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ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN THE DECENTRALIZING OF CULTURAL PLANNING

by

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PREFACE

There has recently been a series of marked shifts in the accepted goals of cultural policies, and a developing interest in the decentralizing of cultural planning (especially in the interesting series of Council of Europe reports).

This essay attempts to 'open up' some of the issues involved, including the variety of the proposed spheres of intervention by cultural planners, of their aims, and above all of the very different meanings of decentralization in different cases. It is argued that the detailed or even statistical projection of decentralized planning needs is not yet possible, and probably inappropriate or undesirable.

In order to anchor a discussion which is often very general through lack of space or adequate available research, British policy is analysed and British examples drawn on. Britain is of course in many respects very different from other countries, but it is hoped that the information may be useful, if only by contrast. The British regional arts associations are discussed as a case of successful limited decentralization. But no British organisation is in any way connected with this study, which is entirely the author's responsibility.

Alain Touraine's The Post-Industrial Society was extremely useful for its arguments about leisure, and Christopher Lasch's The World of Nations, besides being continually stimulating, provided very important quotations about work and about the limitations of some forms of decentralization.

This study was prepared as a report to the Division of Cultural Development, U.N.E.S.C.O., Paris. (Contract No. 281598). Further general and particular studies of decentralization in relation to culture would seem welcome and necessary.

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1. CULTURAL PLANNING AND ITS DECENTRALIZATION: THE CONTEXTS OF THE DISCUSSION

1.i Changes in the definition of cultural goals

In the last ten years the goals of cultural policy in many member states of UNESCO, and certainly of most Western European countries, have been drastically redefined. This is important for two reasons. The scale and amorphous nature of the shifts have implications and consequences not yet thought through in the formulation of pdicies themselves. In addition, further changes and the problems attached to them are already implicit in current practice, and likely to emerge more sharply in the 1980s.

In the most general terms, the movement of definition has passed through three phases. All were possible interpretations of article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which said that

> everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community

but were brought about, not only through problems and limitations experienced through each attempted implementation of cultural policy in turn, but also by the implications of broader political, social and intellectual shifts.

The first phase, dominant in the 1950s and early 1960s, concentrated on traditional forms of art, especially literature, music and the visual arts, though sometimes with a special gesture towards the importance of film. Major concerns were preservation (the effort to maintain a cultural heritage both for its own sake and as a bulwark against the rise of what was then called 'mass culture'); dissemination (with a strong educational emphasis on instruction, presentation and guides of understanding, especially for groups lacking knowledge or experience of 'high culture'); and the commissioning of new work (subsidies for new work in art forms now relatively distanced from their original economic, social and cultural bases -- opera, for instance, or classical ballet). A characteristic British example would be the radio Third Programme, planned by the B.B.C. from a firm belief in tightly defined cultural values and in the need to sustain them even for small minority audiences.

The second phase, emerging in the middle and late 1960s, was to emphasise the democratisation of culture, and the objectives laid out at the Venice conference of 1970 indicated some new intentions:

> to democratize cultural life by facilitating access to and participation in major cultural currents by the whole population... to promote and develop all the various cultures and in particular those tending to deteriorate or disappear ... to facilitate the growth of an original culture which would meet both the deepest aspirations of the people and the requirements of the modern world...

Policies were now concerned with the extension of traditional art forms (drawing on more contemporary themes, using buildings designed to be more open and less inhibiting than before); with cultural access (the undertaking, by for example museum directors, or teachers, of a responsibility to attract and stimulate younger audiences); and with participation in traditional culture (as in the movement within the teaching of native languages and literatures away from 'set books' from the past, and towards exercises in acting and imitative writing). British examples spanning this range were: the London Roundhouse, in which a disused railway shed was the setting for plays and music performed to younger audiences; the Birmingham Cannon Hill Arts Centre for Young People, welcoming teenagers to take part in pottery, dance classes and the like; the Open University, offering degree courses, many in the arts, through television teaching and with considerable care about the methods and aims in such work; 'arts laboratories', with experimental facilities in inner city areas.

The third phase, in the middle 1970s, has been dominated by the idea of cultural democracy. Policy-makers now call on animators not only to take traditional arts 'out' to an audience (street theatre) or to stimulate demand for arts-based activities, but for much wider purposes described as socio-cultural community development. An ambitious claim by the Director of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Cooperation defined animation as

> that stimulus to the mental, physical and affective life in a given area or community which moves people to undertake a range of experiences through which they find a greater degree of self-realisation, self-expression and awareness of belonging to a society over which they can exercise an influence, and in the affairs of which they are impelled to participate ...socio-cultural animation is something much wider than encouragement to appreciate and practise the arts and crafts. It envisages a creativity which can equally become manifest in the formation of a consumer group or a neighbourhood newspaper or a parents' association or a pressure group for improved public transport. It can arise in...a foot-clinic or an ice-rink no less than in cultural centres...[1]

Concepts of community and participation are central to this definition; culture is understood not as the arts but as the communication of values

1 J.A. Simpson, Preface to Finn Jor, The Demystification of Culture (Strasbourg, 1976)

and meanings. A British example comes from the Craigmillar Estate in Edinburgh, built as a rehousing project on the city outskirts in the 1930s, where the Festival Society includes eight working parties on the quality of estate life with, alongside those on housing or welfare, one on culture, and where community musicals have characteristically taken up local controversies.

Each phase has been a response to the absences and failures of earlier policies, but cultural policies have been crucially shaped also by other developments which need to be briefly reviewed.

1.ii Pressures on cultural policies

The shifts described have not occurred in any direct way as a response to economic performance— the third phase opening up vigourously, for example, despite the recession of the 1970s. Five connected developments have made them necessary.

Perhaps the strongest reason for discomfort with the aims of the first phase was the social inequality of its cultural provision. In Britain the inequality was brought into focus through recurrent criticism of the Arts Council for its notoriously high relative expenditure on opera and ballet as a proportion of its budget. Disproportionate spending has also been the ground of easily invoked complaints about cultural bureaucrats, cultural palaces and the like; to such an extent that the words culture and the arts are now used as little as possible. Internationally, the problem was signalled in Baumol and Bowen's finding[1] that

> costs per performance should be expected to continue to rise more rapidly than the general price level

and by their suggestion that in Britain, for instance, what they termed 'blue collar men', estimated as almost 69% of the population, represented under 5% of the performing arts audience (48% to 3% of audience for 'blue collar women'). Complaints about cultural 'white elephants', over-spending and the reinforcement of middle class taste at public expense have all re-surfaced in the debate about the newly-opened National Theatre in London, over a decade beyond their, and its, inception.

Second, disapproval of commercialisation has led to a resistance movement which has refused to 'abandon' the 'mass' audience to commercial interests in culture. In the later 1950s, notably following

1 William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, Performing Arts--the Economic Dilemma (New York, 1966)

the start of commercial television in Britain, there were fears that European audiences would be subjected to the least demanding, ambitious or responsible components of North American cultural influence. A split appeared to be opening up between the minority's support (in theatres, opera-houses, concert-halls and perhaps also universities and some schools) for traditional cultural forms, and a majority/'mass' refusal of these forms in favour of cultural consumption of new commercial developments (bingo, rock music, commercial television). This in turn prompted half-hearted and often inconsistent attempts to 'check' or 'restrain' the commercial sector, combined with a determined effort to 'open up' traditional culture to a wider audience.

The debate about commercial influence on cultural development was and is unresolved, shot through with ambivalence and uncertainty. In Britain, the criticisms of commercial television, and the often contradictory attempts by B.B.C. television both to meet commercial programming on its own ground and, at the same time, to provide an alternative, have been an index of less conspicuous, but similar, controversies about commercial effects on other areas: sport and pubs, for example. (Instances have been the symbolic refusals of commercial pressures on the Wimbledon tennis championships, and campaigns for 'free' public houses, not tied to the major brewery chains). The influence of commercial developments in culture has been a substantially unresolved problem for Western European governments. Resistance to commercialisation has been made inconsistently, sometimes in the name of 'amateurism' and sometimes under the aegis of the state.

Third, the visibility of distinctive sub-cultures from the late 1950s onwards has challenged the restricted scope of earlier policy definitions. The best-known cases have been the string of working class youth sub-cultures in industrial countries[1]; the affirmation of black culture in the United States and later elsewhere; and the interaction of student protest and hippy strains in the middle class youth counter-culture of the late 1960s. In each case the challenge to any idea of a 'cultural policy' has been double. Groups have appeared whose cultural activities were wide-ranging, involving distinctive forms of dress, patterns of living, and attitudes and values explicitly articulated, and were certainly not limited to interests in music or other arts. In addition, these forms were used by members of these groups to articulate the contradictions and needs of their situation--as museums and

1 For Britain, see Hall and Jefferson, eds., Resistance Through Rituals (London, 1976)

repertory theatres, however 'accessible', could never remotely be drawn on. In each case, too, the rejection of officially provided culture was important, while particular uses of commercial forms were central to the sub-culture's self-exploration and self-presentation.

It was in such a context that, fourth, intellectual and political extensions of interest in culture found their resonance. In Britain, Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy (1958) had described the tension between older forms of inner city working class culture and the double effects upon them of rehousing and of commercially developed cultural inroads. At the end of the decade, and into the 1960s, the British and American New Left held issues of culture and consciousness to be central in post-war politics. Raymond Williams's work[1] commented on the 'selective tradition' through which a society is presented with a version of its 'cultural heritage' which is in fact very partial, constituted through choices made by some groups only for particular reasons. And he argued that the 'cultural revolution' was of the same order of importance as the industrial and democratic revolutions, representing a struggle towards the availability to all, as equals of the potential inherent in various forms of communication. The Chinese 'cultural revolution', even if misunderstood, signalled more extensively the argument's urgency.

Fifth, the rehabilitation of communities became a general aim in the social services during the same period. Policy statements were addressed to the devastated cultures of inner cities, scarred and transformed by urban deveopment policies, changes in housing and employment patterns, and by the consequent breaking-up of close-knit (both intimate and claustrophobic) groups. They looked also to new towns, suburbs and estates which lacked communal life of almost any sort, exhibiting as a partial result such 'social problems' as 'restless' teenagers thought in need of 'constructive' activities. The resulting sense of crisis, in its most intense moments, produced such statements as this from the Rotterdam symposium on socio-cultural facilities (1970):

> A social resistance movement is growing up as an anti-society...We have arrived at the great crisis of industrial civilisation...This 'great fear' of the end of the millenium may be overcome only by a 'cultural revolution'. Such a revolution... poses a crucial question: 'can it be achieved without throwing one or more generations into chaos?' A night of the long knives...We, cultural and educational administrators...have here a grave responsibility. For if, together, we

1 The Long Revolution (London, 1961)

> can lay down the principles and trace the paths of a transforming cultural policy, people will follow us.[1]

The speaker's appeal for teachers, politicians and artists to work together followed that of Matthew Arnold in his Culture and Anarchy (1868). The difference is that for Arnold the hope for cultural democracy lay in the educational system and its expansion. In the 1970s this ambition has been tacitly given up. The attempts of animators to involve people directly not only protests against the commercialisation of culture but stems from the substantial lack of interest in traditional cultural institutions, including schools.

These forces have then combined to spur the drastic reformulation of the goals of cultural policies. Though the phases have not necessarily contradicted each other, each has implied a wider definition of the forms of culture and a stronger attempt to 'involve' the non-involved in particular forms of cultural activity. This in turn should have raised questions about the decentralization of cultural planning, and about the limited abilities of cultural 'planners'.

1.iii Reasons for Decentralizing Cultural Planning

It is striking, however, especially for the purposes of this study, that there has by comparison been so little debate about the devolution of cultural planning--especially in a period which has seen vehement controversy about the powers and duties of planning authorities in health and education. The practices of cultural policies have varied widely, but there have been implicit hints about methods of decentralization rather than statements of goals. This section again briefly reviews arguments to date; and attempt is made later to look more fully at the paradoxes involved.

Discussions about cultural devolution have often raised the issues as though they were a series of oppositions:

i) Control or 'laissez-faire'

In one part this has been a debate about whether culture can or should be planned at all, and has involved some facile contrasts between east and west European countries. Against thos arguing for strong control of cultural developments it has been said that 'needs' of this kind are not readily predicted, and should not be planned in the same way as health and housing. To those for whom cultural

1 Facilities for Cultural Democracy, CCC document (Strasbourg, 1970)

planning is anathema the reply has been made that unrestricted western trends could leave whole towns without cinemas or bookshops, though well supplied with advertising billboards and, increasingly, pornography. In addition, there have been exchanges about the 'freedom of the artist' and about what constraints his commercial or public patrons may impose. At both levels the debates have usually been too schematic and pejorative; to see any issue of cultural policy as 'direction' or 'freedom' is misleadingly abstracted from the concrete historical developments.

ii) Central or decentralized planning

Devolution of powers in this, as in other fields of government has ambiguously referred both to a centrally made decision to carry out a national policy through local bodies, and to the stronger decision to cede money and powers to local groups, not always groups directly elected. The confusion is central to much populist rhetoric in politics, but it is also a marked feature of administrative arguments which see the issue as being, indeed, only one of administrative convenience.

iii) Large or small units

The increasing need for cost effectiveness in cultural spending has to some extent clashed with a felt need for smaller centres and companies where initiatives need less elaborate bureaucratic approval, and where participants and audiences can achieve closer relationships. Versions of this and of the other two oppositions have helped structure, for example, reviews of the commercial and B.B.C. sectors of British radio and television.

There have also been reviews of types of planning strategies as such the respective problems involved. A useful example is Jacques Antoine's distinction between utopian, realistic, strategic and democractic planning types.[1]

Only on two counts, however, has there been any sense of urgency or necessity about the decentralization of planning. One has been that the third phase of cultural goal definition, cultural democracy, has itself wanted to anticipate the taking-over of cultural facilities and initiatives by local people; self-management. In that sense, animators were at first thought to be catalysts, whose goal was their own replacement by other people in the local area--though a recent

1 Cultural Planning: Types and Strategies (unpublished paper for UNESCO given in Helsinki, 1976), used by Ritva Mitchell with reference to Finland in Planning for Equal Opportunities in the Cultural Sector of Society (paper given at the 10th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Edinburgh, 1976)

report on France[1] noted that

> animation, formerly based on activiism, has for some years now been subject to labour disputes and unionisation...we are getting away from the animation of the pioneer years of the 60s. And we see an increasing rift between the animator and the activist.

This aim has sometimes involved the allocation of money by local authorities to groups who have questioned or opposed them; with results ranging from toleration to an apparent or actual threat of closure. Two, the larger political movements towards devolution of powers in the last ten years, strongly marked in Britain, must involve some cultural devolution. The breaking-down of local traditions by a metropolitan culture was already a main subject in Scott's novels at the start of the nineteenth century. Recently, the preservation of distinctive patterns of language and culture has been made a central aim once more by nationalist movements.

But even these motives for decentralization have been much less assured than they seem. A very tight rein on cultural planning from the centre might still be held even on an extended notion of community involvement as a cultural goal, though it might meet with contradictions and resistance. And ideas of devolution have been recurrently vague, open to the fluctuating definition of political parties at given moments. The ceding of cultural power by the few to the many has remained an intermittent and hazy notion, easily criticised for a fuzzy populism and constantly questioned through appeals to standards of cultural 'excellence'. It must be concluded that no very strong case for the necessity of cultural decentralization has as yet been made out, let alone practised.

British cultural policy embodies one distinctive method of decentralization, within a larger hesitation about the value of cultural planning of any sort. Its description precedes a fuller inquiry into ways in which decentralization is important.

2. BRITISH CULTURAL PLANNING

2.i General characteristics

Cultural policies and planning in Britain can most easily be evoked in negatives; what they have tried not to be. They have

1 Pierre Moulinier and others, Symposium on Animation..., Report on France (DC/Symp (76) 9-E, Strasbourg, 1976)

rarely, for instance, been explicitly stated; there has been anxiety that they should not be directly open to political influence; and it has been claimed that cultural policies have not initiated developments but only supported them as they have arisen. If in addition British cultural policy has often seemed to stand at one European pole (responding to 'pressures from below') and France at the other (issuing 'directives from above'), this has stemmed from cultural images held in each country of the other, rather than from actual practices which have increasingly converged.

British policy aims as such have been virtually absent in that form. All concepts and terms in the field have usually been treated with a mild distaste, as though embarrassing; the acceptance of the policy of animation (though in a low-key, local form) has typically taken up a decade of hesitation, irony or resistance followed by its adoption. The reasons for this would involve a reconstruction of much earlier British history, and the particular formation of its intellectuals and civil servants in a tradition of thought and administrative practice determinedly empirical, pragmatic, and suspicious of abstractions. Nor have postwar politicians shown great interest in cultural policy, with some important exceptions such as Jennie Lee. The result is that policies must be 'read off' as best they can from available evidence of practice.

To some extent this has connections with the equal determination that matters of culture and, until recently, education, be kept as 'non-political' realms. Such institutions as the B.B.C. and Arts Council are not departments of government, nor directly politically appointed. Their governing bodies are made up of industrialists, trade unionists and many others; their policies and programmes attempt to avoid any direct response to political parties. Nobody could be entirely convinced, of course, that the 'barrier' between politics and the concerns of these institutions is a strong one. Money is received by government decisions, bodies with major power have a readier access than others, and the context in which decisions are made is necessarily informed by social and political changes, as 1.ii suggested. But certainly no major political party or other group has yet challenged the basic purposes of either institution. This fact is itself open to further interpretation.

The Arts Council has always presented itself as responding to 'initiatives from below', recognising and supporting activities rather than intervening to structure them. Hence there have been no concrete formulations of needs or goals, almost no research

programmes, and few if any studies comparing the experience of Britain and of other countries through UNESCO or Council of Europe programmes.

What follows is a description of British cultural provision by public authorities at national, regional and local levels, and of the restraints placed on commercial provision. Phase 1 (in the sense used in 1.i) involved chiefly the Arts Council. In phase 2, educational institutions were urged to stimulate cultural involvement more directly. In phase 3, cultural animation has started to merge with the social services as such.

2.ii The national level

The Arts Council (established in 1946 but with a revised charter in 1967) has since 1967 received its grant from the Department of Education and Science (DES). This was the result of a decision by the Labour government to co-ordinate cultural provision inside and outside formal education. At the same time, though with fluctuating status in the government, there had been inaugurated the post of Minister with responsibility for the Arts. The government Leader in the House of Lords (19 April 1967) said

> we are committed to raising a generation of children who will enjoy first-class art as no generation has enjoyed it before

and since then the Arts Council's concern with the democratisation of culture has been linked with such developments under the DES umbrella as the Open University, the stimulation of drama teaching in schools and universities, and the general encouragement of access to the arts through schools and adult education. One of the Council's official aims is

> to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts

which of course involves its subsidies to writers, orchestras and the like. Another aim is

> to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public throughout Great Britain.

To both ends, the Council consults its own specialist panels of advisers, concerned with Music, Drama, Art and Literature.

To these there has recently been added a fifth panel concerned, significantly, with Community Arts. This development was recommended

by a working party in 1974 on the grounds that such work cuts across art forms, across the distinctions between professional and amateur, experimental and non-experimental, and into an area where criteria include

> the effect of...work on the community rather than the achievement of standards acceptable to specialists.

The panel was intended to include people with technical experience in, say, video, and

> at least one person with experience of social work.

Community Arts are a striking extension of the Council's activity. Some indication of potential problems came in 1976 with a press stimulated controversy over public support for artists sweeping leaves into piles on street corners, bearing poles around the countryside, and so on.

The Council had adopted two main roles, apart from its work in advising, promoting tours and so on: it gives support to artistic excellence (as advised by its panels), and it supports as best it can the claims and initiatives of the regional arts associations described in 2.iii.

Museum policy, under the Arts minister, has been strongly committed to preservation, though museum directors with a crusading interest in attracting a broader public have been appointed in recent years. (Public buildings and monuments are financed by the Department of the Environment). Film is the concern of the British Film Institute (BFI), which also received a DES grant. The BFI's activities have included the preservation of valuable films and television programmes, educational work, film research, some small subsidies to film-makers, and the attempt to set up a national chain of quality cinemas controlled by the Institute. An earlier UNESCO study commented:

> It seems fair to say that the practice, appreciation and study of cinema are in a very primitive state in Great Britain. The fact that the BFI is a separate body from the Arts Council has tended to obscure the startling comparisons that could be made between the situation of the young film-maker and the young musician, or the film enthusiast and the theatre-goer.[2]

The Arts Council bears the main formal responsibility for cultural support, but far greater resources back the less explicit roles of, on the one hand, the vast educational system itself, and on the other, the B.B.C. The B.B.C. has an enormous role in artistic patronage, in the

1 Community Arts (Arts Council, London 1974)

2 Cultural Policy in Great Britain (1970)

development of distinctive televisual and radio forms, and, through its commanding penetration of adult evening activity in competition with commercial companies, in all the complex effects of the mass media upon cultural life. The role of the B.B.C. in the preservation and democratisation of the arts is like that of the Arts Council; quality is supported and initiatives responded to. There has been an attempt to devolve production to regional centres and, in radio, to local stations (a development the Corporation had wanted to take much further), but this seems to have been a reaction to criticisms of over-cumbersome bureaucratic organisation. There was little suggestion, except for one late night Open Door programme, that the organisation should become a catalyst providing facilities for use by others, as an animation work.

2.iii The regional and local level; a) access to and provision of traditional arts

Local authorities were authorised in 1948 to spend a small proportion of money raised through local property taxes on the provision of entertainment and of theatres, halls and premises for such purposes. Wider powers were conferred in 1972, and it is now possible for authorities to support community arts, and to promote all forms of art through library and educational services. Since this spending is permitted, not required, it is not surprising that in a period of financial stringency there should still be, on some estimates, as many as half of all local authorities giving no money at all--while actual spending concentrates heavily on the performing arts, and may often be matched or surpassed by spending on gardens and parks, together with sport. Recurrent arguments that cultural support should be mandatory at local level have been resisted. One consequence has been that cultural development often occurs through other kinds of local social services (see 2.iv). No local authority has a detailed forward programme of desirable cultural development for its area, nor are there any pressures upon it to do so except those of civic pride and responsibility. The present chain of repertory theatres and orchestras in major cities has often received only grudging support from local authorities.

Since the Arts Council closed its regional offices in 1956, regional arts associations have been the preferred means of cultural development across the country. Varying considerably in size and shape, and to some extent in character because often decisively formed through the enthusiasm of a few individuals, they are made up of a wide range of varied local arts organizations. These form the

general membership, from whom executive and policy committees are chosen. The associations, like the Arts Council, draw on specialist advisory panels, appoint officers in particular fields, and try to publicise and stimulate local cultural activity. Finance is drawn from local authorities, industry and trusts, with matching grants from the Arts Council which may also provide additional money at the start of an association's life. Thus once again British policy prefers suggested developments to 'emerge', recognised as initiatives as money permits. The associations imitate the Council's own structure, yet have the appearance and feeling of distinctively local bodies with their own regional special interests. The near-completion of this network fulfils the hopes of the Council in the 1960s for a national structure of regional bodies.

In relation to the arts, then, local authorities and regional arts associations are now enabled to carry out the policies of arts support typically thought desirable in the post-war period. To go further, it would be thought, is not only impossible given national resources but counter-productive since cultural policy only usefully supports activities 'on the ground'. At this level, the current compromise between central and decentralized planning would be argued to represent the limit of cultural policies. If this were to be challenged it would have to be from an alternative view of culture and cultural policy.

2.iv The regional and local level; b) socio-cultural development

Under this general rubric there exists a huge variety of interventions whose funding, intentions and success differ widely. Many are experimental, short-lived and to be reviewed after two or three years, and many would have no wish to do more than try to articulate local needs and then, in relative failure or success (with the fading away of the founders) to move on.

The most characteristic form here is some kind of cultural centre --an arts centre (such as Cannon Hill, Birmingham); a community association (Washington New Town); a resource centre (the London Fantasy Factory); or community action centre (Notting Hill). The centres are typically non-commercial, highly flexible in design and in policy commitments. They offer information services and possibly somewhere to drink and talk, though only as a background to an emphasis on involvement, both in performance and in the running of the centre itself. Space is provided for organisations to meet and for the teaching of the arts, video resources or community skills such as the printing of a neighbourhood paper.

Centres may be created in disused shops or houses, and they may sometimes be specially built. Other buildings have been provided for these purposes. Schools, particularly in some rural areas such as Cambridgeshire, may be built as community schools, designed for evening use of various kinds of top of educational activities as such. Abandoned churches have been offered as places of worship for non-Christian believers, as well as for arts or advice centres. A recent government report[1] suggested that libraries were well placed to be used as cultural centres:

> Books, records and reproductions can only provide an introduction to such cultural experiences as drama, music and painting; they are not complete in themselves and it is logical and convenient for opportunities for at least some of these other cultural experiences to be offered...

The wish to use museums and libraries as centres of activity, not merely of records, recognises also that new buildings designated as cultural centres are unlikely to be attractive.

The shorter-term aims of such centres include the transmission of some basic skills in a welcoming atmosphere; the spreading of information about local services of all kinds and attempts to improve them; and support of all local groups with cultural interests. Longer-term aims would be the creation or restoration of a strong community able to take on control of the centres and to define their future uses.

Similar aims have prompted local cable television and video units, though few of these remain from the ambitions of the later 1960s. There have been group ventures such as theatre companies, performing in streets and parks, pubs and schools, or (in a typical merging with other kinds of social service) adventure playgrounds. Individual community artists have painted street murals, or given puppet shows informally on buses. Other ventures aim at more specific groups, especially youth groups, ethnic groups and women. The Association of Community Artists have said that the community arts

> explore ways of enabling people to meet and work together ...to re-examine their relationships to each other and their environment.[2]

Financial support has been precarious, provided often after strenuous fund-raising by trusts, local business or authorities, and sometimes with government funds provided indirectly on an experimental

1 Public Libraries and Cultural Activities (DES Library Information Series No 5, London 1975)

2 Quoted in Frances Berrigan's invaluable 'Animation' Projects in the U.K. (National Youth Bureau, Leicester, 1976)

basis. Local authorities have welcomed work with school truants and others, but there have been many clashes between community groups and their funding sources, especially in the case of the Community Development Projects. In the passage from 'community arts' to 'socio-cultural development' several boundaries have been crossed, with what results it is too soon to tell.

2.v The commercial sector

Commercial television franchises, and later the options on a small number of commercial local radio stations, were offered for tender and granted after review by the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The authority is an indirect 'buffer' organisation of the kind described before. Its reasoning behind the eventual choice of companies has not been made public, but can be assumed to have included criteria such as expertise, experience and relevant funding. A programming commitment to 'balanced' entertainment was sought, as were thorough and impartial news coverage and responsiveness to local interest. Many critics have since argued that promises were not kept after the granting of franchises, and this may have been acknowledged in a re-allocation of some franchises after the last review. Local commercial radio has been praised for its coverage of local affairs (within the boundaries of a substantial concentration on recorded music). Advertising is monitored by a central authority. Commercial trends within the mass media generally have involved a concentration of ownership, the diminution of risks, and a strong emphasis on profit even in such areas as book publishing where other criteria had been in play.

Elsewhere, cultural development has been vigorous, very much on the model of property development. The remodelling of pubs is a typical case where patterns of social behaviour have been reshaped by the pubs' designers, without much reference to local needs and uses of the pub. The only policy restraints upon commercial cultural developments have been in spasmodic and feeble efforts by some local authorities to require property developers to include some cultural facility, often a small pub, in a large housing or office complex. Trends towards concentration of ownership in the hands of a few companies in sport, brewing and other areas have been sporadically criticised. Newspaper concentration, and the very severe dependence of newspapers upon advertising revenue, have been commented on, but with no government intervention. Cinema attendances have for many reasons fallen steadily, and British film production declined, but again critieria of profit (and so often the unwillingness to take risks) have been pursued uninterrupted. (Though

there has been some minor patronage of the arts and community ventures by a few companies and banks).

The new 'leisure industries' look increasingly towards 'leisure complexes' which characteristically house a cinema, pub, ballroom or club, shops and possibly a small theatre. As these complexes are developed in city centres, often for the benefit of commuters from the suburbs or surrounding areas, they come to stand for a quite different conception of cultural development from that embodied in the community centres. This raises questions discussed in 3.vi. Very little research has been undertaken on the structures and planning of the leisure industries, or on their effects upon the cultural life of classes and neighbourhoods.

2.vi Summary of the growth of cultural planning

In perspective, British cultural planning can be reviewed in five stages.

Before the Second World War there was almost no government action except for the establishment of libraries and museums in the 1890s. There was almost no cultural provision by local authorities, which concentrated strictly on providing utilities and saw no reason to go further. Nor was much interest in culture shown by the labour movement, the unions, or the co-operative societies which, as the century developed, became more strictly commercial. Strong cultural movements (such as Blatchford's The Clarion and the associated activities concerned with the development of a socialist culture at the end of the last century) were never linked with central and local authorities, and rarely with the organisations of the labour movement. Cultural policy was virtually un-mentioned, except by Reith in his years as Director-General of the B.B.C., despite the eloquent attacks on the development of 'mass culture' in the 1930s and 1940s and fears of cultural 'Americanisation'. The idea of a cultural policy backed by central government grew up during the war years and emerged in 1946, with the foundation of the Arts Council, as a small component in a flood of social welfare legislation.

From then until 1964 there were restrained, almost discreet, attempts to maintain high standards in the traditional arts. These were now seen to require public financial support for survival, but policy aims could rarely go further than the distribution of a little money to the strongest claimants on specialist advice. Local

authority spending was discretionary and almost entirely unplanned, consisting again of a series of rescue operations, often reluctantly undertaken. A strong distrust of 'culture' in any sense--an example might be this extract from a 1965 report:

> a large section of the population is completely indifferent to anything that comes under the general heading of 'culture' and they have every right to stay in that state of non-grace...the appetite for culture in this country is less voracious than many of us pretend...[1]

--both reinforced and was reinforced by central government's unwillingness to risk suggesting directions. In this period, also, commercial interests in the media and elsewhere, now whole industries, began to reshape substantially existing cultural patterns. No assessments of those developments were made by public bodies except in the heated controversies about the social roles of radio and television.

An important achievement within this policy was the creation of internationally recognised bodies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company. The accepted legitimacy of arts work by public bodies was taken further in the creation of new universities with theatres, often departments of drama and resident artists.

During the period of the Labour government, 1964-70, there were three rapid and very marked initiatives. One was the sharp increase in the proportion of total spending given to the Arts Council, so that commitment to standards of excellence (including the vision of a future National Theatre) became accepted as a state responsibility within political discussion generally. (That this commitment can be checked has been shown in the recent demotion of the Arts ministry within the current Labour government). A second initiative was the successful encouragement of regional arts associations, through whom it was thought local cultural efforts and ways of improving access to the arts were most appropriately stimulated. Third, discussion of culture began to move into a framework of social policy more generally. The Arts Council Chairman of 1967 commented that

> young people lack values, lack certainties, lack guidance... I do not say that the Arts will furnish a total solution, but I believe that once young people are captured for the Arts they are redeemed from many of the dangers which confront them.[2]

In this way the arts began to be connected with 'problems': the 'problem of youth', the 'problem of leisure', the 'problem of communities'.

1 Public Patronage of the Arts (London, 1965)

2 House of Lords, 19 April 1967

In the 1970s, within the context outlined in 1.ii, this has been taken further. Three kinds of interest have overlapped. From the Arts Council and the regional arts associations beneath it has come the endorsement of community arts, with the recognition that through them the arts connect with other policy areas:

> the activities of community artists, despite the name, are not only artistic...their work must therefore also concern other bodies through which public subsidy and other assistance is channelled: education, social welfare, sport, 'leisure' or 'recreation' in general...the position of local authorities in this matter is especially important.[1]

From activists influenced by the political ideas of the late 1960s have come the various attempts to develop resource centres within local areas, to give the poor and unprivileged the means through which to speak. And from local authorities there have been moves to use cultural work as part of a more comprehensive programme of youth and community services.

2.vii Cultural planning; some limits and limitations

On this reading, British cultural planning has taken a fairly weak form. It has developed slowly to prevent the loss of major companies in the performing arts, when private resources are no longer sufficient. It has encouraged some attempts to improve access to the arts. And it has begun to be interested in small-scale initiatives in cultural development. In all these cases support has been given to the proved enterprise of others; there has been little direct instigation as such.

The encouragement of the arts in the regions (2.iii) has represented a distinctive method of decentralizing cultural planning. Through it, local groups have been promted to suggest ideas and activities. If this has originated in, and often amounted to, a waiting for suggestions by others, yet the existence of one strong regional arts association soon became a model for others, and inspired the expectation of similar support. It has been said that this kind of planning is the most that can be done.

But this view cannot see beyond the present situation, and its absences. It has been necessary to campaign vehemently (and without success) in the last few years for some elementary measures in the arts, such as Public Lending Right (the return of royalties to authors on library borrowings), which have not yet been implemented. Major performing companies stagger under the costs of inflation and, as in the case of the National Theatre, find themselves the targets for envy and resentment.

1 Community Arts, op. cit.

Many of the 'access' initiatives of the last decade, such as the arts laboratories (informal workshops and studios in inner city areas) and Centre 42 (the attempt to involve the unions in cultural activities), have been given up. On present trends, some areas of the country will soon lack an adequate bookshop or cinema, and already have access to a dwindling number of newspapers heavily dependent on advertising, and distributed through retail networks concentrating on journals and magazines which sell without controversy. As for the broader hope of encouraging groups to explore and communicate their experience, to affirm their interests and values--what Raymond Williams called

> The aspiration to extend the active process of learning, with the skills of literacy[1] and other advanced communication, to all people rather than to limited groups...comparable in importance to the growth of democracy and the rise of scientific industry[2]

--its fulfilment can scarcely be glimpsed.

What is more, cultural policies in the 1970s still operate unhappily alongside the commercial sector's strong interest in culture and the media. They are subject, often before other commitments, to financial cuts which can rationalise an already existing indifference, suspicion or hostility. Like other social services, they suffer from a suspicion that policies of provision in the 1960s, while costing more and more, failed in their main objectives. The recent degrading of the Arts ministry confirms this current of opinion. Only a rethinking of the problems of cultural policy can possibly defend its concerns against these attacks.

Britain then represents the case of a country which has both partially decentralized its cultural planning and simultaneously broadened its scope. At the same time it has hesitated about central cultural planning and in no way checked the commercial development of culture. Both central and decentralized planning are therefore caught in an ambiguous position within the financial constraints of the 1970s, especially when cultural planning is partly distrusted as such. Like other UNESCO reports this study then has to negotiate the Scylla of a close analysis of one country's economic, political and social structure (in danger of being parochial) and the Charybdis of international typologies (on a scale abstraction rendering them hard to apply in concrete instances). Not all countries have commercial sectors, and few can show industrial cultures as densely established as Britain's.

1 A new campaign for full adult literacy has recently had to be mounted in Britain.

2 The Long Revolution (London, 1961)

It has hoped that some limited way of opening out problems in current thinking about cultural planning will be found by looking further at two matters. One, very different activities may be under discussion in a cultural policy: the arts and mass media on older definitions, but increasingly a broader sweep of social life which is being thought about and acted on in three different senses examined in 3.iii-v. Two, behind cultural interventions in any defined area of cultural lie different kinds of goals which inform the interventions, the means used, and the criteria for success. Three such models are examined in 4.i--iii. The difficult tensions between these arenas and objects of cultural intervention are assessed in 3.vi and 4.iv respectively. The meanings, merits and some possibilities of 'centralized' and 'decentralized' planning in each case will then be explored.

3. CULTURAL DOMAINS

3.i Narrower definitions: the arts, the mass media

There have been relatively few problems of definition in connection with the older arts. Policy has been concerned with the preservation, dissemination and continuation of the received forms. There can be some important discussion of what is kept alive, and why--serving what ends, informing what concerns, in the present. Similarly, some forms have been and are being encouraged to continue rather than others: opera rather than folk song. There have been several phases in modern European art history when, for complicated reasons, the institutions of officially preserved culture have been attacked as mausoleums. There is a need for more research on a cultural 'field', on the ways in which art-forms interrelate, compete and jostle in a hierarchy. But that the traditional arts will remain an object of cultural policy is not in doubt.

Again, a cultural policy is likely to be interested in the availability of a range of books, magazines and newspapers. Other kinds of questions will be asked about cinema, television and radio. Cinema, partly because of television, is rapidly losing some of its potential as a social form; its survival is becoming as precarious as that of opera unless the flow from cinema production into television screening becomes normal, with consequences for the subject-matter and visual scope of the films. Television is in a different position because its technical limits, which are also the ways it can be socially used, have not yet been reached. In Britain there are so far three kinds of non-broadcast communications systems of this sort: the use of videotape recorders, though

on a small scale; the use of closed circuit television systems, usually in schools or hospitals; and cable television stations, transmitting locally originated programmes. (Five cable stations were established experimentally in the early 1970s, and only one of them, at Swindon, has survived. The majority of its programmes are produced by local people and half suggested by them. One publicly owned station, jointly financed by the Post Office and local corporation, is to begin broadcasting, in Milton Keynes, on a similar community basis). In the same way, more local radio stations, transmitting to a small area, are technically feasible. It would be possible also to develop widely television receivers capable of playing old programmes or films on tape, in addition to national and local television broadcasts. This would in turn have mjor effects on cinemas, and on community action centres.

3.ii Broader definitions

Beyond this we enter into divergent and disputed areas. All notions of 'leisure centres', of 'community arts', 'community centres' and 'socio-cultural developments', and some areas of activity, such as sport, which cut through such definitions, involve differing notions of the cultural sphere and of its development. Three areas of group and institutional activities, with their particular forms and implicit values, may be distinguished through commonly used phrases: 'leisure'; 'community development'; Cultures and sub-cultures'. Each points to a different realisation of the 'culture' involved in a policy of 'cultural democracy', reviewed in the following sections. In section 4, three models of the ideals and aims underlying the struggle towards 'democracy' in the sphere of culture will be reviewed. Each model, at least to some extent, may be used in each conception of the cultural sphere.

3.iii 'Leisure'

'Leisure' has appeared decisively in post-war western countries both as a 'problem' and as the simultaneous object of and justification for intensive commercial development. That leisure should have been thought a problem has stemmed partly from perhaps exaggerated extrapolations of a tendency, now halting[1], toward a reduction in hours worked. In fact, overtime working often takes back many of the hours conceded from the official working week. Again, there has been concern over juvenile

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1 Social Trends No. 7 (H.M.S.O., London, 1976), p.173 has some information on certain industries for full-time adult male manual workers.

delinquency, thought to bear some relationship with 'the' lack of adequate leisure activities; 'the Devil makes work for idle hands to do'. Above all, the discovery of leisure has constituted the affirmation and legitimation of a 'need' for the opening out of leisure industries.

In this respect, the growth of an industrial leisure sector has been rapid and significant, with necessary effects on cultural development. Activities have become extremely wide-reaching and inter-related, to the extent that large companies may be expected to hold a wide sheaf of inter-related leisure investments. At the same time, there have been in some countries halting attempts to correct or supplement commercial criteria. Tourist complexes and their problems are a good example.

Sport, travel and entertainment are developed 'public' examples of highly visible leisure activities, necessitating intensive property development and planning permission on a large scale. Sport has been the site of commercial sponsorship and investment, of many kinds of gambling, and of the highly competitive selling of specialised clothes, equipment, books and magazines. Stadiums, rinks and the like have been designed to offer food and drink, shops and a range of other services in addition to sports and training facilities. In the same way, travel now includes the provision of a graded series of hotels, boarding houses and camp sites; of literature and travel advice services; and of all the goods and services which go with the promotion of tourism and can restructure the economies and societies of whole regions or countries. Entertainment spans clubs, ballrooms, theatre-restaurants and, most ambitiously, leisure centres and complexes where films, sport, eating, drinking and dancing may all be available under one roof.

At the same time, state provision has tried to balance or supplement the growth of private enterprise, though on unequal terms and without much co-ordinated planning. (Often public finance supports older forms where profit returns are low or non-existent, just as in other industries since the war nationalisation in some form has picked up the remains of underdeveloped or archaic areas, leaving newer industries for private investment. Cultural planning, like transport planning, shows little co-ordination between private and public sectors). Thus the football stadium, run on aggressively commercial principles, may face a sports centre for amateur activities, financed by local government. Luxury hotels overlook historic sites which prompt their existence but are maintained and protected by the state. Privately owned ballrooms may be found next to concert halls or repertory theatres dependent on public subsidy, though opportunities for both dancing and theatregoing are

certainly now expected equally by those who live in cities and those who visit them.

Less public activities typically include non-spectator sports such as fishing, and the whole empire of hobbies, especially gardening, collecting, modelling and so forth. Gardening provides a good example of the state/private mix in provision: local authorities maintain parks, private housing provides gardens but for inner city and council housing local authorities maintain rented gardens, once called 'allotments' but now 'leisure gardens'. Magazines and television programmes are offered for such hobbies, and for other interests such as science, history or nature.

And, wishing itself the most private form of all, pornography has been the fastest-growing, most profitable leisure concern of the last decade.

As is characteristic of consumer industries needing large sales, very wide participation in these developments, across class boundaries, has been stimulated. Upper middle class viewers of commercial television, and working class holidays on the Mediterranean coastline, are now equally familiar though both seemed novel in the 1950s. However, since provision is strictly graded in terms of cost, participation is in many ways still hierarchical and strictly dependent on consumer income. Holiday facilities provide a very clear example.

Dumazedier has suggested[1] that leisure's three functions are relaxation, entertainment and personal development. His argument is well-known, but it tends to confirm the promises of those in charge of the leisure industries, that leisure is essentially pleasant and harmless. In historical perspective, two more striking features of leisure in this sense is that it is detached equally from particular neighbourhoods and from the sphere of production.

The detachment from localities has come about simultaneously through the new urban planning in which cities are zoned in different ways and through the spread of cheap mass transport. City centres, often now without residential areas, become the night-time location for commuters of different areas and classes seeking their own forms of provided entertainment. Only those caught in the poverty of inner city areas, or the old, and to some extent those within particular ethnic cultures, are driven to develop their leisure in their own areas; for the rest, mobility allows access to entertainment in no particular way linked to an area.

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1 J.Dumazedier, Towards a Society of Leisure (London, 1967)

The determined separation from the sphere of production is an even more significant assumption of 'leisure' activity; one index is the dwindling of attempts by large companies to provide their own forms of leisure provision. It is difficult to accept Stanley Parker's view[1] that one pattern of the work-leisure relationship consists of an extension of work into leisure, for this makes into an absolute category a concept, and a division, which such a way of living refuses to accept. Leisure is a word whose widespread use is recent and value-laden, and it seems, rather, to imply always that the sphere of work has been left behind. The movement towards the forgetting of the work sphere has been the premiss for the commercialisation of leisure.

This is not to deny that forms of work are imprinted upon particular leisure patterns, in a variety of ways; or that leisure can be seen as a critique of work. As Parker has argued, a leisure game such as Bingo may reproduce typical features of work experience (concentration, regular physical movement, supervision) thought with an important difference (prizes). It may also be the informal setting for work friendships. Or, conversely, leisure may allow for kinds of relaxation, of 'doing nothing', which contrast with strenuous labour. In a third, more interesting case, leisure activities may involve kinds of effort, skill and choice denied by work; the skilling of leisure matches the deskilling of work. However it may be in these particular cases, leisure in these senses grows rarely from a shared life at work, or in a neighbourhood; and its content is deliberately other than these. Leisure is then marked by its unwillingness to be critical activity. It occupies the spaces provided for it, within the world as it is.

Lastly, commercialized leisure has an obvious tendency towards recurrent consumption, the replacement of older forms and the encouragement of novelty and fashion. Developments and changes are planned by commercial strategies, as in public houses. The consumer's 'freedom' is the capacity to respond to, and partly change, what is offered; but not to initiate or question. So it has been thought that there are links between commercial forms of leisure and passivity; state supported sports centres encourage people who take part, rather than spectators. This attempted critique of passivity is however not easy to sustain, for two reasons.

One is that no use of the provided commercial forms of leisure can be written off so quickly as an automatic or value-free response. Certainly leisure in these forms is developed and planned nationally by profit-seeking industries; it does not arise out of work or neighbourhood experience, and few individuals have access to its conception and implementation. There is, for example, almost no connection between those interested in developing the potential of film as a form and the commercial rationalisation of the industry's production and distribution. But cultural needs cannot be instilled into 'passive consumers' just like that. The very opening up of the 'youth market' in Britain during the late 1950s showed the ironic inability of middle-aged and middle-class manufacturers to predict or direct their consumers' tastes. In such fields as clothes and rock music commercial provision, for all its ruthlessness and drive towards its preferred types of provision, has been actively used in the articulation of cultural meanings and hopes of important ways:

> (youth) sub-cultures could not have existed without the growth of a consumer market specifically geared to youth...objects were there, available, but were used by the groups in the construction of distinctive styles ...All commodities have a social use and thus a cultural meaning.[1]

In addition, with leisure have arisen also many forms of club, association, society and group whose members are connected again, not directly through work or neighbourhood, but through a shared interest, hobby or sport.

> Touraine has argued that to the degree that traditional barriers fall, other more elective barriers are raised. The decline of cultural discrimination gives rise to the increase of segregation...Greater homogeneity of the content of (leisure) activities is accompanied by a setting-up of partitions in the forms they take.[2]

Here again passivity is a mis-description. Motor rally clubs, rose growers' associations, to take random examples, generate other links: social events, travel, a common magazine. Once again there has been some speculation about this, and very little informative research. It seems likely that for a great many people in different classes such societies play a central role between their work lives and their families.

It is, nevertheless, a sense of the limitations of a culture developed as a leisure market which helped produce the alternative conception of community development.

3.iv 'Community development'

Flanked and dominated by these commercial incursions, attempts have been made to revive, stimulate and even create cultural activity

1 Stanley Parker, The Future of Work and Leisure (London, 1971)

1 Hall and Jefferson, eds, op.cit.

2 Alain Touraine, The Post-Industrial Society (London, 1974)

stemming from, and speaking to, a 'community'. Different groups have pioneered this work.

The oldest has been the cluster of industrialists, usually those in family-based firms with an affiliation to non-conformist religious, who have been unwilling to abandon their workers' lives outside the factories to market forces. Ever since Robert Owen's New Lanark at the start of the industrial period, towns have been set up in which employers have taken on responsibility for housing, social services, and other amenities. Though much diminished in ambition, as the state's services have grown (and with criticisms of industrial 'paternalism'), some manufacturers' conceptions of social responsibility still allow them to finance experimental work through trusts, foundations and direct grants. This is no longer in the spirit of control which prompted, in good ways and bad, the 'model village' and 'company town'. Later, in the 1960s, the condition of inner city areas became the concern of local authorities, and at the same time of student and political activists.

Thus in a typical British inner ring area at the moment, it would be possible to find community medicine and information services prompted by the local authority social service departments; a community school receiving some money from industry but the majority of its support from the state, which has now made community development a priority; and a community transport service, drama group or newspaper, run by former and present students in higher and further education. These activities have also been transferred to villages, and to the new estates and towns resulting from industrial and residential relocation. Four kinds of area have then been the bases for intended community work.

Of these the fullest example, attracting most interest, has always been the old inner city ring areas. Once the site of industries crucial to the city's growth and of accompanying living patterns, these areas have been the often unhappy object of intensive redevelopment. The decline of an old housing stock has left behind a mixture of poor quality accommodation, with authorities usually preferring new council housing to the restoration of old property. Urban planning has threaded motorways and bypasses through such areas, breaking up old neighbourhoods, while pre-war cinemas, pubs and churches have been pulled down or drastically redesigned. Older industries have dwindled or been relocated, while office blocks and supermarkets in city centres or suburbs replace the small businesses and corner shops. The local population has often lost the industrial work force in a particular industry which gave the district its character, since such workers have been relocated or gone into different kinds of work. Those who remain may be a mixture of

older people, and those staying only briefly, and of newcomers as various as students and immigrants. Such an area, dispirited and ill-equipped, is then the object for attempts to create a 'neighbourhood' with its own activities, facilities, and means of speaking its needs.

Other problems arise when the intended 'community' is that of a large housing estate on the edge of a city. Here the population is apparently less disparate, but again work occupations vary widely and there are few facilities for meetings and social occasions. Local authorities have been trying to remedy their own failure to provide more than accommodation in the unfriendly tower blocks of post-war planning. For the same reason, planners have tried from the start to provide cultural facilities in the government's new towns, which are varied in class and occupation. A last example is the attempt to mould communities in villages remote from large cultural facilities, or where old and new inhabitants co-exist without much connection.

One precondition, then, for the wish to develop an area as a community, is its lack of self-generated resources. This is most true, in the inner city areas, in the fundamental senses of poverty and isolation. But these areas also share a physical, financial and cultural distance both from the leisure developments of city centres and from the apparently well-provided areas of middle-class suburbs. There have obviously been no attempts to generate the development of middle class communities (though some such districts lack any arts facilities let alone community newspapers), for there cultural opportunities are already implicit in work and education, cultural resources to speak and act readily available. It is apparent that cultural development of communities, where outside catalysts are needed to stimulate activity, is part of the general thrust of policies to counter deprivation. It is not intended for those with ready access to leisure facilities, nor for those to whome the arts are familiar, and who already have the power and confidence to express their view of the world.

The other factor behind community development has been the wish to generate adolescent and youth involvement in activities taking them off the streets. Parker[1] referred in 1971 to 'some concern' in Britain

> about the ways in which certain groups--especially the more rebellious types of young people--spend their leisure time. The Youth Service, religious and other welfare organizations are doing something to provide leisure facilities, with or without guidance in how best to use leisure time, and there is considerable pressure on local government to do more in this field.

1 op.cit.

Finn Jor[1], reporting on a centre in Hamburg, says

> when there are considerable numbers of young people out of work...the very task of creating an alternative to the streets is an important one...It is too early to tell what the significance of this natural association with culture may have in the long run. It is interesting, however, that both criminality and juvenile delinquency have declined...

Another Council of Europe report[2] even

> even speaks of drunkenness as largely conquered by a temperance movement which was, in its own way, a form of animation.

Thus the provision of cultural facilities now takes its place in a long line of initiatives, from poor relief and charities to youth movements, designed to occupy the restless and the unemployed.

Cultural community development has usually wanted to interest people in older or newer crafts and arts, and to develop some skills. It may look to the exploration of the area's history or its present life. From this may then stem attempts, organised mainly or wholly by local people, to gain better services, or to restore community pride and confidence. From this perspective traditional cultural institutions (theatres, museums and even schools except where there has been a strong community orientation) have seemed distant or irrelevant; while commercial leisure has certainly failed to speak to urgent needs for work, housing, and self-respect. Local cable television could be a great spur for this work, as long average adult viewing hours have been a source of weakness.

Community development has had little money behind it, however. It exists in the areas 'left behind' by industrial decline or 'opened up' by relocation. And, shorn of the structural links with work and class which traditional cultural forms possessed, it has not as yet generated its own distinctive forms of association. Specific groups meet around particular problems, but this is less than a 'community', and less than a culture in the fuller sense.

3.v 'Cultures and sub-cultures'

More generally, the ideas and policies of 'leisure' and 'community' have attemped to inscribe themselves upon the map of cultures in the elaborated sense, through which all social experience has been shaped and handled. To speak of cultures in this broader way involves, primarily,

1 op.cit.

2 J.A.Simpson, Towards Cultural Democracy (Strasbourg, 1976)

the concept (however modified and refined in particular cases) of a dominant middle class culture and of a subordinate working class culture, each with its distinctive patterns of work and family life, institutions, attitudes and values. Thus the older forms of working class culture in Britain[1] have characteristically included the fight for trad unions, co-operative societies and the Labour Party; an urban landscape marked by chapels, pubs, corner shops, clubs, terraced housing and the street and neighbourhood life that went with it; particular family patterns; such values as respectability, and often a kind of fatalism. Quite different forms have gone to make up middle class culture since its emergence in dissent from the culture of the aristocracy and landed classes above and before it[2]. These parent class cultures have then been the site for the emergence of sub-cultures which have explored alternative values, or expressed themselves in opposition[3], as in the 'counter-culture' of the late 1960s. So youth cultures, for example must be understood in relation

> first, to their 'parent' culture (e.g. working class culture), second, to the dominant culture[4]

just as more generally one class is

> given breathing space for its own cultural habits within the total aerial environment of another class[5].

In each case, work--work practices, work attitudes, the forms of work organisation and ways of living out work experiences both in the work space and at home--has been central to the culture's values and self-perception. This marks a crucial difference from the 'forgetting' of work in 'leisure' and the 'bracketing' of work in the notion of 'community'; communities where work is indeed central, such as mining towns, have no need of this unlocated form of 'development'.

If class cultures in this sense are central, hardly less so are the class-related cultures of particular ethnic groups. Thus since industrialisation began British cities have always had a strong Irish presence. And in the 1950s, the arrival of Asian and West Indian groups

1 See, for instance, E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963) or R.Robert, The Classic Slum (London, 1971)

2 See Hall and Jefferson, eds., op.cit., p.70

3 See Raymond Williams, Base and Superstructure (New Left Review 82)

4 Hall and Jefferson, eds., op cit.

5 Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate (London, 1971)

again brought distinctive cultural patterns into co-habitation, at various times adaptive, uneasy and conflicting, with the established warrening of class cultures through the large cities.

It is more problematic to speak of regional cultures. This has been done by those seeking to defend outlying regions, such as the Scottish highlands, left behind by modern industries, transport networks and emigration and more recently encroached upon by the discovery of oil. There have also been efforts to develop cultures lined to the women's movement or gay liberation. There are distinctive cultural forms here, both those suppressed and forgotten and new expressions of a particular group's identity, concerns and values.

Many forces have seemed to be 'flattening out' these cultural differences. As industries, transport and distribution have spread products, clothes and housing across whole countries, 'mass communication' has similarly developed its own 'national' information and programming. Mobility, and the lessening of the extremes of poverty, has seemed to some observers to replace a 'culture of poverty' by a 'culture of consumption'[1]. The education system has worked to impose a nationally shared curriculum and is sometimes a means through which a regional and class culture is left behind. And, we have argued, it is the intention of 'leisure' to replace these cultural differences by shared forms of activity which no longer possess a distinctive cultural content of any separate or affirmative kind.

In the 1970s it is clear that these forces for uniformity and standardisation have been misunderstood and over-rated. Distinctions of class culture, however camouflaged by appearances, remain deeply embedded in families, and above all in schools and factories where an apparently shared experience has been negotiated in very different ways which are culturally specific. There has been a widespread reckoning in the last ten years with the realisation that children bring into schools, and workers into factories, their own cultural formations through which they handle in detailed ways, and may even resist or refuse, the offered practices of teachers and managers. These processes through which a culture of schooling and culture of work are negotiated are still little understood; research attention has been given to the problems of educational 'failure' or low 'productivity' rather than to the cultures in which schools and factories are located. But class specific cultural attitudes and practices remain, in various forms of tension with each other, even after some familiar traditional cultural forms have changed or passed away.

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1 See Jeremy Seabrook, The Everlasting Feast (London,)

Meanwhile ethnic and regional differences have been vigorously asserted, as have the previously 'hidden' history, art and ideas of women. These movements have also an international strength; black politics in the U.S.A. in the 1960s, and the international culture of hippies, have instituted a permanent realisation of the need to affirm specific cultural values against the taking-for-granted, in schools or in the media, of a 'common' culture.

It has been far more difficult to judge, in particular cases, how far a culture or sub-culture is more than a defensive movement against complete incorporation in a dominant culture. But this issue is quite crucial for the concerns of this study. At the moment cultures and sub-cultures are not the subject of a 'cultural policy', nor is it clear how they could be. If a cultural policy 'brings' a culture which it offers to others, the cultural forces of particular classes and groups may resist such a culture, as they already have (to varying degrees and in specific ways) within the education system. But 'cultural pluralism' is too weak a formulation. It ignores the forces threatening particular cultures, it underrates the dominance of certain cultural modes through the main social institutions, and it suppresses the critical force of such cultures, valuing their own ideas and practices against those of other cultures.

In these terms, if 'cultural democracy' cannot and should not be the handing down of certain forms of culture, nor can it be a 'letting the people speak' variously, as though deeply rooted cultures in tension with each other were not already decisively present. Rather, the gaining of cultural democracy involves a gaining of cultural power. The claim that

> demonstrably, then, socio-cultural progress can be made without any alteration of the political and economic structures[1]

is misleading. The cultural arena is distinct from those of politics and the economy, and cannot be collapsed into them, but nor is it completely independent. If cultural values are understood to stem from ways of acting on and living through the experience of family, work and schooling as well as of the arts, they articulate a whole vision of social life. This will emerge and be expressed as the groups and classes concerned come to affirm the cultural, not as a leisure pursuit or as a compensation for social dislocation, but as a self-conscious dimension of all their activities.

The differing broader conceptions of the cultural sphere may then be contrasted, too schematically, in a chart:

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1 J.A.Simpson, Towards Cultural Democracy (Strasbourg, 1976)

	'Leisure'	'Community Development'	'Cultures and Sub-cultures'
Developed by	Commercial leisure industries, supplemented by local and central government	Local and central government, supplemented by voluntary activists and industry	No formal development as such, in constant response to economic and social change
Participants	Families, individuals, friendship groups, ideally 'across classes' but usually related to class hierarchy	'Youth' 'Communities' Usually displaced or relocated working classes	Classes, class fractions and subordinate ethnic, generational or sexual groups
Situation	Town centres, country, home	Inner city decayed areas, new towns and estates, country	Various
Relationship to work	Deliberately distant	Bracketed	Central
Characteristic forms	Sport, travel, entertainment, hobbies, 'interests'	Arts, crafts, skills; group exploration of situation, group initiatives	Various
Forms of association	Clubs, societies	Group activity around shared skills, problems	Various
Values	Relaxation, entertainment, personal development; 'freedom' from work	Participation, communication	Specific and various in dialogue with dominant culture, other cultures commercial forms
Problems for 'cultural policy'	Mainly commercially developed, uses profit and market criteria, does not bear on arts or culture in broader sense	Danger of developing in vacuum, unconnected with central cultural experiences, if successful political tensions latent	Outside and resistant to cultural policies as such in present form

The Broader Definitions of Culture

We may, lastly, ask how far these spheres of culture overlap with, intersect with, and even contradict each other.

3.vi Compatibility of the broader definitions

Each of the broader conceptions of cultural activity undoubtedly refers to distinct institutions, pursuits and aims. In a weakly descriptive sense, the three spheres do co-exist, and might even be thought to make up between them a full arena for the expression of cultural interests and needs of a variety of kinds.

Co-existence is however a passive and misleading term for the developing situation in Britain and similar countries. To begin with

extremely powerful forces have worked towards the deterioration of older cultural forms: especially the separation of work and family life through industrial relocation and the spread of cheap transport, and the rise of the mass media. For these and many other reasons, the cultural institutions of the working class and of other groups are in some ways in abeyance or in decline. Meanwhile the growth of commercial leisure enterprises has been sustained and far-reaching, backed by large-scale investment, 'market research' and determined sales and promotion. As for community development, it has only recently been prompted, and unevenly, as a wedge against the encroaching decline of inner city areas and apparent emptiness of some new urban development. Thus the pattern in fact shows the extension of leisure organisations into, and in important ways against, the aims of those involved in community animation or the attempted consolidation and extension of particular class or group cultures.

The fullest argument about the current results of these changes, and their possible outcome, has been made by Alain Touraine in his The Post-Industrial Society[1]. It deserves some exposition and comment.

Touraine begins[2] by assuming (and British evidence would certainly support him) that there has been a weakening of cultural expressions bound to a particular social group. One result, in his view, is that membership of tightly-knit groups (such as highly-structured communities, families, youth sub-cultures or 'gangs') now expresses only

> a forced cultural retreat and a weak participation in the general society

Those in such groups will take less part in cultural and leisure activities (which Touraine does not sharply distinguish) than do members of dominant classes. An American study of the late 1950s is cited to suggest that American workers are far more preoccupied with family life and with work, far less involved in leisure activities, than those in classes above them. A similar finding is apparent from the British General Household Survey of 1973[3], which shows the participation by seven socio-economic groups ranging from professional, and employers and managers, to semi-skilled and unskilled, in many kinds of leisure activity: outdoor and indoor sports, visits to museums,

1 op.cit.

2 ch IV

3 Social Trends No.7, op.cit., table 10.18

gardening, gambling and so forth. In each of the eleven categories of activity the statistics show

> a steady gradient across the socio-economic groups. This may reflect the fact that professional workers may have more time and money to spend on leisure.[1]

Much more than this may be thought to be involved; but the pattern is clear. Participation in all forms of activity falls steadily, down to the lowest involvement among unskilled workers. Equally, as Touraine suggests, the lower socio-economic groups watch more television. British figures (from a survey using three categories of social class) show average viewing hours in February 1976 of 20.3 hours a week among adults over 15 in social class C, 16.6 hours in social class A[2]. He goes on:

> this distance between the consumer and the producer, the consumer's frequent subjection to economic, moral and political imperatives that are essentially conservative and mystifying, is the principal problem of a leisure civilization...initiative can only exist at the top of society, while the middle levels are dominated by imitative behavior, and the lower levels by withdrawal or subordination to the spectacles organized by the social elite.

Leisure activities are then, Touraine argues, sharply stratified. At the lowest level (and often the subjects of the community development programmes) are the poor and old wage earners, immigrants, and those in general

> locked into marginal zones marked by the decay of earlier cultural worlds.

Here strong family ties are retained in partial compensation for a low involvement or interest in the cultural and leisure activities of the wider society. Above these groups are production workers who also withdraw into primary groups but may be more involved in the purchase of leisure goods and as spectators (though this is a very partial rendering of the implications in 'consumption of spectacles'). For groups with specific roles and responsibilities in organizations, cultural 'imitation' is part of a general pattern of social promotion and social mobility.

> Finally, those who perform tasks connected with management or knowledge...cultivate...cultural activity for its own sake.

This stratified pattern is accompanied by an increasing material

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1 ibid

2 ibid, table 10.20

segregation of groups in urban areas, and by an increase in the 'elective barriers' of clubs and associations.

The argument, as is admitted, is abstract and schematic, and it needs and deserves detailed research in particular countries; but it is extremely suggestive. Touraine goes on to argue that traditional cultures cannot be resuscitated. Equally, it will be impossible to provide access across the whole society to 'culture' in the limited sense (which many groups will reject) and oppressive to attempt a tighter organization of leisure activities. For Touraine it is a question of 'desocializing' cultural forms, of offering cultural models which permit the learning of cultural 'languages' (skills) and 'the discovery and formation of personality'. The

> search for social integration and participation

and especially the stress on participation as a value (which may oppress such groups as the elderly) should be replaced by a search for a genuinely personal life. Instead at present we have such characteristic forms of consumption as fashion and commercialized eroticism in which important innovations, potentially capable of transforming the individual's experience of self and others, are subordinated to a hierarchial organisation for profit. There should also be an active resistance to all such forms of stratified consumption, a sociocultural opposition perhaps led --the book was published in Paris in 1969--by youth, especially students.

Thus on this analysis traditional cultural forms, closely linked to the work and living patterns of particular social groups, have been irreversibly transformed by the appearance of highly stratified and commercialized forms of cultural involvement in which

> the consumer on the whole has little control over the producer.

This movement must be resisted by a counter-emphasis which values the expression of the imagination, and personal development, against the planning of either social consumption or social integration.

The Post-Industrial Society is a stimulating book, many of whose hints justify further argument and investigation. Unfortunately its negative force seems more persuasive than its attempt to resolve the problems it has posed. It does not seem at all clear how culture, of all human activities, can be desocialized, or what constitutes a personal development which is not linked to the development of larger groups, classes and societies. And even if 'scientists, artists and the young' could form a movement of resistance, with what means and power are they foreseeably equipped?

It seems likely instead that, although some of the older institutions of particular classes may have been weakened, different class and group values still inform and structure the ways in which the mass media and leisure activities are 'used' and experienced. Even some of the most

perceptive recent analyses of the leisure sphere and its importance seem to have tacitly accepted some assumptions of mass society theories: that new needs can be 'instilled' into a virtually passive population of consumers, that cultural differences are 'levelling out' in the post-war period. To be sure, the specific cultural ways in which family structures, schools, the domain of work, and all the forms of leisure are handled by various groups are still very little known; immensely more work, of a subtle kind, is needed. But football and holidays are two very obvious cases where groups approach and use even an apparently shared experience in differing ways. In education, too, any teacher in a large urban school has to become aware that pupils' responses to the experience of the classroom are intimately related to their class, to their group activities out of school, and to the places in the work process which they are later likely to occupy[1]. In another case, that of film comedies, it has been shown[2] how the social classes of which an audience is composed interpret and respond to the same text. All this suggests that patterns of lived culture remain various; that even the mass media and the newer forms of leisure are the site for the differing experiences and modes of involvement of the various classes, sub-classes and other groups. Cultures in this widest sense cannot 'go away'.

The formations of different cultures and sub-cultures then lie behind and structure the ways in which any of the arenas of cultural development and cultural policy as such are variously used and lived--or in other cases variously refused or rejected. But it is also true that most subordinate groups possess less and less their own erts or their own cultural institutions. In Britain the dwindling, against considerable counter-pressures and forces, of attempts to establish working class patterns of schooling in the nineteenth century[3], is an instance of a more general shift towards an ambiguouse 'national' provision by the state or private enterprise in which the cultures of subordinate groups exist within, and respond to, institutions which those groups did not initiate and do not control, though their responses have to be reckoned with in the 'making' of the institutions concerned.

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1 See Paul Willis, Learning to Labour (forthcoming)

2 By John Ellis, Made in Ealing in Screen (Vol.16, no.1, London 1975) or argued more fully in his The Ealing Comedies 1947-57: their Production and Use (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Birmingham 1974)

3 See Richard Johnson, Notes on the schooling of the English working class in Dale, Esland et al., Schooling and Capitalism (London 1976)

4. THE AIMS OF CULTURAL POLICIES

If there are different spheres in which a cultural policy may seek to intervene, there are also three kinds of implicit or declared emphases within current planning.

4.i Access to and provision of the highest standards

This aim, once the overt concern of those associated with the birth of cultural policy as such, spoke of the need to preserve and sustain excellence in all the arts as an absolute human value and right. T.S.Eliot's 'the intolerable Wrestle/With words and meanings'[1] is characteristic of the insistence on poetry, other arts, and even at an early stage such newer forms as photography and cinema as crafts hard learnt, exacting, and not fully realised or understood without effort.

Such language has rarely been used in the last decade; instead the labour of art and culture has been spoken of defensively, or 'justified' in other terms. This change has been extremely rapid, is parelleled by similar movements in the teaching of national literatures, and has causes already touched on. Of these one is undoubtedly the wider recognition that cultural values are in many respects relative to particular groups. As this has been realised, it has become harder to use formulations such as 'mass civilisation and minority culture' as did F.R. Leavis in the 1940s. The implication, that the many are uncultured or without culture, has been resented, and other forms of culture upheld. Second, the provision of state backing for the older performing arts has become embarrassing as the financial requirements have increased and the social appeal of such forms remained limited. In 1973 it was estimated in Britain that only 18% of the population had taken part in going to 'films, theatres and operas', 9% in visits to historic buildings and museums. Third, it has become much harder even for the interested or 'expert' to be sure of assessing excellence as such. If this is true of television, where the potential of the medium may be assumed to have been scarcely developed as yet, it is also true of such older arts as painting and sculpture, as controversies over 'pop' art, for instance have shown. Harold Rosenberg has remarked[2] that

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1 T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets: East Coker in Collected Poems 1902-1962 (New York, 1963)

2 in his The Tradition of the New (London, 1962)

> the only vital tradition of twentieth-century art to which criticism can appeal is that of overthrowing tradition. This makes every attempt at criticism of contemporary art inherently comical.

Even more serious difficulties have been met in the drive to facilitate broader access to works of art whose greatness was not in doubt. The effort in the late '60s to 'open up' cultural institutions was parellel to similar attempts in education and in community development areas to 'tap' 'reservoirs' of unused skill and potential. Despite heavily increased educational expenditure, with which the hope of wider access to the arts was linked (see 2.ii) repertory theatres in large cities are still unable to find sufficient audiences; and attendances at British art galleries in 1975 were lower than those of 1971.[1] Despite an enormous and imaginative variety of new ideas (the touring company 'Opera for all' for instance) there are no real indications that the arts are regularly or actively appreciated outside the familiar and limited social groups. That this is so is surely because cultural formations remain decisively linked to work and social class. The arts are often seen as belonging to foreign institutions, from which 'missionaries' are unwelcome.

These problems together account for the embarrassment at any decisive stand in favour of standards of excellence, and for a recent sense that the social uses of the arts need rethinking; possibly in terms of community arts where, to repeat the quotation of 2.ii, the effects of the arts on community life matter more perhaps

> than the achievement of standards acceptable to specialists.

Yet the defence of standards in this century has not always been the prerogative of the cultural conservatives with whom it has become associated. Gramsci wrote in 1919[2] that

> in the accumulation of ideas transmitted to us by a millenium of work and thought there are elements which have eternal value, which cannot and must not perish. The loss of consciousness of these values is one of the most serious signs of degradation brought about by the bourgeois regime; to them everything becomes an object of trade and a weapon of war. The proletariat, having conquered social power, will have to take on the work of reconquest, to restore in full for itself and all humanity the devastated realm of the spirit.

1 Social Trends No.7, op.cit., table 10.15

2 The Modern Prince and other writings (New York, 1970)

And Christopher Lasch, a very different writer by whom these words are cited, argued in 1971[1] that

> it is a symptom of the general malaise of modern culture that watching a play, reading a poem, or getting an education are defined as passive and spectatorial ... although the cult of participation encourages a distrust of professionalism, the institutions of American society continue to be operated by professionals. It is only the left which, both in its politics and its culture, clings to the illusion that competence is equally distributed among people of good intentions and regards any attempt to uphold professional standards as a betrayal of democracy.

Despite the current loss of nerve, therefore (which of course has come about partly in a generous attempt to avoid excluding anyone made shy of the arts for whatever reason) an interest in providing work of high quality and in facilitating access to it will remain a latent or declared component in much cultural policy.

4.ii Social participation and integration

Lasch's argument illuminates, by contrast, precisely how far in other kinds of cultural policy participation is a declared goal. In the most general terms, the Council of Europe's 1970 Rotterdam symposium recommended[2]

> investment in cultural development in addition to the current investments in order to ensure harmonious and future directed social development.

In this sense cultural planning has been used to reach marginal groups: the old, the unemployed, those in badly provided urban areas and especially adolescents in their late 'teens.'

'Communities' remains the most used term in this respect, and the promotion of closer social life has sometimes been remarkably deliberate, almost didactic. Stephen Mennell reports[3] that in Exeter the city's Youth and Community Services Sub-Committee encouraged officials to call meetings throughout the city:

> they told the local people who attended that there was a need for a focal point in the social life of each neighbourhood; that a Community Association....would help to break down the rather introspective character of existing groups and societies...

He adds, though, that only a few associations were started because of a general lack of interest, and that in those which survive even

1 reprinted in his The World of Nations (New York, 1973)

2 Facilities for Cultural Democracy, op.cit.

3 Cultural Policy in Towns, op.cit.

paper membership is no more than 10% of the local ward's population. But elsewhere, especially on estates, in new towns and in urban inner ring areas, community provision has aimed with more success to offer facilities and initiate activities for those not provided for by commercial sources, uninterested in the traditional arts, and unable or unwilling to organise in groups. Cultural policies have insisted on participation, especially as a counter to a despairing, criminal, or rebellious opting-out. This has led to the links between community development services and the promotion of youth organisations, most of whose memberships are increasing in Britain[1]; behind which lies also the concern among police, social workers and the press, for example, about the need to give young people 'constructive' activities.

As such these policies are almost attempting compensation (for those without economic, political or cultural power) and an indirect form of social control (to groups perceived as deviant). Yet the forms of community provision have often had no real connections with the local population's experiences of work, schooling and the family, and sometimes offered forms of organisation without any substantial content. At least this has seemed the case where (as at Exeter) community development has been launched 'from above' by local or central government. This is quite unlike the deliberate and extensive involvement of local people in planning and decision-making of every kind, as is for instance reported in the case of Bologna.[2]

Policy attitudes towards the cultural integration of newly arrived ethnic groups have been more fluctuating, the site of a difficult balance between a wish to see respect for such groups' cultures and an insistence on some familiar customs being upheld. It has been a feature of some policy statements that the distinctive mores of immigrant groups have been spoken for, and those of the indigenous working class and other groups relatively neglected. For example:

> municipal authorities should accept the philosophy of a pluralistic society, thereby recognising the right of particular social groups, such as old ethnic minorities and newly arrived groups of foreign workers, to express their own values through socio-cultural activities which satisfy their particular needs.[3]

In 1976 the converging insistence within the debate about education in Britain has been on the need for training in socially useful skills.

1 Social Trends No.7, op.cit., table 10.12

2 The Decentralisation of Cultural Promotion: Case Study no. 4; Bologna and le Havre (CCC/DC (76) 11, Strasbourg, 1976)

3 Facilities for Cultural Democracy, op.cit., recommendation B.I.2

Cultural policy may become more concerned with 'harmonious...social development', less with the flowering of sub-cultures seen in the later 1960s. Where another mode of cultural policy strives for excellence, this seeks, above all, social involvement in the activities encouraged by governing groups.

4.iii Cultural Devolution

But in this third case aims are more divergent. The words deconcentration, decentralisation and devolution have been used in ways which are sometimes overlapping, sometimes in contradiction. The linguistic confusions between French and English have been discussed by Stephen Mennell in his report[1] on the 1976 Nuremberg colloquy, and he commented that

> administrative decentralisation may in fact be adopted for a variety of motives: to facilitate adaptation to the special physical or social characteristics of an area, to symbolise and protect distinct cultural, religious or linguistic identities, to promote participation in administration and accountability to the people.

For the purposes of this study it is important to distinguish clearly three different interpretations and implementations of the central terms in cultural policies.

i) Devolution as a means

Here devolution is seen as the best way of carrying out a particular national policy. The British regional arts associations are an excellent example, since they arose from a resistance or indifference to any attempted national cultural plan proposed by central government, and through a preference to encourage and subsidise regional artistic activity through bodies representative of the region itself.

A rather different case arose when the B.B.C. established regional television studios largely because the size and complexity of central facilities in London have proved uncomfortable and almost unworkable. It does not follow that a programme initiated by 'B.B.C. Birmingham' or 'B.B.C. Manchester' will have any distinctive regional content, just as in the national commercial television programming networks a company in one region may transmit to other regions an imported American series. Regional television shows a mix, in fact, between devolution in this sense, which lies behind the majority of its

1 The Decentralisation of Cultural Promotion (CCC/DC (76) 55-E, Strasbourg, 1976)

output, and the attempt as in ii) to transmit programmes distinctive to that region and based on local skills or characteristics. Both in commercial and local B.B.C. radio, at least in terms of spoken continuity, the balance of the two is reversed.

ii) Devolution as an end; the transfer of power from the centre to the regions

In this case, techniques and strategies of devolution may vary considerably, but the attempt to lessen the dominance of a 'central' culture is deliberate. Everything then turns on what 'centre' and 'regions' mean in the cases of various particular national histories and social structures.

Thus Britain has no major linguistic pluralism, as does Belgium; its 'national' structure has been established far longer than in many other countries, so that it is not a federation, or made up of solidly established distinctive cultural identities; and its size requires no special measures to integrate distant regions and territories. Yet the present debate about measures of devolution for Scotland and Wales has shown up the paradoxes of attempting, as some have suggested, a devolution within England itself. In Britain, the 'central' culture must presumably be located in the major cities, perhaps including Glasgow, not usually referred to as part of a 'Scottish' culture in need of preservation. The 'regional' cultures appear to refer to areas literally on the periphery (Cornwall, Wales, Scotland) and sometimes especially to rural and pre-industrial characteristics in any area. Interesting attempts to articulate, say, a 'Northumbrian' culture (by such writers as Basil Bunting[1] and Tom Pickard[2]) have not found wide support. When the cultures of particular cities (Manchester, Liverpool) are evoked, it is usually working class cultural forms (clubs, football, kinds of humour) which are described.

Regional cultures in Scotland, Wales and Cornwall have been stimulated by nationalist political groups, by those seeking the revival and protection of declining languages and by workers in particular arts and crafts. There has been no sustained attempt to ask for, or to cede, a greater strength for regional cultural forms in Britain, though this may come about later from political

1 Briggflatts in Collected Poems (London, 1970)

2 For his work in establishing a poetry centre in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, see Ray Gosling, A World of their own Making (Listener, 13 June 1968, London)

devolution. This is precisely because in largely urban industrial England 'regional cultures' have little meaning and concrete lodgement compared to the various cultures and sub-cultures within cities themselves. England may differ quite strikingly from even other industrialised nations in this respect.

iii) Devolution as an end; the transfer of power from dominant to subordinate groups

The notion of cultural pluralism, though an important attempt to respect the cultural traditions of particular groups, can mask the institutional weight of a dominant culture which structures the cultures subordinate to it. If this was once true of an industrial culture replacing rural forms, it refers now to a cultural hegemony which a dominant class may exercise or attempt. Juliet Mitchell's argument[1] is crucial to the understanding of the role of 'middle class culture':

> We don't think of 'middle-class culture as something separate--it simply is the overall culture, within which are inserted these insolable other cultures... There is no cultural conflict because social groups remain fairly isolated from each other--in fact all the sub-cultures manage to establish are a series of communication barriers. It is a case of one class ... being given breathing space for its own cultural habits within the total aerial environment of another class.

This is too brusque: there are cultural conflicts within schools and factories, and elsewhere, and sub-cultures have achieved more than 'communication' 'barriers'. But the main point is exact. Subordinate groups and classes have lacked their own cultural institutions, the confidence, power and skills to express their own values, as much as they have remained economically and politically unequal.

To transform this situation, as much in the cultural domain as elsewhere, has in history of course often been an explicit political intention. However, in many western countries the complicated effects of the 1960s have included the emergence of a 'cultural politics' as such, but only among certain groups. Thus for students within higher education, 'counter-culture', however understood and practised, named the need to build 'alternative' institutions, to live in alternative ways to those offered or implicitly imposed. Blacks within the United States and elsewhere stressed cultural achievements as a source of group pride and distinctiveness.

1 Woman's Estate, op.cit.

> The revival of black nationalism in the fifties and sixties, with its Puritanical morality and its reassertion of the work ethic, was directed precisely against this kind of cultural 'integration'.[1]

Later some women's groups were also to assert their own cultural history, values and forms of struggle. But cultural politics of these kinds has in many ways been transformed, in the harsher context of the following decade, into a more familiar insistence on economic and political rights. And in all this, working class culture, its history, its contemporary forms, its necessity, has usually gone unmentioned. The weakness of such subordinate cultures constitutes an absence of major significance which it will take a determined struggle to reverse. That the effort is possible is shown at the moment by the example of some local government authorities in Italy.

In this third sense, then, cultural devolution speaks for the establishment of strong cultural institutions by such groups and against their subordination within cultures and organisations not of their own making. Indeed it is only in this way that cultural democracy becomes possible.

5. DECENTRALIZATION: SOME POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE APPLICATIONS

It is the argument of this study that decentralization has many meanings in the whole gamut of cultural policies, appearing sometimes as a means, and sometimes as various kinds of end. It is not a self-evidently accepted aim, nor a value-free technique; and its possible bearings on the achievement of cultural democracy are many and complex.

5.i Decentralization as a distraction

To begin with, decentralization is in some respects either not applicable as a possibility, or not desirable.

Within the field of leisure, for instance, where in such countries as Britain developments are initiated mainly by private enterprise, decentralization has little meaning either in terms of the achievement of certain standards of provision, or in the encouragement of participation. Nor, in any case, are either state or other bodies at present in any position to suggest or bring about changes in the organization of leisure.

1 Christopher Lasch. The World of Nations, op.cit.

A far more important preliminary would be a full series of studies concerning the impact of leisure interests on cultural practices. To suggest that

> culture should not be considered merely as an aspect of leisure but as an aspect of life as a whole[1]

is a welcome recommendation, but cultural groups seem increasingly to constitute themselves in some relation to a shared attitude to leisure or shared enthusiasm for one form of it. How leisure is practiced, within the provided opportunities which structure the 'consumer's' range of actions, must in turn have its effects in attitudes toward and behaviour within work, families and neighbourhoods. We also need to know how far leisure and culture are distinguished, both objectively and in the attitudes of different groups towards them, by the sources of their provision, and how far other reasons: by their 'content', by the kinds of social organisation which at present go with them, by the 'needs' they satisfy, or appear to satisfy. None of these questions can be adequately answered from present research, and given the sweeping effects of the leisure sphere investigations are urgently required.

For the purpose of achieving certain standards within the arts in the more limited sense, recent experiences have clearly shown the limits of decentralized provision for such forms as opera, theatre and ballet. Not only would further regional companies be extremely expensive but many of those in existence are not yet adequately supported. Short of unusual private endowments of the kind given from American foundations but very rarely in Europe, it has fallen on central agencies to encourage the highest standards from their own limited resources, and this situation is bound to continue. There is a much stronger argument for saying that central governments have responsibilities which must be shouldered with regard to the arts. Writers, for instance, are in Britain badly served by copyright laws and face an increasing commercial need for large paperback sales to warrant publication. In coming years, there may need to be more consideration of state grants-in-aid and even of a centrally supported, though not directly controlled, publishing house.

In other forms of communication (see Section 2) basic facilities for cultural 'citizenship' should include the possibility in urban areas of reasonable access to a good bookshop; to a range of magazines and journals; to both local and national newspapers with the resources

1 Facilities for Cultural Democracy, op.cit., recommendation B.I.1

for a full and critical coverage of affairs; and to cinemas where the classic film repertory and contemporary films of quality can be seen as a matter of course. To say this is not to accept either term of the now banal opposition between 'state control' and the 'freedom' of the press or film industries, but to point to present trends and their current or likely outcome; in which newspapers depend heavily on advertising and bookshops on textbooks and best-sellers, and in many towns some of the smaller journals, due to distribution difficulties, are scarcely seen. It has also been estimated that the great majority of the British population never enters a bookshop, and this is at least partly because of the kinds and numbers of bookshops there for them to enter. The reasoning which has led to such 'buffer' organisations as the Arts Council or B.B.C. applies as strongly to the foundation of a Books Council, a Film Council or a Newspaper Council whose task would be to use a state grant, given without direct political control, to seek the basic forms of adequate provision described. The alternative, that these facilities should be available to better-paid groups only in a few cities, and especially in London where there is already a strong concentration of opportunities of access, does not seem acceptable. In this situation decentralization is a cul-de-sac. Stronger, better-backed and more resourceful central direction of adequate national provision is necessary.

5.ii Examples of limited forms of decentralization

Two examples of limited decentralization show how eagerly local involvement in culture and communication might be grasped.

The arts associations in Britain (2.ii), as has already been shown, are not developing regional cultures as such, but the practice of all the arts in a region. They do so by offering a common organisation, including opportunities for exchanges of ideas, and the promotion of particular events, to the many smaller arts groups, and larger regional companies, already existing. The Northern Arts Association[1] suggested in the early years of the associations that the Arts Council might

> channel all its grants (except perhaps those to professional orchestras, repertory theatres and major festivals) through regional associations as they become established, thus decentralizing support and freeing the Arts Council to concentrate on national problems, plans and priorities[2]

1 who published Notes of Guidance on the Formation of a Regional Arts Association (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1968)

2 Evidence to House of Commons Estimates Committee in Grants for the Arts (H.M.S.O., London, 1968)

and this is what has been done. The advantage for local authorities, again, is that they give grants to bodies whose competence and enthusiasm is already founded, without needing to establish their own arts departments. It was said in 1968 that

> these regional associations to be effective will have to think in terms of millions of pounds. The situation might be quite different if we ever get regional government[1]

but local authorities might be less willing to give grants to associations directly were arts spending to become, as was once argued, mandatory not optional. The dwindling of these suggestions is linked with a growing realisation that interest in the arts is not developing as had been expected, and that this is largely due to the strength of broader cultural formations.

A much more unresolved instance of potential limited decentralization is that of local uses of radio and television. There has been a decisive withdrawal in the last five years from plans to experiment widely with cable and video television, quite largely (and significantly) because of the withdrawal of commercial sponsorship. But the challenge here is enormous, as Enzensberger said in a famous essay:

> There have been no historical examples up until now of the mass self-regulating learning process which is made possible by the electronic media...It is wrong to regard media equipment as mere means of consumption. It is always, in principle, also means of production and, indeed, since it is in the hands of the masses, socialized means of production. The contradiction between producers and consumers is not inherent in the electronic media; on the contrary, it has to be artificially reinforced by economic and administrative measures.[2]

For, even though the 'decoding'[3] and 'uses' made by different groups of television may vary in ways hardly understood as yet, the figures for average British viewing hours by all persons over five have been:

1971:18.6 hours, 1973:19.3 hours, 1976:19.9 hours[4]

and this of programmes in whose conception and making most people had no part whatsoever. The claim that local television is possible is then sometimes accepted as though it will lead to a worthy amateurism,

1 ibid, evidence by John English, then Director of the Midlands Arts Centre for Young People

2 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, The Consciousness Industry (New Left Review 64, London)

3 See Stuart Hall, Encoding and Decoding in the Media Discourse (Cultural Studies Centre, Birmingham University)

4 Social Trends no.7, op.cit. table 10.20

programmes of mainly parish-pump interest. But it may be doubted whether television as yet has its own fully established techniques and languages which can only be mastered by 'professionals'. There are undoubtedly skills to be learnt, but programmes could both be of a high standard and a high degree of general interest. Whether this comes about depends rather on the provision of instruction in television production inside schools and institutions of higher education. Given children's exposure to television, the power of visual compared with verbal forms of communication, and that the learning of television skills is inherently a group activity, it should be expected that television literacy might become an educational goal; reversing the current situation in which close instruction is given in cultural forms rarely used, none in those to which the child is accustomed.

In this case cultural decentralization would involve the teaching of television appreciation and production in school syllabi, developing after a number of years a strong base of interest in television production and participation locally. This seems preferable to the exclusive use of television by 'professionals' with rare experiments given over to 'community problems'. It might also lead to the possibility of a structure of regional television associations, based in practical interest and involvement, with planning powers in relation to national programming.

Thus in the first of these cases limited decentralization responds to, and promotes, what already exists; in the second it would attempt, through the schools, to lay the basis over time for a genuine decentralization arising as a demand from an interest in the medium, not merely as a form of community promotion or commercial experiment.

5.iii Decentralization and cultural democracy

The achievement of cultural democracy in the proper sense must involve the possibility for all groups in society to help control and shape all aspects of their lives; to express and communicate their ideas and values; and to use as producers and participants the full range of modern cultural forms. Anything less than this is a refusal of the cultural dimension of 'the long revolution'.[1]

Thus cultural development should not run the risk of becoming, with whatever good intentions, a compensation for social deprivation. But this is likely to be the case when the central experiences and

1 Raymond Williams, The Long Revolution, op.cit.

institutions of social life are left untouched, while only the time and space remaining from their reach is occupied by cultural planning. If the implications of this brief account are correct, that is already the case, in different ways, with both 'leisure' and 'community' forms of culture where the main social institutions go, by intention or of necessity, unmentioned. In this sense, decentralization may itself be a further diversion from the central issues, not only in the areas described in 5.i, but in that there might develop.

> a regression to a state of generalized ignorance disguised as ethnic pluralism and having as its political counterpart a system of repressive decentralization, combining 'community control' of culture with centralized control of production, and a colorful proliferation of 'life-styles' with the underlying reality of class domination.[1]

These sentences should be at the forefront of any discussion of 'decentralization'.

This is to say that all groups must be able to share in the making and development of, above all: their work process and its organisation; their schools and other educational institutions; their neighbourhoods and environment; and the forms of communication, media, through which ideas and experiences are articulated and exchanged.

Whether this can come about through the sphere of culture alone has been sharply debated: compare

> demonstrably, then, socio-cultural progress can be made without any alteration of the political and economic structures[2]

and

> there is no chance of the working class rising up and simply asserting their cultural values over and against those of the middle class...nothing will be achieved within this sphere alone: nothing...can be changed without a transformation of the economic base.[3]

For cultural development the urgent starting-point is itself more disturbing. Regional cultures not yet fully industrialised, and subordinate cultures within industrial cities, appear to have lost to a very significant degree, insofar as they ever possessed, their own cultural institutions. In consequence their 'cultures' appear or are 'preserved' only in neutered forms, as quaint, 'colourful' or plainly archaic traces in a world made elsewhere. One immediate need is more knowledge of these (largely) 'hidden histories of

1 Christopher Lasch, The World of Nations, op.cit.

2 J.A. Simpson, Towards Cultural Democracy, op.cit.

3 Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate, op.cit.

subordinate cultures; their forms and values, their dismantling and incorporation within other structures. But nations vary widely with regard to current possibilities for the achievement of greater cultural strength by subordinate groups. It is hard to imagine in Britain at present the workers' cultural associations spoken of in the Bologna study[1]. What follow are hints for further development.

Of the four central areas, schools seem most likely to be first changed by these problems. There have been many fine accounts of the unrealized potential of children and teachers in the wake of the 'deschooling' debates and, especially in the incisive and unforgettable Letter to a Teacher[2], of the failure of response in school systems to many children's own cultural formation. It is no longer in doubt that schools are institutions in which central social issues are engaged and contested. If children in large urban schools may often resist schooling openly or implicitly, so too employers and others have protested against the schools' alleged failure to produce 'qualified' labour power. In this teachers and teaching methods are at stake, often torn between professional demands made upon them and an interest in their pupils' life situation; which may include the near-certain prospect, if not of actual unemployment, of manual labour and a life of impoverished opportunities. The result has been the more direct engagement of teachers in community affairs and community politics[3], and the determination of some parents to concern themselves with the running of the schools to which their children are compulsorily sent. There are already a few schools where teachers, parents, trade unionists and future employers together concern themselves with both the school and its relationship to the society for which it prepares children. This could be taken further. Not to do so involves a resistance to or refusal of the cultural situation of many groups of children. To do so would involve a lead by teachers' groups and organisations in initiating discussions with parents, children and others.

For neighbourhoods, the most useful reported model seems to be Bolbgna's division[4] into eighteen administrative districts whose councils and their sub-committees discuss with local people

1 Cultural Decentralization: Case Study No.4 op.cit.

2 Letter to a Teacher, by the school of Barbiana (London, 1970)

3 Nigel Wright in Whitty and Young, eds. Explorations in the Politics of School Knowledge (Driffield, YO25 OJL, England, 1976)

4 Cultural Decentralization; Case Study No.4. op.cit.

all issues of district concern and

> can reject, or at least substantially modify, even projects which have reached an advanced stage... decisions...are arrived at by a continuous and general process of two-way communication of wishes and requirements between the inhabitants and the authorities, through the intermediary of the district council. This process, though it may appear cumbersome, slow, and even tedious, does nevertheless permit a real, effective form of urban democracy.

Such districts, or a combination of them, could also be the basis for local media uses of the kind described (5.ii).

A much longer struggle may be expected in relation to work, Lasch's

> most important issue...the loss of autonomy on the job, the collapse of high standards of workmanship, the pervasive demoralization that results from the mass production of goods that are widely recognized as intrinsically worthless by those who produce them, and the general crisis of a culture historically oriented around the dignity of labour.[1]

It is these aspects of work which are most demeaning and would need to be raised as an integral part of the hesitant movement towards worker participation and worker control, whose suspicious refusal by unions is often linked with the perception that such aspects are not offered as relevant concerns of management.

These shifts towards the involvement of all groups as equals in the making of their own situation and affirmation of their own values will occur unevenly, not be directly charted by central agencies who cannot plan the forms of things unknown. Those directly involved will rather be those who work in those areas, as far as they are willing to think about and act on forms of culture, as on other perhaps more apparent and graspable aims. This partly involves more knowledge and discussion about past, present and future comparative possibilities. For central agencies, the offered role is to be more watchful and in one sense more negative. If the arts of the past and certain kinds of interests and skills cannot be yet generally engaged with, this should not entail defensiveness about their active maintenance. Far more important is the need for a critical engagement with the encroaching effects of the commercial leisure industries and of the leisure sphere in general, whose detailed consequences need careful study and evaluation but do not on the face of it appear to bring nearer a cultural democracy. Nor is the temporary relief provision of community development 'socio-cultural animation' in any full sense.

1 Lasch, op.cit.

Beyond that, it should be the aim of central cultural planning in two senses to disappear--because cultural democracy and its furtherance takes place within work, schools, and other institutions and practices including the arts, and not in a 'cultural' realm so labelled; and because it is inherently paradoxical, if not impossible, to plan decentralized planning:

> Today I am free and no longer need your freedom.[1]

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. In the name of developing towards a cultural democracy, very different spheres of cultural intervention and policy aims have been called upon. These need further discussion and study especially in terms of their potential incompatibility.
2. Decentralization is both a means and different kinds of end in cultural policies, and itself needs further discussion if it is not to be a form of tokenism.
3. Leisure, especially in its commercial forms, has been insufficiently examined and has central effects on other forms of cultural life. It cannot be ignored by or omitted from cultural policies.
4. Community development risks being dissociated from the central concerns of cultures and sub-cultures and becoming a form of compensation for deprivation.
5. Cultural democracy must develop within the central social institutions and communications media, not in an isolated sphere of cultural policy.
6. There is insufficient theoretical and empirical work, especially of a comparative kind, on the current situation and potential developments in most areas discussed by this report.

1 W.H. Auden, in The Sea and the Mirror, Collected Longer Poems (London, 1968)