A CRITIQUE OF 'COMMUNITY STUDIES' 
AND ITS ROLE IN SOCIAL THOUGHT 

by 

The Work Group 

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A CRITIQUE OF 'COMMUNITY STUDIES'

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"... the formal groupings of club, band, choir, union, chapel - all the many strands of 'neighbourhood' that reach out to attain 'community'"

(Jackson and Marsden 1966 p 19)

An important part of the short history of cultural studies has been concerned with the level of experience, subjective response, and the texture of the day to day routine amongst particular groups. Partly, and especially in the Hoggartian strands, the interest was in the recording and analysis of cultural activities constituted as aspects of a whole way of life rather than as privileged and separate moments relating to the best which has been thought and said.

The fieldwork group, as one of the nine current Centre groups, has preserved and developed this line of interest whilst attempting to place it in a more thorough going analysis which both specifies subjective experience more closely, and locates it within a structured social totality rather than in the looser, 'whole way of life'. Our attention has been on the relationship of determining forces - not necessarily recognizably represented in consciousness or practice - and the form, or potential for change, of given experience and cultural activity in a specific zone.

Though there is a body of ethnographic descriptive work developing within cultural studies we thought it vital to review and use work lying in adjacent areas to generate the maximum information possible on the relation between cultural form and determining conditions.

This spirit led us to make a collective reading of the literature within the genre of Community Studies. We took CS to be the most massive and continuing attempt within social science to use 'qualitative methods' to record and analyse working class experience in particular located cultural forms.

It soon became clear, however, that it was extremely difficult to define the characteristic elements of such a genre, and that there was no direct principled way in which it was possible to borrow evidence directly for our purposes from this source.

We had to proceed via a critique of CS. It was necessary to make a careful analysis of the way in which particular CS were bound up quite intimately with the particular social, political, ideological and intellectual conditions of their creation.

This paper is the result of that exercise. It presents a deconstruction of a genre. It attempts to lay bare the connection between presented evidence and underlying pre-supposition. In fact the very completeness of the mediations and necessary connections between these levels severely questioned for us whether it was at all possible to use evidence from CS for other purposes without also imparting - perhaps unconsciously - something of its theoretical paradigm. Our project became one then, finally, of a critique of the whole conceptual basis of an area of study - not a limited borrowing of 'hard' data. We believe that this offers a model of the necessarily theoretical work of a principled attempt to borrow data and evidence from differently constituted academic regions.
Its place and the lower orders recognised and acknowledged their superiors who were superior by reason of their style, authoritative manner, air of gentility and who were acknowledged as such because they claimed the rights of their social position with self assurance.

Bagot (1879) portrayed the English as essentially a 'deferential community in which the rude clings at the bottom defer to what they call the theatrical show of society and by their deference acquiesced in and welcomed the rule of the aristocratic classes'.

Country house living and the income, sports, pursuits and entertaining that went with the possession of land continued, albeit in an attenuated form until 1939. There was a spate of books in the late 40's and early 50's eulogising country life and rural communities. As late as 1947 a country squire, Godfrey Locker-Lampson, extolling the existence of himself and his peers in 'English Country Life', he feared the extinction of the breed with the coming to power of the post-war Labour Government. In Ch.1, 'The Extinction of the Country Squire' he says 'Before he takes his departure it may not be amiss to render him a passing tribute ... he may be pictured as having £2,000 of revenue and 2,000 or 3,000 acres. He will have chosen a wife from respectable county stock and be on familiar terms with his fellow land owners within a radius of ten miles. His time will be divided between sport, the management of his estate and local public duties. His sons will be at college and his daughters finishing their education at home. The riding of the hunts, the social round will consist of a butler and footman and perhaps 6 or 7 other servants. There will be a coachman and a couple of men in the stable, 3 or 4 gardeners will prune his lady's roses ... two estate men will be needed and in addition to these, there will be a couple of barrowmen to rear five or six hundred pheasants to stock his coverts ... and to keep poachers and trespassers at bay. This author also writes of the 'Old Retainers', 'What pride in the tradition of the Family (note capital F) care for its interests, affection, loyalty, zeal and love unshaken by a thought of gain'.'

But this view of community was not only represented by ruling class writers. For more influential was the literary work done by the representatives of the working classes, which has had important repercussions both for English literature and the sociological notion of community. Writers such as George Eliot and D.H.Lawrence perfectly express 'organisist' ideas of tight-knit communities which display peculiar tensions which leads to the squab and squabbling. Values and leaders of these communities were seen at the same time as necessary and repulsive.

Later writers on the working class - especially during the 1960s - returned to the North and Midlands (Stillette, Worsley, Waterhouse) as the only place where 'true' working class solidarity still existed.

This is not very different from the idea of community in sociological studies: the sociology of simple, face-to-face communities by some sociologists does hark back to rural hierarchical/familial set ups where bonds and networks of village and community life were seen as cohesive (not as reactionary and strangling). So, old Tory nostalgic ideas of community did creep into many of the sociological studies.

Not surprisingly, for it was the village community and its attendant

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* However, these works displayed cruel ambivalence, for the working class life styles they were describing were changing under the impact of 'Affluence' - particularly these ambivalent were displayed by Stillette anti-hero, Arthur S Eaton: 'All I'm out for is a good time - all the rest is propaganda'. See later discussion.
II Post-war community studies can be seen as a reaction against certain developments in sociology and social geography. In the early 1950s, there was a tendency to view social relationships as being static and unchanging. However, with the development of post-industrial society, the concept of community began to be seen as more fluid and dynamic. This led to a new focus on the role of communities in shaping social change.

These interpretations rested on three basic assumptions. Firstly, that the liberal and social democracies were pluralistic, power being held by a number of social groups. Secondly, that the substantive interpretation of community did not require a specific or limited understanding of the context. Thirdly, that community was a social structure that could be understood through the application of Keynesian economic policies. These assumptions were challenged by the post-1955 implementation of the Beveridge Report, which suggested that inequalities were being eroded and that the old loyalties of class were being replaced with new forms of social organisation.

In its simplest form, the post-war 'community' represented a continuous tendency towards the reduction of inequality in income distribution, and to a lesser extent, in wealth. Thus, the widespread material poverty characteristic of the 1930s had been overcome, and political debate was focused around the new problems faced by people living in an 'affluent society'. As far as poverty was seen to exist, it was felt to be a result of social change, and that the solution lay in collective action and new forms of social organisation.
by some of its opponents.

The fallacies underlying these conceptions went unchallenged, at least ideologically, until the development of the 'New Left' arising from disillusionment both with the effectiveness of Labour's social reforms and with the sterility of organised left-wing thought. The threat of this changing ideological stance was characterised in certain circles by Hoggart's 'Culture and Society' (1957), while "The Uses of Illiteracy" (1964) by T. S. Eliot. Despite the differences of scope, subject and emphasis, these works stood in one way or another for a favourable evaluation of the meanings of working-class culture, as Hoggart makes clear:

"I think such an impression is wrong if it leads us to construct an image of working-class people only from adding together the variety of statistics given in some of these sociological works ... clearly we have to try to see beyond the habits of what the habits stand for, to see through the statements to see what the statements really mean... ...to detect the differing pressures of emotion behind ideological phrases and ritualistic observances" (Hoggart 1957 p 17)

In the New Left's interpretation of working-class culture, the idea of 'community' plays a pivotal role. 'Community' is important because it allows the Culture/Society question to be thought through in all its dimensions - as a 'totality'. Again, two years on, it is difficult to appreciate the radical implications of this - but what more than anything else distinguished these literary/cultural studies at this time was their attention to the 'totality': how separate texts/rituals/institutions inter-related in a 'whole way of life'. The idea of community necessarily presupposed an intellectual commitment to go beyond immediate empiricism, the 'obvious', the isolated text, to interpret cultural phenomena in terms of structural relationships or parts of a whole.

These critical developments of Williams & Hoggart were closely linked with a movement in social administration, in which Titmuss (1958) was the leading figure, which stressed the gaps and inadequacies in welfare services, the extent to which working-class material standards remained below those of the middle-class, and argued that political policy rather than individual competence was responsible for these differences.

The theme linking the two areas was the realisation that working-class people had characteristics that were not explicable simply in terms of their financial position, that proposals for change needed to be grounded in a more complex theoretical understanding of working-class life. It is within this context that we find the development of, for example, the Institute of Community Studies and the work conducted by Liverpool University, at a time when more than superficial social research was rare, and where sociology as an academic subject had gained footholds in only a few universities.

Community studies, in fact, very largely ignored the assumptions of the 'post capitalist society'/enbougeoisement thesis, or at best they conceded that higher wages had meant a rise in the standard of living of the working class, but asserted that this had made no real difference and that the working class still existed as a discrete group - a cultural level at least. Community studies went on to "rediscover class", and in this sense 'community' carried connotations which can only be described as political. There was a kind of smuggling process, whereby the idea of 'community' was identified with the central socialist/social democratic preoccupation with class. Not accidentally, we might add, for it was based in part on real anxieties about Labour's electoral base. It is noteworthy in this context that of the six British studies published in 1957, four had authors with some formal connection with the Labour Party. The notion of 'community' with its overtones of tradition and oppositional culture had an obvious attraction.

So, whilst we can see that the development of community studies was, in part, a reaction to the more vulgar enbougeoisement thesis and a reflection of the concern generated by the apparent erosion of Labour's electoral base, it is apparent that many of the community studies were specifically aimed at the practice of social policy, or directed towards an illustration of those conventionally defined 'social problems'. Thus, for Young and Willmott:

"The assumption was that the policy-makers were... insufficiently aware of the needs of views of the working class people who form the bulk of the users of the social services, and we hoped that social research might help to provide a more realistic basis for policy" (Young and Willmott 1961 p 2)

Whereas, with Jackson: "The communal urge could then have been harnessed, for a common good". He took "...the illustration of productivity to show the practical help that can flow from an understanding of the otherness of working class life" (Jackson 1969 p 156).

III. It is important at this point to step back and attempt to understand the position that sociology occupied within bourgeois ideology, and, to explain the phenomenal growth in sociology, both as an academic discipline and as an applied science, during the late 50's and 60's. Sociology, as Gouldner (1971) attempts to point out, arises and assumes that economic problems are solved, when economic problems have become transparently social problems which cannot be solved within the framework of bourgeois economics.

"Sociology focuses upon the non-economic sources of social order. Academic sociology polemically denies that economic change is a sufficient or necessary condition for maintaining or increasing social order".

(A. Gouldner, 1971 p 4).

That is to say, when the social character of capitalist production has become apparent in the oppositional life-style and activities of the chief force of production, the working class, sociology arises as a theory of how to respond to this opposition without abolishing the capitalist character of production. It recognizes the social character of production - only by denying that it is connected with production, which is taken to be the concern of economics. Thus, at one and the same time, sociology is both reformist and repressive. By providing palliatives to real social problems it also, by definition, accentuates means of social control.
So, in the boom of social research and sociology, 'social problems', that is, those activities or phenomena which impinge on the interest of capital, are seen to be the result of 'social' life and not of economic contradictions. It is no longer the individual 'problem family' that is at fault, it is a lot of 'problem families' living in a 'problem area'. Thus, for example, the incidence of industrial action can now be explained with reference to the community. The work force of industries with few strikes:

"...are more likely to live in multi-industry communities, to associate with people with quite different working experiences than their own, and to belong to associations with heterogeneous memberships. In these communities their individual grievances are less likely to coalesce into a mass grievance which is expressed at the job level."  
(Kerr & Siegel 1964 p 193)

Alternatively, in regard to education, we can now see that it is the community which largely determines educational success:

"What is unchallenged, however, is that the concept of community provides us with an illuminating guide to the expectations and requirements of the population of the school catchment area, as well as to the prevailing factors in the behaviour of its pupils and teachers"  
(Roscletton: 1967 p 35)

This ideological role is clearly exemplified, for example, in the notion 'culture of poverty'. This argues that the poor constitute a distinctive culture or community within society; that the experiences, attitudes and values generated in poor communities are passed on from one generation to the next in a never-ending cycle. Thus, this culture is able

"to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on the children. By the time the children are aged six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic attitudes and values of their subculture, and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of the opportunities of compensatory education which may occur in their life-time."  
(O. Lewis: 1965 p 60)

So it is not unskilled, meaningless, irregular employment, or bad housing, or an irrelevant education that is at fault - it 'basic attitudes' that are wrong. This ideological and overtly repressive theme logically leads to notions of compulsory education which will, no doubt, finally reach down to the foetus, or maybe sterilisation in hopeless cases.

Thus, within the total context of bourgeoisie ideology, sociology provides important methodological and empirical data for the social policy makers. Because it has an understanding of contradictions within a total structure it is conceptually limited to understanding class conflict in terms either of cultural or individual deprivation, and its policy formulations boil down to 'tinkering with the machine' - never mind the engine.

IV. This inability to understand society as a total structure in the Marxist sense, has meant that sociology in general, and community studies in particular, have automatically limited themselves to the appearance of things, never trying to analyse the relationships latent in the things themselves. It is in this area, and seemingly for this reason, that community studies have been drawn on functionalism, particularly as manifest in the work of social anthropologists. A practice, custom or belief was interpreted in terms of its present and ongoing functions in the surrounding society. But whereas, anthropologists within small-scale societies are able to study social life at first hand; sociologists have adopted the same model as if their 'communities' are excused participation in the national structures of class and politics.

In practice this approach leads to a concentration on 'normative' facts ('treat social facts as things') so social structure refers to relations between actual, empirically given social phenomena. Those relationships are either given in the facts as directly observed, or arrived at by simple abstraction from the facts. Thus, social structure when used in a functional analysis, refers to no more than the actual organization of a given social system: 'its all moving wallpaper really.'

From within this perspective social behaviour is seen as determined by norms, enforced by implicit or explicit sanctions. This structure, in a regular and predictable fashion, the social life and relationships of individuals. Thus, to Young and Willmott, the mother/daughter relationship is one where:

"Though they both derive benefit from the relationship, it is far more than a mere arrangement for mutual convenience. The attachment between them is supported by a powerful moral code"  
(Young & Willmott 1962 p 193)

The analysis focuses on rules of conduct as mechanisms of social control, as consequences of rules that govern particular forms of social groupings (for example, kinship) and on the consequences which these rules have for the composition of particular social relationships. The meaningful fabric which constitutes social life is therefore found, not in culture, but in institutions considered as regulative social relationships. This largely descriptive approach to social phenomena is given a certain 'dynamic' by the use of the concept of function. Institutions are seen as functioning parts of a social whole, (the community') and serve to maintain it in a more or less stable condition. The logic of the approach then becomes: insofar as these institutions contribute to the maintenance of the social system, that is, if the system 'works,' then they are seen as functioning for it. This approach, by definition, leads to a focus on the mechanisms of control that function to ensure conformity to the prescribed normative order.

Thus, many community studies erect a social reality which is taken as given and giving of itself in immediate appearance. A relatively unquestioned reality is reported on relatively unquestioningly.
We are confronted with, a single-layered social totality consisting of attitudes, behaviour, activities and institutions, and the relationships between these things. There is little awareness of process, or dynamic relations between different forces and groupings. There is no sense of leaps within the social whole, and in particular no notion of the relations and mediations between the subjective level of experience, ideology and determining material conditions. In general people are seen as passive things happening to them, rather than as showing some attempt to create their lives; there is no dialectic between objective and subjective factors.

This single-layered analysis also leads to the abstraction of community from social processes which constitute it as if it were a self-regulating entity, thus community studies cannot examine the dialectic between local and national factors.

The ideological construction of a world which is self-evident, single-layered and functionally inter-related, in which ideas are just there as they have always been, delivers a specific kind of methodological unconsciousness. Since one reality is there for the seeing, there is no more than one way in which to see it - why therefore give the groundings or detail of your observations? It is not a reflexive world so why should your methodology be reflexive? The techniques are 'naturalistic', direct, unproblematic and usually unrecorded. With no clear statement of the paradigms in this work, without any information about research techniques, or how respondents saw the investigator, with no information independently presented both concerning the relationship of the researcher to the community and concerning the way in which the written work is created by the theories of the writers, it is impossible for us to triangulate, to read back along the lines of the prior theoretical predisposition, to deconstruct and reconstruct, to come to our own principled interpretation of the evidence.

The literature forms the single most massive encounter with the located experience of working class people, and is the major accredited authority of working class experience. As its text should be 'demythologised', and 'salvaged as sources for our own, hopefully, more reflexive research procedures'. As it is 'reading back' from community studies is an uncertain exercise. We are dealing with a popularly authorised, naturalised, imposed problematic which methodologically conceals its own tracks.

Just to give one short example of how this conceptual approach is used in community studies and how it actually obscures that which needs to be explained, we can look at Klein's (1965) use of parts of the Rodrigues et al. (1956) study dealing with education and mental activity. Parents were asked about their aspirations for their children and the researchers conclude that study, with a few exceptions, is not taken seriously (because 'book learning' is recognised as applying only to careers outside the experience of working people). This way any leans to a general scepticism about theory. Furthermore, the miners are said to have a 'taste for tenderness' and to regard most from mental activity as oppressive (and therefore - since this is a male dominated community - of little value). From this Klein generalises that 'cognitive poverty' - an intellectual insecurity arising from the strongly externalist pressures of social life - is characteristic of traditional working class communities. The suggestion here is that anti-intellectualism arises inevitably from the conditions of working class life - do we detect a note of determinism?

Apart from the very obvious criticism that the dimension of school experience is totally lacking in both the original study and in Klein's reworking of the material, the formulation of the explanation does not explain anything, it leaves us with a necessary residue to which we must return ("That's the way miner's are!"). That residue still has to be answered in a meaningful way in 'why are they that way?'

In a sense, this brings us full circle and back to Hodgson who, apart from neglecting a peculiar nostalgia for a way of life moulded by insecurity, local exclusion and crude exploitation, at least makes us to see through the statements to see what the statements really mean'. However, it would appear that much of the work done in sociology and community studies is ideologically and politically rooted in a conceptual framework which is content to skim the surface of social reality.

V. This paper has taken us a long way from community studies as such, rather we have tried to locate community studies within sociology and use them to say things about sociology in general. We have tried to make plain some fundamental weaknesses which we think are characteristic of the studies we have read. Obviously we have mainly dealt with one particular ideological strand within sociology. We now wish to move on to say how that strand achieved and reflects political expression within social democratic formulations.

We noted the uncritical, and mainly willing acceptance of commonly defined 'social problems' earlier. The construction and perception of these 'social problems' by the State is a complicated process. Suffice it to say that this definition is increasingly reinforced at every level in the academic hierarchy, from term essays to S.S.R.C. projects. We are not suggesting that 'social problems' do not correspond with material ones, simply that the nature of that correspondence is socially important. In the main, social administration accepts uncritically sociology's definition of 'social problems' and formulates its policy in terms of that acceptance.

It is important to note the institutional (through advisory committees, research etc.), educational (through social work courses, etc.), and cultural links between social policy and research. Thus the aims of the Institute of Community Studies, for example, are recapitulated in full by social administration. Slack maintains that the purpose of social research:

"...is to produce factual evidence on which social policy action or reform may be based...the socially important function of the social research worker, therefore, is to produce data on social life in order to present their results in such a way as to secure greater public attention".

(Slack 1966 p 71)

This role, played out in the personal biographies of many social researchers, strictly limits the parameters within which recommendations on social policy can be made - limits of which very few researchers are aware of. The understanding of social life generated within this framework tends to take the form of a narrow cultural pluralism in which to see beyond the habits to what the habits stand for, degrades into a call to 're-shuffle the pack of cards of cultural values'.

"The aim here was to seek the human detail, the individual situation in a group phenomenon which made some sense of what was happening. And always to raise the old dilemma: Working Class Life - listen to the voices - has strengths we cannot afford to lose; middle class life transmogrifies within it the high culture of our society, that must be opened freely to all. That is the problem the planners must solve."

(Jackson & Marsden 1966 p 249)

This 'pluralism' provides, and illustrates, one of the crucial linkages between social democracy, public administration and community studies - the linkage being provided by their encompassed understanding of the meaning of class. We do not wish to suggest that there are no important conflicts within social democracy, or within this particular form of sociological practice - what we want to do is to try to outline the relationships that exist between these two bodies of thought in their understanding of the concept of social class.

A crude historical characterisation of the political demands and policies of social democracy enables us to identify an immediate post-war concern with 'equality of provision' - hence the Welfare State, an attempt to establish 'equality of provision' in certain basic welfare services. It was only after these services were attained that the other crude of social democratic thought - 'equality of opportunity' - was able to take its place near the top of the political agenda. Obviously, both these strands were tightly inter-related, but the change in emphasis during the 50's and 60's is apparent - particularly, for example, in education: from 'provision' in the 1944 Education Act, to 'opportunity' in the comprehensivisation programmes in the 1960's.

The role played by social research in the intervening period was, initially, to provide information outlining the disadvantages still suffered by certain groups, despite numerically equality of provision. The important finding was not that certain groups were disadvantaged, but that there was a pattern to the disadvantages, a pattern related to social class. Thus, it is at this stage, that a more complex understanding of working class life is needed. Structural deprivation demonstrates the existence of deprivations, but deprivations which are no longer simply understandable in terms of inadequate provisions - it is time to 'listen to the voices'.

The whole notion of 'cultural deprivation' or 'working class otherness' as Jackson might say, has been inform and developed by social research. The historical transition from 'controlling the working class', to the 'problem factory', to the 'problem community', has significantly alterned both the policy makers conceptions of the problems and the range and type of policy options open to them. Plowden, in this sense, was a 'watershed'. Instead of the 'under-socialised delinquent', we now have the 'cycle of deprivation' which is a whole series of inter-related problems. But because 'social problems' are seen as 'social', and not the manifestations of contradictions, change can only be achieved by changing people, their communal values, and by 'tinkering with the machine'. Thus, education, the social democratic panacea, is seen as the vehicle for change:

"...better educational provision can, by compensating for the effects of social deprivation and the depressing physical environment in which many children grow up, make an important contribution to overcoming family poverty"

(BLS. Circular 17/1970)

To this end we now have Plowden's new policy of 'positive discrimination' (urban aid, nursery education, C.D.P.'s, community advice centres, etc.), for areas to be identified by 'the criteria of social deprivation'.

VI. At this point we wish to return to our original discussion of the 'withering away of class', to look at what exactly was being examined under the heading of working-class, both by the 'post-capitalist society' theories and the concern in community studies. The direction we have taken inevitably leads us into questions about working-class consciousness: where it came from and how it operates - both within local and national class structures.

There has always been a 'two nations' tradition in British sociology and an explicit recognition that British society is the most 'class-bound' in the world. Acquaintance, vocabulary, dress, diet, recreations, and power in this society are always important components of this traditional view. However, this tradition sees class related economic factors largely in terms of income, not as reflections of a dynamic relationship. The variables are normative or status based, i.e. 'social', and from this is drawn a consensus model of the class structure expressed usually as 'social stratification'. However, this model remains highly problematic because of the obvious differences in the normative factors it considers important between classes: to use a Persian term there is obviously a major value system. Sociology's major attempt to come to terms with this problem were 'affluence', 'embourgeoisement' and 'convergence' theories. Fifteen years on, these concepts may look more like leaps of faith than theories, but the problem still remains. The larger area of concern is the sociology in progress for sociology by the introduction of a class differentiated view of the normative system in social control. If classes differed widely, the dominant class would have to rely heavily on physical coercion as a substitute for moral persuasion, or so it is alleged. Yet this is not necessarily true. As Pratin (1973) points out, the two nation problem with the consensus model is that it fails to make clear the relationship between the normative and factual elements of stratification - i.e. the connection between the distribution of power and the legitimation of power in society is absent. It is pointed out in a celebrated passage in the ruling class are, in any age, the ruling ideas'. The extent to which dominant values are legitimated is largely a function of the institutional power of the dominant class.

However, not every member of the working class endorses the moral order of the ruling class. The 'images of society' held by the working class are anything but homogeneous. As well as the more blatant sectionalisms displayed through racism and sexism, and the division between the 'rough' and 'respectable' working class, there is an obvious sense in which the consciousness of a London docker and a Coventry car-worker differ. If the consensus bourgeois values dominant in most institutions were universally endorsed, unselectively, then the regional/industrial variations in working class culture, central to most sociology, would be non-existent.

Community studies display some strange tensions about class. One major problem is that very often there is no objective definition of class given at all. Yet, at the same time, there is a taken-for-granted perception of a national, homogeneous class structure on the part of the anthropologists, based on common-sense notions of 'working class'. This is evident in the work of Bogart and Jackson, and Dorendorf emphasized (or overemphasized) its significance to support a general
theory of class consciousness. On the other hand, the small and often esoteric areas within which the studies were carried out, along with the initial lack of an objective definition leads to a stress being placed on the local experience of being working class and hence, the unique formations of classness in any one area. Implicit definitions of class are based on inequality yet dimensions of power and domination are almost entirely lacking. The rich are only different in the sense Hemingway meant - 'they have more money'. The rest of this section seeks to explore how 'class images of society' are created/determined within a particular section of the working class: Lockwood's (1972) 'traditional proletarian' and Parkin's (1971)'accommodative worker'.

Lockwood distinguishes three different 'class images of society' spontaneously generated through work experience and the values held by the local community. Firstly, the traditional proletarian, typified by miners, dockers and shipyard workers. Secondly, the traditional deferentialist, likely to work in a craft based industry and to relationships with a paternalistic employer. Thirdly, the privatized worker who is 'instrumental' in his attitude to work and ' privatized' in his home life.

Parkin's categories differ in that they do not refer to spontaneously generated ideologies, but mainly to national ideologies imposed by some means of another and to which different sections of the working class place allegiance. Firstly, there is the dominant value system, the social source of which is in the ruling class. Typically, it is accepted by the 'deferential' or 'aspirational' working class. Secondly, there is the 'subordinate' value system, the social source of which is two-fold. On the one hand, it is experiential work and community, and on the other, certain national movements and ideologies - for eg. trades unionism - impinge on and are transformed by the local class practices. It should be noted that this category collapses two of Lockwood's; the privatized and the proletarianized worker. Thirdly there is the radical value system. This is not the property of the working class since they are incapable of autonomously generating a systematic opposition to capitalism - the working class on its own can only develop trades unions 'free-floating' intellectuals rather than whole social groups generate this value system. The only social base suggested for it is the 'mass political party'. The implication seems to be that only workers who attain a 'state of grace' will actually assimilate these values.

If we take it as axiomatic that people are not simply on the 'receiving end' of their objective class position, then it follows that their actions are partly projected in terms of creative expectations and definitions. Unfortunately, even examination of this semi-autonomous layer of working class experience have been within community studies. It is with this imperfect material that arguments about working class imagery have been carried out.

Lockwood argues that there are two crucial variables in the formation of working class imagery of society - work and the local community. There are two basic models for this imagery: a model based on power, conflict and a dichotomy between two classes, and a model based on prestige, status and hierarchy.

The proletarian traditionalist is likely to endorse the dichotomous model. This type of worker is the archetypal subject of community studies: he is the most colourful, romantic and inaccessible representative of his class. The proletarian traditionalist is likely to be male and usually works in a situation of physical discomfort and danger. Nevertheless, he has a high degree of job involvement and a strong attachment to his primary work group. This occupational culture spills over into leisure, facilitated by the fact that most of this kind of work requires an 'occupational community'.

The classic community study in this field is undoubtedly Coal in Our Life (1955). This study has shaped a whole generation of academic's perceptions of the miner. The data for this study was collected in the 1950s and it is rarely read in a community study influenced by social anthropology. The note of caution this strikes in us seems to be shared by at least one of the authors. Certainly,Henriques in very sensitive to the implications of this approach and method. In the introduction to the second edition he writes: 'My its focus upon the community framework as such, this technique will tend to abstract from the societal framework at every level of social life' (Henriques et al. 1969, p.7).

Whilst we have made it quite clear that we disagree strongly with the concept of 'community' as it is usually operation in our own society, there is a sense in which the concept of 'occupational community' is important. We agree with Salaman (1979) who argues that this concept can be useful: firstly, for the way in which it focuses attention on certain aspects of occupation as collective activities; and secondly, because occupational processes and features are important and significant in our understanding of extra-occupational issues and concerns, for example the development of forms of imagery and processes of change and conflict within the stratification system. We would agree with Salaman that this definition is 'useful' but would see it as an argument for the centrality of work processes, rather than a call for the reintroduction of a reified notion of community.
"viewed primarily from the standpoint of grasping their interrelationships with the forms of activity and social relations imposed by the social mining work upon which the community is based, this emphasis will tend to obscure the fact that each of these particular sets of relationships is extended beyond the community, in both space and time. By itself, the community study technique provides no way of measuring the significance of its findings against that which may crudely be described as these 'external' factors".

(Henriques, et al. 1969 p. 7)

Ashdown miners certainly display dichotomous class imagery - but whether this conforms to Lockwood's model is unclear. It is certainly debatable whether it is spontaneously generated through the social relationships of work and the local community as Lockwood suggests. Apparently Henriques at least suggests that the miners could be drawing on extra-local factors for their class imagery.

The central features of the community life described by Dennis et al., are: recurring domestic conflict; particular attitudes of the miners to their cultural poverty and isolation; the oppression of miners' wives. These are seen as determinants of natural economic relationships and working conditions. Thus a logical connection between the common work experiences of the miner and a dichotomous social imagery is posed. But there are many weaknesses here. One problem is the clearly different life experience of women in mining areas. Whilst men have been thrown together by coal, it has operated the opposite or 'locally effective influence on women. There is no paid work for them unless they go outside the area. Nor can they identify very easily through the family - marriage and the family in a battle arena, and seems completely devoid of affection. Men and women are separated in English and Africans. In fact, the experiences of the sexes is so totally different that one has to make an effort to remember that they lived together in the same town. As Lockwood is contending that the work and community experience is crucial in the formation of perceptions of class, then it is reasonable to expect that the men's and women's images would be different. Unfortunately, this seems never to have been investigated. However, voting returns from mining areas (admittedly very partial evidence) tend to show that the same way as men, at least suggesting they share the same type of class imagery. This interpretation would tend to favour Parkin's argument rather than Lockwood's. In that far from being spontaneously generated, people are recognizing some kind of national ideology and their acceptance or rejection of it is mediated through their local experience and work.

To take a different stage in Lockwood's argument, is the traditional worker the most radical working-class type? For social democrats like Lockwood 'radical' obviously refers to trade-union and Labour Party consciousness. But if we take 'radical' to mean a total and systematic opposition to capitalism, then obviously trade-union and Labour Party consciousness does not go far enough. Thus as a 'genre consciousness are, as Parkin suggests (firstly in the case of trade union consciousness, more tentatively with the Labour Party), an 'accommodation to capitalism'; a cultural transcendence rather than a material transformation. This is reactionary in effect, not in intention, in their engendering of the awareness of the awareness of contradictory interests between bourgeoisie and proletariat, the type of community relationships experienced by the proletarian traditionalist brings about the opposite result - a sectionalist, parasitic self-interest. In a paper on shipyard workers Cousins and Brown give a good example of what is at stake with reference to the employment market. Pessimism, based on localism and residence, is a factor in gaining employment in an industry and area (Dundee) where unemployment is a major problem. The dailyokinetic - a feature of capitalism - encourages localism. Cousins and Brown quote the following case:

"A chargehand from the former Bath shipyard a little further up the coast and now closed told us 'with us it was always keep the Tyne's out'."

(Cousins and Brown 1975 p.55)

There are many examples of this: the hostility towards women and Poles in Jackson's (1966) Yorkshire mills; the split between newcomers and 'traditionalists' in Stacey's (1960) Banbury; the rich insularity of Hoggarth's (1957) Hunslet - the list is endless.

Westergaard has pointed out in numerous articles that localism and parochialism is endemic in the working class, and that this factor inhibits them in the pursuit of their interests. He also makes the interesting point that parochialism is not necessarily a spontaneous creation of the working class, but one influenced and fostered by the ruling class.

A locality consciousness has been imposed in some situations. Victorian reformers always recognised and valued the conservative restraints of parochialism, and feared the radical implications of the absence of these restraints. Westergaard quotes Thomas Chalmers who in "The Civic and Christian Society of Large Towns" written in the 1820's advocated a system of localities to break up the large working-class areas of cities into smaller local units.

"His argument was that if working class interests could be turned inward into the locality, then workers would be prevented from forming alliances and loyalties across the repressive boundaries of the locality and the social order would be safeguarded." (Westergaard 1975)

According to Lockwood, however, the old working-class traditions of community and collective culture are undergoing a major change. The modern tendency is to break up traditional working-class communities, whether occupational or not, and throw people with little immediately in common together on council estates or low cost private estates. These are the living conditions of Lockwood's 'privatised workers'. However, to return to Lockwood, he argues that there has been an evolution towards a new kind of collectivism which is no longer 'based on institutional narrow kinship ties', so beloved of traditional social democrats, but 'instrumental', based on a rational calculation of interest. But there is no reason why the second is necessarily narrower than the first. On the contrary 'solidarity collectiveness' based on community and localism is itself a narrow form of social consciousness, and can lead to yet more sectionalism in the working class. In contession that it is precisely the entrenched, insular traditional class consciousness of the British working class which holds it back and helps to maintain its most cherished illusions.
characteristic which is also imputed to the privatised worker. But a dichotomous conception of 'us' and 'them' reflects a power and class relationship with wider ramifications than those within the local community. This point reflects Westergaard’s criticism that Lockwood’s schema does not allow for a ‘radical class consciousness’ - i.e., one which transcends occupations and locality and becomes generalised to other sections of the working class. Neither of Lockwood’s models display radical overtones and neither represent a dichotomous class imagery: they are both hierarchical visions of society.

If ‘post industrial society’ theorists were taking their typical model of the working class from what Lockwood calls the ‘traditional proletariat’ and the privatised worker, neither of which, at the moment, poses a particularly substantial threat to capitalism, then it is not surprising that the theories gained a vogue. An important part of the argument was a lack of political mobilisation, and this could be largely due to sectional interests as well as rising living standards. The fatal flaw in community studies was to oppose the thesis of embourgeoisement with the traditional worker. This meant that instead of coming to terms with new realities, the social democrats fell back on nostalgia and romanticism: a simple minded historical faith that old customs and habits (which had not produced anything spectacular since the middle of the 19th and the final collapse of Chartism) were still to be the salvation of the Labour Party, and by implication the working class.

The misleading notion of unity implied in this category was compounded, we would argue, by a misuse of the methodological tool of the ‘ideal type’ in some of the studies we have examined. It was used as a heuristic synthesis of elements in an attempt to show the essence of particular social relationships. But it allowed the assumption to pass uncontested that the social order could be analysed without recourse to the dialectical connection of social forms with production and exploitation. We were given a response to the visible character of capitalist production in the moment that its heart was denied.

We must conclude that workers do not see the class structure in unitary ways, but in different and contradictory ways. The work remains to be done to show their particular forms and inner connections.

Anderson in a rather Hegelian synthesis argues that the advent of ‘instrumental collectivism’ means for the first time the penetration of reason into the closed universe of the Labour movement - its still the market rationality of capitalism, but it’s a start. Our basic disagreement with this position - on the revolutionary potential of the privatised worker - is reflected in Partin’s collapsing of these two types within the category of ‘accommodative’ working class. In a country they are two sides of the same coin. To the fluidity of locality and work mates easily become the privatised worker’s family. Nevertheless, the move towards the break-up of traditional working class communities can only be welcomed by the left. In new industries and new areas workers might avoid the stifling parochialism and traditionalism of the rest of the labour movement.

There are, therefore, several problems with Lockwood’s formulation of the traditional worker. He has inverted the traditional model of the proletariat. ‘Traditional’ and ‘proletarian’ seem to us to be contradictory terms when applied to working class consciousness. We would suggest that some of the factors Lockwood associates with traditional community - the existence of face-to-face emotional interaction at work, the localised labour market, and the high degree of job involvement - inhibit the development of proletarian consciousness rather than support it. To this extent (and only this) we would agree with Anderson that Lockwood’s privatised secondary worker corresponds more closely to Hurz’s proletarian than the traditional proletariat. As Westergaard points out (1970), the economic developments underlying the cultural response to privatisation are leading to an increasing transparency in the class nexus, a development not unproblematic for capitalism.

Lockwood also seems to have a deterministic/positivistic idea of consciousness which is seen merely as a reflection of activity. This is surprising in view of the (earlier) Affluent Worker monographs where he insisted that three aspects of working class activity must be taken into account. These were, in the discussion of embourgeoisement, the economic, the relational - and the normative, all of which had relative autonomy, with the relational acting as a mediation between the other two. In this sense, consciousness could never be just a reflection of what people do, since the mediation of how they did it, and with what were crucial. In Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society, Lockwood seems to collapse the levels of the economic and relational, giving us instead a crude base-superstructure formulation with mechanistic determinations. An example of this mechanisation is displayed in Lockwood’s identification of the proletarian traditionalist as the most class conscious worker. Here is Lockwood’s account of their images of the social structure:

"Shaped by occupational solidarities and communal sociability, proletarian social consciousness is centred on an awareness of 'us' and 'them'. 'Them' are bosses, managers, white collar workers and ultimately the public authorities of the wider society".

(Lockwood 1995, p.18)

This characterisation displays a crude simplification into a dichotomous imagery of 'us' and 'them'. Shaped by work and the local community, the proletarian traditionalist sees 'them' in terms of a hierarchy imposing on the activities of work and community, a
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