

A Study of Status Inconsistency
and Voting Behavior

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

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June, 1973

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History of Stratification

From the time of the early social philosophers questions concerning political and social inequalities have been raised and seriously contemplated. Many of them have talked about the naturalness, permanence and inevitability of these inequalities and have also questioned if they were good for any social purpose.

For example in The Republic, which was written about three centuries B.C., the society that Plato envisioned was explicitly meant to be class structured. Citizens were to belong to either the Guardians, the Auxiliaries, or the workers class. However, the society that he proposed was an open class society since each man had an equal opportunity to develop his natural qualities and be trained to fulfill his proper role in the society. (Somerville and Santoni, 1963:22).

In his time Machiavelli noted the tensions that existed between the elite and the masses as a constant feature of organized society. He noticed that such tension ". . . is accompanied by fear of the masses among the elite, and envy and fear of tyranny among the masses." (Tuman, 1967: 3).

Karl Marx identified the conflict between competing social and economic classes as a key feature of society and a major source of social change in that society.

When Max Weber considered the problem of stratification in addition to the economic dimension he identified two other dimensions of stratification - power and prestige. Weber ". . . saw power, property and prestige as three separate though interacting bases on which hierarchies are created in any society. Property differences generate classes, power differences generate political parties, and prestige differences generate status groupings or strata." (Tuman 1967:6)

It is evident from the preceding excerpts that questions concerning stratification have a long history and today questions on the subject of stratification are still being raised.

In the early days of the social sciences most social philosophers and social scientists have described stratification in terms of a single hierarchy in which each member of the society occupies a single position. In the following excerpt Benoit-Smullyan describes what is meant by a hierarchy.

By a hierarchy we mean a number of individuals ordered on an inferiority-superiority scale with respect to the comparative degree to which they possess or embody some socially approved or generally desirable attribute or characteristic. A hierarchical position is thus always a position in which one individual is identified with others with regard to the possession or embodiment of some common characteristic, but differentiated from these others in the degree or measure to which that characteristic is possessed or embodied. (Benoit-Smullyan 1944: 151).

However, since the time of Max Weber this traditional approach of a single hierarchy has come to be criticized by a growing number of sociologists who have said

. . . that the uni-dimensional view is inadequate to describe the complexities of group structure. These critics have maintained that the structure of human groups normally involves the coexistence of a number of parallel vertical hierarchies which usually are imperfectly correlated with one another. . . .

Instead of being a single position in a uni-dimensional hierarchy, it becomes a series of positions in a series of related vertical hierarchies. (Lenski 1954: 405).

This idea that a number of vertical hierarchies operate to determine the status of an individual in a system of stratification opened up an entirely new field of inquiry into the subject of social stratification, that of consistency or inconsistency of status ranks.

Benoit-Smullyan in 1944 was the first to suggest that there is a tendency for different types of statuses to reach a common level. For example, there is a tendency

. . . for a man's position in the economic hierarchy to match his

position in the political hierarchy and for the latter to accord with his position in the hierarchy of prestige, etc. This tendency may conveniently be called "status equilibration," and a social situation in which a high degree of correlation is obtained between different forms of status, an "equilibrium status structure." (Benoit-Smullyan 1944: 160).

Benoit-Smullyan went on to suggest that a sort of tension resulted when the ranks on the hierarchies mentioned were inconsistent. He said that there is ". . . a tendency on the part of individuals whose ranks on these hierarchies are inconsistent to be dissatisfied with this situation and to try to 'equilibrate' by bringing their lower ranks into line with their higher ones." (Hyman 1967: 383).

In a more recent work Lenski adds credibility to the Benoit-Smullyan hypothesis that status equilibration is not always the case and that lack of equilibration often causes tensions for the individual:

. . . census data, as well as data from other sources, make it clear that the rank of individuals and families in one dimension is never a simple function of rank in another. Correlations between property holdings, political status, occupational status, educational status, status group rank, age status, and sex status are never perfect, and are usually far from it.

One of the closest relationships is that between education and occupation, but studies in the United States have produced correlation coefficients no higher than .87, and in some instances as low as .30. At the other extreme there are certain relationships where the correlation is almost .00. This is clearly the case in the relationship between age and sex, and also with respect to relations between the following pairs; sex status and property holding, age and occupational status, and finally, both age and sex on the one hand and status group rank and educational status on the other. Other relationships tend to fall in the middle range. . . .

The low correlations between the various types of resources indicate that there are substantial numbers of persons who find themselves confronted with inconsistent statuses of every type. . . . On grounds of deductive logic a good case can be made for the hypothesis that discrepancies between major status dimensions can be a source of stress, first of all for the individuals affected and, through them, for the society of which they are a part. (Lenski 1966: 408-409).

Theoretical Models

There are several major theoretical models which have arisen in an attempt to explain the tension that comes as a result of status inconsistency. Specifically, Dr. Dutton has stated in his dissertation that there are three theories concerning the formulation of tension assumptions. (Dutton 1972: 3).

The first of these theories is called the cognitive balance-dissonance theory. There exist three fundamental assumptions in regard to the theory of cognitive balance: "1. Balanced ranks are stable. 2. Imbalanced ranks tend to change until they become balanced. 3. Imbalanced ranks produce a state of tension." (Zelditch and Anderson 1966: 249).

Appropriate examples of imbalanced ranks would be apparent in the case of the wealthy Jewish businessman who is high on the income rank, but low on ethnicity; or the Negro professional who has a high rank on the basis of his occupation but low on ethnicity. Discrepancies such as these are a source of strain and tension. In such cases individuals will attempt to balance their various ranks.

Zelditch and Anderson state that

. . . the least satisfactory part of the theory of rank balance is its account of the way in which balance is restored. All it says so far is that, once comparison activates the process, imbalance is disturbing and an attempt will be made to restore balance; how is unclear. The most commonly mentioned mechanisms are mobility and revolution. According to Benoit-O'Sullivan, for example, an actor who is imbalanced first attempts to raise his lower ranks. If blocked, he then turns to radical, extremist protest directed against the rank structure itself. (Zelditch and Anderson 1966: 250).

The second major theoretical model is the reward-cost theory. This model is derived from Homans' theory of distributive justice and Thibaut and Kelley's reward-cost theory.

Homans defines the rule of distributive justice in the following words:

A man in an exchange relation with another will expect that the rewards of each man be proportional to his costs - the greater the rewards, the greater the costs - and that the net rewards or profits, of each man be proportional to his investments - the greater the investments, the greater the profit. (Blau 1971: 56-57).

The idea that tension results when distributive justice fails is implicit in this statement:

. . . the more to a man's disadvantage the rule of distributive justice fails of realization, the more likely he is to display the emotional behavior we call anger. People whose standards of justice are violated feel angry as well as dissatisfied and give vent to their anger through disapproval of and sometimes hostility and hatred against those who caused it. (Blau 1971: 62).

Thibaut and Kelly's theory of interpersonal relations is very similar to Homans theory of distributive justice, both employ the idea of costs and rewards. The basic ideas of Thibaut and Kelley's theory may be stated as follows:

The outcome of the individual's sequences of behavior in an interpersonal relationship consists of rewards and costs. Rewards are defined as the pleasures, satisfactions, and gratifications the individual enjoys as a result of his performance of the sequences of behavior involved in the relationship. Costs are defined as any factor that operates to inhibit or deter performance.

The attractiveness of an interpersonal relationship or the degree to which the relationship is satisfactory to the individual depends on his comparison level for the relationship. Comparison level is defined as the standard against which he evaluates the reward-cost outcome of the relationship. This standard consists of the rewards and costs he feels he deserves in the relationship. (Zelditch, Berger and Anderson 1966: 218).

If the actual costs or rewards of an individual are inconsistent with what he feels he deserves the result will be tension and dissatisfaction.

The third theoretical model that can be used to explain tension is the expectation-conflict theory. One of the major proponents of this theory is Gerhard Lenski. In his works Lenski uses four measures of status: income, occupation, education, and ethnicity. In essence the idea contained in the theory is that considerable tension results when an individual has inconsistent

statuses. People with inconsistent statuses (those ranked high on some variables and low on others) must at some time interact with individuals who have a consistent status (those ranked high on all variables or low on all variables). Other people tend to treat inconsistencies on the basis of their lower status while inconsistencies tend to think of themselves in terms of their higher status. Status inconsistencies find a disturbing discrepancy between the way others treat them on the basis of their lower statuses and the way they want to be treated on the basis of their higher statuses. This discrepancy results in tension for the individual with inconsistent statuses. (Lenski 1964: 330; Lenski 1966: 87).

Lenski gives an example of the tension that results from situations involving inconsistent statuses in the following passage:

One can see how this works and the consequences of it, by imagining the interaction of a Negro doctor and a white laborer in a situation where neither the racial nor the occupational status alone is relevant. The former, motivated by self-interest, will strive to establish the relation on the basis of occupation (or perhaps education or wealth), while the latter, similarly motivated will strive to establish the relationship on the basis of race. Since each regards his own point of view as right or proper, and since neither is likely to view the problem in a detached, analytical fashion, one or both, are likely to be frustrated, and probably angered by the experience. (Lenski 1966: 87).

Besides the frustration that results from conflicting expectations in regard to the person with inconsistent statuses Jackson proposes another consequence, that of uncertainty. There is uncertainty of the inconsistent individual with respect to what he can rightfully expect of others and what they may expect of him. These uncertainties are also felt by the people with whom he associates. This social uncertainty, in addition to adding to the unpleasantness of his social relationships, may tend to reduce the stability of the inconsistent self image. (Jackson 1962: 470).

In summary of the expectation-conflict model, tension from inconsistent

statuses occurs because there is a discrepancy between the evaluation made by the individual and the evaluation made by others. This discrepancy causes frustration and uncertainty for the individual with inconsistent statuses. For the purpose of this paper this is the theoretical model that will be employed.

Types of Behavior Linked to Status Inconsistency

The state of tension resulting from inconsistent statuses is an unpleasant one for the individual. Obviously, the next step for the individual with inconsistent statuses to take would be to attempt in some way to alleviate their discomfort. Consequently, since the time of Benoit-Smullyer men have made attempts to explain certain types of human behavior as stemming from status inconsistency.

In 1954 Lenski in essence opened up this field of inquiry when he designed a study to discover whether an analysis employing the idea of status inconsistency would be capable of accounting for some of the variance in political behavior that was left unexplained by traditional methods of stratification analysis. (Lenski 1954)

Since that time numerous other studies have been conducted by other researchers in an attempt to explain political partisanship in terms of status inconsistency: Kenkel (1956), Hoffman (1957), Brandreaver (1965), Kelly and Chambliss (1966), Treiman (1966), Janowitz and Secal (1967), Lenski (1967), Secal (1968), Smith (1969), Knoke (1969), Bitzer (1970), Lauman and Secal (1971), Knoke (1972), and Olsen and Tully (1972).

Besides using the concept of status inconsistency as an explanation for political partisanship, it has been employed to account for other patterns of behavior. For example, the theory of status inconsistency has been employed to account for patterns of participation in voluntary associations by Lenski in 1956. In 1962 Jackson used the concept to explain variance in psychosomatic

symptom levels. Treiman made an attempt to link status inconsistency and anti-Negro prejudice. (Treiman 1966).

Status Inconsistency and Voting Behavior

Although these areas are interesting fields of inquiry, the major focus of this paper will be that of status inconsistency and its relationship to political partisanship. My interest in the subject was aroused last year during the McGovern campaign for President of the United States. I was unable to understand why wealthy Jewish businessmen in Columbus, Ohio were ardent McGovern supporters. McGovern was a liberal Democrat so the behavior of these businessmen seemed to be completely out of line with the political behavior that would normally be expected from wealthy businessmen. One day in a class status inconsistency was proposed as a plausible explanation for the behavior of these Jewish businessmen. As a result, this paper is an attempt to satisfy my curiosity concerning the subject.

V.O. Key says in The Responsible Electorate that "Given knowledge of certain characteristics of a voter - his occupation, his residence, his religion, his national origin, and perhaps certain of his attitudes - one can predict with a high probability the direction of his vote." (Key 1966: 5). In their work concerning status consistency and voting behavior Lenski and others have suggested that they can do just that - predict political partisanship by knowing certain characteristics of the individual.

Smith, Bruner and White believe that men develop their political opinions to meet three needs: 1) To understand the world and control events, 2) To get along well with others, and 3) To express psychic tensions. (Lane 1959: 102). If we accept the assumption that status inconsistency produces psychic tension it follows that voting can be an expression of that tension and an attempt to reduce it or at least make the tension less intense for the individual.

Leftist voting is usually interpreted as an expression of discontent, and an indication that needs are not being met. (Lipset 1966: 417). Lenski in his 1954 study points out that the political liberalism of several diverse groups in American society appear to be expressing a common social experience. Strong support for liberal political programs have been found among many diverse groups -- college professors, Jewish businessmen, Hollywood actors and Protestant clergy. All of these groups express status inconsistency on some of the four status indicators used by Lenski - income, occupation, education, ethnicity. Professors and clergymen enjoy high occupational and educational ranks but their income is often less than skilled manual workers. Actors often combine high income with low education and sometimes low ethnic rank as well. Jewish businessmen combine high income and occupational rank and often high educational rank with low ethnic rank. (Lenski 1954: 412).

Lenski hypothesized that "... individuals characterized by a low degree of status crystallization differ significantly in their political attitudes and behavior from individuals characterized by a high degree of status crystallization. . . . (Lenski 1954: 405). The more frequently acute status inconsistencies occur within a population the greater the proportion of that population that will support programs of social change. (Olsen and Bully 1972: 560). In the United States the Democratic Party is identified as the party that promotes liberal attitudes on economic issues and the desire for change. Thus a desire to promote social change would be to vote for the Democratic Party.

Lenski concluded from his study that

. . . the fact of imperfect status crystallization per se seems to have been related to political liberalism. . . . The data also suggests the tentative conclusion that certain types of status inconsistency are more closely related to political liberalism than others. For example, relatively low ethnic status in combination with relatively high income, occupational, or educational status was more associated with liberal tendencies than the reverse. (Lenski 1954: 411).

An analysis of the Detroit Area Survey for 1954 illustrates this phenomenon. Of those surveyed with low ethnic status and high occupational status 86% expressed a preference for the Democratic Party, while 79% with high ethnic statuses and low occupational status expressed such a preference. Of those who were high in both status dimensions only 19% expressed a preference for the Democratic Party. (Lenski 1964: 329). The data shows that individuals exhibiting inconsistency between ethnic and occupational statuses are more likely to vote Democratic than those exhibiting high consistency on these dimensions. Also those with low ethnic status and high occupational statuses are more likely to vote Democratic than the reverse.

The results of Jackson's 1962 study also lends support to Lenski's findings. Jackson was interested in determining the relationship between status consistency and symptoms of stress. He found that inconsistent individuals whose racial-ethnic rank was superior to their occupational rank (R/O) or whose racial-ethnic rank was superior to their educational rank (R/E) reported high symptoms of stress. However, subjects whose occupational rank was superior to their racial-ethnic rank (O/R) or whose educational rank was superior to their racial-ethnic rank (E/R) did not exhibit the same stress pattern. Jackson interpreted these findings by saying that O/R and E/R inconsistent individuals do experience stress, but respond to it in a fashion other than developing symptoms. He concluded that:

. . . the patterns which in the present research were found to produce no effect upon symptom level (O/R and E/R) are exactly those which Lenski found to have the greatest impact on political liberalism. It would appear that these compared findings can best be explained by the assumption that all forms of status inconsistency are stressful for the individual, but that persons whose inconsistency is due to high racial-ethnic status and low occupational or educational status tend to respond to their stress physiologically, while persons of the opposite patterns of inconsistency respond politically. (Jackson 1962: 475).

Why does an individual with inconsistent statuses tend to vote for the Democratic party? One line of reasoning presented by Goffman seems to answer this question. He suggests that preferences for change in the distribution of power occur when the individual is prevented from reducing status inconsistency and

. . . therefore maintains competing identities in a given situation. It has not, however, indicated why preferences for social change might be anticipated by such individuals as tension reducing. . . . Absence of a clear and dominant identity is likely to impair the ability of the individual to use the self as a stable referent for perceptions, judgments, and guides to behavior. To the extent that there is no stable internal referent, the individual is probably dependent on his social environment in several important respects. Several studies, for example, suggest a positive relationship between the extent to which the individual is characterized by competing identities, lack of a clear and dominant identity or self concept, and (1) dependence on environmental cues for behavior and needs for social supports, (2) vulnerability to experiences of discomfort when these supports are withdrawn; and (3) the tendency to locate the sources of discomfort in the environment rather than in the self. Characteristics such as these should dispose the individual who is inconsistent in his status more frequently than one consistent in status to: (1) have relative frequent and intense experiences of discomfort in interpersonal relations, particularly since others will tend to act in an inconsistent way toward him; (2) perceive these discomforts as stemming from the environment; and (3) anticipate that changes in the environment will reduce his discomfort. The distribution of power is likely to be experienced as a significant aspect of the individual's environment, changes in which are likely to be anticipated as tension reducing in fantasy if not actuality. (Goffman 1957: 229).

Since the distribution of power in a society is likely to be identified as the source of stress for the person with inconsistent statuses, that person will probably attempt to remove the stress through changing the existing social order. In the United States, the Democratic Party is identified as the party favoring social change so the inconsistent is likely to vote Democratic in an attempt to remove the source of stress.

Ascribed - Achieved Variables

The research carried on in connection with status inconsistency and voting behavior have suggested that not all forms of status inconsistency have equal effects. Jackson (1962) and Treiman (1966) pointed out the importance of ethnic status in Lenski's analysis of inconsistency and political liberalism. Lenski (1957) acknowledged that the association between inconsistency and political liberalism existed primarily when there were sharp discrepancies between ethnic and socioeconomic statuses. Olsen and Tully (1972) say that

More recent studies have supported the generalization that if status inconsistency has any noteworthy political consequences, they emerge only when one's socioeconomic statuses are disparate from one's racial, religious, nativity or other ethnic statuses. (Olsen and Tully 1972: 561).

They went on to say that status inconsistency involving only achieved socioeconomic statuses did not appear to produce a preference for political change. (Olsen and Tully 1972: 566).

Ascribed variables are those such as race, ethnicity and religion that are often thought of as being fixed in that they are determined by others' evaluations of ego's personal qualities. Ascribed variables are dependent on qualities which are unchanging such as sex or skin pigmentation, or if they are capable of change, undergo changes over which ego has no control for example are.

Socioeconomic or achieved variables are those such as occupation, education and income. An individual's ranking on achieved statuses may change as a result of his personal initiative and effort. (Smith 1969: 909).

Goffman (1957), Jackson (1962), Lenski (1964), and Segal and Knoke (1968) have argued the thesis that status inconsistency will have political consequence only when it involves sharp discrepancies between achieved and ascribed statuses.

Segal (1969) hypothesized that when

. . . an individual is visibly of low ascribed status but is also of high achieved status, he will feel the strains of status-inconsistency and support the Democratic Party. If, however, he is not identified by those around him in terms of his lower status, but that status is made relevant by issues or candidates in a particular election, then the choice between withdrawal and partisanship will be based on the difference in attractiveness of alternatives. (Segal 1969: 355)

Segal used Heider's system of interpersonal relations to explain the phenomenon that is occurring with a person of inconsistent statuses. An individual, P, carries on interaction with a series of other people, O_1, O_2, \dots, O_n , they both have an evaluation of X, which is P's status. If both P and O think positively or negatively about each other and P's status there is balance. However, if P learns that he differs with each O in his evaluation of his status, X, then the situation is imbalanced and therefore a source of stress for the individual, P. This imbalance

. . . cannot be resolved in the modes most commonly associated with Heider's theory. P cannot terminate his relationship with O, since O is, in effect, the social system. Neither can he change his evaluation of X, his own status, since he is utilizing objective achievement criteria. He hence seeks to change the system that makes his lower status relevant and supports political parties that promise to change the system. (Segal 1969: 354).

It is interesting to note that in order for the inconsistency to occur O must identify P's low status. Therefore, it must be visible in a meaningful way for example through skin color or accent.

Segal cites the case of the Catholic businessman as a transient case of inconsistency because the individual's lower status is not visible. Although the Catholic businessman may have discrepancies between achieved and ascribed statuses, the lower status of his minority religious affiliation is not readily identifiable. Most people relate to him in terms of his achieved occupational status. Following the reasoning behind status inconsistency

theory which comments that individuals will think of themselves in terms of their higher status, the person with low ethnicity and high occupational status will define his achieved occupational status as more relevant. In connection with this Seral says:

Insofar as the Catholic businessman is identified by society as a businessman, and thus identifies himself, he may support the Republican Party with immunity, feeling that it best represents his financial interests. If, however, his Catholicism is made relevant through specific political events such as the issue of government aid to parochial schools being raised, or a Catholic candidate running for office, and the Democratic Party is on the pro side of the ledger, then affective and cognitive political notions will be aroused which are inconsistent with those associated with his occupational status. This is clearly a cross pressure situation, but, in the absence of interpersonal precipitating factors, it does not truly fit Lenski's status inconsistency formulation. (Seral 1969: 355).

Smith believes that those with inconsistencies between ascribed and achieved variables but whose inconsistency is not particularly visible such as that which occurs in the case of religion do experience intra-psychic awareness of inconsistency which are stressful. "Consequently, we would suggest that inconsistency between low-visibility statuses generally lead to intra-psychic (covert) experience of stress which is resolved in a compatible (i.e. relatively non-visible) mode, namely non-participation." (Smith 1969: 212). In 1960 this principle seemed to be in operation. Cross pressured Catholics did not vote. However, in 1968 many of these cross pressured Catholics were attracted to Kennedy, the Catholic presidential candidate, and many Catholics did vote. Seral concludes that

... where the conflicting pressures are internal to the individual and transient in nature, he may withdraw affect from the political arena completely, unless one of the alternatives that he is forced to consider is clearly a more attractive short-term choice. (Seral 1969: 355)

From the preceding excerpts the importance of the visibility factor of the lower ascribed status rank and its connection to voting behavior become evident.

Previously in the paper it was noted that there was a different response pattern to inconsistencies involving racial-ethnic status that were superior to occupational status or educational status (P/O, P/E). In the case of E/O, E/E inconsistencies achieved statuses are inferior to ascribed statuses which resulted in symptoms of stress for the individual. With O/R, E/P inconsistencies achieved ranks exceed ascribed ranks and the resultant behavior was preference for political liberalism. Jackson explains why these two inconsistent types respond in different ways to their inconsistency in terms of ascribed-achieved variables:

A person whose achievement ranks are inferior to his ascribed rank is likely to view his situation as one of personal failure. Unlike the low status consistent, he cannot justify his lack of success in terms of ascribed handicaps. His difficulties therefore tend to stimulate feelings of personal deficiency and self-blame, thus increasing the likelihood of an intrapunative response such as symptomization.

On the other hand, the inconsistent whose achievement ranks exceed his ascribed rank usually is evaluated, and evaluates himself, as a success, since he has won (or maintained) his position despite the handicap of low racial-ethnic status. If he experiences stress due to conflicting status expectations, he is less likely to blame himself than to see his problems as stemming from the unjust actions of others. For some, this extrapunative tendency will find political expression, predisposing the individual to favor social change.

. . . a second factor which may influence this response to inconsistency is achieved status per se. Advanced education and high status occupation both reflect and reinforce a tendency to cope actively with problems and an ability to see them in their social context. An inconsistent with high achieved and low ascribed rank thus tends to see the social bases for his difficulties; his tendency to cope actively with such problems makes him more likely to favor change in the social system than would a consistent person of equally high achieved status. (Jackson 1962: 476).

Age as a Variable

Smith indicated that age would be an important factor affecting the political partisanship of an individual. "We would hypothesize that the degree to which status variables determine partisanship (party identification) varies directly with crystallization." (Smith 1969: 912) Age was used as a measure of the extent of crystallization of statuses. Older people are more likely to have firm party identification. It is also implied that their status rankings are more likely to become fixed and their total status configurations consequently crystallized. "With younger people status on the basis of achievement is likely to be changing. A lower degree of crystallization is associated with a greater degree of status ambiguity and a lesser degree of visibility. Smith says that

Both of these phenomena suggest that status should contribute less to determining partisanship among younger than among older voters. . . . As long as the possibility of achievement creates a salience differential favoring achievement over ascription, the stress of inconsistencies among ascribed statuses can be practically overlooked. Conversely, when achievement slows or stops, the relative salience of ascription increases. Inconsistencies involving ascribed rankings are likely to produce greater stress manifested in enlarged support for liberal political parties. (Smith 1969: 913).

Smith cites the example of a young Negro to illustrate this principle involving age:

. . . a young Negro is not as likely to resign himself to the contingency of race and income as long as increases in income are possible or appear to be possible. But with advancing age, as his net income becomes set, and unchanging in response to his investments and achievement, the contingency is likely to take on greater salience as a source of stress. (Smith 1969: 914).

Smith notes that it is well known that younger voters are more glib than older voters, participate less in community organizations, and are less cynical about politics. He reminds us that

. . . there is nothing intrinsic to aging per se which produces these relationships. Rather, they can be explained by assuming

are indicative of the phenomenon. The spontaneity of older voters, as already noted is probably more intense because of habit, experience, exposure to political symbols, and other such factors. Younger people usually participate less in community organizations and are more politically apathetic because they are more concerned about making a living, and they are less critical because they have been exposed to fewer failures of the system. (Smith 1969:012-020).

Other Factors Affecting Voting Behavior

Linset believes that even though a group of people are suffering from some deprivation under the existing socioeconomic system, it doesn't automatically follow that they will support political parties aiming at social change. He identifies three conditions as facilitative such a response: effective channels of communication, low belief in the possibility of individual social mobility and the absence of traditional ties to a conservative party. (Linset 1968: 403).

The first condition, that of effective communication, is an important one. Close contacts among people who have a common problem "... further an awareness of a community of interests and of the possibilities of collective action, involving political action, to solve common problems. (Linset 1966: 403). Once a common awareness and organization exists it

... may activate many persons who were isolated or insulated, give them social support, make the injustice they feel more real, reinforce the impulse to action, and make them feel more powerful. Probably, therefore, organization has a snowball effect, involving that public expression of discontent is a threshold phenomenon and once it reaches momentum it can be expected to have a rapidly developing "take off" period. (Zelditch, Renner and Anderson 1966:062).

A low belief in the possibility of individual social mobility is another aspect that affects political partisanship. If the possibility exists for discontented individuals to better themselves by working their way up the ladder of success there is a reduction in collective efforts at social change such as support for leftist political parties. Linset points out that in the United States three different survey studies report that the upwardly mobile are more conservative (Republican) than those who were raised

in middle class families. The difference in the political behavior of these people who move from the lower class to the suburb is evident in several studies. Linset cites a re-analysis of the 1952 survey conducted by the Survey Research Center at Michigan as supporting this trend. An analysis along

. . . lines of suburban-urban differences found that there were indeed shifts in party loyalties which cannot be explained simply as the movement of already conservative people to the suburbs. Both hypotheses suggested by the authors of this study are consistent with the thesis suggested here of the impact of social mobility upon lower-class people. Whether self-selection is the crucial factor implying that the new suburbanites are upwardly mobile and anxious to become socialized into a higher environment - friends and neighbors - account for greater conservative voting. The data show that mobility of this kind produces higher Republican voting on the part of previously Democratic voters when occupation was held constant, in both "medium" and "high" status occupations there was considerably more Republican voting in the suburbs. (Linset 1966: 426).

Berger, Zelditch and Anderson explain precisely what is operating in the case of upward mobility in the following excerpt:

This process is, roughly: ego is upwardly mobile, tries to associate with members of the class into which he has risen, is rebuffed, or thinks he is rebuffed, believes this is due to his speech, clothes, attitudes, and other signs of his lower ranks, and therefore tries to change in these respects. This then leads to strict conformity or even over conformity with the beliefs and values of the upper stratum a symptom which may be an ultra-conservative political position. (Zelditch, Berger and Anderson 1966: 263-264).

Leadership in Political Movements

Lenski in his book Power and Privilege points out an interesting fact about the leaders of liberal political movements. He says that although the great majority of the supporters of liberal and radical movements will probably always be those with consistently low status the leaders of these movements do not normally belong to this group. Persons of consistently low status are not likely to have have either the training or the skills

necessary to lead these movements successfully nor are they likely to have the money to back the movement. However, persons of inconsistent status are often in a position to supply these necessary elements, hence they become leaders of the movements.

Lenski notes how this phenomenon corresponds to the predictions of Marx and Engels:

Status discrepancy and the reactions to it produces may well be a major source of the revolutionary leadership which Marx and Engels predicted (without explaining) would come from the ranks of the privileged classes.

On the basis of limited studies . . . one would hesitate to say that this hypothesis is much more than interesting speculation. However, there is also a considerable body of unsystematic evidence to support it. The role of ethnic and racial minorities in radical movements has long been noted, and it has also been observed that even the successful members of these minorities are attracted to such movements, in fact, they often provide the leadership. (Lenski 1966: 407).

In this way the theory of status inconsistency provides a possible explanation for the leadership of revolutionary movements arising from a more privileged class. An inconsistent such as a wealthy Jewish person could be considered privileged in terms of his wealth, but the ethnic factor involved does not permit him to be honored on the basis of his religious beliefs.

Criticism of Status Inconsistency as an Explanation of Voting Behavior

In spite of the amount of research that has been inspired by Lenski in 1954 there are many problems involved in research on status inconsistency and consequently a great deal of criticism of the research in this area. A survey of the research in the area of status inconsistency and voting behavior reveals several studies that offer results contradictory to the findings of Lenski. A study done by Kenkel in 1956 showed no relationship between status inconsistency and a desire for political change. Jackson in 1962 and Treiman

in 1966 revealed that Tenski's hypothesis should be limited to a few social forms of status inconsistency. That is, however in 1966 and Kelly and Chubbless in 1966 published data that did not support the ideas of Tenski. Brown and Jones (1970) found no significant relationships between occupational and education - income inconsistency and preference for political change among Catholics of high socio-economic status. (Cited by Brown and Jones 1970: 560).

A study by Laumann and Levin revealed that inconsistencies between ethnic-religious and educational statuses explained no significant relationships with several measures of preference for political change. (Laumann and Levin 1971).

From this brief survey of the literature in the area it is evident that there are a great many contradictory findings in the field of status inconsistency and voting behavior. Perhaps it would be helpful to look for reasons for the discrepancies in the existing research.

One possible cause for the contradictory findings could be the different definitions used for political liberalism. Tenski treats liberalism as though it were a unidimensional phenomenon. In other words he assumes that a person is either liberal or conservative on a whole series of items. Kelly and Chubbless believe that

It is possible, however, that persons may be liberal on some issues and conservative on others. Lipset for example, after reviewing studies of lower class liberalism-conservatism, concluded that the lower classes are more liberal if liberalism is defined in non-economic terms such as support of civil liberties, internationalism, and civil rights. . . . If Lipset's interpretations are correct, they suggest that different results might be obtained if different dimensions of liberalism are used. (Kelly and Chubbless 1966: 375).

Besides difficulties with the definition of liberalism there are problems in testing the validity of status consistency theory. Brown says:

Although the theory itself appears plausible enough, there are serious difficulties in implementing adequate empirical tests of its validity. For example, it is not all clear how to

determine which status configurations are "crystallized" and which are not. According to the theory, a crystallized status set is one in which each of the component statuses gives rise to similar values or expectations. However, while examples of clearly discrepant statuses may be found . . . there is in general no way to match particular status categories precisely with particular values or expectations. . . . Thus, while it is possible to discover mean differences between status categories on particular attributes, it is difficult to match those specific categories of various status characteristics that are most similar with respect to the particular values or expectations which result in strain when in conflict. (Treiman 1966: 652).

Blalock identifies the existence of too many unknowns as constituting the main problem in Lenski's status inconsistency theory. (Blalock 1966: 55). Later Blalock states that this problem is created because inconsistency is defined as a perfect mathematical function of the difference between two or more statuses. Blalock suggests the importance of non-status factors such as personality traits or characteristics of the situation that would affect the importance attached to different patterns of inconsistency. In regard to the problems that exist with status inconsistency theory he says: "In short, much remains to be done before really definitive conclusions can be reached concerning the effects of status inconsistency." (Blalock 1967: 315).

In his studies Lenski used ethnic background as one of the status variables. Kelly and Chambliss suggest that

. . . Lenski's findings that status inconsistent persons were more liberal was probably attributable to the fact that ethnic background was one of the status variables he used, whereas other studies have not used this variable. Thus the implication is that ethnic background, not status inconsistency, determines political attitudes. (Kelly and Chambliss 1966: 391).

Thus the use of different status variables could account for the difference in findings among several of the studies.

Another difficulty with status inconsistency theory arises as a result of the statistical analyses that have been employed. Lenski has stated:

I am hypothesizing that the simple additive model that students

of stratification have traditionally used is incapable of describing relationships between two status variables and a variable measuring stress. (Lenski 1964: 326).

Olsen and Tully suggest that the contradictory findings are a result of several different methods of data analysis. They say:

Without going into much detail, we can observe that such methods as simple frequency counts or the four cell "fold-over" technique are generally regarded as inadequate or unreliable for measuring status consistency effects. Consequently, many of the earlier findings should probably be discarded. (Olsen and Tully 1972: 560).

Perhaps the mightiest blow to Lenski's status inconsistency theory comes from Olsen and Tully concerning the explanatory cover of status inconsistency.

Almost all previous research on the political consequences of status inconsistency focused on whether it was statistically significant. Having discovered a statistically significant relationship, however, one should go on to examine the amount of variation in the dependent variables that can be explained by the independent variable of status inconsistency. Despite statistical significance, a correlation that explains only one or two percent of the total variation is essentially meaningless. . . . Unless status inconsistency can account for at least a moderate amount of variation in one or more political variables, it is of questionable theoretical use in explaining preferences for political change. (Olsen and Tully 1972: 564).

Olsen and Tully again put status inconsistency theory in a questionable position when they say if one is concerned

. . . with the explanatory power of concepts such as status inconsistency, then Lenski's proposition appears relatively worthless theoretically. It does not substantially increase our ability to predict preferences for political change beyond what we can predict from the separate effects of socio-economic status and ethnicity. (Olsen and Tully 1972: 522).

The final blow to Lenski's theory is stated in the conclusion of Olsen and Tully's paper:

. . . we conclude that Lenski's proposition is not particularly useful for explaining preferences for change since status inconsistency appears to explain about one percent of the variation in these phenomena beyond that given by a straightforward

additive approach using socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Let us therefore file this proposition under the heading of valid but trivial information," and get on with the vital task of identifying, measuring, and explaining all the factors that contribute to desires for socio-political change in contemporary society. (Lipson and Hill, 1992: 393).

When all the factors are taken into consideration, the value of the theory of status inconsistency as it relates to voting behavior is quite questionable. The theory seems to be obsolete when it explains liberal voting preferences in connection with a low ethnic rank; in other words the theory leaves much to be desired. The theory of status inconsistency is certainly an interesting one, but it is evident that many factors need to be clarified before any definitive conclusions about status inconsistency and voting behavior can be reached.

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