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This dissertation is polemical, biographical, logical, historical, theoretical and practical:

- The treatment of the relationship between sociology and social policy does not conform to conventional wisdom; and so in order to make its case it is perforce polemical.

- The discussion of the relationship between knowledge and policy draws upon personal experience; and so it cannot avoid being to that extent biographical.

- The argument in favour of a new paradigm for sociology is long and complicated; and so to make sense it has to be logical.

- The reasoning throughout the whole dissertation, however, relies not alone upon logic but also upon a sense of history, which combines an appreciation of classical philosophy and modern sociology in a single outlook.

- This dissertation is theoretical inasmuch as it provides a philosophical paradigm within which the science of sociology can be understood and its relationship with social policy determined.

- The dissertation is also practical inasmuch as evidence can be provided of the use of its paradigms for actually affecting current social policy.

- For examples of the application of the fundamental principles discussed in this dissertation to actual policy formulation, please see the following four works:

  1. 'A Survey of Programs Relevant to Youth of the Federal Departments and Agencies', by T. O Brien, under contract with the Citizenship Branch of the Secretary of State, Ottawa, Canada, 1970.

  2. 'Planning-Becoming-Development', by T. O Brien, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, Canberra, 1977.


The author of this dissertation provided the conceptual framework for the above mentioned report and it is ideas arising out of the preparatory research that are discussed in this document.

The author wishes to extend his thanks to all those who helped him to produce this dissertation and in particular to Professor J. Zubrzycki.
INTRODUCTION

The way in which communities organise themselves can be observed from three different angles. Initially, one may adopt the role of a community development worker and walk the streets and talk with individuals, groups, committees and organisations in particular localities. Alternatively, one may step aside into a university and study sociology and review community theory. Else, one may join the public service. Here there is a chance of working with both administrators and politicians, learning how they view the organisation of the national community. Thus one may acquire three distinct ways of understanding diverse aspects of the same reality.

Chapter 1 explains how the above three perspectives can be complementary to each other. The second chapter sets out a theoretical framework for understanding the practice of community development. It takes two subsequent chapters to draw up a sensible definition of sociology and to show the relationship between sociological ideas and programs aimed at sponsoring development from the bottom upwards. But much community development also takes place from the top downwards through the implementation of government social policy. So, the final four chapters are spent clarifying the meaning of social policy.

Ordinarily, different perspectives on the same reality give rise to conflict; and so attempts are often made to keep it at a minimum by approach avoidance techniques. In other words separate organisations compartmentalise their functions and avoid as much as possible any interference from others. Nonetheless, just as often, people can only bring about significant developments in the functioning of democratic institutions when they are prepared to engage in organisational interactions and to accept the risk of tensions that these may cause.

So, the following study makes three salient points:

- Community development is interpreted in different ways as the viewpoint from which it is seen varies;
- A sociologist can enhance his ability to contribute to social policy when he can clearly define what he means by sociology and can articulate its relationship to politics and ethics;
- Policy analysts who appreciate the nuances of distributive justice can clearly see the need for a more integrated philosophy of public administration and a consequent improvement in the arrangement and coordination of departmental functions.
PART I

THINGS, KNOWLEDGE AND CHOICE
CHAPTER 1

CHANGING OUTLOOKS

Sociology derives its origins from philosophy and its effectiveness from public administration. So, this study begins by identifying a philosophical perspective. In subsequent chapters this leads to an original angle on the nature and function of sociology. In turn, this fresh outlook on sociology opens up a sensible way of understanding public administration.

In philosophy I am a moderate realist. Those who are familiar with Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy will understand what I mean by that. Those who have read Bernard J.F. Lonergan's classic work on 'Insight' will be able to appreciate even better my basic philosophical position. However, here and now my purpose is not to elaborate on my philosophy but rather to explain my sociology. Consequently I propose to put my philosophy in a nutshell, precisely for the purpose of making it easier for others to recognise how I handle sociological concepts.

I submit that all philosophy can be summed up in three concepts: things, thought and choice. Around these fundamental concepts have grown systems of ontology, epistemology and morality. In a moderate realist philosophy all three branches of knowledge are well integrated with each other to form a single composite viewpoint.

Putting my philosophy into its simplest terms, I can state that I am aware of things outside of me of which I have some knowledge and on the basis of that knowledge I have to make choices about how I will act. For a moderate realist, reality, knowledge, choice and action are intimately linked to each other. In other words, my moderate realism is an essentially practical philosophy.

At their most basic, philosophical problems concern a complex reality which exists independently, regardless of whether individuals know it or not. From an awareness of this reality I derive knowledge: some of which I can grasp intuitively; some of which I can gain from...
experience; and some of which I have to sort out by collecting data on it. Ultimately, though, on the basis of such knowledge, even when it is imperfect, I have to make choices. Some of these choices will relate to the reality that I originally apprehend; some such choices will relate to the thought I have gleaned from my experience, and some such choices will relate to other choices that I have previously made.

Choice is a most significant element in my philosophy. Although I am convinced, and am prepared to affirm, that it is possible to be certain about some simple, material and cognitive facts, I accept that much of my knowledge is imperfect, tentative, analogical. Consequently, I, like others, am constantly confronted with the necessity of making choices on the basis of imperfect knowledge. To guide one in acting on such knowledge there is a need for a keen appreciation of the principles of morality, ethics, and politics. I and many like me would consider that any philosophy which did not grapple with ethical problems was inadequately comprehensive.

I will not source the above ideas by referring them to any particular writer, because to the best of my knowledge no one has previously expressed them in the way that I have here. Nonetheless, throughout the next half of this dissertation I do display that I have read widely in both philosophy and sociology and it is from this reading that the above ideas have crystallised.

The question now emerges: How does all this relate to sociology?

When I am confronted with the problems of what sociology is? what it does? what it can achieve? I fall back quite naturally on what I know of the essentials of philosophy. I want to understand sociology in terms of its ontology, epistemology and morality. In other words I want to know what is its subject matter, what are its methods of knowing its subject matter, and on the basis of such knowing, how can this science contribute to choices that have to be made.

The main difference between a moderate realist philosophy and sociology is that the former has a primordial concentration on the individuality of things, whereas sociology prefers to deal with their
social aspect. On the one hand a philosopher will approach a problem by stating that there is a thing outside of him and on the basis of his knowledge of it, he will choose what he can say or do about it. On the other hand, a sociologist is more likely to frame the same problem thus: there are groups outside us and we can obtain certain data about them and on the basis of our understanding of these data we can understand how our society is organised. Usually a sociologist will stop there. He will not go a further step and state that we can understand how our society ought to be organised. Modern mainstream sociology does not generally shape its fundamental problems in terms of ethics.

Often sociologists seem to consider choice as little more than opinions - which are sometimes called value judgments. Fact is separated from value. Fact is considered as objective, observable and measurable - though a moderate realist will counter this contention by pointing out that there are as many interpretations of fact as there are philosophies. In the main, value is considered as a matter of personal preference, where there are a number of such preferences and all of them are of more or less equal importance. On the other hand ethical choice is often virtually inescapable in so far as it must be consistent with one's ontology and epistemology. But some sociologists would find that last statement irritatingly incomprehensible - a matter for metaphysics, irrelevant to their science.

Given this intellectual milieu a sociologist who is a moderate realist can sometimes be made to feel like a fish out of water. In as much as he understands the philosophy of logical positivism he will find easy acceptance in sociological circles. He who is an empiricist is welcome: but he who does not want to limit his philosophy to empiricism is more likely to be made unwelcome. In effect he may be excluded from the discipline or simply tolerated within it. Else he may feel forced to succumb to the intellectual dominance of a major sociological school, unless he can articulate a credible counter position. Academic freedom, however, demands that the chance to do this be open to him.

**Social Science and Public Policy**

This latter task has been made easier recently; because nowadays there is a great deal of disillusionment with a social science which is
uncomfortable with ethics. In few places is this more obvious than in the efforts of sociology to establish its bearings in regard to public policy. The difficulty in the relationship between the two can be made plain by personalising it and stating that when sociologists wish to act as advisers to governments, they are inevitably confronted not alone with choices, but also with systems of knowledge which provide principles for making choices: politics, ethics and morality.

Martin Rein's book on 'Social Science and Public Policy' is a good example of an effort to reconcile the two. In it Rein stated that he was interested in the uses of social science for public policy. So in search of an answer to how one could be used for the other he began to explore how the subject was dealt with in philosophy. His book implies he did not find the answer. Instead what he discovered was that philosophical debate was, by and large, abstract and divorced from specific policy concerns while modern social science literature was, by contrast, more concrete, but without the benefit of a formal framework from which to address ethical and epistemological issues. My immediate reaction to this remark is that a comprehensive framework for the reconciliation of social science and public policy would have to be one which gave due importance, balance and consideration to ontological, epistemological and ethical issues.

Rein concludes that it would surely be intriguing to discover ways in which philosophical and sociological traditions could be integrated or, at least, in which differences between them could be identified and analysed. But Rein himself does not attempt to do so in this book of essays. He simply tries to deal with a philosophical problem: the dichotomy between fact and value. He does not try to relate his social science to a coherent and comprehensive philosophy.

In essence Rein considers a clash between a science and a policy. I submit that he would have had a better chance of being successful in solving even his immediate problem had he given equal balance in his investigations to a reality, a science and a policy.

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In this treatise I accept the same kind of challenge that Rein faced. In accepting it, I maintain that whether the matter under discussion is one for sociology or philosophy attention must be paid to the thing, the knowledge and the choice. The thing, of course, is the subject matter. The knowledge is really the method of knowing, or the science. The choice embraces the ethical principles or the political processes by which public policy is made. Moreover, in any analysis such as Rein's its success depends upon the symmetry that is maintained between these three components of the problem.

Philosophy is very broad in its scope. Indeed one of the definitions of a philosophy is that it unites other branches of knowledge in a coherent viewpoint. Nonetheless the extensiveness of the ground covered by philosophy is less of a problem whenever a scholar follows the excellent advice of one of the greatest of all the philosophers: Descartes. It is generally known that he insisted on getting back to the basics of grasping clear and distinct ideas about simple things before getting involved in complicated analysis. I suggest that those of us who work with sociological concepts can benefit by acquiring a similar facility.

Consequently in the ensuing paragraphs (and subsequently in the chapters that follow) I will explain how I understand a reality: that of an organised community. I will then disentangle a definition of sociology, by whittling down some descriptions of it until I can state simply and clearly what it means to me. Then I will spell out what I mean by choice and will indicate the comprehensiveness of the philosophical and sociological foundation which helps me to wrestle with social policy issues.

Three Perspectives on Social Policy

However, definitions are much influenced by one's current perspectives. Consequently, before I get down to definitions, I want first of all to draw attention to apparently conflicting, but potentially complementary perspectives. To begin with, in regard to issues of public policy I name three perspectives as follows: the administrative method or common sense perspective; the scientific method or research perspective; and the philosophic method or policy perspective. The three are distinguishable and may be separate but need not necessarily be so.
The Administrative Perspective

Within the Public Service, for instance, those who concentrate on
the administrative perspective are primarily interested in the task in
hand. They wish to know precisely what program objective is to be
achieved and what are the means to attain it. They are concerned about
whether there is enough money in the budget to ensure a capable
performance of a particular departmental function and sufficient and
competent staff to carry out the variety of tasks involved.

Those who pride themselves on their administrative ability are
often ready to profess their belief in the importance of common sense.
The intelligence that goes with common sense is apt to be a
specialisation in matters which are particular and concrete. The
function of the administrator is to master each situation as it arises.

It follows that those who operate primarily from an administrative
perspective often have an impatience with technical language, research
methods, general conclusions and statements which claim to have a
universal validity. The administrator, as a man of common sense, does
not favour a concentration on theoretical issues. He or she is far
more at home in the familiar world of departmental procedures and
the specific responsibilities of divisions, branches and sections.

The administrator also places great store on the value of
experience. Administrators look for staff who can fit into a given job,
among a given group of people, someone who can be at intelligent ease
in every situation in which he is called upon to speak and act. A
competent administrator always knows what is going on in his department,
just what to say in any work situation, just who to contact and where
the relevant files are, just what needs to be done and how to go about
it. His experience has taken him through a cycle of eventualities that
have occurred in his department. He knows the score. He may have made
mistakes but he learns not to make them twice. He develops an acumen
that notices changes in established routines. He can size up a political
situation before embarking on a course of executive action. He has the
resourcefulness that hits upon the response that fits in with
departmental policy as he confronts each new situation.
Common sense, although it can be supremely intelligent, has its own limitations. It has a basically constant style of bureaucratic language, it prefers to stick to its own universe of discourse, and to follow its own methodological precept of keeping to the concrete, of avoiding analogies and generalisations, and to acknowledge that it does not feel at home in the realm of the abstract and the universal.

The Research Perspective

Those who operate from a research perspective are on a quite different wicket. The researcher pins his faith not on this or that specific conclusion but rather on the validity of scientific method itself.

The scientific method can be conceived as a process of empirical inquiry which moves from the observation of specific data to an explanation of their meaning. A principal technique in effecting the transition from description to explanation is measurement. In constructing the numerical relations of things to one another there is introduced into the analysis of any particular problem an almost necessary simplification of arrangement. In selecting and determining standard units of measurement, the scientist introduces into his investigations an element that may be conventional or arbitrary, but which is always theoretical.

Those who approach problems of public policy from a research perspective pursue their objectives on the basis of hypotheses, research designs, statistical techniques and computer analysis. Within such frameworks of meaning, the researcher moves from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from the immediate problem to the long-term solution. Whereas those who work from an administrative perspective like to move from a familiar program objective to another program objective similarly familiar, the researcher seeks to advance from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and even from the obvious to the hidden. What the researcher offers is usually not an immediate solution to the workaday task of administering a program, but rather some further insight into the extent and quality of the consequences of the program he evaluates.
The fact that administrators and researchers have different outlooks accounts for the fact that there is often tension between them. The researcher is inclined to want to reach a general audience and to express his conclusions precisely and to imply that his solutions have a general validity. The administrator prefers to consult with his own peer group who have the arduous task of coping with similar administrative difficulties and to speak mainly about the practicality of a particular course of executive action.

In the long term, of course, it is obvious that both the administrator and the researcher perform tasks which are complementary to each other. In the short term, however, there is often tension in their relationship. For as long as the tension is present the researcher may be tempted to conclude that the administrative perspective is somehow crude. In retaliation, the administrator may be tempted to make jokes about the ineptitude of those who concentrate on research and even to demand that if they are to justify their existence, they had better provide more palpable evidence of their usefulness.

The Policy Perspective

The development of a policy perspective often depends upon the insights of both the common sense of administration and the scientific method of research. It can also be sharpened by pursuing a philosophic method. The philosophic method, however, is not always understood by those who have not a philosophical training. Some social scientists, suggests Lonergan, find philosophy baffling, repellent or absurd and even dispute whether it has any method at all. 3

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* By the same token a philosopher can also be baffled when he finds that a sociologist will react to what he considers a fundamental fact by labelling it an assumption. To the philosopher it may appear that what he held to be knowledge is being taken by his sociologist critic to be merely opinion. For instance, for a philosopher the existence of the principle that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time is a cognitive fact, not an assumption, as it may be for a sociologist. In Michel Foucault's terminology the disjunctions between the universes of discourse of the two disciplines are immense.
The basic difference is that scientific method is prior to scientific work and independent of particular scientific results, but philosophic method is coincident with philosophic work and stands or falls with the success or failure of a particular philosophy. Sciences are concerned to assign various determinate conceptual concepts to fill empty heuristic structures, so that virtually the same method leads necessarily to different determinations. Philosophic method obtains its integrated view of a single universe of discourse, not by determining the contents that fill heuristic structures, but by relating the heuristic structures to one another. Scientific method can produce a variety of particular conclusions, but philosophic method aims at the attainment of a single all-inclusive view.

As Lonergan points out, just as there is nothing to prevent a scientist from being a man of common sense, so there is nothing to prevent him from being a philosopher. Indeed, the scientist's dedication to truth and his habituation to intellectual patterns of experience are conducive to philosophy. In as much as mind itself by its inner unity demands the integration of all it knows, the mind of the scientist will be all the more impelled to proceed to that integration along a course that is at once economical and effective.

The contribution of science and scientific method to philosophy lies in its unique ability to supply philosophy with instances of heuristic structures - that is various methods of acquiring knowledge. Philosophy has been fertilised repeatedly by scientific achievement. But it would be a mistake to expect that a philosophy, as such, should conform to the method or the linguistic technique or the group mentality of the scientist. The distinctive contribution of philosophy to science - precisely in as much as a philosophy is a metaphysic - is to integrate heuristic structures of learning into a single view of the universe.

Such a view is not only single, it is also necessarily personal. In as much as a policy analyst uses a philosophic method he is very likely to be dissatisfied with endless analysis and more interested in synthesis; he will want to embrace a variety of issues in a single conceptual framework; and he will recognise that this tendency will have a strongly subjective element in it. Whereas the reasonableness of each scientist is a consequence of the reasonableness of all, the philosopher's
reasonableness is grounded on a personal commitment to knowledge that is essentially his own. For issues in philosophy cannot be settled by looking up a handbook, or by reference to a set of experiments performed by other scientists, or by appealing to the authoritative statements of experts who belong to the past or the present. A philosopher often bases an argument on what he proposes as a generally accepted axiom and then logically builds up the consequences of accepting the initial proposal until he has reached his conclusion. Other authors may be quoted, but they are quoted as references only. The validity of the argument does not depend upon the authority of others: it depends upon the acceptance of premises, the rationality of the argument and the reasonableness of the conclusion.

A philosophical argument must stand on its own merits. Philosophical evidence is within the philosopher himself. It exists in his ability to use his own experience, to recognise the intelligence he has gained through the application of scientific method, to synthesise his knowledge by logical reflection, and to present his findings in a way that is significant and ideally is easily understood as such by others.

There is an element of intuition in the use by a policy analyst of a philosophic method. But it is not the kind of intuition that comes from a stroke of luck. It is far more likely to come from a long and conscientious study of relevant issues. It is the result of inquiry and insight, reflection and judgment, deliberation and choice.

When the chips are down a philosophic method involves the policy analyst in the risk of making a definite choice on the way to change a policy or to meet a future contingency. At the same time, in the course of providing arguments, he must exercise a subtlety of mind that displays an intelligent appreciation both of the common sense of the administrator and of the scientific method of the researcher - both in their differences and their complementarity.

From this analysis of the three perspectives - which may be operative in any arena of decision making on public policy - it is obvious there will always be tension between them. But the degree of tension need not be exaggerated. A reconciliation between the three perspectives
is possible. In fact such reconciliation is constantly required for the formulation and re-formulation of government policies.

In the preceding paragraphs, the analysis implies that the three different perspectives are held by three different classes of people. But there is no need to imagine that the three ways of looking at things are necessarily characteristic of separate classes - or even of separate individuals. There is nothing extraordinary about a single individual being able to look at problems of public policy from three different angles. Whenever an individual does so, he will be aware of tensions within himself. But there is no reason why he cannot reconcile such tensions within his own thinking by giving appropriate balance to each perspective in his judgments on specific issues.

A sensitive awareness of various modes of an individual's thought is not an unusual characteristic of philosophers. One can learn to understand what Lonergan calls the polymorphism of individual consciousness. Many sociologists, though, are likely to find such an idea peculiar. In their profession, sociologists seldom use an expression like the polymorphism of individual consciousness. They prefer to point out that different patterns of thinking are caused by different social environments. Resiliently, the philosopher will reply that that is just another part of a broader but still single truth. Nonetheless, in as much as truth is conformity of the mind with reality, sociologists can by their science bring a richness to the dimensions of this conformity that is often not matched by philosophers who are prepared to rest on principle!

The Influence of Institutions on Perspectives

In the preceding eight years or so, I have worked for a government department, a university and a federal parliament. As a 'participant observer' in each of these 'institutions' I have studied and written on an aspect of social policy. Each institution has a markedly different appreciation of reality, knowledge and choice and this is reflected in my writing at each successive stage.

When I was with the Department of Social Security a dominant appreciation prevailed there about the importance of what was called common sense administration. Admittedly there were researchers and statisticians within the department, but their role was subsidiary to that of the administrators. A philosopher was not in much demand for dealing with departmental procedures; but he was useful when a new policy was being designed or evaluated.

The departmental section in which I worked was dealing with a community development program called the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP). A sociologist in a university may often find it difficult to arrive at a theoretically satisfactory definition of 'community'; but for administrators this posed no problem. The program being promoted was one for the co-ordination of local social welfare services. Those who were involved (or could be involved) in the program were considered to form a community of interest. When the community of interest was operating at a local level, then they were considered as belonging to a local government community. So, geography and interest defined the community and that was that. The social reality with which we were concerned was thus easily - even simplistically - defined.

When the program called the AAP was terminated by the government I wrote a monograph on it called Planning-Becoming-Development.5 The language in the monograph reflected the language that was used in the department: it was plain, ordinary and sensible. Few social scientists were mentioned in it and no references were made to philosophers. All in all the program description in the monograph was well structured and each chapter displays an ability in clear thinking, but the language was sober, the ideas commonplace and the presentation prosaic. In other words Planning-Becoming-Development displayed a common-sense approach to knowledge similar to that which prevailed within the department.

In regard to 'choice' the monograph recorded the AAP policy decisions and elaborated on their consequences. It is true that I wrote not only about the choices that had been made but also about choices that

were in the making or could have been made. But once again the salient intention of the document was to make a plain statement of what had happened, in case a program like it might happen again.

By the same token the second chapter in this dissertation takes a reflective look at the 'community development' theory which underlay the Australian Assistance Plan. The intention of this chapter is to evolve a theory from a matter-of-fact experience of a program. Once again the emphasis is on a logical but common-sense approach to reality, knowledge and choice.

When I left the department and took up a visiting fellowship at the university I found myself in a different world. Here the salient ethos was not one of a common-sense appreciation of a common-sense reality; but rather an ethos where there was a more sophisticated approach to knowledge about knowledge. In the university epistemology was the name of the game.

A university discipline provides a framework within which knowledge is sought. Since I was now a resident in a sociology department I sought to get to grips with the question of what was the essential framework for acquiring knowledge which sociology provided. I had previously done courses in sociology and absorbed knowledge about its origins and its methods, now I wanted to know more about sociology as a science. I wanted to know precisely, in a nutshell, what it is.

In language that is appropriately epistemological I explain the process of finding my conclusion in Chapter 4. Suffice it to state here that I did not find in sociological writings or in textbooks a definition of sociology upon which everyone agreed and with which I could be happy. So, I had to forge a fresh one of my own. This definition is both suitable for my purpose (and for others) of relating sociology to public policy. I also found it was acceptable to sociologists with whom I have discussed it. It simply says:

Sociology is the science of institutions - their genesis, functioning and relationships.
On the basis of this definition I wrote a book called 'Job-Generation'. Unlike 'Planning-Becoming-Development' which was factual in as much as it documented a past program, 'Job-Generation' is totally theoretical in so far as a program based upon it has yet to be implemented. Whereas the first book provided knowledge derived from the reality of a past program, the second book provides knowledge on the basis of which a choice can be made of making its proposals a reality. After all, I wrote the second book in a university and the business of a university is knowledge.

Subsequently, when I joined the Secretariat of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) I quickly discovered that not knowledge but choice was the critical issue there. True, choices have to be based on knowledge of certain realities; but the responsibility of the Parliament to make choices is the ever-present and dominant imperative in the PAC. The work of the Secretariat is to facilitate choices in public policy and in tending towards that end neither common sense nor epistemology is enough: a consciousness of ethics is a prerequisite.

The task I was given was to make sense of a wide variety of income maintenance programs administered by ten Federal Departments in the social policy area. The reality I had to deal with was complex. One hundred and twenty-seven programs were identified as falling within the scope of the PAC inquiry. A way had to be found of relating these programs to each other and of arranging them in an order which would make it easy for others to understand each of them separately and all of them together. In the manner in which the information was initially presented by the departments in response to the PAC questionnaire the assortment of programs was a hodge-podge.

Confronted with the task of establishing a conceptual framework into which a large variety of programs could be ordered, I found that the philosophic approach to knowledge that I have just previously described stood me in good stead. I hit upon the strategy of selecting

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an ethical concept - that of justice - as my co-ordinating principle. To be more precise the proposition that public administration is a mechanism of distributive justice enabled me to contain a plethora of information within a single, albeit flexible, concept.

In the process it was nonetheless necessary to structure the information according to a scientific method. So, an hypothesis was formed, a questionnaire designed, and data collected, collated, analysed and synthesised. The criteria of evaluation were latent in the questionnaire, and consequently when the data were elicited from the departments it was possible to make comparative judgments on the basis of the evidence about the clarity and cohesiveness of program objectives. It was also possible to compare programs for the efficiency of their administration and the effectiveness of their results.

It was true also that because the research would subsequently be published, it had to be written up in a common-sense style which would appeal to a general readership. Nevertheless, it is the philosophical concept of distributive justice which holds the whole report together.

The briefing paper that I had written was subsequently submitted to the members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts who used it as a basis for their judgments about what kind of hearings ought to be held and what kind of recommendations to Parliament ought to be derived from the cumulative processes of the total inquiry. My work was simply a preparation for theirs.

But even my own analysis of the information I had studied must culminate in choices. For it is the role of the staff of the Secretariat to select initial recommendations for policy on the basis of information received in inquiries. Choices are essentially a matter of exercising one's judgment on the basis of the available evidence.

To sum up, in this Part I, I have discussed the content of the following three parts of this dissertation and related each of them to a major research study. Part II contains a common-sense description of a community development theory. Part III discusses an epistemological problem of how to construct an appropriate sociological paradigm within
which to analyse social policy. Part IV defines social policy and discusses the relevance of the idea of distributive justice to social administration.

By late 1983, the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts will have tabled in Parliament a report on the 'Administration of Income Maintenance Programs'. In as much as the Committee will have accepted the preparatory work that I have done on this report, it will provide a good example of how a combination of a common-sense method, and a scientific method and a philosophic method can be used, and also how such thinking can contribute to making choices in public policy.

Be that as it may, my main purpose in the following dissertation is not simply to establish the relevance of three methods of knowing. The dissertation itself has a salient concentration on the contribution that a new way of understanding sociology can make to policy formulation. My main aim in discussing common sense and philosophic method is to define sociology by separating it from other forms of knowledge. For this reason, the most important Part in this treatise is the third one, in which I define sociology and propose a sociological paradigm for action in the social policy area.
PART II

SEEING THINGS AS THEY ARE
I derive my understanding of social policy from a prior understanding of the theory and practice of community development. I have been fortunate enough to have been involved in community development programs in Kenya, East Africa, and subsequently I was a director of a community development organisation which served the Province of Prince Edward Island in Canada. In Australia, I was involved in the Australian Assistance Plan, which I saw as a community development program that operated at a national, regional and local level.

Ideally, it would be best to capture the idea of community development in a definition. But this assumes that the term is definable, and this simply cannot be taken for granted. It is a mistake to labour under the illusion that every term in common use can be defined in a way that is universally acceptable.

Strictly speaking, to define a concept is to limit its meaning in terms of its genus and species. But the meaning of some terms cannot be thus limited. An idea like 'community' has almost an unlimited meaning in regard to human beings, in so far as it can be applied to all instances of people living together. Similarly, the term 'development' is open to many and unpredictable connotations. Any attempt to give the term itself a definite meaning in its association with the term 'community' poses insurmountable problems. It does seem to be virtually impossible to forge a definition of community development with which everyone interested in the subject will be prepared to agree.

When confronted with the difficulty of indefinable terms, one has two options. The first is to resort to a general description of the topic which is broad enough to half-please everyone. The second option
is to choose a tighter statement which, in effect, can serve as a personal definition of what one means.

Descriptions are looser than definitions. However, descriptions can serve a purpose of indicating the general parameters within which a topic is being studied. Such explanations help to identify the general nature of the phenomenon under observation.

Despite the fact that community development may be virtually impossible to define, it is, of course, acceptable to define one's own personal interpretation of it. Indeed anyone who wishes to discuss it, must do so, in order to work with clear and distinct ideas that can be conveyed to others. Naturally, in proposing a definition of terms, one may at the same time be seeking the agreement of many others, but it would be foolhardy to imagine that a desire for acceptability is the same thing as actual acceptability on a broad scale. Nevertheless, the willingness of an individual to provide a definition represents an honest approach to research into any subject.

This last statement puts me on the spot to state what I mean by community development. Let me say at the outset that I am primarily interested in co-operation between local organisations and government departments. Naturally I recognise that there can be community development without any government involvement in it, but my present particular interest is in government-sponsored community development programs. The development in question may be first of all sponsored by the community and subsequently attract the sponsorship of government, or vice versa. One way or another, interaction between local organisations and government is central to my understanding of community development.

Having said this, I still do not want to proceed immediately to a succinct statement of what I mean by the essence of the concept. Instead I propose that my personal definition will be better understood, if I first of all give an account of the steps I have taken to arrive at it.

A logician may choose to take two approaches to a definition of terms. One approach is to define government-sponsored community development programs by extension. By this I mean that one can point to
a number of such programs in various countries around the world and identify the concept by reference to them. But the fact that each different country has a different understanding of what programs can be categorised as ones of community development does mean that our resultant definition is going to be very broad and rather loose. Fortunately, such definitions by extension can be complemented by a definition by intension. That is, each interested observer can abstract from a variety of community development experiences the essence of what he perceives the concept means. So, in this analysis, I propose to begin with a quick survey of the extent of the use of the concept and then to follow this up by explaining what for me is its essential meaning.

Community Development Programs Around the World

In Britain, the Seebohm Report\(^7\) saw community development as a responsibility of new service departments of local government. It is described as a client-centred operation in which staff mobilise resources within the local area for the improvement of social welfare services. In subsequent years increased government support for such activity has been given to places designated as specially deprived areas. In these areas the Home Office established special inter-service teams to assist under-privileged communities.

In the USA a series of programs aimed at combating the problem of poverty in the cities was developed through the 1960's and the 1970's. The stress was on public participation in the solution of local problems. Such programs generated a lot of literature on how the Americans interpret community development. Programs like the Model City Program, have since been amalgamated into the Federal Government's Community Development Block Grant Program which in 1978 provided

\(^7\) Britain. Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (Chairman, F. Seebohm), London, 1968.
$3.5 billion to local government for neighbourhood improvement, community services and facilities.\(^8\)

In Canada, community development spans a number of agencies, including the Federal Neighbourhood Improvement Program, the federal and provincial rehabilitation programs, the social animation programs of the Ministry of Culture, the Canadian Assistance Plan, the Company of Young Canadians, the Opportunities for Youth Program and so on. Some will even include within a very broad definition of community development, the provision of multi-service centres to integrate and decentralise the provision of services by government departments.

Since I will subsequently be working towards a personal definition of community development I should also like to make a brief reference to community development in Kenya, East Africa; where I worked in the 60's. The then President and Prime Minister of the country, Jomo Kenyatta, regarded community development activity as a major responsibility of politicians. When politicians were in recess from Parliament, they were expected to foster self-help projects in their electorates.

My purpose in making this passing reference to Kenya is to provide just one instance of a variety of community development philosophies and practices which exist in underdeveloped countries in Africa, Asia and South America. The community development ideas which are evolving in these countries are important for more advanced countries. In fact, some writers, such as Batten,\(^9\) have maintained that the current interest in community development techniques had its origins in the practices of British administration in underdeveloped countries. In the 50's, the western nations realised that the principles fundamental to the practice of community development overseas have an important relevance to their own more developed political, economic and social structures. The rich countries learned from their experiences in the poor countries and began to apply the theories and practices of community development back home.

Here in Australia, there has been an accelerated interest in community development in recent years. In the early 70's references to

\(^8\) Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development. Unpublished paper on Community Development. Canberra, 1977.

community development were common in the literature and seminars of such organisations as the Councils of Social Service, the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, the Council for the Aged, service clubs, leagues clubs, citizen's advice bureaux, resident action groups, adult education groups and the like. Local government authorities employed community development officers mainly to help in the provision of welfare services. They still do. In each of the states community development is mostly regarded as the province of government departments of welfare. Within the federal departmental system the Department of Social Security has a close association with a variety of groups which consider themselves involved in the processes of community development. Under the Whitlam government, the Department of Urban and Regional Development undertook a community development responsibility; and this function survived for a time in the subsequent creation of the Department of the Environment, Housing and Community Development. In turn, this department was abolished and at present (1983) there is no department within the federal system which has a responsibility for community development in its title. Nonetheless such departments as the Departments of Employment and Industrial Relations and the Department of Education and Youth Affairs and others, are involved in what may be called community development activities.

A Definition by Intension of Community Development

Since community development in one form or another is a world-wide phenomenon and since thousands of people in Australia would consider that they are involved in it, it is sensible to ask, what is it? What is its essential nature? In the language of the logician after it has been defined by extension, how can it be defined by intension? How is it possible for any individual to capture his own idea of community development in a formula of words that will be precise enough to pin-point its key idea and yet be flexible enough to be applicable to a variety of programs here in Australia?

At this stage it is apt to refer to a description of community development which has cropped up again and again in discussions on this matter, even though it was first written in 1956. It is a description that was still being used in interdepartmental discussions within the federal government in the late 1970's. It is sometimes referred to as the standard U.N. definition. It comes from the Twentieth Report of the Administrative Committee of Co-ordination to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It is as follows:
The term community development has come into international usage to connote the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate those communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute to national development. This complex of processes is made up of two elements: the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative, and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiatives, self-help and mutual self-help to make them more effective.¹⁰

This 'definition' has lasted in good currency for a long time, so it must have some validity. However, before looking at its good points I propose to identify some of its more obvious weaknesses.

Anybody acquainted with the rules of logic will be sceptical about it as a definition. A definition is supposed to state the essence of a thing and to separate one thing from others in a way that makes it easily identifiable.¹¹ The U.N. definition hardly does that. The terms embrace so much that there is little room to separate one thing from another. For example, the phrase 'economic, social and cultural conditions' embraces almost everything. Such an expression may describe the context within which community development activity occurs, but it does not describe the nature of community development activity itself.

A definition is meant to be terse. It should measure up to the thing defined, being neither too wide nor too narrow. It should fit like a glove or a tight pair of jeans. This definition hangs like a kaftan.

The definition also falls foul of one of the biggest blunders in defining things. To define community development it uses the term community a second time. This makes the reasoning circular and advances our understanding of the concept very little. A purist would say, this


is not a definition, but simply a description, and a very loose description at that.

It might be objected that if this formula of words is all that bad, why put it up for analysis? It is worth doing so, because bad and all as it is, it is still possible to strip away the unnecessary verbiage, separate the wheat from the chaff, and arrive at an important kernel of truth.

For me, the key phrase in the 'definition' is that which refers to the fact that:

... the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities.

I make the point that government authorities are also people. So, what I want to extricate from this definition is its emphasis on potentially productive relationships between organised groups in the private and the public sector.

I accept that there are people who interpret community development quite differently. There are those who stress that community development happens at the neighbourhood level and has nothing to do with government departments at all. Indeed they hold that government departments are a hindrance to any such development.

I agree that it is possible to interpret the beginnings of community development in this way. But it is most unlikely for any community in Australia to develop for long before it runs up against the fact of government intervention in its affairs in one form or another.

On the other hand, the key issue for a person interested in government sponsorship of community development activity is how to encourage the interaction between people in government departments and people in local organisations for their mutual advantage. So, I propose to shape a definition of community development which simply says:

Community development happens through organisational interaction.
In other words, the essential characteristic of government-sponsored community development programs is organisational interaction. For me these two words capture the core meaning of community development. In a sense they define it. In another sense, though, the definition is too skimpy. We cannot say that the concept of organisational interaction on its own casts enough light to make any community development program easily understood. Nonetheless, I submit that the concept of institutional interaction provides us with a fundamental idea upon which the definition of all community development programs can be built.

Community Development and Different Forms of Organisational Interaction

Community development is not only a dynamic concept, it also manifests itself as a reality that takes different shapes and forms in different countries and in different contexts. Consequently, even though I find its central core of meaning in organisational interaction, this concept has to be extended further to fully capture the essence of community development programs in particular places. Accordingly I propose this form of words to explain it:

Community development happens through the organisation of special interest groups and through the interaction of these new institutions with older and more established institutions for the benefit of increasing categories and numbers of people.

It may be countered that this definition does not say much; but I propose it says enough to specify the nature of the kinds of community development that I have experienced. By not saying too much the definition is sufficiently flexible to be applicable to a variety of programs. The shape of any particular program can be further determined by the circumstances which decide the 'special interest groups', the 'new institutions', the 'established institutions', the 'interaction', the 'benefit' and so on.

In order to provide an example of how apt this definition is, I will clarify how the meaning of its terms became apparent in the unfolding of the nature of the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP). The special interest groups involved in the AAP were those associations in local
government areas, or in regions, that were especially concerned with
the improvement of social welfare services. These groups formed the
constituent elements of a new institution in Australian society which
were called Regional Councils for Social Development - or Regional
Councils for short.

These were the new institutions that began to interact with
established institutions for dealing with the welfare services aspect
of social policy. In the first place, the interaction involved the
gaining of acceptance by the Regional Councils from established
government departments of their right to be involved in the provision of
services - local, small-scale, short-term, social welfare services. In
the second place, the interaction involved planning - on the basis of
local organisations' knowledge of their own needs - of new or expanded
welfare services. In the third place, the interaction involved a
pressuring of the established service departments to supply services
which were better tailored to the social welfare needs of particular
places.

Within the parametres of the AAP social policy, the 'established
institutions' were principally the service departments - Social Security,
Health and Education - though other federal departments besides were
involved in the action. The activity of the Regional Councils sponsored
under the AAP policy also affected a variety of departments in the state
government system. Local governments also were put in the position where
they had to decide on what kind of official interaction they were
prepared to have with the Regional Councils for Social Development - as
also were a variety of established voluntary agencies.

In the first three years of the Australian Assistance Plan, the
'benefit' which resulted from the work of the Regional Councils was
about $12 million dollars spent on the resolution of local issues.
About $5 million of this was spent on structural arrangements for
neighbourhood action, such as the acquisition of staff and premises; and
about $7 million was spent in local social welfare projects. The
objective of the AAP - which was achieved in part - was to reach those
categories of people who were most in need of social welfare services,
and to reach increasing numbers of them.
In brief, I argue that the above stated definition of community development is applicable to the Australian Assistance Plan.

However, this forging of a definition of what I interpret as a nationally sponsored community development program is a definition based on hindsight. At the beginning of the development of the AAP, its initiators had no such clarity of vision. There is much value, however, in eliciting a definition from a past program. The intelligent interpretation of a previous program can provide the intellectual basis for the design of an alternative program.

An Approach to Designing a New Program

In setting out to design a new program one can try to learn from the mistakes in the Australian Assistance Plan and get rid of the many perceived weaknesses in its implementation. In the context of the political management of the economy, it can be claimed that one of the major weaknesses of the AAP was that through organisational interaction it stimulated a demand for services, even though there was no real knowing where the demand might end. Moreover the AAP policy concentrated on the provision of welfare services and did not include any responsibility to stimulate complementary organisational activity to generate enough wealth locally to pay for increases in services. Indeed, it could be argued that the AAP policy was pursued almost to the extent of disregarding the possibility that an escalation of welfare services might over-extract the ability of the economy to pay for them.

This argument can lead to the conclusion that it would, perhaps, have been better if the initial focus of a government sponsored community development program had been on an economic objective rather than a social one. With the advantage of hindsight, it is fair to consider whether a focus on job-generation might have been better than a concentration on welfare services.

Be that as it may, it is still true that the Australian Assistance Plan was widely and officially recognised as a valuable social experiment. Exactly how valuable it has been has yet to be proved. The extent of its

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value depends in part on how well equipped we are now, to use its lessons for future programs.

When we do undertake to design a community development program to alleviate unemployment, I suggest that one way in which we can approach this task will be to accept ‘institutional interaction’ as our key to a solution. We can then use this idea as the foundation for building a new definition of community development which is relevant to the improvement of, say, manpower policy. To be more precise, to achieve our new purpose we can define a community development strategy to generate jobs as follows:

Community development concerns the integration of institutional interaction geared towards the specific objective of generating a greater availability of productive work.

This could be the start of a new social policy. However, it will be wise to realise that the organisations which can contribute to job-generation are many and varied, and to anticipate that the modes of their interactions can be similarly multiple in their forms. The integration of such diversity will be no easy task.

The wording of a definition of community development may be simple but the ramifications of its consequences can be extraordinarily complex. Accordingly before beginning to design a new program it is a great advantage to have a conceptual framework which is simple enough in its perception to be easily understood, but yet supple enough in its comprehensiveness to cater for managing the complexity of pursuing simple ideas to their logical conclusion. Such a conceptual framework can be derived from a reading of the literature on community development. But it is a very great advantage when one’s understanding of this aspect of the literature has already been exemplified in a national community development program.

A perusal of the literature on community development gives evidence of the variety of its forms. However it is most unlikely that anyone will find in any single book written outside Australia a discussion of community development which is at once sufficiently incisive and sufficiently comprehensive to provide a cogent theoretical basis for the
design of a government sponsored community development program such as we had in the Australian Assistance Plan.

**Rothman's Models of Community Development**

Fortunately, there is one treatise on community development, which although not adequate in itself to provide a precise theoretical explanation of a complex national program, nevertheless, does provide valuable pointers. I refer to Jack Rothman's 'Three Models of Community Organisation Practice'. It was first published in New York by the Columbia University Press in 1968. His theory was revised in 1972 and published again in 1974, after which it became generally available in Australia. 13

Rothman holds that there are different forms of community organisation practice. He considers them separately. There appears, he maintains, three important orientations to deliberate and purposive change. He suggests we can best refer to them as approaches and names them Models A, B and C. They can be called respectively, locality development, social planning and social action.

**Model A**

Rothman begins with locality development. Locality development presupposes that community change may be pursued best of all through the broad participation of a wide spectrum of people at the local community level in goal determination and action.

**Model B**

This is the social planning approach. It emphasises a technical process of problem solving with regard to substantive problems such as poverty, inadequate social services, unemployment, delinquency, community recreation centres, health centres, housing and so on. Deliberately planned and controlled social change has a central place in this model. The use of a statistical base for planning decisions is paramount. The approach presupposes that change in a complex industrial environment requires expert planners, who through the exercise of technical abilities

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including the ability to lobby large bureaucratic institutions, can skillfully guide complex change processes.

By and large the concern here is with establishing, arranging and delivering goods and services to people who need them. In this Model B, building organisational and management ability in the community does not play a central role. Likewise model B does not have a focus on fostering radical social change.

**Model C**

Model C, however, is about fundamental social change. It presupposes a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be organised, perhaps in alliance with others, in order to make adequate demands on the larger community for increased resources, or treatment more in accord with justice.

Rothman proposes three models. But his principles of classification for differentiating the three models do seem to be conceptually untidy. He begins in Model A by using a concept of space as his principle of classification by referring to locality development. He then switches to a mode of operation as his principle of classification for Model B and C, by referring to social planning and social action. Finally, he offers as a rationale for his three models a principle of classification built on the philosophical labels of idealist, rationalist and realist.

Greater conceptual tidiness can be brought into Rothman's analysis by adopting three separate principles of classification and by correlating them with three principal areas of operation. It then is possible to integrate all these separate ideas into a single paradigm. Moreover, it can be shown that this paradigm is relevant to the various kinds of community development activities that were encompassed within the AAP policy.

**A Community Development Paradigm**

A schematic presentation of this paradigm is as follows:
Although Rothman does not provide a paradigm, as integrated as the one above, for his three models, he does recognise the interdependence between them. He refers to his models as being the result of different value preferences of three different types of practitioner.

The locality development practitioner will likely cherish that aspect of the social work value system that emphasises harmony and communication in human affairs; the social planner will build on social work values that encourage rationality, objectivity and professional purposiveness; the social activist will draw upon social work value commitments that stress social justice and equality.

In the case of the AAP, a government sponsored community development program was mounted in which all three kinds of practitioners had a role to play. Moreover, I propose that an understanding of the relevance of the foregoing paradigm can help to elucidate the relationship between the different modes of operation. Accordingly I will discuss each of the three principles of classification and illustrate its relevance to the AAP. To begin with, consider the effect of the spatial unit on the mode of activity which was salient at different levels of operation.

**The National Level**

First of all it needs to be said that at the national level the Commonwealth Government sponsored the AAP policy through the agency of the newly formed Social Welfare Commission. The Commission was embedded...
within the federal departmental system. As a unit within a bureaucratic structure, the Commission was dependent upon the administrative support of the Department of Social Security. Nevertheless, the Commission by the terms of its mandate was charged with the responsibility to promote an innovative style of social planning and community development.

The small group of community development practitioners within the Commission were required by circumstances to put their primary emphasis on what Rothman calls a social action model.

They were concerned with questions of improved democracy, a fairer go for the poorer sections of the community, a better deal for those who needed welfare services, and the acceptance of the idea that ordinary people have a right to be involved in social action to improve their own communities. In short, community development practitioners in the Commission had to be concerned with matters of social justice.

They had also to be realists in regard to paying attention to conflicts of interests between various federal government departments. The Commission had to be prepared to ease the tensions that existed between Federal and State Government departments in the delivery of welfare services. Moreover, those in the Commission had also to be alert to the sensitivities that existed in the relationships between the new institutions called the Regional Councils for Social Development and the already well established private welfare agencies.

The Regional Level

At the regional level a different set of values prevailed. The mandate that was given to the Regional Councils had a quite distinctive emphasis. The emphasis at this level was on a social planning secretariat staffed with professionals, but under the management of voluntary committees. The secretariats were to be headed (at least in theory) by expert social planners who were skilled in the methodology of community surveys, statistical analysis and the rational allocation of resources according to facts and figures acquired by social research.
It may be stated in passing that the expert planning approach is one that on the surface at least has the best chance of acceptance by public administrators. For almost all such administrators conform to the principle that social welfare services ought to be provided on a rational and equitable basis. Where the need is greatest, there services should be provided. However, a political realist may well maintain that in practice this does not happen; though, if he is also an idealist, he may admit that it ought to; and if he is also a rationalist, he will be able to give facts and figures to prove his point.

The Local Level

In the Australian Assistance Plan funds were allocated to the Regional Councils for the employment of community development officers. Their job was to go into the poorer areas of the region, to make contact with people, to seek the support of neighbourhood groups, women’s groups, ethnic groups and so on. The COO was expected to motivate co-operation between these local groups and the Regional Councils. Where new groups were needed in order to respond to a specific social problem, as, for instance, the employment of school-leavers, the COO was expected to encourage new organisational initiatives. The mandate that was given by the Commission to the COO's was to advance the interests of disadvantaged groups. The role was one of locality development, the mode of operation was largely one of motivating group activity.

For each scale of operation in the community development program known as the Australian Assistance Plan there was a most immediately relevant mode of operation. Although this was true, it by no means expressed the whole truth. As a matter of fact, at each separate scale of operation all these modes of community development were to some extent appropriate and to some degree were always present, simultaneously.

In the community development operation at the local level the practitioner is very quickly going to get beyond the stage of initial motivation, and will find himself being required to make plans for the future, and his plans will have a better chance of being effective to the extent that he understands social planning techniques. Planning for other people's lives is a political activity, and so, once plans are set,
the planners are well advised to be prepared for conflict, negotiation, bargaining, compromise, judgment and resolution. In other words social motivation leads through social planning to a social action mode of operation.

A similar eventuality can be in evidence in the other scales of operation. At the regional level all three modes of operation may occur - social planning, social motivation and social action. At the regional level, in the AAP the most important style of operation was meant to be the social planning style. In practice, in different regions, at different times, the social motivation and social action modes of community development predominated.

At the national level the Commission found it necessary to stress the values of social action, in order to gain acceptance for its mandate from government departments and agencies. In a sense, the Commission played an advocacy role, seeking recognition within the bureaucracy for the right of community organisations to affect departmental decisions. The arguments in favour of allowing citizens greater control over service delivery were based on terms like justice, equality, and democratic processes. The purpose of such arguments was to enable the Commission to gain acceptance for a community development program that had repercussions not alone on bureaucratic administration but also on regional planning and local organisation.

As a matter of course, public administrators are wary of community development programs. Public servants have a most important role to play in rationing scarce resources among a variety of public programs in accordance with long established principles, traditions, and procedures. They know that the new pressures which can be generated by community development programs are often unpredictable. They realise that in a government sponsored community development program all sorts of cross-currents of interactions are likely to occur which can challenge the effectiveness of established programs. From the point of view of encouraging initiative and fostering the development of new services, a loosening of bureaucratic controls may be necessary; but from the point of view of stable administration it has its risks. During the promotion of the Australian Assistance Plan, the Commission recognised these risks,
but maintained that the community development activity was necessary to facilitate the provision of improved services. Similarly, in any new community development program, the risks to be undertaken must be balanced against the advantages to be gained. Both the means and the ends must be justified.

An Apt Definition for a National Program

At this stage we have arrived at a critical turning point in this chapter. We have already looked at definitions I have derived from previous program experiences. It is now time to advance this conceptualisation further and to evolve new definitions better suited to a new program, in this instance, focussed, say, on job-generation. I will do this briefly in two paragraphs. The first gives the broad outline of a particular type of a government sponsored program. The second gives a terse statement of its essence.

An awareness of the many potential conflicts in community development enables one to forge a more apposite definition which is directly related to the government sponsorship of a national program. In this context 'community development' consists in a choice by cabinet of a specific policy objective, for the attainment of which, a department of the public service is charged with the responsibility of launching a new institution, which has a calculated degree of freedom from traditional bureaucratic controls. This requires that the new institution be so designed to encourage interested people to accept a mandate to achieve a stated objective, through the performance of defined functions, within a determinate geographical area. It entails the activation and re-activation of many local organisations; and extends to their co-ordination at a regional or local government level. It further entails the making available to such co-ordinating institutions, adequate financial and staff resources to achieve their purpose. It also involves the planned use of the activity of these institutions as a catalyst among established departments and voluntary agencies, in our federal system, for the deliberately and publicly acknowledged purpose of integrating the consequent organisational interaction, so that it, too, becomes geared towards the initially chosen objective.
In fine, a succinct definition of a government sponsored community development program can be stated as follows:

Community development concerns the activity of giving purpose to a new institution, generating its functioning; and integrating its relationships.
PART III

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE
CHAPTER 3
PARADIGMS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

The previous chapter ended in a terse definition of community development. A definition such as this is significant because it catches succinctly the nature of a social activity. But some definitions can do more than that. In the formulation of social policy a definition can sometimes act as a principle upon which a paradigm can be designed. Indeed, insofar as a definition of a social activity is both incisive and flexible it can give rise to a paradigm within which the development of subsequent programmatic action can be explained. The knowledge can be directly related to things that are actually happening. In other words the root of the knowledge can be ontological.

A definition of sociology is bound to be different. Sociology is a science. A science is a way of knowing. Consequently knowledge about a science is knowledge about a way of knowing. In effect, a definition of sociology will help one to understand not a tangible fact, but rather a cognitive fact. Strictly speaking the problem of trying to find out what a science is, is essentially an epistemological one.

Sociologists, though, are sometimes reluctant to be specific about the nature of their science. For instance, this reluctance is plainly in evidence in Raymond Aron's book on the 'Main Currents in Sociological Thought'.

Aron begins his book by admitting that 'to write a history of sociology, one must first arrive at a definition of what is to be called a "sociology"'. Then on top of that he concedes that this task is beyond him.

14 The statement of a principle can achieve the same effect. For instance the 'Opportunities for Youth Program' in Canada could be said to have been established on the basis of a principle which stated: 'Give young people worthwhile things to do that they enjoy doing and for which they are properly remunerated'. Cf. A survey of Programs to Youth of the Federal Departments and Agencies, by T. O Brien, under contract with the Citizenship Branch of the Secretary of State, Ottawa, Canada, 1970.

He acknowledges that we 'cannot offer any body of demonstrated truths which might be called the present state of sociology'. He is prepared to risk what the previous chapter of this dissertation termed a definition by extension. He proposes:

To avoid this difficulty I prefer to regard as sociology that which societies designate as such; I regard sociologists as those who assume this title - of honor or disgrace as you will; and for an idea of sociology throughout the world, I refer to the quadrennial International Congress of Sociology attended by several hundred people who call themselves sociologists and who discuss a number of problems they call sociological - problems which imply a certain idea of what sociology is and should be today.

Such a definition is all very well for those who are already sociologists. Presumably they will know what Aron means. But for any newcomer who wishes to gain acceptance within the community of scholars who call themselves sociologists the definition is not much use. The circle is closed: he remains in the dark. If the newcomer happens to be well versed in history, it may remind him of gnosticism - in the 2nd Century A.D. The gnostics were a Christian sect who claimed to have esoteric spiritual knowledge of a kind that was hard to refute because they would not reveal what it was!

Anyway, anyone who is familiar with logic (or even with a child's persistent questioning) will realise that the human mind is seldom fully satisfied by definitions by extension and seeks to complement them by definitions by intension. Indeed, this very tendency is evident in Aron's own case. Despite his protestations to the contrary, he inadvertently slips into an attempt at defining the nature of sociology. His definition by intension (albeit a very bad one) is as follows:

Sociology may be said to be characterised by two specific aims which account for its nature. On the one hand sociology lays claim to objective and scientific knowledge. On the other hand what it claims to know objectively and scientifically is some vaguely defined thing we call society or societies or social phenomena. 19

The realisation that the adjective 'social' and the abstract nouns 'society' and 'sociology' itself are all derived from the same etymological root makes the reasoning circular and the above statement practically meaningless. Moreover, when there is vagueness about the subject matter, such sociology's claim to scientific knowledge is at least suspect.

Given that Aron's definition by intension is so inadequate he would have been saved from the above criticism if he had adhered to his original plan of only defining sociology by extension. Be that as it may, he goes on to state that in the course of recent international congresses, two typical schools of sociology have emerged each aware of itself and of its opposition to the other. These two concepts of sociology were that of the American school on the one hand and that of the Soviet, or Marxist, school on the other. These two schools, continues Aron, do not involve the whole of what is practised all over the world under the name of sociology; but these two schools, which are the most typical ones, form the opposite poles between which fluctuates what is called sociology today.

Now it is possible to consider any science - the concept of sociology included - as a way of knowing, a heuristic structure, a cognitive map, a framework of knowledge, a problematic or a paradigm. All these terms although not exactly synonomous are roughly similar. In effect, it is Aron's contention that in regard to sociology the Americans and the Marxists have two competing paradigms. Consequently in as much as one can find a way of identifying the nature of these paradigms one may be on the track of discovering an acceptable definition of sociology.

Fortunately, it so happens that in recent years two eminent social theorists, the one an American and the other a Marxist, have each written

a book which deals with frameworks of knowledge. The American, Kuhn, 20 wrote a book called 'Structures of Scientific Revolutions' and called his concept of a heuristic structure a paradigm. The Marxist, Althusser, wrote 'For Marx' 21 in which he describes an equivalent idea of a way of knowing as a problematic. Consequently it makes sense to sort out how Kuhn and Althusser consider science in general before zooming in on the nature of the science of sociology in particular.

Paradigm and Problematic

In accordance with the above train of thought the best way to proceed is first of all to present an explanation of Kuhn's paradigm. This will be followed by an account of the consternation that Kuhn's paradigm for social science caused among logical positivists. To add fuel to the flames of such consternation a brief reference will be made to Willer and Willer's criticism of empiricism in general. Thus the way is prepared for the introduction of an alternative viewpoint: that of Althusser. So, an explanation of Althusser's use of the problematic will be presented.

However, one can go a step further. Both Kuhn and Althusser are open to criticism on the basis of the moderate realist philosophy which was referred to briefly in Chapter 1 to this dissertation. Consequently it is proposed to compare and contrast Kuhn's paradigm and Althusser's problematic from the viewpoint of moderate realism. After this has been accomplished the ground will have been prepared for the presentation of the definition of the science of sociology from a new philosophical perspective.

Kuhn's Paradigm

Kuhn's book entitled 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions' is a history of how scientists know their science. The history refers to particular scientists who were pre-eminent in certain selected fields, as for example: Aristotle, Copernicus, Gallileo Descartes, Newton, Lavoisier, Priestly, Leibnitz, Einstein and so on. They studied things like motion, physics, mechanics, thermodynamics, electricity and relativity. Such

men are known as 'physical scientists'. Kuhn's work is an historical account of how they know what they know, and about the states of knowledge in which the various sciences were at different periods.

Kuhn proposes that in what he calls pre-science there is no dominant theory which is generally accepted by those interested in the field. There is no unified understanding of the problem in question. There is no single salient conceptual framework within which the problem is considered. There is in fact no paradigm.

However, when a particular problem in science becomes the centre of attention and a scientist succeeds in explaining it so well that his thinking becomes dominant in the field, then a paradigm emerges. Kuhn makes the point that it need not necessarily be an individual thinker who makes this breakthrough. A number of scientists working along the same lines could establish a new theory. Once such a theory becomes a paradigm, in effect, this means that everyone working in the field must take it into account. It may be difficult to pin-point in time the precise emergence of the paradigm, but one can identify the period in which it came to the fore. For instance Lavoisier helped to establish a paradigm for understanding electricity; Newton, mechanics; and Einstein, relativity. Their theories become the accepted paradigm during particular periods, even though there may have been some overlapping with theories that preceded theirs.

Each time an established paradigm is 'toppled' there is what Kuhn calls a scientific revolution. Paradigms are toppled by innovative thinkers who identify weaknesses in paradigms and by relating the old paradigms to a new framework of facts in the real world make it impossible to defend them any longer.

Referring to scientific revolutions Kuhn states: 'Each of these necessitates the community's rejection of one time-honoured scientific theory in favour of another incompatible with it'. This results in:

(i) a consequent scrutiny, and
(ii) a transformation of the scientific imagination.

This can be expressed succinctly and accurately by stating that there is a transformation of the world in which scientific work is done.
Kuhn claims that the makers of paradigmatic science - which he considers as 'normal science' - are successful in gaining dominance because their achievement is sufficiently unprecedented to attract enduring groups away from competing modes of scientific activity. Simultaneously it is sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for re-defined groups of practitioners to resolve. Students who wish to enter the discipline now have to study their paradigms and, initially at least, are under pressure to accept what the paradigm proclaims. Around the paradigm grows a body of theorists and practitioners. There follows the formation of specialised journals and the foundation of specialised societies with a similar focus of interest. A claim is made for a special place for the paradigm in university curricula. The paradigm has arrived. The paradigm becomes the accepted model for studying that science. Kuhn sometimes refers to such a pattern of study as a disciplinary matrix.

The paradigm sets the focus for the study of the science. It defines its general parameters. It still leaves room for a tremendous amount of work in explaining the original position. Kuhn says a paradigm is rarely an object of replication. Instead, like an accepted juridical decision in common law, it is an object for further articulation and specification under new and more stringent conditions.

The paradigm may be compared to the outside straight-edged pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Before tackling a specific problem within the discipline, it is a good idea to get the outside edges in shape first. The need for the paradigm arises out of the immense difficulty encountered in developing points of contact between a theory and reality. Once one has grasped the general framework of a science, then one can work on its specific aspects. One is assured by one's colleagues who subscribe to the same paradigm that one is on the right track. One is supported in one's research by a strong network of commitments - conceptual, theoretical, instrumental and methodological.

In these circumstances, to propose a new paradigm not only requires intelligence, it also demands great courage.
Nonetheless, every so often a new talent comes along that has such courage. Instead of an individual it may perhaps be a group of gifted scientists. Kuhn states that paradigm-makers are often new to the discipline. On account of their fresher outlook they are able to spot anomalies in the old paradigm and begin to unsettle the whole-hearted acceptance of the received wisdom. Kuhn makes the point, though, that once any established paradigm is in place, there is no way in which it can be ignored by anyone working in that field - newcomer or not. To reject one paradigm without at the same time substituting another would be seen as rejecting 'science' itself. And few groups of scientists worth their salt will tolerate that.

By ensuring that paradigms will not be too easily surrendered, resistance to new ideas guarantees that scientists will not be too easily distracted from their main interest, and makes it mandatory that anomalies that could possibly lead to paradigm changes will have to penetrate existing knowledge to the very core before they will be taken seriously. Skirmishes may take place on the peripheries of a science but, with some exceptions, before scientists will acknowledge a revolution in their thinking, the new paradigm maker - like an Einstein - must prove that he has something worthwhile to offer. His new paradigm must give a better understanding of the reality in question than was previously available.

Although Kuhn does not say so explicitly he does bring out the political nature of the accepted truth. The paradigm belongs to the 'scientific community'. It is hard to buck the system. In Kuhn's own words: 'The group's members as individuals and by virtue of their shared training and experience are the possessers of the rules of the game or of some equivalent basis for unequivocal judgment.'

A moderate realist philosopher may wish to simplify Kuhn's message in this way. In all knowledge their are three essential elements to be taken into consideration. Firstly there is the thing itself - which can be known. Secondly, their is the knowledge of the thing in the minds of the knowing group. Thirdly there is the choice by the knowing group that what it knows it accepts as true. Once all three elements are present the paradigm is solidly established.
However, Kuhn goes on to stress the relativity of scientific knowledge. He states that a paradigm is only true until the next revolution comes along. His historical account of paradigm makers shows that this has often occurred in the past and can be expected to occur in the future. A moderate realist could interject here and say, yes, and when it does, a new choice will have to be made about what is to be accepted as true.

The Reaction of the Scientific Community

Kuhn's book caused quite a stir. His paradigm was the subject of an international colloquium in the philosophy of science. As a result of this colloquium a book was published by Lakatos and Musgrave called 'Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge'. The list of names of expert social theorists who attended this conference is a testimony to the importance of the topic discussed. It included: T.S. Kuhn, J.W.N. Watkins, S.E. Toulmin, L. Pearce Williams, K.R. Popper, Margaret Masterman, I. Lakatos, and P.K. Feyerabend. The following is a sampling of the discussion which ensued.

In the conference setting, Kuhn himself was given the opportunity to re-state his theory of how scientific revolutions occur. It soon became apparent that he was at loggerheads with mainstream logical positivism in general and with Sir Karl Popper in particular. The gist of Kuhn's argument with Popper and the popperians hinges upon the fact that logic and formal mathematics are not enough in themselves to explain the progress of science. Kuhn says that, 'Again and again Sir Karl has rejected the "psychology of knowledge" or the "subjective"', and insisted that his concern was with the 'logic of knowledge' and the objective. Nevertheless, Kuhn insinuates politely, Popper allows in by the back door, the relevance of the individual's source of inspiration. Kuhn then posits the question: How about the scientific group's source of inspiration?

inspiration which has been brought about by both nurture and training in the psychological make-up of licenced membership? In other words Kuhn makes the point that there are social-psychological imperatives that cause the acceptance of even Sir Karl's logical imperatives related to conjecture and refutation.

Watkins, a contributor to the discussion, waxes rhetorically in reaction to his own construction of Kuhn's theory, i.e. as a 'view of the scientific community as essentially a closed system, intermittently shaken by collective nervous breakdowns followed by restored mental unison'. He is at pains to defend Popper, but he is unfair to Kuhn, because he over-emphasises what he calls the gestalt-switch. In other words he admits to interpreting Kuhn's paradigm maliciously (sic) as an instant-paradigm thesis. By over-stating his case, he lessened whatever chance he had of winning the argument. One could draw the conclusion from his contribution to the conference that he simply wanted Popper to be right.

Popper's own contribution to the conference is written in a very urbane style admonishing everyone at the beginning that 'we approach everything in the light of preconceived theory ... as a consequence one is liable to pick out those things that one either likes or dislikes ...'. He is reluctant to be in outright disagreement with Kuhn. He states eventually that his difference with Kuhn goes back fundamentally to logic. It is difficult to see how Kuhn could possibly agree with this, particularly since Popper immediately afterwards refers fleetingly to a paper he wrote about scientific knowledge being subjectless. The subject, either as an individual or as a scientific group, plays far too important a part in the establishment of Kuhn's paradigms of science for him to agree to such a statement. It is nonsense to claim that the difference between the two men is simply logical when both are arguing from quite different premises. The difference between Kuhn and Popper is political.

Toulmin, another contributor to the conference takes Kuhn much more seriously. He states that Kuhn has compelled many people to face for the first time the full profundity of the conceptual transformations which have marked the historical development of scientific ideas. He softens Kuhn's thesis by suggesting that Kuhn's revolutions be looked upon
as units of variation leading eventually to effective changes in scientific theory. Nonetheless, he accepts that such changes may depend on 'political revolutions' within a science.

Masterman's article is a 'tour de force'. She defends Kuhn. She says he is scientifically perspicuous even though he is philosophically obscure. She gives a first class analysis of twenty-one meanings for Kuhn's paradigm. She then synthesises these into three: metaparadigms, sociological paradigms and construct paradigms. She scoffs at Popper and Feyerbend. She claims that it is obvious that one of the roots of scientific achievement is metaphysical; praises the originality of Kuhn's sociological notion of a paradigm; but suggests that his paradigm is most of all an artifact which can be used as a puzzle-solving device. Her paper demonstrates that a computer scientist can be a formidable critic of any hazy thinking in the philosophy of science.

So as not to make this section of the chapter too long it is proposed to pass on to Kuhn's reply to his critics. Kuhn makes the point that where he differs from Watkins, Popper, Toulmin, Lakatos and Feyerbend, it is in respect to substance rather than to method. The substance in question is normal science and the change from one normal scientific tradition is another. Courteously he reaffirms a basic point:

Some of the principles deployed in my explanation of science are irreducibly sociological - the group of ablest and best people, appropriately trained and disciplined make the choices that lead to developments in science ...

In effect they endorse the paradigm.

The colloquium which has been discussed above provides evidence of conflict among logical positivists and empiricists particularly in regard to the validity of Kuhn's perception about who decides on paradigms for science. Within the confines of that argument about 'scientific revolutions' Kuhn and particularly Masterman present a much better case than Popper and particularly Watkins. However, the further question can still be asked: Does either side offer an adequate philosophy of science?
To this question a book by Willer and Willer presents an answer. Their book is entitled 'Systematic Empiricism: Critique of a Pseudoscience'. It provides an ironical sequel to the above argument. It criticises positivism and empiricism in general. Willer and Willer imply that the claim to objectivity is spurious as it leads to self-objectivication of scientific inquiry making it philosophically invalid. Empiricism is also at times socially pernicious to the extent that it buttresses the status quo. The results of a 'scientific' research are often used as a means of social control, if not by intention, at least in effect.

To the extent that American sociologists are empiricists and logical positivists, Willer and Willer raise doubts about the validity of the philosophy which underlies their science.

Both Kuhn and Popper are also open to attack from another angle. Marxists find their philosophy too compartmentalised to offer a satisfactory explanation of scientific knowledge. Althusser has mounted such an attack in his writings.

**Althusser's Problematic**

Althusser's book entitled 'For Marx' is difficult to read. He gives words meanings of his own. Admittedly a glossary is included in the book and in it an attempt is made to describe a problematic. It goes as follows:

A word or concept cannot be considered in isolation; it exists only in the theoretical framework in which it is used: it's problematic .... There follows a definition of the negation of some of its elements - which is not very helpful, since what one wants to know is not what a problematic is not, but rather what it is. Finally in a typically paradoxical Althusserian statement the glossary states:

It (presumably the problematic) is centred on the absence of problems and concepts within the problematic as much as by their presence ....

(It must be acknowledged that Althusser did not write this description/definition himself, but in a letter to his translator, recorded in the book, he endorses it.)

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Throughout this book the reader is not spared any of Althusser's own struggle in expressing what he wants to say, nor any of his translator's difficulty in conveying it. Moreover, Althusser repeatedly makes oblique reference to his own interpretations of how Marx interpreted other philosophers, which detracts from making his own meaning clear. Then there is also the difficulty for the reader that this book is a compilation of essays rather than a carefully structured unit.

Nonetheless, just as Kuhn's writing about a paradigm reflects the American approach to the philosophy of science, Althusser's writing about a problematic reflects Marxist thinking on the same subject. Consequently in order to gain an understanding of how a concept of sociology emerges from different philosophies of science, it is worth struggling to follow the intricacies of Althusser's language and thought.

In the chapter 'On the Young Marx' Althusser states (page 6) that every ideology has its own problematic, i.e. a framework from which it is impossible to extract one element without altering its meaning. When he refers to the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach (as he often does) Althusser proposes that his writings do not succeed in conceiving what it is that constitutes the internal essence of an ideological thought, that is, its problematic. In other words Feuerbach's writings have not got a determinate unitary structure.

Althusser states that it is necessary for a philosopher to think the unity of a determinate ideological unity by means of the concepts of its problematic. This enables a rigorous thinker to arrive at the **typical systematic structure** unifying all the elements of the thought to be brought to light and so to discover a determinate content. This in turn allows a rigorous thinker to understand the meaning of the elements of the ideology concerned. He can then go even further along the road to knowledge by relating this ideology to the problems posed to every thinker by the historical period in which he lives.

The understanding of an ideological argument implies simultaneous knowledge of the ideological field in which a thought emerges and grows and the awareness of the internal unity in this same thought. This is the thought's problematic. Elsewhere Althusser equates a problematic
with an ideological schema. He subsequently makes a distinction between the ideological problematic and a scientific problematic.

At this stage a moderate realist could interject and propose that what Althusser is talking about is a philosophical overview within the unity of which the role of a variety of sciences can be more clearly understood.

At the beginning of his chapter 'On the Materialistic Dialectic' Althusser presents the reader with his own explanations of his terminology. Theory with a capital 'T' means Marxist philosophy. All other philosophies are arrogantly relegated to ideologies. In the text of 'For Marx' theory with a small 't' refers to scientific theories. Marx, claims Althusser, founded a scientific theory of history. By theory in this respect Althusser means a specific form of practice, which itself belongs to the complex unity of the social practice of a determinate human society.

The theoretical practice of a science, that is, its problematic, is always completely distinct from the ideological practice of its pre-history. This distinction between a scientific theory and the ideology from which it emanates takes the form of a theoretical and historical discontinuity. It is what Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) calls an 'epistemological break'. The comment can be made on this concept of Bachelard, which Althusser adopted as his own, that such a breakthrough into a new way of knowing results from a combination of a clear philosophical perspective and rigorously logical thought. Analogically, it can be compared to a 'break' in billiards where a combination of luck and skill puts one well ahead in the game.

Beyond the break which constitutes the science there develops a theory, which can now be understood as a theoretical practice of a scientific character. (In this thinking Althusser is close to Kuhn's idea of a period of pre-science being replaced by paradigmatic science.) In other words a problematic emerges. However each such theory with a small 't' (i.e. the theoretical practice of a science) exists within the ambit of the Theory with the big 'T' (i.e. Marxist philosophy: dialectical materialism).

This theory of dialectical materialism is essential for the transformation of domains of knowledge in which a Marxist theoretical practice may exist. The Marxist scientific theory of economics and

politics is established in 'Capital'. But the Marxist theoretical practice of epistemology, of the history of science, ideology, philosophy, (Althusser's own words) and art has yet to be constituted. These fields of knowledge must be purified in a continuous struggle against previous ideologies - and particularly in a struggle against idealism. The reasons and aims of this struggle are clarified by the Theory with the big 'T': the materialist dialectic.

Meanwhile Althusser allows that existing science goes on. But he warns the rigorous thinker that what is truly science and what is truly ideology has to be discerned. The majority of sciences in the ordinary sense of the term do have a 'theory' which he describes as their corpus of concepts. But they do not have a Theory with a big 'T' to which to relate their theoretical practice. However, Althusser claims that in the long run all science will need to be related to the Theory: dialectical materialism.

In reading Althusser it is not always easy to discern how much of what he is proposing is his own thinking and how much that of Marx. However, this distinction is not essential to the main purpose of this chapter. Here the primary concentration is simply upon grasping what a pre-eminent Marxist philosopher, Althusser, means by a problematic and within what philosophical context he evolves this concept.

Marx himself never wrote a 'Dialectics' but Althusser sets out to explain how he has elicited one from his writings. This explanation brings one through a tendentious explication of the relationship of Hegel to Marx and ends up with what Althusser proposes as the two key ideas of dialectical materialism:

(i) the ever pre-giveness of a structured complex unity; and
(ii) over-determination, i.e. complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined.

Towards the end of the book Althusser gives a summary of the Marxist dialectic active in the theoretical and political practices of Marxism. In his own convoluted terminology it goes as follows:
The specific difference of Marxist contradiction is its 'unevenness' or 'overdetermination', which reflects in its conditions of existence, that is, the specific structure of unevenness (in dominance) of the ever-pre-given complex whole which is its existence. Thus understood, contradiction is the motor of all development. Displacement and condensation, with their basis in its overdetermination, explain by their dominance the phases (non-antagonistic, antagonistic and explosive) which constitutes the existence of the complex process, that is, 'of the development of things'.

In brief, Althusser conceives dialectical materialism as a process in which there is a combination of the concrete (the ever-pre-given-complex), the contradictory and the dynamic. It is from within the context of such a philosophy that the present day concept of dialectical sociology emerges.

A Philosophical Recapitulation

Kuhn is ostensibly a positivist. Althusser is a materialist. In order to summarise the comparison and contrast of Kuhn's paradigm and Althusser's problematic it is possible to assess them both from an unaligned philosophical position: that of a moderate realist.

From this standpoint, Kuhn is weak on ontology, but he is strong on the history of the epistemology of science. The insights he has gleaned from his study of history lead him to the discovery of psychological and/or social imperatives in the matter of choice. His sense of logic is balanced by a sense of history which convinces him that he cannot ignore the presence of politics in the matter of the choices that the scientific community makes. Moreover even though he does not go so far as articulating a discovery of ethics or morality, it is implied in his thesis that the choices so made ought to be ethical and moral. His proposition that the best people make the choices that lead to developments in science has strong ethical overtones in it. Anyway, his emphasis on the choice of the paradigm by the scientific community embarrassed some of his friends who wished to defend their paradigm of logical positivism from the uncomfortable incursion of a new paradigm.

By contrast Althusser is definite in his ontology. He posits it quite forcibly in his description of the ever-pre-given-complex-structure. He relates his epistemology - his generalities I, II and III - to his
ontology and insists that both this ontology and epistemology should direct the choice of the problematics for new sciences. From a philosophic angle this approach to making choices is more satisfyingly comprehensive than Kuhn's. However this does not imply that one finds Althusser's epistemology original nor does it imply that his materialistic ontology is valid.

A moderate realist has a different approach to reality. He can begin, not necessarily with the ever-pre-given-complex-structure, but rather with any individual tangible thing. The thing can be considered both as an objective reality and as a concept. It is both an 'ens' and potentially an 'ens rationis'. It is both a being and a thing-to-be-known. It has both 'esse' and 'essentia', i.e. it has both existence and a form of existence, its essence. Related to this theory of essence a moderate realist identifies substance and accidents. Some accidents are specified as essential properties of substance, such as extension in space and time and the relations between the elements within a substance. The relationships of the accidents of one substance to the accidents of another can also be scrutinised. Indeed the precise specification of these relationships is the realm of the physical scientist. They are observable, quantifiable and measurable. Philosophically, this is where Kuhn paradigms are located.

Incidentally, it is here that the logic and the mathematics of the empiricists can lead to much precision of thought. Their focus is good for science but inadequate for a comprehensive philosophy. The very limitations of empiricism can work to its advantage. In as much as empiricists deal with the compartmentalised problems of physical science it is an advantage for them to be pluralistic, open to new perspectives and new experiences. In so far as physical scientists, logical positivists or empiricists become doctrinaire about metaphysics they are in trouble. To the extent that they deny the relevance of metaphysics to science they are in danger of becoming obscurantists; for an obscurantist is one who is locked into his own tunnel-vision and shoves out into the dark difficult ideas which he cannot handle.

On the other hand, Althusser has no doubt about the comprehensiveness of his philosophy. Having worked through his various scientific problematics he then professes the doctrine of an absolute Theory with a capital 'T'. He is at pains to claim that this Theory has worked
itself out in practice in economics and politics. He purports that acceptance of this theory of dialectical materialism will ensure improved problematics for sciences. But he cannot prove his point. Those who are not Marxists remain sceptical. To the extent that Marxist philosophy permeates a widespread political movement it undoubtedly influences the perceptions of many scientists; but in so far as Marxism as a philosophy is rejected by other philosophies, it can be argued that ultimately it contributes not to an improvement of science, but to its detriment.

However, the aim of this chapter is not to prove that either Kuhn's or Althusser's philosophy is either right or wrong. This chapter has a much more limited objective. For the purpose of this dissertation one does not have to prove conclusively that logical positivism is better than Marxism or that moderate realism is better than either of them. The purpose here is rather to show that there are many different philosophies (and not just the three kinds discussed here). Consequently, it is unfair for anyone to demand that any social scientist should blinker himself into one of them - or even to disown his critical ability in regard to any of them.

When a social scientist has a philosophy of his own which differs from that of others, academic freedom demands that he gets a fair hearing and that he is judged on the intelligence and the reasonableness of the case he presents. One who happens to have a preference for moderate realism will never be content with either logical positivism or Marxism; but that does not mean that he should become suspect as a social scientist.

A moderate realist is neither an empiricist nor an idealist but both empiricism and idealism have a place in his philosophy. In this regard Lonergan sums up a moderate realist viewpoint very neatly. He states that idealism is a half-way house between current empirical fact and future reality.

Both the paradigm and the problematic, discussed above, belong to philosophical schools which are uncomfortable with idealism. After they have pushed idealism out the doors, though, it comes back in through the windows. It is far too simplistic to imagine that idealism involves a denial that matter has existence independently of consciousness. Idealism in philosophy is better understood as a method for breaking down the hard
and fast dichotomies of subject and object. Idealism recognises that the mind is not merely a passive mirror duplicating external realities and acknowledges instead that the mind is active and indeed constructive in the creation of knowledge.

It is impossible to keep all idealism out of the activity of knowing. This can be aptly illustrated by the way in which idealism seeps into the writing of Kuhn and Althusser. Kuhn in his paradigm allows idealism back into his positivism through the decisive choices of his scientific community. Even though Althusser insists upon rigorous ideas of necessity, inevitability and determinism, he also emphasises ideas of deliberate revolutionary activity and free activity. Choice is not based on positivistic knowledge alone but also on the idealism which motivates it.

To sum up, both the paradigm and the problematic are provisional conceptual frameworks within which problems of knowledge can be tackled. The difference between their use by Kuhn and Althusser can be traced back to the differences in these two men's philosophies.

Althusser argues that rigorous thinking can lead to the acceptance of a comprehensive philosophy which can form the foundation for the proper pursuit of science. Kuhn argues in favour of believing what we are told by others in the scientific community - upon whom, he contends, we can reasonably rely. Some consideration of the value of a comprehensive philosophy and some degree of belief in Kuhn's scientific community can be looked upon as an essential constituent of intellectual collaboration. Indeed a study of the thinking of social theorists like Althusser and Kuhn puts one on a plateau of knowledge from which one may pursue one's own investigation into similar topics.

However, such consideration for the beliefs of others is subject to one's own checking and control. The acceptance of the insights gleaned is variable in its extent, and it is provisional. Even though it is reasonable to appreciate that there is much of value in what eminent social theorists propose, it would be unreasonable to swap a belief in the value of others' ideas for the knowledge one has gained through careful reflection on one's own experience.

Belief is not knowledge. One can acquire knowledge - as distinct from belief - by distilling the essence of what one learns from others
and making it one's own. The richer the practical experience that one can bring to the reception of ideas, the greater the chance one has of knowledge. In the last analysis knowledge is the affirmation of the things one correctly understands in one's own experience.²⁶ It is from such knowledge that new paradigms for either social science or sociology are likely to emerge.

When one is immersed in the evolution of social policy initiatives and research, then the knowledge of what is happening in these fields results from a consciousness of an actual inability to avoid the lessons of one's own experience, to renounce one's intelligence in inquiry, or to desert one's reasonableness in reflection. It is on the basis of this kind of knowledge that one's search for a new paradigm for sociology is likely to prove fruitful. The fact that such an investigation may end up by authenticating a perception of a sociological paradigm that one has held for years does not lessen the value of articulating an argument which justifies its validity now.

²⁶ Op.cit. (Lonergan)
CHAPTER 4
A PARADIGM FOR SOCIOLOGY

The foregoing chapter displays the importance of the concept of a paradigm in social science in general. Thus the scene has been set for sharpening the focus of this investigation so as to specify a paradigm for a particular social science: sociology. One way to construct an epistemological paradigm is to whittle down some current descriptions of sociology until one can get at its core meaning. When one knows precisely what one means by sociology, one can seek agreement from others that one's perception of it is valid for others also. From such a definition of sociology a paradigm for action can be elicited.

However, a newcomer to sociology could be excused for contending that it does not have what Althusser calls a scientific problematic - it does not have a specific form of practice. Some current definitions of sociology could easily lead one to claim that sociology in Kuhn's terms is in a state of pre-science. Questions can be asked about: Where is the clear-cut dominant theory which is generally accepted by those in the field? Where is the common understanding of what sociology is about? Has sociology got any sensible paradigm?

As was indicated in the previous chapter, Aron proposes that the Soviet and the American schools of sociology dominate the scene. But, as the foregoing analysis of the thought of Kuhn and Althusser so aptly illustrate, there is a dispute over method between the representatives of Soviet dialectical sociology under the influence of Marxism and the representatives of American empiricism under the influence of logical positivism. Empiricist sociology can be expected to accuse dialectical sociology of arbitrariness, since it does not, it is said, subject its

assertions to the test of direct personal observation: while dialectical sociology can be expected to accuse its opponents of the uncritical use of empirical techniques, without attending to the relevant problems of a wider structural context, and so attaining neither to historical depth nor to a critical perspective.

Faced with such conflict between the dominant sociological schools, the newcomer, who is a moderate realist, is well advised to pick his steps carefully if he is to find a pathway towards his own solution of what sociology is all about.

Stepping Stones Towards a New Definition

The 'Great Soviet Encyclopaedia' provides a definition of sociology as follows:

Sociology, the study of society as an integrated system, and of individual social institutions, processes and groups viewed in their connection with society as a whole. An essential pre-condition of sociological knowledge is the view of society as an inter-connected entity 'and not as something mechanically concatenated and therefore permitting all sorts of arbitrary combinations of separate social elements (V.I Lenin, Poln sobr, Soch 5th ed. Vol.1, p.165)'.

One who approaches the definition of sociology from the standpoint of moderate realism is unlikely to accept dialectic materialism nor its consequential exemplification in sociology. Perhaps such a person may be sympathetic with some of the outlooks of Soviet sociology and might even find a study of it interesting from the point of view of revealing the polymorphism of philosophic consciousness, but in the long run it will be next to impossible for him to accept what he considers the unjustified constraints of dialectical materialism on the practice of sociology.

On the other hand, if he turns to the Encyclopaedia Americana for its definition of sociology he will confront a different problem. In a search of an adequate definition of sociology the Soviets will appear to him to err on the side of too much regulation of the discipline. Moreover it is a kind of regulation which he can hardly accept if he is to retain his

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integrity and his freedom of thought. By contrast, in the case of the American definition there is such a lack of regulation (in the sense of putting order into ideas) that it is difficult for him to know what he is required to acknowledge if he wishes to subscribe to the American school of sociology. The following definition, taken from Encyclopaedia Americana, illustrates the second half of this dilemma.

Sociology has sometimes been described as the scientific study of social behaviour of human beings. Beyond this the definitions and theories of modern sociologists exhibit great diversity. Because there is no consensus among sociologists, definitions directed at the general public usually glide over the problem by speaking of sociology as the science of society, or as the study of human group life, or as the study of social relations or institutions. (Emphasis added.)

The suggestion that it is possible to glide over the problem is euphemistic. Moreover, definitions can be found aplenty which are not directed at the general public; but rather at the academic community, other sociologists and students of sociology. Many such definitions are deplorable in their lack of logic. The two main logical flaws are:

(i) the assertion that sociology cannot be defined (as above); and

(ii) the use of the word 'social' to define sociology.

In the light of this discussion of sociology as one of the social sciences, it is ironical that the abuse of the word 'social' in the definition of sociology is found so plentifully in that provided by the 'International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences'. It is as follows:

A commonly accepted definition of sociology as a special science is that it is the study of social aggregates and groups in their institutional organisation, of institutions and their organisations, and of the causes and consequences of changes in institutions and social organisation. The major units of sociological inquiry are social systems and their sub-systems; social institutions and social structure; and social aggregates, relationships, groups and organisations.


Trying to define sociology by the use of the word 'social' is like defining geography by stating that geography is the study of geographical systems and sub-systems. Similar examples of the use of the word 'social' and 'society' in the pretense of defining sociology are not hard to find in text books. Here are two samples:

The task of an introductory text in sociology is to present a clear understanding of social interaction, social structure, and social change. How do societies work? How do societies hang together? How do they change? How do they meet - or fail to meet - human needs?  

Sociology is a systematic and scientific discipline seeking knowledge of a man as a social animal: his societies and sub-societies and his adjustment to them, his customs and institutions and the patterns of stability and change that they develop.

Other modern sociological textbooks duck for cover and adopt Aron's tactic of saying that sociology is undefinable. Two samples are as follows:

Throughout this book I will not define sociology, because I believe one cannot explain what the field is or how he feels (sic) about it, except by giving examples of what sociologists do and commenting on these examples.

The question 'What is Sociology?' or its corollary, 'What is a sociologist? is a familiar one which has been on the scene for a long while ... . However, what is the 'sociology of sociology?' is a more unsettling question, and this volume is an endeavor to indicate that we are dealing with an important query. Too often we tend to take for granted what we are most familiar with, and for sociology this is sociology itself. I do not mean by this sociology as one among many academic subjects, an abstraction consisting of abstractions - I mean sociology as a multidimensional set of activities and conceptions which has been and is of great existential importance for people who think of themselves as sociologists. Sociologists too, are social beings, just like sociology itself is a social fact; in essence, this book utilizes a variety of materials to illustrate just that.

Fortunately there are better definitions of sociology than those mentioned above but it is still very difficult to find a satisfactory one.

Moreover if a sociologist is not content to study sociology for the sake of sociology, but wishes to turn it to practical use, say, for the formulation of government policy, the task is made even more difficult. Be that as it may, this author maintains that the task must be tackled and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

A Definition of Sociology

To begin with it is proposed that the proper subject of sociology is aptly captured in the concept of the 'institution'. Secondly the method of knowing in sociology is 'scientific method'. Thirdly, it is proposed that if the science of sociology is to be a responsible one it must relinquish its insistence on knowledge for knowledge's sake and accept that the knowledge gained in sociology about institutions inevitably has consequences for organisational policy. These three points are developed in the rest of this chapter and the next.

An understanding of the way in which the term institution is being interpreted is of pivotal importance for the subsequent understanding of the definition of sociology which will be proposed. Nonetheless, the use of this term will be better understood when sociology has first of all been defined by separating it from philosophy - in this instance a moderate realist version of philosophy.

Philosophy is concerned with the individuality of things and with the totality of all things. Sociology is much more limited in its scope. A philosopher can take any single thing and use it as the starting point for his philosophy. Even a speck of dust is sufficient subject matter upon which to philosophise. For a moderate realist philosopher the most important concept which he relates to the reality of any thing is its existence. He finds conformity between the actual existence of the speck of dust outside himself and the concept of the speck of dust which exists in his mind. Moreover the speck of dust has existence of a distinctive kind. Its distinctive mode of existence is called its essence. Its existence, essentially as a speck of dust, is extended in space and time. It is of a certain size, has a certain shape, is present now, and it is conceivable that it might not have existed at all and to that extent it is contingent. Nonetheless the fact of its existence necessarily puts it into a
relationship with other existing things and in examining these relationships a philosopher can philosophise long and large. In other words, because a philosopher uses the data of consciousness rather than just the data of the senses, he can raise and discuss many important issues on the basis of his perception of an individual thing which is ostensibly of minute importance.

Philosophy is also concerned with the totality of all things - the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, the whole universe, the whole of existence. The meaning of it all, the concepts related to it all, of space and time, of necessity and contingency, of potentiality and actuality, of cause and effect: they are all part and parcel of philosophy.

By contrast, sociologists do not focus on what philosophers call the principle of individuation. The philosophical mysteries of individuality escape them. Neither is the subject of sociology, the universe nor the totality of all that exists. It is possible to distinguish two concepts: that of 'the earth' and that of 'our world'. The earth can be considered as a subject of philosophy, but not sociology. Sociology concentrates on our world. Sociology does not deal with the earth as considered apart from us and existing independently of us: it does deal with the earth as we have changed it and made it into 'our world'.

So a definition of sociology could well be, 'Sociology deals with what we make of our world'.

Sociology analyses how we arrange things. In other words it deals with how we generate institutions. The institutions may be either small or large, formal or informal, covert or overt. Marriage is an institution, though it often concerns just two people. The family is an institution and it may be as small as three. On the other hand a village, a town, a city or a nation is also an institution.

The original meaning of institution is derived from the Latin 'instituere', meaning, to appoint, to establish, to set up, to arrange things. Sociology is essentially concerned with how we arrange things among ourselves to form our world. But in the struggle to put order or sense into the arrangement of things, mankind has often to contend with realities that seem simple and are yet extremely complicated, that seem intelligible though at times absurd, that seem reasonable though
at times they are as obscene as a nuclear war; and so it is often beyond the wit of man to cope with them.

An example of the awareness of the complexity of the world we live in can be seen in Michel Foucault's book entitled, 'The Archaeology of Knowledge'. He discusses not institutions themselves but their documentation and the discourses about them.

Such discourses as economics, medicine, grammar, the science of living give rise to certain organisations of concepts, certain regrouping of objects, certain types of enunciation ... .

Throughout the book he is at pains to profess how intricate, complicated, convoluted, untidily interconnected and bountiful our world is. He remarks that:

When one speaks of a system of formation one does not only mean the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogenous elements (institutions, techniques, social groups, perceptual organisations, relations between various discourses) but also the relation that is established between them and in a well determined form - by discoursive practice.

Nonetheless 'genesis, continuity and totalisation' are the great themes of the history of ideas.

The horizons of the archaeology (of knowledge) therefore is not a science, a rationality, a mentality, a culture; it is a tangle of interpositivities whose limits and points of intersection cannot be fixed in a single operation. He comments that the analysis of discourse operates between the two poles of totality and plethora. On the one hand the human mind strives to put order into a seemingly disordered reality:

One shows how different texts with which one is dealing refer to one another, organise themselves into a single figure, converge with institutions and practices and carry meanings that may be common to a period.

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On the other hand, we are confronted with a plethora of meanings, some of which overwhelm us, and some of which are beyond our comprehension:

Meaning springs up through ... manifest formulations, it hides beneath what appears, and secretly duplicates it, because each discourse contains the power to say something other than what it actually says, and thus to embrace a plurality of meanings ... .

In reaction to the complexity of our world, Soviet sociology is determined to constrain it all within a theory of dialectical materialism. American sociology compartmentalises problems and deals with them separately. Meanwhile human creativity is constantly at work subjectively making choices which create order and disorder and new order and new disorder in our world. As a consequence it is difficult for sociology to predict with scientific accuracy the outcome of human activity, but it can identify 'institutions' through which men began to arrange their relationships in the past; keep these relationships working in the present; and through which they may continue to adjust and adapt their relationships to each other in the future.

For this reason this dissertation proposes that sociology can be defined as the science of institutions.

Giddens, in his Introduction to a book on Durkheim has a similar appreciation of the importance of the concept of institution in regard to sociology. He states that:

One can, indeed, without distorting the meaning of this expression, call institutions all the beliefs and modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity. Sociology can then be defined as the science of institutions, their genesis and functioning.

This definition of Giddens is an attractive one. It is short and to the point. It refers to both the origins and dynamism of collective action. However it leaves out of account the concept of interaction which figures prominently in some of the more sensible descriptions of sociology. For example, Collier's Encyclopaedia offers the following:

37 Op.cit. (Foucault)
38 Giddens, A. In Introduction to Emile Durkheim - Selected Writings, Cambridge University Press, 1972.
Sociology is the study of interaction among peoples and of the effects of this interaction on human behavior. Such interaction can range from the first physical contacts of the newborn babe with its mother to a philosophical discussion at an international conference, from a casual passing on the street to the most intimate human relationships. What processes lead to these interactions, what exactly occurs when they take place, and what are their short-term and long-term consequences are subjects sociologists study.39

Cuber in his book entitled 'Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles', states much the same thing far more briefly:

Sociology may be defined as a body of scientific knowledge about human relations.40

By marrying Giddens' perception with Cuber's, it is possible to come up with a good terse definition:

Sociology is the science of institutions, their genesis, functioning and relationships.41

A Way of Knowing

The above analysis has arrived at a definition of sociology by specifying its proper object. Analogically just as a knife is an instrument for cutting, sociology is an instrument for knowing about institutions. But specifying the subject matter of sociology does not complete the process of its definition. Attention has also to be paid to sociology's method of knowing.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, scientific method was described as an empirical inquiry that moves from the observation of specific data to an explanation of their meaning. In this process sociology uses a variety of techniques. For instance, for the purpose of collecting data on institutions or one sort of another, sociologists may use direct observation, process analysis, depth interviews, descriptive surveys, or participant observation, or combinations of any of these techniques.


Alternatively they may use a content analysis technique on the documentation relevant to their topic. It is also possible that a sociologist may use projective techniques which analyse responses to unstructured material like single words or even ink blots; or responses to stories, myths, customs and so on. The choice of the techniques depends upon the institution which is being studied and the particular perspective from which the sociologist chooses to study it.42

Many sociologists use advanced statistical techniques to collect and analyse data on issues of national significance such as questions of demography, ethnicity, stratification, standards of educational achievements, employment patterns and the like. Explanatory surveys are conducted which involve the researcher in the production and pre-testing of questionnaires and the coding of open-ended answers. Also government statistics are used taken from official surveys, registration material and special studies published in the form of census data and other vital statistics.

The analysis of such material may involve the sociologist in editing, coding and tabulating the data on the chosen subject of his enquiry. Knowledge of statistical techniques for establishing randomness, sampling procedures, and probability are all part of the sociologist's stock in trade; as also are a variety of techniques for interpreting the data which investigations yield from the setting of scales of measurement and the simple analysis of variance to techniques of multiple regression and factor analysis.

No matter what technique a sociologist uses to collect his data for analysis, it is essential for him to keep in mind that the data only has meaning in relation to the subject matter upon which he has chosen to collect it. Data remains simply 'the given'; which means that it is the information given in response to the questions that the researcher has chosen to ask. Unless the researcher is quite sure in his own mind of the definition of the topic he has chosen to study, the data lapses into pre-scientific insignificance.

By the same token, when it comes to analysing the data, the mind is active in the construction of the knowledge to be gained. Analysis by Wiseman, J.P. and M.S. Aron. Field Projects in Sociology, Transworld Publishers Ltd., Massachusetts, 1972.
its very nature is always a mental construction of reality. It is true that a sociologist analysing data may insist that scientific observation is a matter of just seeing what is to be seen and just accepting the data as it comes. But the specification of the topics to be studied has to be chosen in the first place and choice will also intrude into the methods selected to interpret them.

The claim to total impartiality cannot be taken too literally. The sociologist no less than anyone else, is under the dominance of some guiding orientation. The context in which an investigation is undertaken determines this orientation, and the choice of the purpose of the investigation determines it further. Still the claim to impartiality does possess some validity in as much as the guiding orientation of the sociologist is the orientation that is a pure, detached, disinterested desire to know.

Be that as it may the sociologist is at a particular disadvantage in collecting data on institutions; for data collected on how human beings arrange their affairs can give an appearance of scientific precisions, even when this precision has been purchased by the suppression of further facts of vital significance. So in operationalising his hypotheses a sociologist, more often than the physical scientist, will find that he will have to intervene with choices about how to interpret the data. When operational controls fail, on account of the inherent unpredictability of his subject matter, theoretical knowledge will have to step in to account for failures of control, to identify the uncontrollable factors, to determine and measure their activity and influence and so extrapolate to the probable finding that would have been identifiable if they did not interfere.

In the foregoing paragraphs the word 'choice' crops up frequently. Choice enters in to the selection of topics for investigation. Choice is evident in the selection of methods to be used in an inquiry. Choice also intrudes into the interpretation of the data. Moreover, once knowledge has been gained by a piece of sociological research the challenge of choice is present once again in the question of how the knowledge will be used.
A sociologist does not cease to be a sociologist simply because he chooses to use the knowledge he has gained in sociological inquiry for purposes which go beyond the immediate responsibility of sociology itself. For instance, if the sociologist is also a policy analyst he may rightfully choose to use his knowledge of sociology for the purpose of advising government on social policy. Nonetheless, even though such a proposition may sound to most people like ordinary common sense, it is fair to put on record that within the discipline there is a traditional institutional bias against sociologists who do not (in a university fashion) study sociology for sociology's sake.

The classic example of this bias is recorded in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Here the writer of the article on sociology arbitrarily states:

As a social science, sociology, contrary to popular misconception justified in part by its early history, does not have as its objectives the determination or modification of social values, the proposal of reforms, the design or administration of welfare programs, or the direct promotion of a better social order. These are important objectives to be sure, but they are the tasks of the statesman, the administrator, the legislator, the education, the social worker, the clergyman, the labor leader, the agitator and the propagandist, rather than of the sociologist as a social scientist. The discipline of sociology strictly speaking is concerned only with the pursuit and funding (sic) of knowledge about man and society. In such knowledge, which ideally comprises generalisations drawn from empirical and verified investigation, the sociologist strives to understand and to achieve prediction of human conduct and social phenomena. Values are among the data which he studies and not the end product of his labours. 43

There is, of course, a logical weakness in this assertion. It is signalled when the writer switches the subject of his sentences in the paragraph from the abstract noun of 'sociology' in the first sentence, to the common nouns of the statesman, the administrator, the legislator, the educator etc. in the second sentence. Sociology as such may have to confine itself within its own parameters as a science, but this is not adequate justification for having the sociologist as a person so 'cribbed cabined and confined'. As well as performing his role as a research

sociologist, the same person may be called upon to make judgments about administration, legislation and education because of the very fact that he is a sociologist. When he does give others the benefit of his considered judgment on such matters it does not seem sensible to ask him to renege on his profession as a sociologist.

Indeed in the final paragraph in this same article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica there is a virtual back-down from the position taken in the beginning of the article which was quoted above. It goes as follows:

Sociology had increasing application to the solution or practical problems, especially after the 2nd decade of the 20th century. The findings of sociological research have been utilised, particularly in such fields as criminology, social work, education, race relations, planning, government, administration, marketing, communication, propaganda, public opinion polling, social psychiatry, industrial relations, and marriage and family counselling. Most sociologists continued in teaching and research activities at universities and colleges.44

The writer's final sentence is revealing in as much as it indicates the perspective from which the article was written. Obviously, though, some sociologists operate in other than a single role of 'pure' research.

The article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which not only pronounces on the parameters of the science of sociology but also virtually restricts the sociologist within the confines of his discipline, was written in 1969. One would expect that such a view of the role of sociologists would have been by-passed by events. To some extent it has been, in as much as the New Encyclopaedia Britannica, gives a better definition and discards altogether the kind of arbitrariness, which is being criticised here. Nonetheless the tradition of sociology as an exclusive or even as a closed science lingers on!

The separation of sociology from public policy is all the more significant due to the difficulty of separating the concept of the 'social' from the concept of the 'political'. The closeness of the two concepts is discussed elsewhere in this dissertation.45

45 Cf. Chapter 5. pp 75,76
The contention here is not that the scientific method used by sociologists should become politicised; for obviously that would be to prostitute the science. Instead attention is drawn to the fact that sociology studies 'institutions' and often (though not always) such institutions are very close to the politics of a nation. So, to imagine that the sociologist who has gained knowledge through his science should not become involved in the hurley-burley of its political consequences is to condemn the sociologist to being considered irrelevant or at least to his being treated as of far less importance than other social scientists, such as economists.

This last point could open up a whole new area for discussion which would lengthen this chapter unmanageably and destroy its unity of purpose. The purpose here has been simply to arrive at a definition of sociology and to indicate that such a definition can be used as a paradigm. When used as a paradigm it can serve to elucidate how the definition can 'inform' governments' programmatic action. By inform is meant provide a foundation for understanding the origin, functioning and relationships of institutions brought into being by government policy. The fact that the definition proposed can in fact be used as a paradigm for explaining programs can be illustrated by picking any institution and examining how it began, how it now works, and what are its relationships with its environment.

**Sociology and Social Programs**

Before concluding this chapter I think it is permissible to switch to the first person and acknowledge that the definition I propose is original and that its use as a paradigm is based on personal experience. However, this personal experience is a matter of public record in two published books: one entitled, *Planning - Becoming - Development* and the other entitled, *Job-Generation* Both books are constructed on the basis of my definition of sociology as the science of institutions, their genesis, functioning and relationships.

In accordance with the thinking which underlies both of these books it is possible to present the reader with a paradigm which is relevant to
the use of sociology for the formulation of public policy. Indeed the following paradigm makes an apt conclusion to this chapter, which set out to define sociology and then to provide evidence on how such a definition can be useful when putting shape on social policy. The paradigm is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociology is the science of institutions which examines their:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The influence of the above paradigm can be seen in the way it evolves into relevant concepts of social policy and public administration. Key concepts in policy formulation and program design are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The working out in practice of these concepts can be seen in the evolution of the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP). When the first steps were taken to promote the AAP, it was considered that the program to be derived from the initial policy could be embraced within three concepts which formed, in effect, its paradigm:

Aim : Resources : Implementation

Gradually, these concepts became more refined in their emphasis on the promotion of the aim, the organisation of the resources, and the definition of the composition of the RCSD\textsuperscript{46} structures. So the key words for the AAP activities became:

Promotion : Organisation : Definition

\textsuperscript{46} Regional Councils for Social Development under the Australian Assistance Plan.
Subsequently, these three concepts which related to the clarification of the policy led to the establishment of the RCSD program which was concerned with education about program objectives or aims, organisation for the appropriate administration of resources, and a definite policy for the relationship of the new organisation to other bodies. So the key concepts underlying the development of the RCSD program became:

Education : Administration : Relationships

In my book *Job-Generation*, I relate the triple concept of genesis, functioning and relationships (mentioned on p.65) to the triple concept of concern, power and justice (p.182) and, indeed, in the whole of Chapter 12 provide a detailed argument which shows the connection between these concepts and the fundamental philosophical principles of being, becoming and relations. In the subsequent chapters of this book, I will relate how a mandate can bring particular instances of social policy into being; how administrative arrangements are made for making a particular instance of social policy become a program reality; and how the justice of a program can be assessed by studying the relationships it causes. Moreover, the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts on *Income Maintenance Programs* is itself affected by the above conceptualisations as it is by this final definition of sociology:

Sociology studies institutions to identify how they come into being; to determine the processes of their becoming functional; and to understand their relationships with each other.

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PART IV

REASONS FOR CHOICES
CHAPTER 5
CHOOSING HOW TO DEFINE SOCIAL POLICY

The earlier parts of this study have shown how one can acquire experiential knowledge about community development and academic knowledge about sociology. This puts one on a plateau of knowledge from which to ask practical questions about a more complicated subject matter: social policy. Most people would not quarrel with the general statement that social policy deals with a wide range of issues. But it is important to go further than that and acknowledge that it concerns not alone actual issues but also issues that might have been or might arise in the future. The world of humankind and the affairs of a nation are so bountiful, complicated and incalculable (as perceived by Michele Foucault, *op. cit.* Chapter 4) that the possibilities for decisions on social policy are manifold. Moreover they are to a large extent mutually exclusive. The fact that we now have one kind of social policy in Australia rather than another is a result of singling out some possibilities from the manifold and rejecting others. Our present social policy is a result of past political choice and the direction that it will take in the future will also be a matter of political choice. In seeking to understand social policy it is advantageous to be able to unravel what were the reasons for the choices that were made in the past; for then we may be in a better position to suggest how we might need to make different choices in the future. So the question of reasons for choices lies at the core of the next four chapters.

Issues that cannot be settled by observation and experiment cannot be settled by empirical method. But it does not follow immediately that they cannot be settled at all. When one considers what should be the relationship between sociology and social policy from the perspective of scientific method it may be initially difficult to arrive at any conclusion. The scope of the question is too broad to be the subject of observation, explanation and verification. However, scientific method is not the only way of knowing. There are other ways of tackling problems and finding solutions. Consider an analogical approach.

For instance, there is an axiom in regard to knowledge that everyone can easily understand: it is that similar things are to be similarly understood. Concepts which express our understanding of things are said to

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* Opus cit.*
be univocal when they have the same meaning in all applications. Concepts are said to be analogous when their meaning varies systematically from one field of operations to another. An argument from analogy first of all assumes that some situation, A, is correctly understood. Once that is agreed upon, the people who accept the validity of the initial statement, can introduce a second proposition that argues that some other similar situation, B, is to be understood in the same fashion.

Proverbs and adages often present an argument from analogy. They are a far older and more direct way of expressing knowledge than scientific method, and they do not lose their validity because of the advent of scientific knowledge. Admittedly, because science is analytic and abstractive its terms are exact and because its correlations purport to be generally valid they must be determined with the utmost precision; moreover because its terms are exact and its correlations general, it can arrive at logical deductions in which each conclusion is equally exact and valid generally. On the other hand it may not always be wise to generalise too literally from a proverb to a conclusion valid on all occasions. But it is often possible to use a proverb to show how one situation compares with another. When the hat fits it must be worn!

Proverbs and adages crystallise the valid insights of plain, ordinary common sense. When one is using analogical statements, though, one needs a sense of humour; for while they usually provide an immediate insight into similar situations, they often include comparisons which are amusing in their difference.

All this leads up to the use of an adage to get to grips with a problem. So it is proposed to state the adage first and then to use it as a stepping stone towards discussing the relationship between sociology and social policy.

If we had bacon, we could have bacon and eggs, if we had eggs.

The above adage is hypothetical; but no one who is sensible will want to quarrel with its logical validity. By analogy it is reasonable to state also that if one had a clear definition of sociology, one could understand the relationship between sociology and social policy, if one also had a clear definition of social policy. The previous chapter went to some pains to elucidate a good working definition of sociology. To the extent that a purpose of this dissertation is to show the relationship between a sociological paradigm and social policy, it is now necessary to define the latter.
The term social policy is so often used that many might imagine that it has a meaning that is commonly understood. Not so. Earlier in this study when community development was being discussed the point was made that different people interpret it differently. Social policy is like that too. Politicians debate it, public administrators administer it, policy analysts analyse it, journalists write about it, the public talks about it and so on; yet there is no unanimity on what it means. It is a rich concept susceptible to many different interpretations.

When scholars are confronted with a term that is hard to define, like sociology or social policy, they often resort to the tactic of first of all examining what others have written about it. They then draw their own conclusions about its essential meaning. For example, in the opening paragraph of the preface of Graycar's book, entitled Perspectives in Australian Social Policy, he draws attention to the difficulty of defining social policy in the following words:

Social policy is a discipline that sits uneasily in contemporary intellectual life. It suffers from great ambiguities in definition. Is it an offshoot of, or perhaps a branch of sociology, of social work, of political science, of economics or of public administration? While it certainly contains elements of each of these (many of which themselves are hybrid disciplines) it is often disdained by 'purists' in these disciplines as a somewhat marginal activity.49

There is no clearly recognizable theoretical base to the discipline, and much of the study that is undertaken is very practical and applied ... 50

After having surveyed literature on social policy, Graycar proposes that:

Social policy is about a theory of benefits and their distribution - it is about allocations. In general, allocations in social policy can be about three things, allocation of income, allocation of services, and allocation of power.51

Graycar's emphasis raises problems. If he were writing about welfare policy his emphasis might not have been out of place; but to state that

50 Opus cit. (Graycar).
51 Opus cit. (Graycar).
social policy is simply about the allocation of benefits implies an oversight. He misses the point that before goods can be allocated they have to be accumulated. Certainly social policy is about distribution, provided that distribution is not understood in its common sense or dictionary meaning; but rather is interpreted in the technical way that classical philosophers used it in relation to justice; since the traditional definition of distributive justice refers not just to the allocation of benefits, but rather to the allocation of both burdens and benefits.

That last point is of critical significance to a proper understanding of social policy, but rather than develop it now I prefer to postpone its analysis until later. Instead it seems preferable to begin by discussing social policy in terms of the people who put it into practice. Then to clarify the meaning of 'social' and 'policy' in separation from each other before bringing them together again in what I hold is the term's essential meaning in the context in which I am using it. Subsequently I will identify how others have defined it and show that many confuse 'social policy' with 'welfare policy'. Then in subsequent chapters I will make plain how a theoretical definition of what I call 'social welfare policy' is exemplified in 127 programs currently administered by a range of Commonwealth Government departments.

Social Policy in Practice

In accordance with the definition of sociology in the previous chapters it is reasonable to propose that social policy is a matter of planning and/or managing relationships between institutions. In public administration it is easy to see how such a definition works out in practice. Parliament itself is an institution. The people who elect members of parliament delegate to the political party which wins an election, the power to rule. The political party is an institution. The victorious party delegates to cabinet the executive functions of government. The cabinet is an institution. The cabinet, which comprises many ministries, delegates to departments in the public service the right to provide a variety of services to a variety of different groups in the population which makes up the national community. The departments are institutions. Those who receive services from each separate department receive them according to certain rules and regulations and as such can be considered also as a recipient 'institution'. In other words, the recipients can be considered as belonging to a category identifiable by the 'arrangements' that government makes for them.
A Social Order

Those of us who are citizens belong to a whole range of institutions. We act very often in accordance with the way things are arranged for us. Even in private life established institutionalised ways of doing things constitute our behaviour. In public life there is little we can do that does not have to conform to some regulation, procedure, arrangement, convention, way of doing things that either loosely or tightly, directly or indirectly, covertly or overtly, is influenced by government decisions.

The outcome is called the social order. It is seldom perfectly satisfactory for everyone, but in Australia it is reasonably satisfactory for many. The order imposed by government, convention or tradition, is not something that necessarily breeds resentment or rejection. Instead, most people accept and even like a good degree of order in how they live.

A new order or a new arrangement or life-style may be accepted or rejected by society at large. In other words new 'institutions' continuously emerge in the process of group living. We live and let live in tune with institutions of one sort or another. The fact that some innovations are rejected and die out does not mean that others will not take their place. Mankind has a talent for inventing new institutions to cope with matters cultural, social, political, economic and the like. In fact it would not be reasonable for a philosopher to propose that institutions are natural to man.

But this treatise goes beyond that last statement and proposes that it is natural for man to establish a dominant institution (usually called a government) to manage institutional interaction. Moreover the idea is posited here that the management of institutional interaction is a valid interpretation of what is meant by the term social policy.

Within this context the definition of social policy can be further explored. The exploration is necessary; for the term is often used so loosely as to carry little meaning. Since the term is a composite one it can be more fully defined by paying attention to both parts of it.

The Meaning of Social

It is especially necessary to define the word 'social'. The essential meaning of the word can be derived from its origin. 'Social' and 'political' have similar origins. 'Social' comes from the Latin 'societas' which the Romans used to describe their community. 'Political'
comes from the Greek 'polis' which the Athenians used to describe their community. Allowances must be made for great differences in the connotations of both terms, since each is derived from a vastly different culture. Even so, the essential meaning of both terms is the same. Both 'political' and 'social' refer to an organised community.\footnote{Acquinas, referring to Aristotle's writing, says: Man is by nature a political animal, that is to say social. The comment was written as an aside, but it sums up the closeness of the relationship between the two in the mind of that philosopher. \textit{Cf.} Arendt, H., \textit{The Human Condition}, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958.}

In modern times the word 'political' has acquired another and more distinctive meaning. It is often limited to refer to the organisation of parties which seek to control government.

On the other hand the way in which 'social' is generally used is much less limited. For example, 'social' can refer to a variety of segments of the Australian community. Some segments are organised for specific purposes; others are only loosely organised; while still others are hardly organised at all, except in the way in which we think about them. In other words, the term 'social' can be used variously to refer to the interests of people in a specific organisation like the Australian Council of Social Services, the Red Cross, the Confederation of Australian Industry or a trade union. It can also be used in relation to a less well organised group like the pensioners. It can even be used to reflect the organisation in our thinking about, say, the recipients of children's allowances - although in fact they are not organised. The adjective 'social' can be used when references are made to the interests of all these groups, and to the interests of many other groups besides. 'Social' refers to the organisation of people, either factually or conceptually.

The Meaning of Policy

A policy is a plan-of-action. When the word 'policy' is used in this chapter it will generally be in reference to government plans. There are many government plans which directly affect people insofar as they can be considered an institution, in other words a particular category, class, unit or group. When government considers plans, or is actually operating plans, to give a benefit or a service to such groups, these plans form part of its social policy.
Policy is always closely associated with an ideal. A realistic ideal can be understood as a half-way house between present fact and future reality. Somewhat similarly a policy represents a half-way house between a current situation and an improvement in that situation which the government wants to achieve. A policy results in action when a program is implemented; or, to put the matter the other way round, a program is a policy-in-action.

Very often the philosophical ideals, which appeal to a particular political party, subsequently become incorporated into its policy platform. On attaining power the party will ensure that its policies are translated into programs, which will usually be administered by departments. Major policy initiatives become enshrined in parliamentary legislation. In this way they become established as abiding elements in the Australian administrative system.

On coming to power, new governments inherit the plans and programs of previous governments; and so to a large extent social policy is a captive of the past. On account of its previous commitments to established social policies, it is extremely difficult to achieve changes of direction. New plans have to compete for recognition against old plans, which now have greater substance because of the extent of time, money and personnel that have been invested in them as departmental programs.

A government department is an institution; and within it there are subordinate institutions called divisions, branches, sections and subsections. Each of these subordinate institutions has a program or programs to administer. Normally the administration of such programs involves a range of relationships with other institutions including other departments and client populations.

The Consequent Definition of Social Policy

The foregoing paragraphs provide us with the basis for a matter-of-fact definition:

Social policy means the plans and programs which a government inherits or initiates to deal with its relationships with diverse institutions within the national community.
Such a definition by intension provides a starting point from which to explore the broader interpretations of social policy. In other words this core definition can be complemented by a discussion of the parameters of social policy. Having established one apt interpretation of its central meaning we are better able to travel around the boundaries of how others use the term without losing a sense of direction.

A Range of Definitions

To begin with we can refer to an English definition of social policy which seeks to capture the kernel of its meaning. In 1957, Professor Macbeath expressed it this way:

Social policies are concerned with the right ordering of the network of relationships between men and women who live together in societies, or with the principles which should govern the activities of individuals and groups so far as they affect the lives and the interests of other people. 53

Macbeath's purpose was to state the central issue in social policy. As he saw it, the central issue was between the self-regarding or egotistical activities of man or the other-regarding or altruistic activities. Arguing that some forms of social policy are based on the notion of moral progress, he then used criteria of moral progress which are to be found 'in the growing power of altruism over egoism' brought about by a fusion of intelligence and concern for social justice. The language is modern but the observation is not new. The dual claim of altruism and egoism is put more simply and directly in the Christian prescription that we should love our neighbour as ourselves.

Two definitions from America serve to illustrate the difference between a definition which seeks to capture the essence of a concept and a definition which directs attention to its boundaries. A Freeman and Sherwood definition is short and to the point. It simply states the principle that social policy is:

... the fundamental process by which enduring organisations maintain an element of stability and at the same time seek to improve conditions for their members. 54

By contrast, Nathan Glazer has a much wider definition which seems to illustrate what happens in practice where the above principle is embodied in policies over a long period. His definition refers to the outcome rather than the principle; and since the outcome is elastic, his operational definition is necessarily broad-ranging. Social policy is:

... all those public policies which have been developed in the past hundred years to protect families and individuals from the accidents of industrial and urban life, and which try to maintain a decent minimum of living conditions for all. 55

Similarly, other American social scientists like Martin Rein steer away from any core definition of social policy and prefer the political tactic of keeping all the options open. Rein chooses to explore the boundaries of the subject - the relationships of social policies to public policy, to academic disciplines, and to social work. He asserts that such an exploration will demonstrate that the boundaries do not have clear perimeters and that we cannot altogether eliminate the fuzziness of the subject. 56

For Rein, social policy can be regarded as the philosophy, politics, history and economics of the social services. In an Australian context such a definition must be broad enough to encompass services such as education, health care, welfare payments, housing, immigration, Aboriginal affairs, veterans' affairs and so on. Rein himself is generally concerned with matters like: how social services have developed over time, the

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assumed problems with which they cope, the ideas and principles upon which
they are organised, the purposes and functions they are designed to fulfil,
and the extent and quality of the re-distribution of public resources.
Moreover, whenever the outcome is seen as inadequate, consideration has
to be given to what changes are required, and how these can be brought
about under particular historical, political, economic or other
circumstances.

There is a similarity between this broad approach to social policy and
that which is represented by a book on 'Canadian Social Policy' edited by
Shankar Yelaja. The editor refers to the fact that numerous views prevail
on the meaning of social policy and then embarks on a literature survey to
extract 'threads of commonality' to advance an understanding on the term.\textsuperscript{57}

Like many others, Yelaja himself seems to equate social policy with
welfare policy. He posits as his first assumption that 'the government has
a responsibility to meet the needs of the less fortunate members of society'.
He sees social policies as those which deal with certain exigencies of
personal misfortune and societal conditions which are summarised in Sir
William Beveridge's 1942 analysis of the 'five evil giants' of modern
society:

1. idleness or unemployment or underemployment;
2. ignorance or inadequate education;
3. disease including ill-health and physical or mental disability;
4. squalor or poor living conditions; and
5. lack of sufficient income to maintain an acceptable standard of
   living.\textsuperscript{58}

This focus of attention on a range of recipients of government services
implies a narrow definition of 'social policy'. In this case the heart of
social policy becomes the relief of the condition of the poor. The concept
of welfare is so important in this outlook, that the term 'social policy' is
better replaced by the term 'social welfare policy'.

\textsuperscript{57} Yelaja, Shankar, A. Canadian Social Policy. Wilfred Laurier,

\textsuperscript{58} Beveridge, W. Social Insurance and Allied Services. The American
Advocates of an improved social welfare policy raise questions about the rights or 'entitlements' of citizens vis-a-vis government services. When this occurs, the policy at issue changes its aspect once more. The title which best describes this focus of attention is a 'just social welfare policy'. This raises the question of whether government is handling its relationships with the poorer groups in society in a way that is considered decent by the general community.

The answer to this question will vary from country to country. Policy analysts make cross-country comparisons based on the proportion of the national budget allocated to welfare. By this standard, in the 1960's, Sweden was a pace-setter in social welfare policies and some Australian theorists looked upon it as a model worth copying.

F. Gustav Moller, Minister of Welfare in the Social Democratic Party, was one of the architects of Sweden's welfare state. He argued that the government of a modern civilized state has a moral obligation to fulfil three goals of social welfare policy:

1. It should guarantee a basic minimum standard of living for every citizen.
2. It should provide services as an inherent right of everyone regardless of income.
3. It should meet these goals through equality of income and social justice. 59

As spokesman for the Swedes, Moller goes beyond asking for a 'just' society and seeks instead a 'moral' system. Justice can be considered as a legal concept. Morality, however, transcends legal justice and rests upon one's ultimate interpretation of the nature of man: which in turn causes consequential judgments on what is considered proper conduct for man considered either as an individual or a social being. Although Moller stakes a claim for the implementation of a 'moral social welfare policy' it is not at all clear that all the ramifications of putting into practice this idea of public administration have ever been thoroughly articulated, either in Sweden or anywhere else.

Social welfare policy, as described above has mainly to do with the distribution of goods and services to the weaker and poorer sections of the community. Obviously, such things must be paid for by the more productive or wealthier sections of the community. The morality of the distribution can hardly be decided upon without reference to policies related to both the production and retention of wealth.

In 1978, Scotton and Ferber published a book entitled 'Public Expenditures and Social Policy in Australia'. They state that the initial response to a question about the content of social policy would include references to specific areas of service such as health, welfare, education and housing. They point out that the key characteristic of these services is that the federal government is involved in them 'as subsidisers, regulators, and producers'.

Since Scotton and Ferber were primarily engaged in examining public expenditure they put their emphasis less on what social policy is and instead concentrated on what governments do. When one is chiefly looking at the activity of government departments, then the essence of social policy is its concern with distributive issues. In this event, social policy is viewed primarily as an activity of public administration - an exercise in the allocation of available resources.

Because Scotton and Ferber have this emphasis in their interpretation of social policy, it is not surprising that they refer to David Donnison's assessment of what it does. As a distinguished British expert on administration, Donnison considers social policy as the distribution of resources and opportunities among different groups and categories of people. For him it is all about methods of achieving a more equal distribution of resources. He acknowledges that the extent to which current disparities are tolerable, or even encouraged, is a matter which different societies have to sort out for themselves. However, he claims that social policy should at least be concerned with gross inequalities and deprivations, especially those suffered by people whose capacity to earn income in the

market is weakest. Even though Scotton and Ferber comment on the difficulty of operationalising Donnison's guiding principle, it is clear that they agree with his orientation towards interpreting social policy as a matter of the distribution of welfare.

Incidentally, Mendelsohn follows Donnison's line in the definition of social policy and quotes also from him as follows:

What distinguishes a policy as social is ... the fact that it deals with the distribution of resources, opportunities and life chances between different groups and categories of people. Donnison is concerned with equality and fairness:

We should not assume that in times of inflation, scarcity and crisis the nation cannot 'afford' equalising social policies .... We should not assume that equalising policies must necessarily be expensive .... Egalitarians must therefore be concerned about economic growth .... For the social policies of Governments are those of their actions which deliberately or accidentally affect the distribution of resources, status, opportunities and life chances among social groups and categories within the country, and thus help to shape the general character and equity of its social relations. Social policies are therefore concerned with fairness. 61

As well as choosing to give a primary emphasis to distribution, these analysts also imply that their main concern is with the effectiveness of services intended to help low income groups. Consequently, they state that one of their first problems is with the specification of the social unit in terms of which incomes are measured. Neither individuals nor household incomes provide an entirely satisfactory base for measurement. Individuals with small personal incomes may be well-off by virtue of belonging to wealthy families. Many people living together in families in the same households do not always pool their incomes and outlays.

In the 1975 Poverty Report,62 Professor Henderson and his colleagues adopted the concept of the 'income unit'. He divided this concept into a number of categories: single persons, single parents, and married couples


with families of various sizes. The actual situation of these income units cannot be assessed by considering their cash income alone without taking into account subsidies available to them for aged relatives, veterans and their dependents, separated wives, children, young adults and so on.

According to Scotton and Ferber another complication of the income distribution approach to welfare policy is the sheer number of cross-characteristics of the social units. They are not only sick or poor; they have more or fewer children; they have or have not members who are aged, invalid, Aboriginal or foreign-born; they have a great variety of preferred consumption patterns; they live in locations variously affected by changing transport patterns, and are subject to the vagaries of unpredictable industrial situations and the uncertainty of adequate employment conditions. These characteristics are not independent of each other. Consequently in trying to understand social welfare policy, one has to be conscious of all sorts of possible correlations.

Subsidies to education, health and housing can have widely varying impacts on the effectiveness of income maintenance programs which are cash payments. Educational advantage is a powerful determinant of life chances, the relationship between poor health and earning capacity is well-known, while specialised welfare services are of particular importance to people in specific disadvantaged categories such as, Aborigines, recent migrants, and the handicapped.

In Australia, it is generally considered that the kind of social policy which provides both cash payments and welfare services should be provided to the extent that it is possible for the recipients to have a decent conventional minimum standard of living. To achieve this end the Federal Government administers a broad range of programs which ensure a widespread distribution of comparatively small cash payments to millions of its citizens. It also administers a series of programs which enable individuals to gain access to basic levels of education, health, housing, and welfare services.
A Definition by Intension of Social Welfare Policy

The administration of the Federal Government's programs which causes a distribution of cash and services throughout the Australian community can be considered as the implementation of a 'social welfare policy'. In accordance with a distinction of terms discussed earlier, 'social policy' itself has a broader connotation. It includes the management of the relationships between those sections of the community which are the beneficiaries of welfare programs and those other sections which produce the wealth to pay for them. The fact that in reality there is some overlap between the two sections does not abrogate the importance of the distinction between the two concepts. Social policy is not just about distribution. It is also concerned with the balance in the relationship between those involved in the production of wealth and those involved in its distribution and consumption. This distinction can be made more plain when it is noted that a social policy perspective can be taken in regard to almost all areas of public policy-making, whereas social welfare policy is but one important facet of it. The latter can be defined as follows:

Social welfare policy refers to plans and programs which a government inherits or initiates to deal with its relationships with the indigent or less well-off sections of the national community.

Sociological Inquiry into Programs of Social Policy

Whereas social policy is about the allocation of burdens and benefits, social welfare policy can be described as being mainly about the distribution of benefits. In the following chapters there are references to a whole range of programs through which social welfare policy is implemented. In the implementation process there is a great deal of institutional interaction. In accordance with the earlier definition of sociology, programs of public administration can be evaluated in terms of their genesis, functioning and relationships.

Thus the nature of each program can be determined initially by its purpose, mandate and origin. Most programs bear the mark of their origins. Ideas which are current when a new policy was being designed, persist when it is implemented as a program, and can influence the shape of its development for many years afterwards.

Similarly sociologists can also be interested in the functioning of programs. A major function of government is to ration out available
public resources through a variety of departments to a variety of programs for onward transmission to a variety of client groups. One of the most significant aspects of the functioning of a program is the size of its budget. In the realm of the delivery of a public policy in the form of a program to a recipient group, the size of the budget is a demonstration of the importance which is actually being given to particular forms of administrative action. The number of public servants engaged in the provision of a service, and the extent of manhours invested in it, can also serve as criteria of its importance - at least from the angle of senior administrators.

The management of programs - and especially of larger programs - often demands a complicated set of administrative arrangements to ensure that the service becomes available to eligible citizens. Moreover in a federal system, such as pertains in Australia, some programs will demand co-operative arrangements both within and between federal and state bureaucracies. Herein lies a fruitful field of investigation for a sociologist who is interested in institutional interaction.

In the provision of a service a relationship is established between a government department and a client population. The nature of this relationship is variously determined by: how the departments make contributions towards their client's welfare; what conditions are laid down to enable potential beneficiaries to become recipients of benefits; and the manner in which clients actually receive the service. In other words, within the context of program administration, a great deal of sociological insight into human relationships can be gained.

Obviously though, the concept of an institution is not confined to public administration. There are institutional relationships in the private business sector. There are institutional ways of worshipping in a variety of religions. Ethnic groups have their own independent institutions and a whole network of voluntary organisations pursue their institutionalised objectives regardless of government. There are also international institutions and so on. Nonetheless since this particular chapter has a focus on the relationship between sociology and social policy it is proposed to continue to direct attention to institutional interaction within the public sector here in Australia.
There are plenty of examples of the use of scientific methods to collect sociological information for government reports. One can refer to the research done for: The Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, The Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, The Commission of Inquiry into Education, The Royal Commission on Human Relationships and the like. However, after researchers have collected factual evidence for a government report, those who wish to adhere rigidly to an empiricist philosophy may find themselves in a quandary. This is so, because government reports are often expected to come to conclusions and make recommendations, which while indicated by the evidence go beyond that which is strictly justified by it. Choice in such instances leads policy analysts into the realm of ethics. As empiricists they may simply want to present the facts and not risk the choices. However, those who are moderate realists would not have the same difficulty. They would find it natural for a thorough understanding of the facts to lead to options for choices. Since for them there is a consistency between their ontology, epistemology and ethics, they will see in recommendations for policy the logical completion of sociological inquiry.

In preparing the grounds for such recommendations this kind of policy analyst will be aware that he/she will almost inevitably be drawn into a dialectical debate about fairness. He will know that the general public and, more importantly, significant sections of the electorate expect senior administrators to adhere to some standards of justice. Unfortunately, for most people these are often ill-defined. But ideally a professional policy analyst should be able to articulate how he understands different forms of justice - contractual, distributive and social. He should be able to clarify how various conceptions of justice have affected policies in the past; and so are likely to be operative in the future. Thus, the following chapters are really an exposition on what can be termed administrative justice.
CHAPTER 6
CHOOSING TO PREVENT INJUSTICE OR PROMOTE JUSTICE

A Theoretical Definition Exemplified

The previous chapter aimed at providing an abstract definition of social policy. Such a theoretical statement can be made much more meaningful by specifying the details of its exemplification. It is all very well to propose the theoretical definition of social policy as the management of institutional interaction, but it demands further sociological investigation to clarify what this means in practice.

Likewise the previous chapter proposed that social policy means the plans and programs which government inherits or initiates etc. But which plans? and more particularly which programs are in operation as a consequence? How many such programs are there and how are they administered by departments?

It is now a matter of fact that such questions have been asked and answers have been given to them which formed the basis of a report to Parliament by the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts.63 The actual topic of the report was the administration of income maintenance programs. However the definition of income maintenance was so broad as to include very many Commonwealth programs which provided cash transfers either to individuals or to organisations for the purpose of providing services to individuals. As a consequence when the data was collected on such programs it emerged that there were 127 different programs providing services that could be construed as income maintenance programs. These were administered by ten departments: the Department of Education, Department of Social Security, Department of Territories and Local Government, Department of Administrative Services, Department of

Employment and Industrial Relations, Department of Defence, Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Department of Health, and Department of Aboriginal Affairs. In effect the collated information on the income maintenance programs of all these departments provides a snapshot of much of the Commonwealth Government's current social welfare policy.

The title of this report is 'Income Maintenance Programs'. Since it will be published this year (1983) and tabled in Parliament it would be inappropriate to anticipate any of its contents here. However, in the context of the argument in this dissertation, it is relevant to note that the questionnaire which collected the information was based on the sociological principle that programs of public administration can be evaluated in terms of their genesis, functioning and relationships.

When the answers to the questionnaire first came in, it was part of the research task to put order into what first of all appeared as an untidy assortment of separate schemes. Consequently, it was necessary to find an explanation for the conceptual untidiness which underlies the administration of current social policy and then to devise a strategy for putting order into it. Accordingly, the final chapters of this dissertation on 'Sociology and Social Policy' will outline some of the theoretical thinking that does not form part of the report, but that had to be done beforehand, in order to decide how to present the data researched on the current administration of social welfare policy.

Social Policy Grows like Topsy

After examining the immense amount of information that was submitted by the different departments on the variety of their programs, the initial perception that emerged was that social policy is often unpredictable. By and large social policy grows not on the basis of a comprehensive plan but rather on the basis of a series of political reactions to a variety of critical situations. Many programs are implemented to prevent what is seen as a specific injustice to a particular group. The 'National Trachoma and Eye Health Program', the 'Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme', the 'Sheltered Employment Allowance' and the 'Migrant Emergency Fund' are all cases in point. Around such issues pressure groups are formed, whose representatives present an argument that unless a program is tailored to their liking they will be treated unfairly. Whether they are or not, becomes a
matter of debate. In the ensuing political process the arguments about the implementation of programs to remedy unacceptable situations are essentially dialectical.

The broad outlines of dialectical debate in policy formulation can be sketched in as follows. When pressure groups - or indeed departments acting on their behalf - argue that a particular policy benefit should be given, they will maintain that justice is on their side. However it is usually possible for an opposition (another pressure group, another department or most often Finance, or Treasury), to show there are adequate reasons against implementing the program which outweigh those that are for it. If a social welfare group gains an increase in its benefits it may be at the expense of an industry lobby gaining an increase in theirs. When one department gains an inordinate share of the budget, the effective functioning of other departments can suffer as a consequence. Obviously not every ill consequence can be taken as a compelling reason for not pursuing a certain policy, otherwise no action could be achieved; and so the pros and cons of each program have to be thrashed out in a dialectical process.

In general, philosophers, politicians and lawyers are much more comfortable with this style of reasoning and consequent program development than are sociologists, administrators and accountants. Because the argument in support of the development of social programs is characteristically dialectical in its form, the style of reasoning differs from the reasoning in the mathematical disciplines which administrators and accountants and empirical sociologists favour. Its logic, instead of being a deductive logic, is the logic of one side of an argument against the other, of proposals and objections, of 'prima facie' cases which may be countered, and of presumptions which may be rebutted. 64

To the mathematically minded an argument must always be rational and cogent. The premises must provide sufficient condition for the result: the result must follow inevitably once the premises are accepted. To the politically minded the premises need only be adequate enough to point to a conclusion. It is sufficient in a dialectical argument to produce an adequate reason, and then to consider whether there are any counter arguments, and if there appear to be none, draw the conclusion.

Arguments in favour of a particular direction for social policy or for the implementation of a particular program characteristically contain a suppressed clause saying 'other things being equal' and hence are perpetually open to further debate. In the language of the statistician it can almost always be said about social policy that there are too many variables to allow definitive conclusions. Accordingly a social program may be proposed, and time given to those opposed to it, either to agree that they are convinced, or else point out the weaknesses in the arguments in its favour. The argument is not conclusive politically unless, although there are opportunities for countering it, no reasonable person, pressure group nor department feels able to do so convincingly.

When politicians, pressure groups and administrators reason about the formulation of social policy, the conclusion depends not only on the initial arguments, but on the moves made in response to them, and in turn the counters to these, and so on. Experienced administrators know that at each stage in policy formulation there are many possible moves, and the cogency of each move in favour of any particular program to some extent depends on the success or otherwise of previous programs. That is one reason why tradition and incrementalism are considered of such importance in administrative systems. The dialectical structure of the political process (together with the tenacity with which administrators fight for the retention of programs they have gained from it) has great consequences for social policy. It pitches the interests of one individual against another and matches one interest group against another.

The distinctness of the individual - together with the distinctness of like individuals who form pressure groups - becomes important when it is recognised that one group can only get a benefit at some other group's expense. It is when one group's rights and interests are in jeopardy that the unity and coherence of society is under strain, and it is then that issues of injustice arise. That is to say that when injustice is in danger of being done people get stirred up, indignant and resentful. When people are talking about justice, they are in danger of lapsing into platitudes. But whenever some specific instance of injustice becomes obvious in society then the cat is put among the pigeons. The recent exposure of the tax avoidance schemes and the medifraud scandal illustrates the point. The reaction last year of the steelworkers and miners of Wollongong who demonstrated in Parliament House against what they saw as the injustice of unemployment gives the point dramatic impact. There is
a contrast between the mild way that people react to the idea of justice and the more bitterly angry way they react to specific cases of gross injustice.

Responses to Injustice

An examination of the programs submitted by the ten departments clearly shows that each separate agency is not primarily concerned to promote justice in society at large; but rather administers its programs to prevent a specific piece of injustice happening to the group that forms its clientele. This fact is of critical significance in understanding the unarticulated motivation which underlies the Federal Government's administration of its income maintenance programs.

Many of the programs seem to have begun as 'ad hoc' solutions to given situations. For instance, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs now implements a program for the 'Maintenance of Unattended Refugee Children' which was inaugurated recently, mainly to cope with the increase in the numbers of children who were separated from their parents in Asia and have arrived in Australia on their own. Similarly the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations operates a 'Special Youth Employment Training Program' (SYETP) as a response to the rise in the number of young unemployed. The Department of Defence operates a program of longer standing. It is the 'Medical and Dental officers - Refresher Training Bounty' which facilitates the transition of medical personnel from the Defence Forces to civilian practice. It bases its origin on Section 58B of the Defence Act, 1903.

The clear realisation that social policy grows mainly as a series of 'ad hoc' responses to the need to counter injustices to particular groups can be a revelation for a policy analyst. As a consequence he begins to accept that it will always be a matter of great difficulty to thoroughly understand present social policy or to predict with accuracy its future development. Present social policy is often expressed in very general or abstract terms which indicate the allegiance of a political party to a mixed set of ideals. The question of which items of social policy will become translated into actual programs with clearly defined implementation processes is often initially unanswerable. It may well depend on how strong a case of injustice can be made by a particular group for a program relevant to their interests.

65 Opus cit. (PAC).
Analogically this pattern of policy formulation is called a stop-gap approach. As a result of it there is a great lack of co-ordination in the programs currently in operation. Consequently there are times when public administration appears like a maze of conflicting initiatives. Given these circumstances, it is fruitful to hit upon a principle which will provide a starting point for finding one's way through the labyrinth of Commonwealth Government policies and programs. Accordingly, I will propose such a principle and then give the reasons why I chose it. It is this:

Whereas the political system operates as a mechanism for countering injustice, the administrative system operates as a mechanism for distributive justice - which when functioning properly can lead to the attainment of greater social justice in the national community.

This principle can only be fully understood when its terms are fully defined in the context in which they are being used.

The quality of justice in social policy (good, bad or in-between) can be better appreciated when it is assessed in the multiplicity of encounter situations in which it is found. Social policy is essentially a matter of justice-in-encounter. Those who are proposing a new policy find themselves in an encounter situation where they have to muster as much political support as possible to have their ideas accepted and turned into programs. Sometimes such efforts are successful and sometimes they are not. But insofar as social policy grows as a result of spasmodic political reactions to disparate instances of injustice, it subsequently becomes necessary to bring a sense of order into the administrative arrangements to implement the assortment of programs that result. Such coordination of program development is no easy task. Some departments succeed in coping with it by incorporating all new program development within an existing legislative framework. One way or another, all senior administrators have to try to cope with the problem of coordinating departmental activities to the extent that they want to succeed in promoting a continuous improvement in the quality of justice in public administration as a whole.

Definitions of Justice Relevant to Public Policy

To fully appreciate the above line of thinking it is necessary to know what is meant by justice. Justice can be defined in a number of ways.

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One way to start is to separate the concept of justice from other concepts that are closely related to it, but still distinguishable from it. In public policy, exemplified in the administration of government programs, justice is not equality, it is not freedom, and it is not mateship.\(^67\)

**Justice and Equality**

Justice is not equality because equality is concerned only with results and not how they are arrived at, and equality is concerned only that people should be treated the same, whereas justice is concerned to consider each individual case on its merits treating, if necessary, different people differently. When in the name of positive discrimination, the government administration treats Aboriginals differently from the rest of Australians the outcome is considered equitable. Equity in the original Aristotelian meaning of the term is justice mixed with generosity. But when justice strives for equity it loses the equality of treating everyone the same. When it concentrates on equality it misses out on equity.

Parliamentarians are more concerned about treating some people fairly than with treating all people the same. Parliamentarians and executive government delegate to the public service the function of giving to many different groups that which is their due in accordance with legislation or regulation or cabinet decision of ministerial decree. This function is exercised by the public service, to some extent regardless of whether the administrative action generates an outcome in society of increased equality or greater equity. Incidentally, the evidence supplied by the departments has clearly demonstrated that over the years the Federal Government's social welfare programs have, in fact, resulted in an outcome of greater equity for the poorer sections of society; but they do not produce equality.

The 'Program Descriptions' in Volume 2 of the Report of the Parliamentary Committee,\(^68\) show that departmental programs are aimed at different groups in the community and that these people are serviced differently and almost to the disregard of the effects this may have on the rest of society. It is true that within the group serviced the department's eligibility criteria

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\(^{67}\) *Opus cit.* (Lucas).

\(^{68}\) *Op. cit.* (PAC).
will be framed so as to treat all clients equally; but no department claims in its statement of objectives, that it is seeking to produce a more equal society. Admittedly the Department of Education states that its objective is to 'promote equality of educational opportunity', but that is a far cry from the concept of equality of outcome in society at large. Departments are not in the business of changing society in the name of equality.

**Justice and Freedom**

Justice is not freedom, because freedom is concerned with who shall have the right to take independent decisions, whereas justice is concerned with the manner in which decisions are carried out, for what purposes and with what results. The freedom of politicians is limited by their responsibilities to their parties and their electorates. Departments do not enjoy freedom. Departments do not have the right of independent decision. They have to act at the behest of the political arm of government. Their job is to translate how decisions taken by others can be put into practice, and in doing so, the evidence has shown, they will always seek to clarify objectives and only sometimes to predict consequences or evaluate outcomes.

Moreover, administrators of Government benefits on a large scale should take into account the fact that the outcomes of their policies do lessen freedom in society in two ways. Firstly it can create passivity, a lack of self-reliance and initiative in the recipients of benefits. Some beneficiaries are irked by the fact that they are not allowed the freedom to earn much on the side. Secondly, the large-scale distribution of benefits lessens the freedom of the individuals who produce the wealth to pay for the benefits. They have to pay tax from which they would prefer to be free.

In any national community the ideal of perfect justice and perfect freedom together is unobtainable. If individuals have complete freedom they will not pay any taxes and if any benefits are available they will freely claim what they can, regardless of the rights of others. On the other hand, in Australia there are strict regulations both for the collection of taxes and the administration of benefits. Thus freedom is limited; for regulation limits freedom.
However, in a democratic system which upholds the value of individual liberty and the right to the retention of private wealth, freedom cannot be limited to the extent that it lessens incentives for individuals to gain rewards through their own efforts. Otherwise a gross injustice may still be done to the total society, as too much restraint on independent action can stultify the creation of wealth. So justice in the Federal Government's total administration of social policy is a matter of striking the right balance. Taxation is imposed calculatedly: not enough to limit freedom unduly but still enough to produce communal benefits, as for example, the $15,000 million for the programs which extend services mainly to those in need.

In Australia, the outcome is not a perfectly free and a perfectly just society - which is impossible anyway - but a society which is reasonably free and just. Thus the common good is maintained by some compromise of both freedom and justice for the sake of the sharing of duties and benefits.

Justice and Mateship

Justice is not mateship either, because mateship is a warm virtue concerned with fellow-feeling, whereas justice is a cold, intellectual virtue which can be manifested without feeling and is concerned to emphasise that each person is not merely a human being like all others, but also a separate individual, with his own distinctive point of view, his own particular rights and his own special interests.

Departmental administrations are sometimes accused of being cold and bureaucratic - both terms often referring to the same reality. This is understandable since, for instance, the main purpose of the administration of income maintenance programs is to dispense justice not to engender friendliness. Moreover, even though departments will endeavour to treat all their clientele alike, the better administrations have appeal mechanisms to take into account the special circumstances which pertain to individuals. Thus in regard to individuals the better departments will try to treat all their clients equally, and maybe, where necessary, even equitably.
A Positive Definition

The above definitions of justice by exclusion are not satisfactory in themselves. They have yet to be complemented by a positive definition. It is not enough to state what justice is not: it is necessary to state what it is.

There is a traditional definition of justice that states it means giving everyone his or her due. To give everyone his due means to give everyone his rights. Rights are not based on justice. The opposite is true. Justice is based on rights. It is because individuals have rights that questions of justice and fair dealing arise.

All people have natural rights, such as the right to life, to marry, to have children, to work, to own property and so on. Such rights are taken for granted in Australia. But in social policy, the concern is not so much about natural rights but rather with legal and conventional rights in accordance with parliamentary legislation or departmental decisions. These rights guarantee to the citizens of this political community such things as the provision of a pension, a benefit, an allowance, an education, an opportunity for training and the like. In the public administration of this social policy, the relationship between a department and the recipients of its services is one of justice in which the department must give to the citizens that which is rightfully theirs.

A Balance in Relationships

Justice has a variety of forms. In its essence, however, it can be described as a proper balance in relationships. Commutative justice refers to a proper balance in relationships between individuals, whether as separate persons or corporate entities. It generally pertains to person-to-person or one-to-one relationships. In its elemental form justice between individuals can be perceived intuitively. However, the ramifications and consequences of basic agreements can often be so complicated that superstructures of legal provisions relevant to a multiplicity of situations are required to ensure fairness to contracting parties. When disputes arise they can be settled in the courts. But normally the courts only intervene when injustice has been done or is in danger of being done. Every day millions of citizens
engage in a myriad of transactions in which commutative justice is operative. This kind of justice lies at the heart of the functioning of the economy and the polity.

An understanding of commutative justice provides a foundation for an appreciation of other forms of justice, such as social justice. But social justice has a nature and a dynamism of its own. Unfortunately, though, it is nowhere nearly as well defined as contractual justice. Like sociology and social policy, it is considered by some to be indefinable - a veritable 'will o' the wisp'. A quotation from a recent article by Julian Le Grand from the London School of Economics sums up the state of the art:

Recently there has been a growing interest among political philosophers and welfare economists in the objectives of social and economic organisation. In particular, inspired by Rawl's major contribution (1971), the problem of defining the aim of social justice has attracted a great deal of attention and effort. Despite this, however, it seems fair to say that a consensus has yet to emerge. No conception of social justice has appeared that is both sufficiently general to command widespread acceptability, and at the same time sufficiently specific to be useful for policy and other practical purposes.* (emphasis added)

In reaction to this situation Le Grand refuses to accept that the uses of the term social justice are so diverse that any attempt to define a common element would be futile. Instead he accepts the challenge of defining it. He uses as his criterion for assessing other experts' definitions whether their conceptions of justice conform with intuitive and widespread acceptability. He wants his ideal definition to be practical, i.e., able to contribute to a reasonable and efficient allocation of resources. He states that he will not be satisfied with a definition that only commands a measure of agreement because it is so general.

On the above criteria he assesses how others have defined justice. By a process of logical analysis he identifies the weaknesses in their arguments. The findings of Rawls, Nozik, Hayek and the utilitarians in

general are found wanting, as they fail to meet Le Grand's criteria. He concludes that the reason for the inadequacies in others' conceptions of justice arise from their failure to take into account the crucial element of choice. He claims that the essential element in the consideration of whether a particular situation is just is the question of whether "all individuals have equal choices".

Any analyst who has an appreciation of how social policy is formed will find it hard to understand how justice could be properly discussed without relating it to choice. Politicians and public servants are considered to deserve credit to the extent that they are responsible for choosing the right policies and programs. Senior administrators who have acted unjustly are held accountable for their actions precisely because they are expected to be able to choose to do otherwise.

Le Grand's style of reasoning is academic, logical, ethical and abstract. He concentrates on epistemological issues, even though his discovery of the importance of choice might lead him subsequently to a deeper exploration of moral ones. In this article, despite the fact that he starts out to define social justice he ends up by implying that its definition depends upon individual choices. He does not frame his definition in any sociological or political context. By contrast, the preceding chapters of this dissertation lead naturally to a quite different conclusion. As already stated commutative justice is about a proper balance in relationships between individuals. Distributive justice deals with relationships between individuals and organisations and vice versa. Social justice is about a proper balance in relationships between organisations or institutions. A more complete definition is as follows:

Social justice, in a western democracy, is a concern of the Parliament insofar as it is called upon to make decisions on what is a proper balance in the relationships of the often conflicting interests of groups, organisations, institutions and classes.

In general usage the term social justice refers to class structures or the broader categories into which the national community can be divided. For instance, my book on Job Generation discusses the difficulty of balancing relationships between governments, employers, unions and the unemployed. It identifies a range of institutions whose function it is
to promote and preserve social justice. Consider the following quotation:

The federal Arbitration and Conciliation Commission and its associated state bodies are helped in their work by other institutional arrangements. Thus, the Prices and Justification Tribunal oversees the advancement of prices; the Restrictive Trade Practices Tribunal concentrates on enterprise competitiveness; the Industries Assistance Commission influences industrial structures and tariffs; influential cabinet ministers, the Reserve Bank and to a lesser extent Treasury make decisions about exchange rate adjustments, and governments pursue redistribution policies through taxation measures. Even further out on this endlessly interactive cycle of interventions, industrial decisions in Australia are indirectly influenced by the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the International Labour Organisation and so on. Each of these many interventions influences who gets what slice of the national cake.*

There is another recent example of this kind of justice-in-encounter. One could interpret the function of the Hawke Government's National Economic Summit Conference in 1983 as a mechanism for improving the quality of social justice throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. Ostensibly the purpose of the conference was to discuss the economy; but in practice the whole point of the exercise was to bring representatives of different sections of the national community together and to get them to realise that to the extent that a proper balance could be maintained in the relationships between the different power groups, then everyone would be better off. This ideal was set against the background of the threat that if good relationships were not maintained then the law of the jungle in industrial relations would prevail, with the consequent implication that social injustice would not only be done, but would be seen to be done.

An economist could have taken an interest in the Summit Conference and have been primarily concerned about its epistemological context. That is the focus of his attention would have been on the different economic scenarios within which the discussions were held. A sociologist could have viewed the same conference and have been primarily interested in who were the people, representing what groups, who made the choices about what was a fair arrangement between conflicting interests. Social

* Opus cit., p. 30.
justice is achieved not alone through economic science, but also through the politics of organisational interaction.

The point could be made that social justice is a relevant concept when one is discussing how different segments of the Australian community fare when the government brings down its budget for health, welfare, education and the like. However, when the focus of attention is not so much on the broad relationships between large sections of the community but rather on the details of Commonwealth policies and programs that transfer cash payments to discrete organisations and more particularly to individuals, then distributive justice is by far the more relevant concept. Indeed one could sum up the situation in a nutshell by stating that the government tries to achieve the general aim of social justice by the specific allocations of burdens and benefits in the budget process. Thus the budget is essentially an exercise in distributive justice.

**Justice as a Co-ordinating Principle**

The choice of justice as a co-ordinating principle does not imply that justice by itself can act as a complete guide to decision-making in social policy. Other ideals also influence policy, like philanthropy, generosity and national prestige. For instance, concern about national prestige may well have influenced decisions to channel more money into rehabilitation programs for the handicapped during the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Justice is not always the dominant consideration. Policy decisions are often influenced by more immediately relevant factors - such as the control of inflation, the alleviation of unemployment, productivity, efficiency and so on. Moreover, it is a fact of life that some programs are motivated primarily by political expediency. Programs are proposed because they have an appeal to electorates in particular places at particular times - and all political parties have to take such considerations into account. As a consequence a niche has to be found for such programs.

Once a program has been established within the system, regardless of how its origins were motivated, it still becomes part of the government's exercise of distributive justice insofar as it represents an allocation of benefits to particular groups or individuals. This idea can be
expressed the other way around by stating that the administrative system is the mechanism whereby government concepts of distributive justice are operationalised. Since considerations of justice are relevant to all administrative actions, it is as well to clarify its meaning further by showing in the next chapter how the work of various government departments can be considered in the light of concepts of distributive justice.
CHAPTER 7
CHOOSING ON WHAT BASIS TO DISTRIBUTE BENEFITS

The precise responsibility of distributive justice in the administration of government benefits is to give to each client and group exactly what is due to them in strict accordance with legislation or regulation or cabinet decision or Ministerial decree.

In the context of the Commonwealth Government's administration of social policy distributive justice can be defined as the allotment of burdens and the allocation of benefits to the members of the national community. In the main, the burdens can be considered as taxation measures and the benefits as 'social' measures. Burdens are imposed on the basis of ability to pay, demerit, expected subsequent benefit etc. Benefits are apportioned on the basis of need, status, merit, entitlement, desert or reward. Principles of justice can be derived from each of the concepts which forms the basis for the distribution of either burdens or benefits.

Burdens that are imposed on the basis of ability to pay means that the rich should be taxed more heavily than the not so well off. Demerit is used as a criterion of taxation inasmuch as the activities of smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and gambling are heavily taxed, whereas eating bread and going fishing are not, and drinking milk is more likely to be subsidised than taxed. A man may have to pay tax when he imports a semi-trailer, but he expects a subsequent benefit from using it. And so on ...

Burdens and Benefits

In its inquiry into the 'Income Maintenance Programs', the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts did not have a focus on taxation issues, and so a policy analyst could not attempt to derive taxation principles from its findings. However, the Committee did report on detailed evidence about the nature, extent and

69 Opus cit. (PAC).
quality of social benefits which the Federal Government distributes, and consequently a policy analyst could relate this information to the concepts of distributive justice already mentioned. However, beforehand, it is advisable to deliberate further about taxation; for it is impossible to discuss distributive justice in social policy without paying some attention to the broad principles underlying the relationship between the burden of taxation and the extensive allocation of 'social' benefits.

The annual cost of the income maintenance programs surveyed by the Committee amounts to fifteen thousand million dollars. To pay for the services rendered taxes have to be imposed. There is a direct relation between the extent of revenue raised and the extent of social services provided. Moreover the bulk of federal revenue to finance the budget is raised through income tax, which in the final analysis is an impost on individuals. In much of social welfare policy the transfer of wealth is not so much from the rich to the poor as from the workers to the non-workers. Taxable wealth does not just happen. Currently, just over seven million Australians in the workforce have to toil to produce it. Initially, the wealth belongs to individuals. Consequently as the social services system increases in size and complexity the burden of taxation on individuals increases also. This may lead in the future to an increased public demand that social policy in general should make sense and that there should be adequate justification for each individual program.

To the extent that the individual considers only immediate interests not many would want to pay any tax at all. On the other hand Australians have achieved, and can maintain, a reasonably just social welfare system only by subordinating individual interests for the sake of the common good. To be fair, however, the common good of an adequate social welfare system does not in itself constitute a reason why any individual should be called upon to make sacrifices except in the context that everyone else in the community who can make similar sacrifices is being called upon to do so.

Nobody likes paying taxes and most people are reluctant to have their hard earned money used to support others. The recent spate of tax evasion and avoidance may well be an indication that the impression is getting abroad that the taxation system is less than just and that income
maintenance programs are extravagant. On the other hand if the tax system generally is just and if income maintenance programs are generally considered necessary in a civilised and humane society, people will not evade tax or if they do they will keep quiet about it. Laws can be enacted to lessen tax avoidance but ultimately the only protection is public opinion and private conscience, and therefore even if the ultimate concern is the expedient one of having a social system that works to the general benefit of all, it must be possible to discern that there is justice in the way both taxation measures and social services are administered. Tax law, like other forms of law, depends upon its being generally accepted for its being generally observed. Moreover, to be acceptable to all sections of the community, the social welfare system too must be seen to be making its contribution to the well-being of the nation considered as a socio-economic unit. From the point of view of the federal administrative system the national community is essentially a co-operative rather than a competitive enterprise and taxes and benefits are meant to generate a society which is good for everyone.

Not everything, though, is possible to the Federal Government. It cannot produce a perfectly just taxation system nor an absolutely cogent rationale for all its social welfare programs. If we insist on government being answerable for a perfect society, we implicitly concede absolute power to government. That is something government does not have in Australia and even if it had the attainment of the ideal would be beyond it. The Federal Government, like all other governments, has to do the best it can with immense, but yet limited resources, to cope with a multiplicity of ever-increasing human needs, wants, demands, desires, ambitions and aspirations. 70

Moreover, strictly speaking, the concept of distributive justice is applicable only within the context of limited associations with definitive aims held in common - such as in a credit union or a joint stock company. Such aims give guidance about how the fruits of common activities should be distributed. The aims of Australian society as a whole are manifold to the extent of being indefinite and unlimited, and therefore invariably vague and sometimes conflicting. Consequently it is impossible in practice to arrive at a method which takes in taxes from each and everyone exactly what he ought to give and in turn gives to each and everyone exactly what

70 Opus cit. (Lucas).
he ought to have. But to admit that we cannot have a perfect scheme of
distributive justice does not mean that we cannot aim at having a better one
than we have at present in the current administration of departmental programs.

Criteria of Distributive Justice Affecting Departments

Although the following analysis is based on concepts of distributive
justice this does not imply that other forms of justice, such as
commutative and social justice, are not also relevant to the topics under
discussion. By the same token, even when one criterion of distributive
justice is highlighted as being particularly relevant to a certain
department it should not be inferred that other criteria are irrelevant.

The criteria are derived from concepts of need, status, merit,
entitlement, desert, reward etc. Although such criteria are
distinguishable conceptually, in reality they may not be completely
separate. In other words in considering the programs of the Department of
Veterans' Affairs we can highlight the concept of 'desert' and by so doing
appear to overlook the relevance of status, contractual agreement,
entitlement, and so on. But they are still relevant. The highlighting of
one criterion serves a purpose. It helps to identify what can be
considered the dominant motivation for departmental programs.

The fact of a dominant motivation necessarily implies subordinate
motivations and it would be a mistake to forget about these altogether.
For the purpose of analysis it is necessary to unravel one strand of
motivation and show the contribution it can make to an understanding of
departmental objectives. But in reality many different strands of
motivation are woven together in any procedure of administrative justice.

The complexity of the consequent reasoning may prove disconcerting
to those who prefer to interpret justice according to a single dominant
scheme, like 'to each according to his needs'. Such a tactic has a
simplicity which can make rhetorical arguments sound impressive, but it
would be far too simplistic an approach to proposing a framework for
understanding the current administration of a broad range of social welfare
programs. It is true that the concept of need underlies the administration
of all programs, but in itself it is not sufficient to allow for a
differentiation of departmental programs on the basis of their dominant
purposes.
When the information for the report on Income Maintenance Programs was being gathered, particular attention was paid to each program objective. An effort was made to ascertain whether various program objectives were consonant with a dominant departmental objective. Then a further question was asked: Does each department's major objective reflect a principle of operation? a guiding orientation? an ideal? From the evidence supplied it was apparent that three ideals were operative. In brief, they were merit, reward and need.

**Merit**

Merit is the dominant basis upon which the Department of Education distributes the benefits under its control. It is true that this department also has programs which are based on need and accordingly makes positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged groups such as Aboriginals and children living in isolated areas. But the main tenor of its statement of objectives reflects the concern that all Australians merit equality of educational opportunity. 71

For example, the purpose of the 'Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme' is to widen educational opportunity by making post-secondary education more accessible to students. As part of its function, the department aims 'to provide talented students with an opportunity for full intellectual development' and 'seeks to ensure a flow of highly trained personnel into the workforce'. Merit as well as being closely linked with the concept of opportunity is akin to the concept of 'promise'. The allocation of cash benefits to students is based upon the implicit promise that both the individual and the general community will subsequently profit as a result of the outlay. For this reason there is a certain affinity between the administration of the functions of the Department of Education and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, insofar as both are based on the principle that every Australian merits an opportunity to make a successful and remunerated contribution to society.

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations directs many of its programs to those who have the status of being unemployed. It is also noteworthy that many of its programs have a distinct welfare aspect to them as the department has a number of programs which are clearly based predominantly on need, particularly those which are implemented for Aboriginals, disabled people and disadvantaged youth. In effect,

71 *Opus cit.* (PAC)
DEIR responds to these groups' essential need for training and money to sustain them while they seek permanent paid jobs. However, the main purpose of this department is not alone to sustain those in need but to provide training to potential employees on the basis of merit.

Merit is often understood in the same sense as desert, but for the sake of categorising the dominant emphasis in the administration of departmental programs, it is useful to distinguish the two. Merit refers to the quality inherent in a person and to his or her potential to make a useful contribution to society. Desert refers to deeds already done or contributions already made.

The distinction can be made clearer by contrasting the primary motivation in the administration of two departments. The training and apprenticeship programs administered by DEIR are directed towards the unemployed on the basis of their merit as potential employees. Most of the programs administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs are based on the principle that ex-soldiers deserve special benefits because they have already made a special contribution to society by serving in the Defence Forces. They contend that ex-soldiers should get their just deserts.

**Reward**

At this stage of the analysis it is appropriate to introduce another criterion of administrative justice: that of agreement. Normally this criterion is associated with commutative justice; but it can be used as a criterion of distributive justice in a discussion of the administration of government programs. Part of justice consists in keeping agreements. Men are free to enter into any agreement they choose and good things are then distributed in accordance with their entitlements under agreements, preferably recorded in contracts. Such contracts determine the extent of rewards that will be given in exchange for work done.

The Department of Defence submitted five programs in response to the inquiry. The dominant motivation in the administration of income

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72 Opus cit. (PAC).
maintenance programs by this department is based on the criterion of agreement. In other words it is part of the work contract. What the department said of the purpose of one of its programs could be judged as being applicable to them all, when it states:

The scheme is a component of the overall conditions of service package of members of the Defence Force. The total package is tailored to attract and retain the high quality manpower which a contemporary defence force requires to operate effectively.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is a clear case of a claim for distributive justice based on desert. Desert is akin to compensation. This department states the principle which motivates its objective quite explicitly:

The major objective of the department in relation to the administration of the Australian Repatriation system is based primarily on the principle of compensation to veterans and dependents, for injury or death related to service, a principle which has been extended to include the tangible effects of this service upon general health and life expectancy. Compensation is provided in the form of monetary payments, a comprehensive treatment service and certain re-establishment measures.73

Furthermore, in response to the Committee's request for information on income maintenance programs, the Department of Administrative Services submitted data on two programs. One is a straight-forward subsidy to migrants in Commonwealth hostels which is given on a needs basis. The other is a redundancy payment program for departmental employees and can be considered as part of their work contract.

Need

Need is a basis of apportionment. The outcome of a department's administration of distributive justice based primarily on need can help some disadvantaged groups become 'more equal' to better-off groups in society. When departments give to different groups according to their need, then, although they will treat different groups differently, the result will be to equalise their positions in some important respects. If each person in the Australian community is given the medical treatment he needs, we will all end up, if not equally well, at least more so than if some were not given needed health care.

73 Opus cit. (PAC).
In the administration of income maintenance programs there is one way in which need is clearly defined. Many of the income maintenance programs examined by the Committee are subject to an income test. The fact of not having a certain level of income defines the need. The need makes the person eligible for certain programs.

However, the doctrine that need alone is a proper basis for a fair distribution is a modern one. In days gone by it was not regarded as constituting any claim in justice at all, but only one for pity or generosity. However, in Australia today, need is considered a proper basis for implementing many departmental programs. In fact the actual payment of benefits on the basis of need is so widespread and so entrenched within the total system that any large-scale reduction of benefits could cripple the consumer economy. It is an ironical turn of events that nowadays not alone do individuals need benefits for their sustenance, but the economy also needs the disbursement of such payments for its sustenance. In other words government social welfare payments help to sustain consumer spending. However, an over-reliance on payments to the needy to fuel the economy can easily become counter productive.

Need can be considered a dominant motivation of many departmental programs; but distribution according to need contains its own pitfalls. Unless the administrators carefully calculate and monitor the need, the resultant programs can create a dependency syndrome within a client population. Distribution according to need keys in with the passive stance that justice so easily engenders, as the following reasoning shows. There is a fallacious argument in popular currency which goes like this. Groups do not create their own needs: they happen to them. If the distribution of social benefits is to be according to need alone, recipient groups do not have to exert themselves. They need not fear that they are being selfish nor pushing their own barrow at the expense of others in the community if they just take what is coming to them. Recipient groups are less likely to be accused of grabbing too much - as unionists and employer groups often are - because recipients of welfare are not doing anything, but merely letting justice take its course. Their case, it is maintained, rests on facts objectively known and impersonally assessed.

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74 *op cit.* (Lucas).
The appeal of such an argument is powerful, but misdirected. Distributive justice demands that the needy who cannot help themselves should be assisted by the rest of society. But justice is not obtained simply by an administrative system that makes more and more people, who would otherwise help themselves, dependent. Justice is not achieved by dependency and passivity, but by self-reliance and the kind of self-assertiveness that is expressed in a willingness to work for others as well as oneself. There is no special excellence in the impersonal character of need as a basis of assessment, as compared with the more personal bases of desert, agreement or a possibly subjective assessment of merit.

The largest cheque-paying department of all, the Department of Social Security, expressed in its submission an awareness of an administrative dilemma. It stated that one of its objectives was 'to ensure that those in need received priority in assistance'. It then referred to a second objective: 'to ensure that self-help and incentives to work are not discouraged'. However, the actual provision of positive incentives to work (apart from rehabilitation programs) is not part of its mandate. The department can only withdraw benefits - which is more of a corrective action than a positive incentive to work.75

The most comprehensive review of income maintenance policy was the Henderson Poverty Report. It looked at income maintenance programs from the perspective of the clients, whereas the Parliamentary Committee's Report looked at them from the perspective of their administration. The major recommendation of the Poverty Report was that government should work towards implementing a guaranteed minimum income scheme. That recommendation has been by-passed by events. In the current recession, Australians are not enthusiastic about the idea of getting a guaranteed minimum income for all, but are much more concerned about a social policy which will provide guaranteed minimum work. It is through work that most people satisfy their needs independently of government. The criterion of need remains a pre-eminent consideration, but the method of satisfying need is not necessarily by an extension of the kind of welfare payments that are costly, unproductive and restrictive of personal freedom. The overall evidence contained in the submissions shows a lack of adequate consideration of the necessity for social policy to provide incentives

75 Opus cit. (PAC).
to encourage work, and so provide a policy framework within which people can satisfy their own needs.

Of the ten departments surveyed, the programs in which need is the dominant factor more clearly than others are those of the Welfare Branch of the Department of the Capital Territory. The services are directed towards those who are in genuine poverty. Although the programs are few in number and comparatively small in cost, they are significant in a Federal system because they show in miniature the kind of services based on need that are supplied by the departments of welfare in all the States. They also indicate the kind of poverty with which welfare departments and voluntary agencies cope throughout Australia.

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs can make a special case based on need for their clients. Many of them are at a disadvantage when they arrive in a new country and need financial and other assistance to settle into the Australian community. So, it is not surprising that meeting cases of such special need is a priority consideration for this department.

Aboriginals are eligible for a variety of services from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), because of their special needs. The DAA submission indicated that their programs are intended 'to enable Aboriginals to have access to social and welfare services available to the rest of the community and to promote the participation of Aboriginals in the planning, management and delivery of welfare services to meet their special needs'. The submission also stated that 'The policy of the Department is to ensure that the training and education programs conducted by other departments accommodate Aboriginal needs to the greatest degree possible' (emphasis added).

Although need once established constitutes a good reason for allocating benefits, it is not always easy to determine exactly what claims are and what claims are not to be allowed as claims of need. Standards in society vary over time. Standards in departmental

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76 Opus cit. (PAC).
77 Opus cit. (PAC).
assessment of need vary also. The Department of Veteran's Affairs uses different criteria to the Department of Social Security.

As long as need is not the only basis of apportionment, ambiguity in its application can be overcome as administrative decisions can be based on some other criteria when need is uncertain; but were need to be made the only prime ground for offering government benefits, ambiguity in their application will give rise to dissension and in some cases to injustice. It would not be too difficult for many people to claim that they are in need, whether they are non-workers or workers. A working man on a minimum wage, which is still subject to taxation, may consider that some welfare recipients have luxuries he cannot afford.

Status is less popular as a basis for the distribution of benefits, but in its broader meaning it is most relevant to the administration of income maintenance programs. Status and not need could be considered as the criterion of eligibility for the Family Allowance benefit administered by the Department of Social Security; for recipients of the allowance simply have to have the status of being Australian citizens or residents here. In the case of other programs eligibility criteria are specially designed for those who have the status of student, senior citizen, veteran, as well as for the migrant and the Aboriginal.

The Department of Health's programs are also based on need. Most of its programs have a strong legislative base which means that citizens have a legal entitlement to many of its services. Health needs are basic, universal and costly. People do not claim to merit good health care: they claim to be entitled to it. In terms of administration, however, the concept of entitlement has a specific meaning. Entitlement differs from other criteria of justice in that it depends not just upon conventions or traditions, but most particularly on legislation.

In the early 1970's the debate about universal health care was based upon the idea that it was an entitlement that the Federal Government should guarantee: hence the introduction of Medibank, Mark 1. However, the perusal of the programs submitted to the inquiry by the Department of Health, shows that the department has traditionally emphasised guaranteeing this entitlement only for the aged.
and the sick who are poor. Nevertheless, the entitlement to health care for some categories, notably the handicapped and the disabled, is universal and is not subject to a means test. In other words the extent to which the Federal Government is prepared to guarantee the entitlement varies. Recent practices show that the Federal Government's responsibility in the provision of health care is dealt with in three ways. The department administers programs (mainly through the States) for those in most immediate and greatest need; it subsidises private medical insurance companies; and continues to support the implementation of the public insurance scheme called Medibank. Thus the entitlement of Australians to health services is met in a variety of ways.

In its submission the Department of Social Security also specifies a single dominant objective. It states that in relation to pensions and benefits, the prime policy objective is to provide a basic level of income support below which no one can involuntarily fall. It also aims to ensure that those most in need receive priority in assistance. The observation that there are exceptions to this principle, such as the Family Allowance, does not detract from the pre-eminent fact that the raison d'être of the department is to distribute benefits on the basis of need.

Certainly other criteria of distributive justice influence this department's administration of its twenty-nine programs to millions of people, and to a variety of organisations. The carefully worded eligibility criteria for its services reflect the influence of considerations of status, merit, entitlement, agreement and desert. But helping those most in need is its dominant and wide-ranging purpose.

A Paradigm for Presenting Information on Departmental Programs

The foregoing reasoning provided a rationale which was used for the collation of the information received during the Parliamentary investigation into 'Income Maintenance Programs'. This rationale determined the initial order in which the programs of individual departments were reviewed. The consequent presentation of programs served to show up the disparity between the objectives of the ten departments.
In effect, the outcome of arranging the departments into this particular order provided the researchers with a framework which contributed to an understanding of how different departments stand in relation to each other. The cumulative purposes of all departments could, in a broad way, be embraced within the following single paradigm based on the flexible concept of distributive justice.

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<td>1. Department of Education</td>
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<td>2. Department of Employment and Industrial Relations</td>
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<td>3. Department of Defence</td>
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<td>4. Department of Veterans' Affairs</td>
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<td>6. Department of Capital Territory</td>
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<td>9. Department of Health</td>
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<td>10. Department of Social Security</td>
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After having arrived at the above outside framework to the jig-saw puzzle of information on programs, it then became easier to arrange the presentation of the data given in response to the questionnaire in an orderly fashion. All in all, the number of programs in the social policy area which were surveyed by this inquiry was 127. These were spread across departments as follows:

| Department of Education | 10 |
| Department of Employment and Industrial Relations | 21 |
| Department of Defence | 5 |
| Department of Veterans' Affairs | 11 |
| Department of Administrative Services | 2 |
| Department of Capital Territory | 10 |
| Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs | 10 |
| Department of Health | 19 |
| Department of Social Security | 29 |
| Department of Aboriginal Affairs | 10 |

TOTAL 127
It would be well beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a description of the nature and function of the above mentioned programs. Those who wish to learn more about the quality of the administration of all programs or the empirical data gathered on each of them could read Report 213 of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts.\textsuperscript{78}

The purpose of this dissertation, though, is rather to concentrate on the sociological-cum-philosophical reasoning for understanding the underlying motivation for program development. In the next and final chapter the continued exploration of the same theme opens up some new horizons for social policy.

\textsuperscript{78} Opus cit. (PAC).
CHAPTER 8
CHOOSING HOW TO WORK TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Community Development Again

At the beginning of this dissertation, in the second chapter on 'A Paradigm for Community Development', consideration was given to how new development can occur in local communities. Such development can be fostered by innovative government action. The development can be nurtured by government departments which are sufficiently receptive to local initiatives to use them to affect their own departmental policies. Thus the organisational interaction that can occur between local communities and government agencies can bring a profit to both participants. That chapter ended with a definition of community development which stated that it entailed:

... the activity of giving purpose to a new institution, generating its functioning and integrating its relationships.

That second chapter argued that socio-economic development can occur from the bottom up. Socio-economic development also occurs from the top down. When the Commonwealth of Australia was established, its founding fathers were also engaged in an exercise that could be described as 'the activity of giving purpose to a new institution, generating its functioning, and integrating its relationships'.

Each department of the Commonwealth Government is an institution which has a mandate to perform a certain function which brings a benefit to those who are in the relationship to it of being the recipients of its services. Some departments cater for those citizens who are in greatest need of assistance from the Commonwealth. Other departments administer programs which reward those who have contributed to the common good. Still other departments provide services which provide opportunities to those who merit them; precisely because they have the capacity to contribute more to the common good eventually as a result of the assistance they receive initially.
The Dominance of the Need Principle in Social Policy

However, it is apt to point out here that there is a strong bias in the Commonwealth Constitution in favour of the distribution of benefits which are based on need. Section 51 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act states that: The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have powers to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to a range of functions. This range of functions makes specific reference to invalid and old age, widows pensions, child endowment, unemployment, pharmaceutical, sickness and hospital benefits, medical and dental services ... benefits to students and family allowances.

In other words authority for the allocation of a variety of benefits is enshrined in the Constitution. Furthermore, specific legislation derived from the authority of the Constitution gives a solid administrative base to a range of programs which distribute over 10 billion dollars. Almost all these programs are based primarily on need. By contrast, the Constitution has no complementary list of powers to prompt the Parliament to pay benefits to individuals on the basis of merit. So, it is more than accidental that the amount of money which the Parliament expends on the administration of social benefits on the basis of need dwarfs the amount it expends on the basis of merit.

This does not imply that the Commonwealth Government does not have the executive power to spend money on the basis of merit. It has such power. But the vast weight of tradition in legislative and administrative practice clearly favours expenditure based on need. Nevertheless, inasmuch as it is accepted that the total administrative system is a mechanism of distributive justice, then it must be acknowledged that there are other criteria for distribution.

The Importance of the Merit Principle in Social Policy

For instance, it has been argued in the previous chapter that both the Department of Education and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations can be considered as having good reason to base the administration of their programs on the merit principle. Unfortunately education and employment are often considered as simply welfare departments.
This is understandable inasmuch as these two departments are caught in the 'needs' based trap. To the extent that their programs are designed to sustain those in need, then the two departments belong in the welfare policy area. On the other hand if the basic philosophy of these departments put more emphasis on 'merit' or even on 'reward' then they could belong more to that area of social policy which is concerned not so much with sustenance as with development. Then both the education and the employment department would have greater affinity with departments like the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Industry and Commerce, and even the Department of Housing and Construction, and the Department of Resources and Energy. These latter departments, however, are usually considered to belong to the 'economic' area, while education and employment are compartmentalised in what is described as the 'social' area - or even in the 'social welfare' area. Such compartmentalisation does not fit in well with the Federal Government's goal of economic recovery.

Rewards in Social Policy

Other departments base some of their services on a reward principle - the Department of Veteran's Affairs being the classic example of this motivation for the provision of services. When a service is done, a reward is appropriate. This is an idea that gains general acceptance. Arguments occur about who should get what reward and how great or how little the reward should be. The following quotation illustrates this point.

One could say it was wrong to pay one man more than another because there should be distribution according to needs. One could say it was wrong to pay the lazy scientist more than the diligent dustman because there should be distribution according to effort. One could say it was wrong to pay the intelligent more than the stupid because society should compensate for genetic injustice. One could say it was wrong to pay the stupid more than the intelligent because society should compensate for the unhappiness which is the usual lot of the intelligent. (No one can do much about the brilliant, they will be miserable anyway) .... One could say it was wrong to pay people who liked their work as much as those who didn't.

One could - and did - say anything, and whatever one said it was always with the support of the particular kind of justice invoked by principles implicit in the statement.79

But this does not really prove that distributive justice is a confused concept or that no further elucidation is possible. What it does show is that, like in wage cases before the Arbitration Commission, there are arguments on all sides which have to be considered and assessed before it is possible to decide which of them are relevant to the particular distribution in question, and how much weight should be given to them.

Even so, it is seldom possible to ascertain, with precision and on a perfectly rational basis, why any one group should be rewarded so much more than another. Questions of benefits, like questions of wages, are influenced by considerations of common-sense, tradition, law, arbitration, politics and philosophy. The outcome is an expression of the operation of past and present social policies, wherein some groups are well rewarded and others are not. In a sense the whole of our socio-economic system can be considered as a complicated web of contracts which give wages to some and benefits to others. These contracts may be either overt or covert, formal or informal, traditional or newly established, and may be rooted in convention or in legislation.

The inquiry which was conducted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee into that aspect of social policy which was reflected in the current administration of income maintenance programs was broad in its scope. Nonetheless since it concentrated on income maintenance programs mainly in the welfare area, it too had its limitations. It did not cover all social policy. The fact that others also get rewards may be hidden or overlooked. Manufacturers and importers benefit from tariffs and quotas; those in rural industry are assisted with subsidies and bounties; and many groups have, over the years, acquired tax concessions for themselves. Consequently, when considering rewards that are distributed as benefits, these can be related to the wider web of benefits that governments confer on different groups through what can be called either its implicit or explicit social policy.

A Re-Evaluation of Social Policy

The evolution of social policy to its present state is plainly reflected in current administrative practices. The latter are the result of a continuous political process during which numerous issues are dealt with and, repeatedly, settled and changed and settled again. Be that as

it may, every once in a while, it is valuable for policy analysts to evaluate the system as a whole to ascertain whether or not a proper balance is being maintained between its various components and asking such questions as:

(i) whether there is a key indicator which shows how well social policy is working?
(ii) whether there is a salient goal implicit in its current administration?
(iii) whether social justice can be facilitated by such a goal?

The Key Social Indicator

To begin this process it was necessary to further refine the context within which the data in the income maintenance study was being examined. When the focus of public policy is on economic measures, then inflation is generally considered to be the best indicator of their success or failure. On the other hand when one is considering social issues, it is unemployment which becomes the critical barometer that indicates how well the social services will be able to cope.

The slowdown in economic activity and the consequent high rise of unemployment constitutes a major challenge to the administration of income maintenance programs. Until the present crisis unemployment levels have been low enough to be tolerated and the national socio-economic system has been able to bear the cost of the volume of unemployment without difficulty. Not so today. With unemployment running at many times its pre-recession level, the long-term ability of the economy to cope with social commitments becomes a matter of doubt.

Not only is the volume of the unemployed to whom benefits must be paid now larger: there is also a substantial loss of revenue in terms of contributions and taxes which amounts to much more than the cost of paying unemployment benefits. This is a point of quite critical significance.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies in London has done a study to show statistically that the cost to the English national exchequer of using benefits as a response to unemployment should be reckoned as three times

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greater than the actual money paid out in unemployment benefits. This implies that when government is calculating the cost of unemployment, it should not alone reckon on the cost of actual payments but should also include the amount of personal and indirect taxes foregone by the failure to have everyone who wants to work productively employed. On this calculation, instead of Australia's bill for unemployment being the official figure of $M1,500, it would be closer to the mark to have the real cost reckoned as $M4,500. Such a calculation puts a different complexion on the significance of this particular social service. Add to that the realisation that the level of unemployment acts as a barometer indicating the increased need and rising costs of other social services.

Some social groups are harder hit by unemployment than others and increasingly, as high levels of joblessness persist, new groups are being forced across the boundaries of poverty to join those who traditionally form the poorest sections of society. The social problem is further accentuated by the continued rapid growth of expenditure on health care, the probably irreversible increase in the indexation of pensions and benefits and the demographic trend towards an aging population. At the very time when revenue is growing more slowly, social welfare services in general are being called upon to meet heavy increases in expenditure. Indeed, the longer the present recession lasts, the greater the danger that revenue in relative terms will decline. But the demand for a multiplicity of social services continues to grow. This puts the whole basis of current social policy administration on trial. The consequent gradually growing concern about the ability of the system to cope is serious enough to cause a re-assessment of current perspectives on traditional administrative practices.

The issue for the social welfare system is not simply one of increasing expenditure; it is even more so an issue of effectiveness. In spite of its relatively high cost to society, the extension of coverage to ever broader sections of the population, progressive increases in benefits and the introduction of arrangements for their indexation, the social welfare system remains a relatively ineffective system for the re-distribution of resources. Most people on benefits remain poor. A large section of those who depend on social services
live a precarious existence. Social services alleviate poverty: they do not solve it.

In 1981, the OECD published a set of conference papers under the title of 'The Welfare State in Crisis'.\textsuperscript{82} The preface describes the core of the problem which the delegates confronted. Basically the crisis consists in a clash between social and economic policies. It became clear at the conference that the financial crisis of social services is closely related to high levels of unemployment not only because of the growing burden of unemployment compensation, and not only because of a loss of revenue on account of uncollected taxes; but because unemployment has an impact on a wide range of social expenditures. One way out of the crisis is to recognise the necessity of a progressive re-modelling of current social programs.

This re-modelling of programs can be initiated by first of all making some conceptual distinctions. One can consider the actual administrators of each program as forming in themselves a service institution. In other words, a group of people within a department are so 'arranged' in order that they may provide a particular service. For the sake of analysis the receivers of a service can be considered as a separate institution. As receivers of a particular service they are 'arranged' into a particular category in accordance with the way in which both the administrators of programs and the general community think about them. For example, the providers of the war widows' pension can be considered as an institution in their own right; and the actual war widows themselves can be recognised as a separate unit within society at large. Moreover, the effort to improve programs can be considered in the light of improving the relationship between these separate, though complementary, institutions.

Firstly the relationship between the givers and the receivers of services can be made better by re-evaluating the adequacy of the mandate for each program, whether this is provided by ministerial decree, cabinet decision or legislation. Secondly, the relationship

can be made more satisfactory for both sides of the 'arrangement' by continuously striving to streamline the efficiency of the management practices whereby the service is delivered. In essence this entails the best possible use of money and personnel for the attainment of program objectives. Thirdly the relationship can also be made more fruitful by constantly seeking to obtain more accurate data on the effectiveness of a program to the extent that its services succeed in satisfying its actual receivers.

Another way to achieve a more fundamental re-modelling of the social system would be to begin to make explicit the goals, ideals and philosophies which are currently implicit in the operation of the public service.

**A Salient Goal**

Each program of each department can be considered in the context of each department's salient objective. In the submissions to the Parliamentary inquiry into the administration of income maintenance programs, it was possible to identify accurately the salient goal of a number of departments. Among the ten departments surveyed, some were able to provide a better statement of their dominant purpose than others. Those who specified their department's salient goal in a single succinct statement were best able to follow this up with a clear description of the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

For example, one can pick three out of the ten departments and identify their programs as being based upon principles of justice:

(i) The salient goal of the Department of Social Security is: To provide, for those in need, a basic level of income below which no one may involuntarily fall.

(ii) The salient goal of the Department of Veterans' Affairs is: To compensate veterans and their dependants.

(iii) The salient goal of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is: To provide employment opportunities.
However a policy analyst may not be satisfied by capturing a salient goal for each department and then examining the functioning of each department in the light of the achievement of that goal. In as much as he is a moderate realist, with a calculated appreciation of the value of achieving a synthesis, he will want to identify a salient goal for the functioning of all the ten departments, considering them as a single, composite social welfare system. When he has achieved an appreciation of such a goal then an assessment of the contribution that can be made to it by each department becomes much easier. In present circumstances, in order that this single goal may be adequately comprehensive it has to be composite in its form. Given this pre-condition, it can be expressed as follows:

The goal of social policy is to manage the government's relationships to a variety of institutions in the national community in a way which gives balanced attention to:

(i) the need to sustain those in need;

(ii) to compensate those who make valuable contributions to the common good; and

(iii) to provide opportunities to those who show promise of being able to make such contributions.

This goal is comprehensive enough to cater for the dominant purposes of all the ten departments surveyed in the inquiry into the administration of income maintenance programs. This goal also constitutes one of the most important conclusions to be drawn both from the data derived from empirical methods of sociological research and also from the processes of philosophical reasoning which have been outlined in the preceding chapters.

The Practical Advantages of an Ideal

Although the above goal was used as a conceptual framework for a co-ordinated presentation of information on income maintenance programs, this does not imply that the same kind of co-ordination
exists in fact. Nonetheless, if senior managers choose to use the
goal as a means of achieving the greater integration of social policy,
or the greater co-ordination of programs within departments, then
improved administration could be the result.

The above goal was arrived at as a consequence of reasoning about
distributive justice. But when the same goal is reflected upon in
the light of the previously defined concept of social justice, then
it takes on a new dimension. In this more general context a goal can
do more than provide a way of understanding the present purpose of the
social welfare system. A goal can be used to anticipate how the system
might be developed in the future. This is so because a goal is like
an ideal. To us an analogy, it is like a beacon which can provide a
bearing for senior managers. It can give a sense of direction either
for the management of current public policy or give rise to a new
direction for it. Insofar as one considers that senior managers should
be held responsible for the continuous promotion of social justice,
a series of questions could be asked. Herewith are some examples:

Firstly, there is the logical problem of whether the ideal of
servicing need and the ideal of opening up opportunities are contradictory
or contrary to each other. If the ideals are contradictory, then if
an administrator chooses one he must reject the other. By contrast,
if the ideals are contrary to each other, then even though it will
be impossible to avoid tension, should it not be possible to formulate
social policy in a way which will maintain a proper balance between
them?

Secondly, when the Department of Social Security made its submission
to the Public Accounts Committee for Report 213, it gave expression
to a dilemma it faced: assistance to those in need entails the risk
that self-help and incentives to work are discouraged. In other words,
the regulations for servicing need may have the effect of preventing
people from making the best use of whatever opportunities to work are
open to them. Those who are prepared to risk taking on a job run the
risk of at least a temporary loss of benefit.

One way out of this dilemma might have been for the Government to have
chosen to adopt the recommendation of the Henderson Poverty Report for
a guaranteed minimum income for everyone. However, this recommendation was rejected when it was first made in 1975 and it is unlikely to become acceptable in the foreseeable future. Even so, the fact that a universal guaranteed minimum income was rejected does not mean that the Commonwealth Government might not consider opting for its implementation for selected categories of beneficiaries who are particularly disadvantaged. For instance, a guaranteed minimum income could be given to disabled people on the basis of their obvious need. In this case they would not lose the benefit when they had enough 'get up and go' to make the best use of their opportunities to earn money through productive work. Such a policy could be implemented to explore the choice of whether to stabilise the basic level of payments on benefits and to increase the level of discretionary earnings. In brief, the question becomes, could such a shift in policy be conducive to a less dependent and more productive society?

Thirdly, the question could be asked whether a sharper specification of ideals by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) could help to make it more effective in generating more permanent employment? Certainly, the evidence in Report 213 shows that DEIR favours a concentration on the ideal of helping those in greatest need, i.e., those who are long-term unemployed and most disadvantaged. It would seem that Rawl's principle of 'maximin' (most should be given to those with least) is in the ascendency in DEIR's administration.* It could be argued, though, that in order to get a better return on public funds and to lessen long-term high rates of unemployment, assistance should be targeted towards those most likely to benefit rather than those most in need. No doubt DEIR would contend that a balance should be maintained between the two ideals. But based on the realisation that other departments channel a large proportion of the national budget towards the ideal of servicing those in need, it is fair to ask the question whether DEIR would make a better contribution to social policy as a whole if it gave priority in its administration to the ideal of providing opportunities to those who could make the most use of them?

Fourthly, the question could be asked whether the Commonwealth Government is channelling too much money into servicing need and not

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enough into providing opportunities for those who could use them both to their personal advantage and the advantage of the general community. Report 213 showed that in 1981-82 $10 billion was expended by the Department of Social Security mainly on need, while only $167 million was spent by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, ostensibly on opportunity. Since then, in the 1984-85 budget, over one billion dollars has been allocated to the Employment Department. This would seem to indicate that the political arm of government recognises the importance of greater funding of departments which generate opportunities. However, to the extent that administrators in departments continue to concentrate on the ideal of servicing need, is there not a danger that chances to encourage those who could make the most of their opportunities to gain permanent employment could be lost?

Fifthly, the ideal of rewarding those who provide important services to the national community is most in evidence in the rewards that are given to ex-servicemen by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. However, if as has already been discussed, unemployment is the key indicator of how social policy is working, should not greater rewards be given to those who generate employment? Insofar as research shows that the small business sector has the greatest potential to generate jobs in particular places, should not that sector be organised locally so as to be able to claim greater rewards for actualising its employing potential?

Sixthly, since the identification of a goal for social policy provides an overview of how the current system of social welfare services is administered, and how it might be improved, could a research project be implemented to show how well integrated are those departments which service economic development and how well co-ordinated are the programs within the various departments concerned?

This dissertation does not give answers to these questions; but it does give a demonstration of how such questions can be derived from a rational analysis of current social policy. The analysis begins with direct and immediate knowledge of facts and situations. This provides the foundation for the clarification of sensible definitions for sociology, social policy, social justice and the like. From these definitions it is possible to derive hypotheses and principles for
empirical research. This in turn can lead to a fuller understanding of social policy and to the possibility of identifying accurately an implicit goal that is operative in its administration. In turn, such a goal can be elevated to the status of an ideal and used to pose questions for subsequent translation into hypotheses, empirical research and increasing knowledge. So, the process of using sociological methods for understanding social policy can become dynamic, iterative and practical. Thus a policy analyst with a moderate realist philosophy can join with others in working towards the attainment of the ideal of social justice.

Complementarity Between Empiricism and Idealism

This dissertation provides sufficient reasons for a policy analyst to choose to make a succinct statement about the ideal of social justice which could be considered as a conceptual framework within which much empirical research could be done:

A greater degree of social justice is achievable through the planning by the Parliament for administration by the public service of programs for distributing burdens and benefits to various institutions within the national community.

The research into all the ramifications and consequences of the situation to which this statement refers would be all the better to the extent that it was informed by both empiricism and idealism.

In an imperfect world, there will always be room for improvement in social policy. It is clear from Report 213 that its present administration could be better integrated and more purposeful in the pursuit of social justice. It could be argued that many of the weaknesses of the present system could be attributed to an over-reliance on an empiricist philosophy - seldom articulated, but often apparent. As a general rule empiricists are uncomfortable with idealism. They prefer to operate with things as they are. They are seldom protagonists of long-term goal setting. Nonetheless, the failure to set long-term objectives can often result in the lack of a guiding orientation for current administrative practices and lead to inefficient and even ineffectual programming.
Empiricism is an adequate philosophy when the economy is buoyant. But when the economy falters and the social situation deteriorates, then, although empiricism does not cease to be relevant, it often does not supply the dynamism to lead to remedial action. Empiricists may be satisfied to observe things, quantify them and explain what is happening, and even to continue to do so when the economy is so bad that most people are frustrated by continuous explanations of what is happening. Those who are most immediately affected by a recession are not helped by being given a theoretical analysis of how bad things are.

It is at this stage that people who are idealists have a better chance of being given a hearing. They are prepared to reason about the choices that have to be made to reach long-term objectives - and to reason with the people who have the power to make such choices. To the extent that idealists can give well argued reasons for making such choices they can contribute more to the attainment of social justice. The success of the Hawke Government's National Economic Summit Conference in 1983 is a good example of how those who were motivated by the ideal of co-operation between conflicting interest groups did more to improve the economy that empiricists who maintained that the economic situation had to be accepted as it was.

By a process of reasoning about choices, idealists can set goals for public administration. But this reasoning itself is dependent upon the knowledge-base provided by prior empirical research and subsequently more empirical research has to be done to discover the best method of reaching the goals desired. In philosophy, sociology and public administration, empiricists need interaction with idealists just as much as idealists need interaction with empiricists. Indeed, it is on the basis of this common-sense principle that the whole of this dissertation on the relationship between 'Sociology and Social Policy' has been written, and it is from this basic principle that its conclusions have been derived. A policy analyst who is a moderate realist can reconcile empiricism with idealism in a realistic appraisal of what can be done to use the science of sociology to attain the ideals of social policy and thus contribute to the aim of improving social justice in public affairs.
May those in public administration who grasp the importance of ideals have the pragmatism to get them working in practice. In effect may their idealism form a bridge between the policies that are currently in operation and those that are, even now, obviously required in the immediate future. For the 1988 celebrations the Australian Bicentennial Authority has chosen as its central theme the concept of 'Living Together'. Both sociology and social policy are all about living together. The purpose of this study has been to argue the case that the clear perception of a sensible relationship between the two could lead to the provision of reasons for more finely balanced policy decisions. This in turn could make the living together better for the millions of Australians - both taxpayers and beneficiaries - who form the clientele of the Commonwealth's public administration.
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