *that* is what I mean by 'social criticism', *in that form*. There are two kinds of value orientation. The one involves starting with the value-commitments one may have through social associations or in some highly individual fashion. Thus, you start by

saying that my loyalties are with such and such a group, such a class, ethnic group, and *hence*, I must emerge with conclusions which will indicate that that group is particularly praiseworthy or has been vilified, and so on. To my mind, that kind of value-orientation leads to cognitive deprivation. But you have another kind of value orientation, where the analysis leads you to raise questions, which transcend common sense or impressions. So, you have picked up the fundamental difference between rates and absolute numbers, proportions and absolute numbers. Relatively few observers, it seems to me, have picked up this fundamental difference; throughout all sociology, it has been lost. I made my effort, I have not done it well, obviously. I declared that is utterly basic to all analysis. And see how seldom it is used. You are, to my mind, absolutely right, and so there you have an extension by raising the developing question: what are the relative costs to society, what are the indicators of that? And you are launched into social criticism without being biased about it, without beating your breast. So, I think, the more you can develop that part of your monograph, the better.

I also want to urge you to pay particular attention to the paper on 'Anomie, Anomia and Social Interaction' [cf. Merton, 1964]. There are whole sections there that have been almost totally ignored in the literature. And again, I am guilty of trying to compress too much into too little space. Why should fellow scholars do the hard work to ferret out what is there. But those hypothetical tables, which I constructed, contained a condensation of an immensely developed theoretical analysis. That will be reprinted again and perhaps I will write a gloss on it to make it clearer.

Then, I can only say that your section on social dynamics, deviance and social change, seems to me apt and quite important. If you succeed in elaborating that section, I think it could be of immense value. ...Now, I

have nothing more to say about your outline at this moment.

NP: I have confronted a conceptual problem and I would appreciate your comments on it. It has to do with the definition of anomie and how it relates to deviant behaviour. Of course, there is a process, in which anomie, anomia and deviant behaviour are implicated. I understand, there are processes of interaction, there is a circle; but it is a matter of chronology, in a sense. Does anomie precede deviance, is anomie to account for deviance, or widespread deviance constitutes anomie? Sztompka [1986] has offered four different definitions of anomie, and I think that two of them can be seen as widespread deviance. If this were the case, if anomie is the same as deviance, how could it explain deviance?

RKM: Well, that is a clarifying question.

NP: Would it help if I gave you, briefly, his definitions of anomie?

RKM: Yes, that would help to retrieve the concepts.

NP: Anomie1 is the breakdown of social standards governing behaviour, and signifies little social cohesion. And this social state of anomie results mainly from incompatibilities within an institutional order. Anomie2 is a disjunction in the norm-value pairings: there is an over-emphasis on goals, and, therefore, less attention is paid to means. Anomie3 is a dissociation between the normative and opportunity structures. Finally, Anomie4 is the withdrawal of allegiance from one or another part of prevailing social standards.

RKM: Let us forget this classification. It is well intentioned, and I can see how it has been derived, but I do not find it clarifying. We start•, let us say, with the assumption that we are dealing with a social state, a social condition, we are going to call it A. And that is a state in which there is a perceptible, significant degree of withdrawal, on the part of members of the community or society, from certain norms,

standards and rules that had been more fully operative, seen against prior allegiance amongst larger numbers. Now, the withdrawal of allegiance or any metaphorical equivalent to that, is to say that now one does not regard them as binding. So, we now have the state of anomie A, which is this withdrawal of allegiance; This produces problems, and raises the question: what makes for that? Now, what does this withdrawl of allegiance mean? Well, it is basically an attitudinal matter, a matter of attitudes to values, of their significance. You may not violate them yourself. But they are not terribly significant or binding.

That can be easily, without any difficulty, distinguished from overt behaviours, observable behaviours that violate the *still* widely accepted, but not *as* widely accepted -it is a statistical concept - distribution of beliefs in prevailing standards. What we have on the behavioural side, is deviance, deviant behaviours. But, it does not follow that all those who no longer consider certain standards as binding, also violate them. They do not. Their reactions to violations by others are more limited, more restrained. Durkheim, above all others, saw this clearly. The ultimate test of beliefs in, acceptance of, a norm or a standard (i.e. the way things should be) is to be found in the response to violations. And if you take it casually, that is an indication that the intensity of your beliefs is stressed. It does not mean that you are violating the norms. So the distinction is between deviant behaviour, which literally violates the norm, and a condition, which represents a lowered intensity of beliefs in, or adherence to, norms. That is the difference between the cultural and the social. There is no ambiguity there.

Now, as you rightly say, however, the process of interaction between the rates of deviant behaviours and the, as it were, rates of beliefs in the standards becomes problematic. Under what conditions does the

rise in deviant behaviour further increase the tendency to withdraw one's allegiance; or, contrariwise, after a watershed, how does deviant behaviour tend to reinforce one's allegiance to norms and values that have been, so to say, soft paddled for a time. The effects of deviant behaviour are not one-sided, but problematic.

Then, there are all sorts of problems. For example, where does opportunity structure come in? This has been one of the most under-recognised aspects of anomie theory, as I see it. That is an effort to account for, an effort to interpret, to explain, differentials in pressures toward deviant behaviour. Then, you have the moral situation of those subjected to such pressures. Not everyone succumbs to pressures. But, on average, in the aggregate, the greater the pressures, *presumably*, the higher the rates of deviant behaviours in response to the stress. The pressures are thought of as the result of a disjunction between a value system which is held, which is variously distributed within society, and the realistic possibilities of living in accord with these values - even the one simply of monetary success. As people are differentially located within the social structure, there is a paradox. I think, in the end, that we, sociologists, are trying to understand the ironies, the paradoxes of human society. The paradox arises out of the lack of integration between an opportunity structure and a value system. The reason I introduce that concept rather than class structure, is that I think opportunity is patterned not only in terms of class, but many other social attributes. The paradox arises owing to the contradiction between a value-system, which argues for the relevance of these values to people variously located in the social structure, while they have different degrees of access to the opportunities to realise such values.

NP: In your paper on the American creed [cf. Merton, 1976g], as well

as in your comments on Dubin's paper [cf. Dubin, 1959; Merton, 1959], you distinguished very clearly another level of analysis: the level of attitudes towards norms and values, and the distinction between attitudes and overt behaviour. Do you think that this distinction should influence the developing theory of anomie, that it should be taken into account in a future typology, something similar to what Dubin attempted?

RKM: To my mind, there can always be too much of a good thing, and Dubin was a case of that. There was a relentless grinding out of possibilities and categories. And to my mind, one has to temper this process of analysis. Otherwise, it can be carried to a point, where it becomes sterile. In contrast, the basic distinction between attitudes toward values, which enter into effecting or constituting degrees of anomie in a society, and overt behaviour is fundamental. It has not been specially thought about, it is a tradition which you find scattered in 20th century sociology. It has somehow been lost; you find it cropping up systematically in the special division of social pschychology. They have done much more of it. We, sociologists, have tended to pretty much forget the implications of that distinction.

NP: I was thinking whether it could be possible to relate this distinction between attitudes and overt behaviour to a sort of sub-culture. If we take as example the American creed: you have people, who recognise that this is something that exists as a value-system, a creed; but personal attitudes to it, whether public or private, may reject or contradict it, for a number of reasons. So, given social interactions, a sub-culture may develop (RKM: Yes), a deviant sub-culture, a deviation from the original model (RKM: Yes). And I was wondering whether this could be related to the sub-cultural theories; i.e. we start with a cultural system, within which contradictions create pressures towards a

variety of responses. This might contribute to our understanding of how sub-cultures are created.

RKM: I think that is what Al Cohen was trying to do.

NP: Certainly. However, A.Cohen concentrated on lower-class juveniles.

RKM: Oh yes, you are raising a more deeply based, more broadly conceived question, but it belongs to the same family of considerations.

NP: I was also thinking that the general framework of anomie theory is applicable to adults, to whom the contradictions between the cultural structure and the social structure are perhaps more obvious. I thought that juveniles, school-children, experience these contradictions mostly indirectly or differently.

RKM: That is a thought that had not occurred to me at all. It sounds intriguing. That is all I can say. It is a thought, which, I think, I would have pursued, if it had occurred to me. It is still vague, but that is the nature of new thoughts. They seldom emerge with clarity. Yes, that is an interesting possibility. That is why I agreed to meet with you. It is that, I find you thinking about these matters, rather than simply recording them. Just as you are making links between relative deprivation and anomie theory, so you are seeing possible linkages between analysis of the American creed and discrinimation. This suggests to me that you are capable of consolidating ideas that on the surface are not obviously connected. That is a good thing.

NP: Thank you.

RKM: I would like to get through a few of the things I have brought along. They may not connect immediately with what you have in mind, but we can get back to any further questions you have, if there is time. ...

Now, I have, at my end, I must say, only about twenty minutes. So, proceed as you would like. I don't know whether I will be able to, but, in

principle, I am willing to be as responsive as I can. Even more so now, than before.

NP: Do you think that there is any possible connection between the notion of 'sociological ambivalence' and anomie theory? As you have observed, such ambivalence arises out of conflicting expectations, on the part of other people, from the occupant of a role or set of roles. Could this lead to deviance straight away? Does it relate to the concept of anomie?

RKM: Not if the organisation of social life permits the temporal insulation of these contradictory elements. And I mean by the notion of sociological ambivalence, is that some of these roles are so organised that one can shift away from one pole to the seemingly opposed pole, without it being an internal contradiction at all. Because they are expressed in behaviour at different times or in different situations. The pressure toward anomie occurs, when the organisation of that role is such, that you cannot insulate one from the other, temporarily or situationally. I am referring to the co-existance of *abstractly* contradictive ideas, *abstractly* contradictive values, *abstractly* contradictive thoughts, which coexist without any real difficulty, because they acted out in segregated situations. I once wrote a piece, I think it was back in the 1940s, on what I call 'ethnic opinionnaires'.

NP: Oh, yes, I have read it.

RKM: Well, if you know the piece, which is very strange because it has elicited very little attention, go back to it, and you will find in there a critique of the assumption that attitudes are additive, whereas I claim that they are segregated. You may have two conflicting values of great intensity without any sense of inner contradiction, because they are expressed in different situations. So with ambivalence. What I am saying

in response to your question - not as lucidly as I would like, but I discover that I am tired after our friendly conversation - is that one needs a sociological analysis of a situation, in order to determine the extent to which these abstractly contradictory expectations can be situationally or temporarily seggregated. When they cannot, then you have the kind of conflict, which would lead toward anomie, as it accumulates.