economic, political, educational and social life of the Black community from top to bottom. It also maintained that the exercise of power at the local level is simply what all other groups in American society have done to acquire their share of total American life. CORE's Black power resolution eliminated the ideology of racial integration as the group's goal and replaced it with the goal of racial co-existence through Black power (Allen, 1970:69).

Around 1966, another extremist development occurred—the Black Panther movement, organised by two students at Merritt College in Oakland, Newton, and Seale who were inspired by Fanon, Mao and Guevara. The Black Panther Party for self-defence was meant to arm the Black people so that they could directly protest against the attacks of the police and their brutalities and harassment. Newton and Seale also established the Community Alert Patrol (CAP) to curb police excesses on ghetto residents. Another eminent Panther was Eldridge Cleaver, who came into prominence in 1968. He declared Fanon's book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, to be the Bible of the Black Liberation Movement in America, for it legitimized the revolutionary impulse (Feaver, 1970:168).
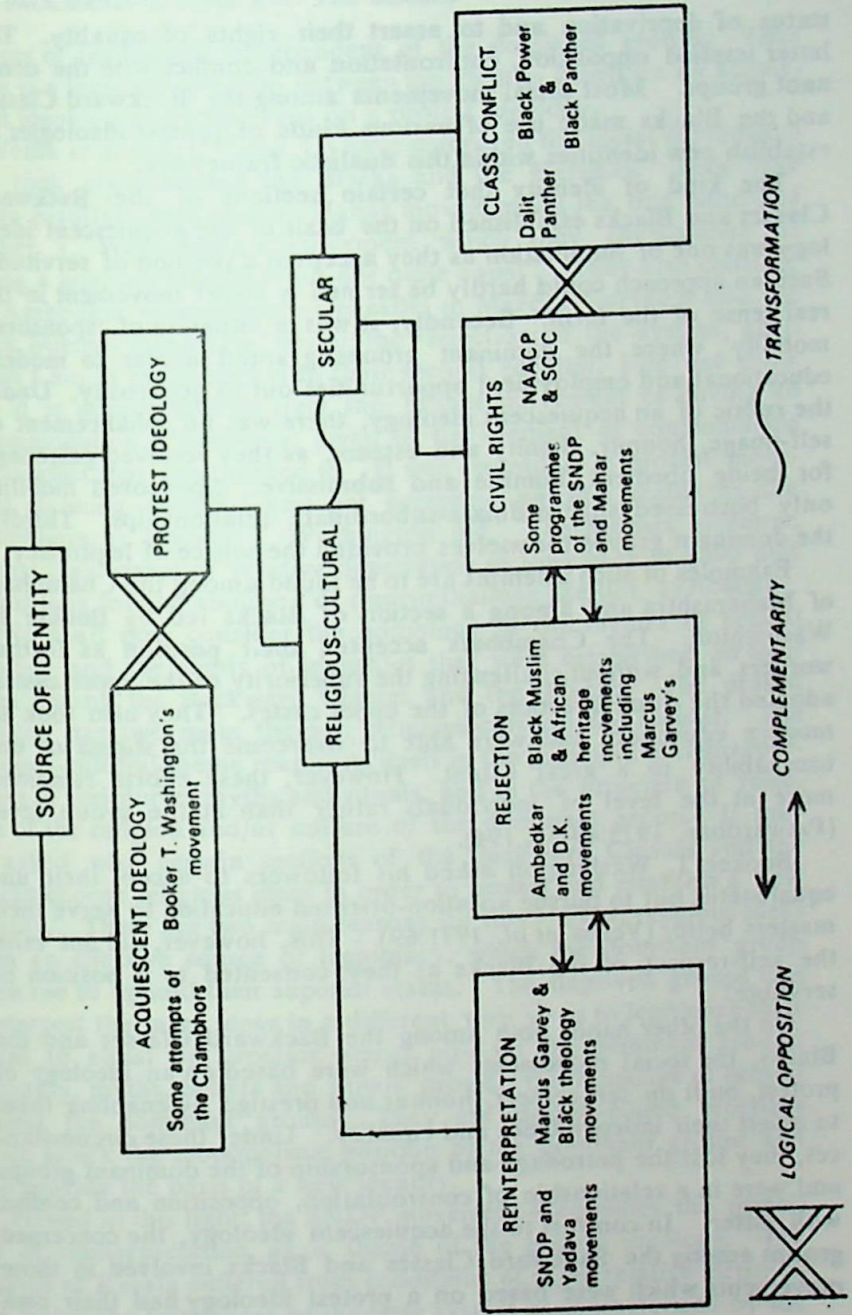
The Panthers emphasized revolutionary nationalism rather than cultural nationalism. They were more militant and radical, and were able to penetrate into the poor working class of the urban ghettos.

Homology in the Sources of Identity

Against the foregoing account of the ideologies of different social movements among the Backward Classes and the Blacks, we may analyze the homology in their attempts to establish new identities. Figure 1 provides the classificatory scheme of the sources of identity.

Broadly speaking, two alternatives were open to the Backward Classes and Blacks to meet the challenges facing them. One was to adopt a position of non-confrontation, accepting their low position but requesting the dominant groups to allow them to have access to modern opportunities of education and employment so that they might serve better. The dominant groups, out of generosity, compassion and pity, granted them certain benefits as rewards for their good conduct. The other alternative was to protest against their

Figure 6.1

SOURCE OF IDENTITY

PROTEST IDEOLOGY

ACQUIESCENT IDEOLOGY
Some attempts of
the Chambhors

Booker T. Washington's
movement

RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL

SECULAR

REINTERPRETATION

SNDP and   Marcus Garvey &
Yadava   Black theology
movements   movements

REJECTION

Ambedkar   Black Muslim
and D.K.   & African
movements   heritage
             movements
             including
             Marcus
             Garvey's

CIVIL RIGHTS

Some   NAACP
programmes   & SCLC
of the SNDP
and Mahar
movements

CLASS CONFLICT

Dalit   Black Power
Panther   &
             Black Panther

TRANSFORMATION

COMPLEMENTARITY

LOGICAL OPPOSITION

status of deprivation and to assert their rights of equality. The latter implied opposition, confrontation and conflict with the dominant groups. Most social movements among the Backward Classes and the Blacks made use of various kinds of protest ideologies to establish new identities within this dualistic framework.

The kind of identity that certain sections of the Backward Classes and Blacks established on the basis of the acquiescent ideology was one of humiliation as they accepted a position of servitude. Such an approach could hardly be termed a social movement in the real sense of the term. Secondly, it was a situation of 'sponsored mobility' where the dominant groups granted access to modern educational and employment opportunities out of generosity. Under the rubric of an acquiescent ideology, there was no enhancement of self-image, honour, dignity and esteem, as they received patronage for being obedient, humble and submissive. Sponsored mobility only buttressed superordinate-subordinate relationships. Thirdly, the dominant groups themselves provided the source of legitimacy.

Examples of such attempts are to be found among the Chambhars of Maharashtra and among a section of Blacks led by Booker T. Washington. The Chambhars accepted their position as leather workers, and, without challenging the superiority of the upper castes, adopted the ritual practices of the upper castes. They also took to modern education, and were able to overcome the stigma of untouchability to a great extent. However, these efforts remained more at the level of individuals rather than at the group level (Patwardhan, 1973:49-51, 194).

Booker T. Washington asked his followers to accept their unequal status but to pursue vocation-oriented education to serve their masters better (Verba et al, 1971:69). This, however, did not raise the self-respect of the Blacks as they consented to a position of servitute.

On the other hand, both among the Backward Classes and the Blacks, the social movements which were based on an ideology of protest, built up self-respect, honour and prestige by enabling them to assert their independence and equality. Under these circumstances, they lost the patronage and sponsorship of the dominant groups and were in a relationship of confrontation, opposition and conflict with latter. In contrast to the acquiescent ideology, the concerned groups among the Backward Classes and Blacks involved in those movements which were based on a protest ideology had their own

sources of legitimacy, independent of the dominant groups. Thus there is a logical opposition between the identity based on an acquiescent ideology and that based on a protest ideology.

Verba *et al* (1971: Chap. II) have compared the social movements that took place among the Blacks and the Harijans. They have drawn parallels between the Mahar movement on the one hand and Booker T. Washington's movement which they characterize as having a goal of 'separate but not quite equal'. They also consider Dr. Ambedkar's movement as parallel to Marcus Garvey's and the Black Muslim movement under the 'rejection of the system' goal. While I am in agreement with their second parallel, I do not think that it is appropriate to treat the Mahar movement as having an accommodationist ideology, given of the element of confrontation and conflict that has marked it. It was essentially a protest movement claiming equality and not accepting unequal status as the Chambhars or Booker T. Washington did. The Mahars protested against their status of relative deprivation as long back as 1890 and fought long for the abolition of discriminations (Zelliot, 1970:404).

We shall now consider the homology in the themes of protest ideology and the kinds of identities that were established on their bases among the Backward Classes and the Blacks. The protest ideology has two main themes: religious-cultural and secular. The religious-cultural theme manifests itself in the principle of reinterpretation of scriptures, myths and rituals, and in the principle of rejection of the religion and/or culture of the dominant group. It may be asked why certain sections of the Backward Classes and the Blacks choose religious ideas in order to protest and establish a new identity. There are two main reasons for this. First, religious ideas form an effective source of legitimacy, which the dominant group often use to uphold their superior status. The deprived groups can reinterpret the same ideas in a different way so as to legitimize their claim to equal or superior status *vis-à-vis* the dominant groups. Secondly, myths, beliefs and rituals provide the language of protest against the dominant groups. They are double-edged weapons which attack the monopolistic position of the dominant groups and also provide the basis of a new identity.

Viewed in this light, the SNDP movement exemplifies the principle of reinterpretation as a theme of the protest ideology. The Izhavas of Kerala suffered from conditions of acute relative deprivation within the framework of the caste system as characterized by the

principle of purity-pollution. This principle was legitimized by the priests of orthodox Hinduism (Brahmins) and by the kings who wielded secular authority. During British rule, these two sources of legitimacy were undermined to a great extent, and new sources of status were established, based on occupation, income, education and an egalitarian value system. Under such conditions, the leaders of the deprived sections were awakened to alternative sources of identity. Two ways of protest were open to them. One was to reinterpret Hinduism and claim a new identity within its fold, and the other was to abandon Hinduism and embrace another religion and culture. The Izhavas chose the former, although they did make several attempts to choose the latter, because of the presence of a charismatic leader, Sri Narayana Guru Swamy, among them.

Sri Narayana Guru Swamy established a new identity for the Izhavas based on a reinterpretation of orthodox Hinduism. He denied the existence of a plurality of Gods, religions and castes. He argued against the criterion of birth as the basis of differential access to the highest forms of spiritual knowledge, and demonstrated the efficacy of training in gaining this knowledge. He was also against superfluous and expensive rituals. He established a set of beliefs, rituals, temples and priests which was parallel to that of the upper castes. The world-view of his reinterpreted Hinduism was both enlightened and simple, on the basis of which Izhavas were able to claim a new identity with honour, esteem and self-respect.

Similarly, the Ahirs and other cognate castes systematically reinterpreted the Yadava myth of origin of their castes in legitimizing their superior status. This was a language of protest against the status that was accorded to them by the dominant groups. They not only achieved self-respect and honour, but also gained access to the religious goods and services of the twice-born castes which they had long been denied.

The same principle of reinterpretation of religious ideas was adopted by a section of the Blacks. They were able to establish a new identity on the basis of a reinterpretation of Christianity. Marcus Garvey created a new Christian religion which characterized Christ as a Blackman and as the God of the oppressed. There was a move to prepare a Black Bible with pictures of Negro saints and angles. But a more systematic interpretation of Black Christianity uncovered the racial biases of White Christianity. Black theology emerged as the theology of liberation identifying the Blacks as the oppressed