# LOCAL POLITICS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS IN SHEFFIELD

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CONTENTS


| Chapter | | Page Number |
|---|---|---|
| | Acknowledgements. | |
| | List of Tables. | |
| 1. | Introduction. | 1 |
| | Section A - Background. | |
| 2. | Tradition and Change in the Political Life of Sheffield. | 24 |
| 3. | Housing Policy in Sheffield 1900-1976. | 36 |
| 4. | The Two-Party Monolith in Sheffield. | 76 |
| | Section B - The Organisations. | |
| 5. | Grassroots Versus the System? | 95 |
| 6. | What the Grassroots Do. | 113 |
| 7. | Organisation. | 125 |
| 8. | Activists. | 151 |
| | Section C - The Groups and Community. | |
| 9. | The Community Studies. | 180 |
| 10. | Boundary Selection and Area Characteristics. | 242 |
| 11. | Methods of Information Exchange in the Communities. | 269 |
| 12. | Community Groups and Neighbourhood Councils. | 286 |
| 13. | Conclusion : Community Groups and Local Politics. | 307 |
| | Appendix A. | |
| | Appendix B. | |
| | Appendix C. | |
| | Appendix D. | |
| | Bibliography. | |

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I would like to record also the name of Harry Hartley, an inspirer and leader of the tenants' movement in Sheffield until his death.

LIST OF TABLES.


| Table | Title | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Composition of Sheffield Council after the 1919 Elections. | 30 |
| 2.2 | Number of People in Employment by Industry in Sheffield. | 33 |
| 3.1 | Local Authority Housebuilding and Slum Clearance in Sheffield 1965-75. | 55 |
| 3.2 | Waiting List Registrations in Sheffield 1967-74. | 55 |
| 3.3 | The Decline of Council House Building 1955-61. | 59 |
| 3.4 | First Five Year Programme of Clearance and Development (1955-60) | 62 |
| 3.5 | Second Five Year Programme of Clearance and Development (1961-65) | 62 |
| 3.6 | Fourth Five Year Programme of Clearance and Development (1970-75) | 66 |
| 3.7 | Condition of Housing in Sheffield Survey 1971-72 | 72 |
| 4.1 | Percentage of Electorate Voting: Comparison of Sheffield, Birmingham, and the Average of Towns with over 100,000 Population. | 80 |
| 4.2 | The Swing of the Two-Party Vote 1965 to 1976. | 80 |
| 4.3 | Swing to the Conservatives in Selected Wards, Sheffield 1966-69. | 83 |
| 4.4 | Percentage Poll in Middle-Class Wards Compared to Sheffield Average. | 86 |
| 4.5 | Percentage of Electorate Voting for Each Party (1967-1972) | 89 |
| 5.1 | "How did you first of all raise the issue?" | 102 |
| 5.2 | "What did you then decide to do?" | 106 |
| 5.3 | "How successful do you consider the outcome to be?" | 109 |
| 6.1 | Reasons for Organisations Being Set up and Present Main Activities. | 115 |
| 7.1 | Level of Activity Scores. | 128 |
| 7.2 | Frequency of Main Committee Meetings. | 138 |
| 8.1 | Socio-Economic Characteristics of Action Groups and Tenants' Association Activists. | 154 |

| Table | Title | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 8.2 | Socio-Economic Status of Activists Compared with Sheffield Electorate. | 155 |
| 8.3 | Highest Qualification Achieved by Activists. | 156 |
| 8.4 | Further Education of Activists. | 157 |
| 8.5 | Age of Activists. | 158 |
| 8.6 | Length of Residence in Sheffield of Activists. | 160 |
| 8.7 | Number of Activists' Relatives who Live in Sheffield. | 160 |
| 8.8 | Number of Activists' Friends who Live in Sheffield. | 160 |
| 8.9 | Number of Residences in Sheffield. | 161 |
| 8.10 | Duration of Residence at Current Address. | 162 |
| 8.11 | Organisational Membership - Number of Organisations. | 163 |
| 8.12 | Organisational Membership - Type of Organisation. | 164-165 |
| 8.13 | Occupations of Activists in Ward Labour Parties, Action Groups and Tenants' Associations. | 171 |
| 8.14 | Age Range of Activists in Ward Labour Parties, Action Groups and Tenants' Associations. | 171 |
| 8.15 | Length of Residence in Sheffield. | 172 |
| 8.16 | Full-time Higher Education. | 173 |
| 10.1 | Reasons for Choice of Boundaries. | 246 |
| 10.2 | Selection of Small Area Census Data for Action Group Areas. | 257 |
| 10.3 | Correlation between Unfurnished Tenancies and Households Lacking Access to One Basic Amenity. | 260 |
| 10.4 | Typology of Action Groups by Organisational Style and Area Characteristics. | 266 |
| 11.1 | Self-defined Degrees of Representation. | 269 |
| 11.2 | Number of Public Meetings in the One Year. | 272 |
| 11.3 | Numbers Attending Most Recent Public Meeting. | 273 |

| Table | Title | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 11.4 | Subjects of the Most Recent Survey. | 274 |
| 11.5 | Number of News-sheets in the Last Twelve Months. | 276 |
| 11.6 | Distribution Procedure of News-sheets. | 277 |
| 11.7 | The Sense of Opposition from Other Sheffield Organisations. | 279 |
| 11.8 | Opposition from Groups in the Local Area. | 280 |
| 11.9 | Overlapping Organisations in the Locality. | 281 |
| 11.10 | Links with Other Organisations. | 281 |

# CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION.

The last ten years have seen sweeping changes in the structure and management of local government, and as the scale of service provision and size of local authorities has increased so the representatives and administrators have become increasingly remote from their public. One response to this new balance has been the emergence of a significant number of grassroots organizations - community and tenants' associations, action groups and voluntary societies - standing outside the mainstream of party politics and yet keenly involved in bargaining and negotiation with the local authorities. Recent research has revealed a plethora of local organizations: for example, Newton identified over four thousand in Birmingham, thirty per cent of which are involved directly or indirectly in the political process.(1.1) It is certain that the sheer volume of small-scale activity by these groups is, in total, making a large, but until recently unacknowledged, contribution to the political life of the nation.

This thesis is concerned with the role of community groups in local politics. It takes the form of a case-study of two types of community organization which have been active in the recent political life of Sheffield. Through the case-study material the problems and aspirations of public representation in local politics are to be discussed. Despite the numerous changes and vast amounts of speculation and popular comment, there is a lack of information about the links between the local government system and the public, and relatively little is known about the role of community groups which stand at the interface between the two sides. Two policy areas in particular have been

the subject of controversy from which distinctive organizations have developed. First, the slum clearance and redevelopment programmes together with a multiplicity of planning proposals have been the basis from which a large number of 'action groups' have emerged. Second, the controversies which surrounded council house rents in the late 1960's and early 1970's led to the growth of a widespread network of tenants' associations. In London alone there are over 900 active tenants' associations many of which are of quite recent origin.(1.2) The thesis will concentrate on these two types of organization - action groups and tenants' associations. They share a number of common characteristics; initially they were built on specific issues; they stand outside mainstream party politics; they are community groups and restrict their geographical horizons; and they all have to a greater or lesser extent a self-help element in their day-to-day activity - providing welfare and leisure services, undertaking small environmental projects, or finding out the views of residents in an area and so on. In some, if not all, of these characteristics they differ from other voluntary agencies, environmental societies and minority political parties: Ratepayers' associations, for example, who have made startling gains in some regions of the country during the last few years are not included because they campaign in local elections on city-wide issues, their approach and ambitions may, therefore, be distinguished from those of community groups.

A short contextual chapter traces some of the most important themes in the twentieth century political history of Sheffield and comments briefly on the character and social background of the city. The first substantial chapter describes the development of housing policy in Sheffield from 1900 to

1976.(Chapter Three) Emphasis is placed on the post Second World War building of council houses and the related programme of slum clearance because it was in opposition to the consequences of these major elements of the housing policy and aspects of detailed implementation that both the tenants' associations and many of the action groups were formed. The resulting changes which have been made to the residential distribution of the population have, in addition, played a leading role in shaping recent party political allegiances within Sheffield. Chapter Four examines these political divisions of the city through an analysis of local election results since the mid-1960's. Sheffield is polarized on a two-party, Labour/Conservative vote with 'third' parties and independent candidates almost always squeezed out. Local issues have, however, had a significant effect on the outcome of the election results and were the decisive factor in the only change of political control in the city since the 1930's. But for local groups, campaigning on a limited range of issues and standing outside the two-party system, competition in the electoral arena is not a viable tactic. A central question which this chapter raises is whether the existence of grass-roots groups implies that the traditional party political system is an unacceptable vehicle for the expression of certain types of public grievance. To what extent should the groups be considered as a symptom of the alienation of citizens from the party dominated system? Chapter Five, examining this theme by describing the relationship of the groups with their local councillors and later with the departmental officers, concludes with an analysis of the communication routes which the groups adopted in their approaches to the decision-makers. This section

was designed to find out to what extent they rely on existing channels and the type of tactics adopted in bargaining with the local authorities. These negotiating situations are the crucial area where their attitude to the system is most exposed and more easily analysed.

Concerning the organizations themselves very little is actually known and the second sequence of chapters is designed to increase the range of information about the characteristics, ambitions and distinctive qualities of grassroots organizations. A number of the pluralist models of urban politics, inspired mainly by Dahl, suggest that a balance is kept in city politics because groups which lack access to one or other of the major resources will be likely to compensate through their skills in other directions or by forming coalitions and alliances with other organizations.(1.3) The evidence from the Sheffield groups suggests precisely the opposite of the American version of pluralism - there is virtually no evidence of coalition/alliance building; group resources are unbalanced but they rarely compensate by going outside the group; groups do not see themselves as being in competition or conflict with other groups - neither do they regard local political parties as opponents. In short, they are characterized by their insularity and parochialism. The American version of pluralism has been an influential theory in British political studies but it would seem to be more suited to the open and unstructured system of government from which it is derived.

Chapter Six summarizes the activities of the two types of organization, tenants' associations and action groups. Chapter Seven begins by quantifying these activities in a comparison of the different rates of activity, showing that there is an uneven

distribution; the chapter continues by describing and analysing the basic elements in the internal organization of the groups, beginning with the surprisingly complicated question of membership; then looking at their structure, especially the committee system and concluding with a typology of organizational models. The single most important resource which the groups possess is their 'activist' members and they are discussed in Chapter Eight. These people play key roles in shaping the style and character of the group but in common with the evidence of a number of studies are untypical of the general membership in socio-economic status, educational attainment, 'rootedness' in the city and in their membership of other organizations. It seems probable that the Michels thesis on the oligarchical control of mass political organizations applies equally to the small community groups but for slightly modified reasons and with different effect.(1.4) The chapter also contains a comparison between the social characteristics of the group activists and a selection of Ward Labour Party activists in pursuance of the theme of the representativeness of the leadership in local political organizations.(1.5)

A third sequence of chapters investigates the relationship between the groups and their communities. Chapter Nine takes the form of a review of many of the seminal British community studies. These furnish important evidence concerning the conditions under which community organizations form and the way in which differing circumstances mould their development. More recent interpretations of community emphasize the political relationships in the broader society which necessitate the division of the population into communities for specific purposes. Community is seen, therefore, not as essentially an internal

construction but as a defence against external agencies or as their creation. However, with the possible extension of neighbourhood or community councils to English towns, finding an appropriate political model of community is important because without such a definition it would be very difficult to suggest what rights and responsibilities could or should be devolved into this new 'tier' of government. In Chapter Ten this argument is made in relation to the Sheffield community groups and it is suggested that they are compelled to adopt a 'political' definition of community, derived from their negotiating position vis à vis the local authorities; the groups' perceptions of community are analysed through a discussion of boundary selection. In the second part of Chapter Ten the internal social characteristics of the group territories are examined. Are they socially coherent units? Is there an index or a series of indices which might provide favourable ground for the development of voluntary associational activity? Would these factors account for the absence of groups in some areas of the city? Chapter Eleven discusses the channels of communication and information exchange between the groups and their communities. This evidence is central to the groups' claims to either represent their area or to be representative of it. Over certain issues it clearly is the case that they reflect opinion in the community. Although neither directly representative nor internally accountable, the efforts the groups make to communicate with and extract information from their communities is a powerful countervailing argument against criticisms of the unrepresentativeness of community groups. As Crick suggests, "....we are only at the beginning of seeing democracy as communication."(1.6) In this chapter consideration is also given to links between the groups

and other organizations in the area for these relationships are important both to the theme of information exchange and also to the general characterization of community groups in local politics. There is no evidence to support, for example, the pluralist notion of alliance and coalition building; on the contrary the groups are parochial and inward-looking in this respect.

The penultimate chapter, Chapter Twelve, draws on the evidence of the thesis to examine the potential and the problems associated with the establishment of statutory neighbourhood councils. Would they be the solution to the bureaucratization of the local government system discussed at the outset of the thesis? (following this synopsis) And will they be able to fill the political vacuum left by the parties over certain issues? In the first place, the support of the groups for statutory Councils would be a prerequisite for the success of the venture. And assuming their support, what do the grassroots groups in Sheffield suggest concerning the problems of setting them up and about the style and characteristics of neighbourhood government?

Chapter Thirteen is a final summary with conclusions.

As a preface to these chapters a number of important themes in the recent history of the relationship between local government and the representative theory of democracy are outlined. The preface focuses on two key areas, first, changes in the organization and management of local government and second, the role of councillors in the formal political system. Neither of these important topics will be dealt with elsewhere but since they are integral to the argument they are discussed as a preliminary to the main themes of the thesis.

Local Government and Democracy.

Since the inception of a modern system of local government - with the Municipal Corporations reform in 1835 - a debate over the role of democracy in the system has been perpetual. From the very beginning, as W.J.M. Mckenzie points out (1.7) the argument raged over whether local self-government was desirable at all, and should be regarded as a threat to the broader national democracy which had been strengthened by the 1832 Reform Act. McKenzie quotes Chadwick, a leading radical reformer of the day, on this question: "These bands in truth of petty oligarchies, which we should call job-ocracies, who maintained their hold over the persons of the pauperised labourers and the purses of the ratepayers by pertinacious blackguardism and every low art." This scenario of local corruption and vice Chadwick contrasts with Reformed Parliament, the only true, progressive force in politics which alone could carry through the Poor Law Act.

Although not articulated in such dramatic diatribe as Chadwick's, there can be no doubt that the issues he raised are still very much alive - the question of national versus local control, of bureaucratization, of corruption and so on. The expansion of service provision and expenditure in the last decade has brought local government to the point of crisis. The Layfiel Committee, for example, (1.8) documents in detail the expansion of local government expenditure, showing that local authority spending has grown faster than the growth rate of the economy as a whole. In 1975-76 current expenditure by British local authorities reached £13,000 million while the capital debt stood at about £25,000 million. Layfield shows that the rate of growth has been particularly dramatic over the past fifteen years for in

that time current expenditure has quadrupled and the capital debt has trebled. In the period from 1950 to 1976 local authority expenditure as a proportion of all public expenditure has grown from 23.4% to 31%. This accelerating trend of expenditure has been fed largely from central government funds, because the capacity of local authorities to raise money has been totally inadequate to cope with demands made on their exchequers. In addition, by 1975 there were 2.9 million people employed in local government, equivalent to 11.3% of the total British workforce.

In practice, such a rapidly expanding growth of expenditure and service provision has resulted in a prolonged crisis of organization and management. From the mid-1960's a continual series of Government Commissions and Committees has been set up to research the problems and suggest changes. All the main components of the system have been considered, culminating in the complete reform of local government in 1974. The nature of the crisis - financial and administrative - to a large extent dictated the 'philosophy' of the reformers. The 1964 Committee on the Staffing of Local Government (the Mallaby Committee) (1.9) and a Committee on the Management of Local Government (the Maud Committee) (1.10) both reflected a particular concern with the <u>efficiency</u> of local government. From a management perspective the problem seemed to be two-fold; how to co-ordinate service provision and how to bring policy under an overall plan. The Maud Report's suggestion of an all-party central management board was not, however, received favourably. But in substance the more recent Bains Report (1972) (1.11) produced a very similar solution, again advocating a central policy and resources committee whose role would be to co-ordinate policy, finance,

manpower and land. Again the report favoured minority party representation. The crucial point is that the solution to the problems of internal management and structure were, and continue to be, based on the idea of narrowing down policy planning and co-ordination into an élite, central management. While it is true that by the mid-1960's most local authorities were very unwieldy and fragmented - the average county borough had, in 1964, 21 committees and 40 sub-committees - suggested solutions did not necessarily relate to the actual needs of urban or rural communities, were implemented badly and unevenly, and did not take account of the growing demand for greater public involvement. As recent commentators have suggested, "Unfortunately, efficiency (doing the job well) and effectiveness (doing the right job) have been confused. Changes have been based upon internal organizational requirements rather than external environmental needs." (1.12)

In addition to this strong centralist tendency, the end-product of the debate on reform of the complete structure of local government was to produce bigger, more remote units of administration, dividing the system into four separate parts: county and district councils, regional health and water authorities; and to reduce the number of elected representatives in England and Wales by nearly 12,000 while abolishing the 4,400 aldermen. The choice of the two-tier system rather than unitary authorities has undoubtedly been wasteful both financially and in manpower (1.13) while the public show every sign of being baffled by the division of functions.

This summary of recent developments is intended to stress the management orientation pervading the executive wing of local government. The solutions to dilemmas of policy-making

and the expanding scale of service provision have been to centralize the process; only a minimum of thought having been given to alternative solutions. It has remained for the growing array of local protestors, community activists and grassroots organizations to suggest other possibilities and most important of all to raise the whole question of local government democracy. Public representation is not a mere afterthought which becomes expendable in times of crisis. Quite the reverse is the case; that in a period when priorities need to be selected with care, a wider public debate and greater accountability is necessary. It is from this climate of opinion that the issue-based community groups have sprung.

It would be wrong to imply that there has been no official consideration of public involvement. Quite independently of the structural and managerial developments, specific pieces of legislation have provided for the statutory inclusion of public participation exercises in two policy areas. The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act placed a statutory obligation on planning departments to consult people and organizations during the development of planning programmes. While this applies to both local plans and structure plans the government timetable for formulating plans has given preference to the latter which were the first to require Whitehall approval. Structure plans are strategic, long-term and by definition abstract and were not therefore the most suitable level of planning with which to initiate a new era of relationships between people and planners and in most cases only a minimum of involvement appears to have been achieved.

A second source of official commitment to the idea of public participation came in the 1969 Housing Act where a

statutory obligation was placed on local authorities to gather and take into account the opinions of people living in General Improvement Areas; this legislation was then superseded in 1974 by a Housing Act which introduced Housing Action Areas as an additional way of achieving comprehensive housing improvement. "A basic - and novel - feature of HAA's is the statutory provision which makes the well-being of the people living in them one of the requirements for, and objects of, declarations. This means involving people and groups in the scale, nature and timing of proposed action programmes....(and) unless the support of people in the area is secured, it is unlikely that an HAA programme could be carried out effectively."(1.14)

The Skeffington Report on Public Participation in Planning, published in 1969, expresses very clearly the thinking behind these commitments to public involvement. "We understand participation to be the act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals. Clearly the giving of information by the local planning authority and of an opportunity to comment on that information is a major part of the process of participation, but it is not the whole story. Participation involves doing as well as talking and there will be full participation only where the public are able to take an active part throughout the plan-making process."(1.15) This broad statement is limited, however, later in the Report which says that "responsibility for preparing a plan is, and must remain, that of the local planning authority....and must be undertaken by the professional staff of the local planning authority." These qualifications suggest that public involvement is seen in terms of public relations rather than a genuine commitment to sharing decision-making power with the local citizens. A number of analyses of structure plan

formulation have shown a strong public relations element in the participation phases. Derek Senior suggests that this was, indeed, the objective of the 1968 legislation.(1.16)

Representation and Public Accountability.

Against this background of bureaucratic centralism and fragmented experiments in public participation the rise of the politically active community groups represents a countervailing force. Their intervention has been mainly a pragmatic response to external decision-making but, having responded, a variety of important principles in local government and in the broad democracy are at once challenged and opened for discussion. Of principal concern is the question of the way in which the public voice is represented in the decision-making process. The 'traditional' theory, which makes the link between the two sides, gives precedence to the mediation of local councillors. British democracy is based on the representative principle. Under the 1835 Act the old oligarchies of self-selected landowners and businessmen were replaced by an electorate of ratepayers. Council meetings were open to the public, accounts audited annually - necessitating the statutory obligation to appoint a Town Clerk and Treasurer. Towns with over 6,000 inhabitants were divided into wards each of which was to have three councillors. The remainder of the century saw the gradual introduction of the principle of "one man one vote" with the consequent abolition of the earlier property qualifications.

The right to vote does not, however, guarantee access to the centres of power and decision-making influence. In the closing decades of the twentieth century it has become an axiom of government studies that the social profiles of the nation's

representatives are significantly different from the public as a whole. In local government council chambers manual workers, women and young people are grossly underrepresented. Only 19% of councillors, for example, come from manual occupation backgrounds - where the figure for the country as a whole is 50%.(1.17) Councillors tend to be more middle class and older than a representative cross-section of the population. There are, however, two views concerning the role of councillors one of which modifies the representative model of democracy to fit the facts. According to this, councillors have a freedom of choice and independence in making judgements. They are elected on the basis of good faith and trust to make decisions on behalf of their constituents; low turnouts at local elections suggest that the electorate tacitly support this view of representation. Accordingly, emphasis in selecting councillors should be placed on their managerial skills, for which white-collar and professional workers are best suited.(1.18)

A contrasting opinion suggests that councillors should reflect the views of their constituents and should be subject to recall and dismissal if they fail to do so. It would thus be more appropriate for councillors to be drawn from the same social class and consumer groups as the people they represent. Newton (1.19), finding that a sample of councillors in Birmingham did conform to distinctive 'role orientations', refers to them as trustees, delegates and politicos. Trustees regard themselves as free agents who may exercise their own judgement depending on the situation. The delegate, by contrast, gives much greater weight to public opinion or may seek out a specific mandate. The politicos attempt to combine both roles, "either trying to balance them at one and the same time or choosing first one then

the other according to the situation." Nearly 50% of the Birmingham councillors opted for the trustee role, the others dividing equally between delegate and politico roles. Newton also shows that younger, newer councillors consider themselves as delegates, whereas senior members functioned as trustees.

Traditionally, the gap between the public and the representative has been filled by local party political organizations; however, in recent years it has been increasingly questionable whether local parties do reflect local opinion or whether the party system in fact inhibits responsiveness to the public. It is suggested, for example, that the oligarchic nature of internal power introduces undemocratic political structures with real decision-making residing in the party caucus and leadership circles. A number of local and national political figures, in addition, attempt to deny the relationship between party and representative, treating their vote as a personal mandate. Within the framework of the party the Conservatives, indeed, incline to such a view of the role of councillors. "The Conservative Party is opposed to the system of delegates ....all members and representatives in the Conservative Party are free to speak and vote according to their conscience."(1.20)

The Labour Party, however, is more vulnerable to criticism because it bases itself ideologically and constitutionally on the concept of democratic accountability. As Michels shows in his famous study of the German S.D.P., "The most important resolutions taken by the most democratic of all parties, the Socialist Party, always emanate from a handful of the members." (1.21) He demonstrated that this was due to the structure of the organization, the ability of the leaders to control agendas and meetings with their superior knowledge of the issues and a

membership more or less unskilled and incompetent with a psychological need for leadership. A more recent critique of the British Labour Party by Barry Hindess introduced a theory which attempted to show, in a strongly worded thesis that, "there has been a vicious circle of decline in the more working class areas of cities with a consequent shift of power towards the more middle class areas. This in turn affects party policy and leads to a further decline in the more working class areas."(1.22) If this were true it would again be a very damaging critique, in addition to the problems of oligarchical control, for the traditional working class party would be seen to be losing its natural class base while at the same time losing political control in the localities to an unrepresentative section In fact, there are important objections to the Hindess thesis not least of which is the validity of his empirical data. Several studies have recently provided much more systematic evidence which refutes the thrust of the argument,(1.23) and these will be discussed later in the thesis. Nevertheless, even in Sheffield, which it will be shown, is probably the most solidly Labour supporting City in the country, nearly 75% of the councillors are white-collar workers.

Councillors and Voluntary Organizations.

An important source of communication between councillors and the public is through the councillors' own membership of other voluntary organizations or by the lobbying and influence which groups and organizations bring to bear on them. In the first instance, Newton found that councillors had an average of five memberships of voluntary associations. "A broad spectrum of organizations is covered, but with a weighting towards

occupational, business, social, welfare and recreational groups." But it will depend on the type of role orientation which a councillor adopts whether he will use these memberships as a source of opinion and of gauging public attitudes or, indeed, whether he/she will favour or promote a policy which will enhance his organization(s). In a study based on Kensington and Chelsea, groups were thought of as being 'helpful' or 'unhelpful' according to whether they made acceptable demands and used 'proper' channels of communication. "....Councillors were not generally sympathetic to groups which were providing information, ideas, or demands for their attention, favouring instead those groups that were working alongside, or with, the Council in some form of service provision which eased their own burden."(1.24) Dearlove also shows that the attitude of senior members and chairmen of committees was much less sympathetic to 'demanding' groups than non-chairmen or newer councillors. This, he says, is due to the chairman's awareness of the financial and policy implications in groups' demands. Newton also found that the senior members of the local élite are more isolated and have fewer contacts with the public than junior members. So in attitude-formation the simple factor of access and face-to-face communication may be crucial.

A study of three South London Boroughs by Cousins (1.25) found support in the council for uncontentious groups - sports, educational and religious organizations - and hostility towards the more controversial activities of tenants' associations, trade unions and especially towards environmental protest groups - these boroughs were also Conservative controlled. Such hostility towards a similar range of groups is certainly not characteristic of the Labour controlled council in Sheffield.

Darke and Walker (1.26) indicate that Labour councillors are more ambivalent towards the role of voluntary groups than are Conservatives. "Ambivalence comes as a result of these ideals (socialist provision of services) meeting the harsh reality of limited budgets so that voluntary effort is appreciated because it can fill a gap."(1.27) But generally speaking, whether in Labour or Conservative controlled areas, groups which provide services in support of council policy will be well received. Otherwise the tactics of the group and the political ideology of the council and individual councillors will to a large extent determine attitudes - Conservative councillors will oppose tenants' associations, trade unions, etc., while Labour councillors may well suspect the self-interest of middle class pressure groups. The latter will be true for middle class Labour councillors equally, if not more so, than working class Labour councillors.(1.28)

The Public Response.

The equation of formal representation would not, of course, be complete without some consideration of the response of the public itself. For the vast majority this response is confined to the possibility of voting for a councillor once a year. But the fact that only a third of the electorate exercise their right to vote has given rise to a popular view of widespread public inertia and uninterest in local affairs. The notion of 'apathy' as an explanation for types of political behaviour has had surprisingly wide currency and achieved the status of a major theoretical position.(1.29) It is held to be an observable feature of modern democracy that the majority of citizens do not participate but instead periodically select a new ruling élite.

The position advanced is, therefore, that participation in politics might in fact be a threat to 'democracy'; the mistake, however, is to equate observation with explanation. In the chapter dealing with the party political background to Sheffield there is evidence which suggests that 'apathy' may well be a positive reaction to the political realities within the city. It is suggested that the electorate has an instrumental attitude towards local politics - concerned mainly about the effectiveness of the services - and that low polls may indicate, among other things, a level of satisfaction, or positive decisions not to vote.(1.30) Party politics in Sheffield is shown to be highly polarised into a two-party Labour/Conservative monolith. It may thus also be a paradox that the strength of the underlying loyalties results in a low level of electoral response. Almond and Verba (1.31) produced evidence which indicated a highly 'participant' attitude among the British electorate. 70% of the sample said that they ought to be involved in local affairs and 78% said that, if necessary, they could do something to force a local council to change its policy. In fact, whether consciously or not, in 1968 the quite exceptional overthrow of Labour control in Sheffield was due to the strength of feeling against a new rent policy. The analysis of the two-party swing in the City, taken against the background of a massive, national, anti-Labour movement, shows that in the wards containing council estates worst affected by the rent scheme, the swing away from Labour was three to four times greater than the average for the city as a whole. This loss of 'safe' Labour seats was sufficient to change the political control in the City for only the second time since Labour took office in 1926.

The debate both about formal party political representation and about problems of the current practice of the representative theory of democracy in local government is integral to this case-study. We have identified in this preface a number of central problems and realities. The electoral system is the basis of legitimation, but only a minority participate; the representatives themselves are untypical of a cross-section of the public; their 'role orientations' differ; the complexity of decision-making exerts a bias against the 'delegate' view of representation; problems of communication are numerous both internally and externally; councillor relationships with voluntary organizations are often confused and unbalanced; internal party political caucuses and the effects of seniority and oligarchical control add to the constraints; party politics in local government is now more extensive than ever. From this multiplicity of differing roles, constraints, political attitudes and so on it is clear that local government in Britain is not in practice run on the basis of a single model of representation.

It is not surprising, given this background, that for some time there has been concern about the problems and effectiveness of communication between the public and the local government system. Even the early Maud Report touches on the question; "....it is very clear that much better communication between councils, councillors and the electors is essential if public interest in local government is to reach higher levels." More recently, the activities of a plethora of community organizations, pressure groups and organized lobbies have compelled a reconsideration of the system. There are now, for example, lobbies in all the main parties which support the introduction in England of Community or Neighbourhood Councils, on a statutory basis,

to provide, among other things, precisely this vital line of communication. This does not imply that existing avenues are totally crippled. They certainly are not. But the complexity and scale of local government activities and its increasing remoteness from the public has created a general concern and in certain localities and services, crisis. It is against this background that the involvement of community groups in local politics must be considered, and the main part of the thesis is built around the implications of their activities upon representative democracy. What do the groups do? Who do they represent? How do they relate to the local authorities and the councillors? Are their claims to 'representativeness' valid? How are they organized? What is the nature of their relationship to the communities? May they be seen as an embryonic demand for a third or neighbourhood 'tier' of local government or are their demands more or less radical than the neighbourhood council idea? It is certainly evident that these grassroots organizations in Sheffield do have a distinctive style and, collectively, a clear viewpoint about the nature of political representation.

CHAPTER ONE References and Footnotes.

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1.2 The London Campaign against Cuts in Social Expenditure collected a list of voluntary organizations in the London Boroughs. It contained over 900 tenants' associations.

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1.4 Michels, R., Political Parties (Free Press Paperback, New York, 1962).

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1.7 McKenzie, W.J.M., 'Theories of Local Government' no.2., L.S.E. (Greater London Papers, 1961).

1.8 Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Local Government Finance (the Layfield Committee), CMND 6453, H.M.S.O. (1976).

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1.10 Report of the Committee on the Management of Local Government (Maud Report), H.M.S.O. (1967).

1.11 Study Group on Local Authority Management Structures (Bains Report), D.O.E. (1972).

1.12 Darke, R. and Walker, R., eds. Local Government and the Public (Leonard Hill, 1977), chapter 1.

1.13 Although not all filled there has been a 70% increase in the number of planning posts.

1.14 .D.O.E., Circular 14/75.

1.15 'People and Planning', Report of Committee on Public Participation in Planning (Skeffington), H.M.S.O. (1969), p.1

1.16 Senior, D., 'Public Involvement in Planning', in Robson, W.A. and Crick, B., eds. The Future of the Social Services (Penguin, 1970).

1.17 Management of Local Government (Maud Report) 1967 Vol.II "The Local Government Councillor". Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.9, 1.11, 1.16.

1.18 Sharpe, L.J., 'Elected Representative in Local Government', British Journal of Sociology (1962), Vol.XIII.
The Maud Report gave support to this view with their emphasis on the managerial and administrative demands which are placed on Councillors.

1.19 Newton, K., op.cit. p.118.

1.20 Conservative and Unionist Party Central Office. 'The Party Organization' (1970).

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1.24 Dearlove, J., The Politics of Policy in Local Government (Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.186.

1.25 Cousins, P.F., 'Voluntary Organizations and Local Government in Three South London Boroughs', in Public Administration No.54, 1976, pp.63-81.

1.26 Darke, R. and Walker, R., op.cit. p.78.

1.27 Hampton also suggests that Labour councillors accept voluntary organizations only as an expedient forced upon them by economic stringency. "They believed that ideally the local authority should provide all the services." Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (Oxford University Press, 1970), p.298.

1.28 Waugh, A., op.cit.

1.29 Bell, D., The End of Ideology (Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); Schumpeter, J.A., Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (Allen and Unwin, 1954).

1.30 Finer makes the distinction between 'true non-participation' and 'false non-participation'.
Finer, S.E., 'Groups and Public Participation' in Parry, G., ed. Participation in Politics (Manchester University Press, 1971).

1.31 Almond, G.A. and Verba, S., The Civic Culture (Princeton University Press, 1963).

## CHAPTER TWO. TRADITION AND CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF SHEFFIELD.

This chapter traces the development of the main strands in the political tradition of Sheffield during this century and provides a very brief background note to the character of the city. These themes are discussed in a number of detailed essays and books (2.1) but a short preface describing these aspects of the city is required here in order to provide an historical and social context for the main thrust of the thesis. Although we are describing the role and nature of certain types of community groups, it has been kept in mind that the issues and events surrounding their entry into the political life of the city are always set against the overwhelming political influence of the Labour Party and the trades council. During the twentieth century the political history of Sheffield follows in an almost uninterrupted sequence the events surrounding the rise of the Labour Movement and the eclipse of Conservative and Liberal rule. In a later chapter it will be shown that this history has culminated in a two-party system in which the primacy of the Labour Party is secure. Sheffield is perhaps the most solidly supporting Labour city in the country, more so today than at any time in recent history. It is against this background of impregnable party control that the 'grassroots' organizations were born, not in defiance of the political realities but as a protest against the insensitivity of its monolithic grip and the twin problem, described in the first chapter, of the centralization of decision-making and administrative power.

The industrial base of Sheffield in steel manufacture and engineering is the reason for the overwhelmingly working-class

composition of the city; and the industrial and political organizations of the workforce have largely been shaped by the nature and scale of the industrial structure. The upsurge of trade union membership in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was enthusiastically taken up by all sections of the workforce in Sheffield.(2.2) For the first time semi-skilled and unskilled sections of workers were unionized in large numbers and it was from these new battalions of general workers that demands for an independent political voice were to develop. At the turn of the century trade unionists in Sheffield belonged to one of three main groups. First, long-established members of the cutlery trades, traditionally organized in a large number of small family firms, who when they accepted unionization at all kept to small, parochial organizations; second, big steel-making and engineering plants with large numbers of workers thrown together in collective activity, providing the basis for strong and militant trade union organization; and third, service trades whose expansion paralleled the growth of the public health, welfare, transport and educational facilities in the city.

Corresponding to the industrial schisms was the tendency for different groups of workers to divide from each other residentially, the skilled workers from the cutlery trades congregating in central areas of the city and in what at that time were the westerly suburbs of Heeley, Walkley and Hillsborough. Even today a high proportion of skilled workers reside in these areas, representing a continuity of tradition and residential status.(2.3) By contrast the newer proletariat working in the vast steel and engineering shops congregated around their places of employment, forming a quite separate residential

division of the city in the 'East End'. Politically, the changing pattern of party support and the division of power in Sheffield reflects the influence of the residential distribution of the different social classes. The current two-party split between Labour and Conservative is based on a residential segregation of the high socio-economic groups into the south-west suburbs and a massive band of Labour support in the north and east of the city. In the formative period of independent Labour politics Liberal and Lib-Lab support was concentrated on the western suburbs while the East End gradually swung to Labour.

The city Council was controlled in the 1890's until 1901 by the Conservative Party. From 1901 until the outbreak of the Great War control switched between the Conservatives and the Liberal Party and in the latter years of the period the Labour Representation Committee had a small group of councillors. But the crucial developments in the early decade of the century, so far as the long-term political allegiance of the city is concerned, were taking place within the Sheffield trades council. The trades council (Sheffield Federated Trades Council, hereafter S.F.T.C.) had nearly all the trade union branches in the city, from every industrial sector, affiliated to it and was the forum for the political debate between the Liberal Party, drawing its support from the old craft unions, and the gathering voice of independent Labour. The ebb and flow of the rivalry can clearly be seen in the documents and minutes of the council.(2.4) Dominated in the 1890's and the early years of the new century by a staunchly Liberal leadership, the S.F.T.C. was unable to contain the demands for an independent political voice for the new layers of trade unionists. The minutes of the council at

this time reveal bitter quarrels over the tactics of promoting working-class interests. The Taff Vale decision obliged trade union leaders in Sheffield, as elsewhere, to consider seriously proposals for independent representation. "For some years, the Liberal Labour leaders believed they could safely ignore the challenge of the Socialists, but when the influence of the latter grew in their East End strongholds and elsewhere, a struggle between them seemed inevitable...."(2.5) The S.F.T.C. although an early affiliate of the national Labour Representation Committee (L.R.C.) was not keen to establish a local L.R.C. However, a conference in 1903 addressed, among others by Ramsey MacDonald, agreed a formula for the local body but the S.F.T.C. refused to be represented on it and so control fell to a small group of Socialists (including the I.L.P.) and members of the militant heavy industrial unions. The danger of splitting the working-class vote temporarily reconciled the two political platforms and a new body was established in 1904 called the Sheffield Trades Council and Labour Representation Committee on which the S.F.T.C. had a fixed quota of delegates. The rift between the Liberals and the independent Labour supporters was finally opened, however, at the local elections in November 1907 when L.R.C. candidates fought a number of East End seats against the Lib-Labs. The results marginally favoured the latter but the uneasy alliance was broken. At the same time, on the industrial front, a number of trade unions decided to disaffiliate from the S.F.T.C. and a proposal was made to establish a new trades and labour council more closely identified with the Labour Party and Socialism. Delegate meetings of the unions in June 1908 approved a motion to that effect and for the period up to the outbreak of the Great War Sheffield had two trades

councils with the new organization going from strength to strength on the tide of industrial and social unrest which was a prelude to the War. By 1914 the Sheffield Trades and Labour Council (S.T. and L.C.) had by affiliation a membership of 20,000.(2.6) From its earliest days the S.T. and L.C. had strong syndicalist leanings and supported a whole range of radical proposals. For example, a motion calling for "ultimate emancipation from wage slavery" was passed overwhelmingly in 1912; a measure to reorganize the railways insisting that "the workers are responsible for the administration of the machinery" was also passed; there was militant protest against the introduction of special constables; against police violence in Dublin in 1913; against the imprisonment of Tom Mann in 1912 and George Lansbury in 1913; as well as campaigns on health and housing, labour legislation and so on.(2.7)

In his youthful days as a Marxist John Strachey in a perceptive essay examined how the working-class, especially the organized sections, switched from industrial to political action and back to industrial action in an attempt to solve the perennial problems of poverty and insecurity.(2.8) The blocking of the political channels during the 1914-18 War together with a series of momentous changes in the means of production threw the whole momentum of the Labour movement into the industrial sphere. Traditionally the centre of the armaments industry, Sheffield threw all its effort into the War machine. To begin with new work practices were accepted in order to boost production. These included the 'dilution' of skilled labour by semi- and unskilled workers, an influx of female labour, the suspension of trade union rules and the rapid deterioration of traditional industrial practices. Disillusionment with the 'War effort' and

the impact of appalling social and economic conditions led to the birth of the shop stewards movement to defend rank and file workers. Towards the end of the war the Sheffield Workshop Committee, representing nearly every section of the workforce, was working closely with the S.T. and L.C. not only on industrial and political matters but also in the establishment of educational projects, food distribution, housing problems and so on. Immediately the war ended a completely new organizational structure based on Divisional Labour Parties was set up. The new Party suffered an initial reverse at the General Election in December 1918 when the Coalition won a landslide victory, including a clean-sweep of the Sheffield constituencies; but an intensified period of campaigning during 1919 brought success at the municipal elections in November when Labour won eight out of sixteen seats, polling over 20,000 votes. In order to unite the anti-Labour vote the Conservatives and Liberals formed themselves into a temporary alliance called the 'Citizen's Association' to fight the elections. This became a permanent alliance in 1920. Later it was re-named the 'Progressive Party' and this remained the basis of the anti-Labour parties until the mid-1960's.

TABLE 2.1 Composition of Sheffield Council after 1919 Elections.

| | Con. | Lib. | Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attercliffe | 1 | - | 2 |
| Brightside | - | 1 | 2 |
| Broomhill | 2 | 1 | - |
| Crookesmoor | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Darnall | - | - | 3 |
| Ecclesall | 3 | - | - |
| Hallam | 2 | 1 | - |
| Heeley | 3 | - | - |
| Hillsborough | - | 2 | 1 |
| Neepsend | - | 2 | 1 |
| Park | 2 | 1 | - |
| St. Peters | 2 | - | 1 |
| St. Philips | 3 | - | - |
| Sharrow | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Walkley | - | 2 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 20 | 12 | 13 |

Opposition was comprised of Labour, Co-op and 3 Discharged Soldiers. Source: Sheffield Year Book 1920, p.69.

It was not long before Labour became the main party in the city, for in the wake of the General Strike and the appalling treatment of the miners, the elections in November 1926 gave Labour 13 out of the 17 wards and thus Sheffield became the first of the major provincial cities to be controlled by the Labour Party. Since then they have held power continuously except for two short periods - 1932-33 in the aftermath of the collapse of the Labour Government in 1931 and in 1967-68 due to an attempt to impose an unpopular rent rebate scheme occurring at a time of Labour's worst local election results nationally since the 1930s.

The gathering storms of unemployment weakened the Labour Movement in the later 1920s and 1930s when trade union membership fell by about half (2.9) although the organizational

structure went through the period unscathed. Sheffield City Council sustained a programme of improvement in all spheres of social life. Housing and slum clearance were approached with particular enthusiasm and by the late 1930s the city was building houses at a rate of 3,000 per annum. In the educational sphere they expanded the secondary school building programme opening intermediate schools and attempting to democratize the grammar schools. All building in these projects was undertaken by a considerably expanded Labour force under the control of the Direct Labour Department which was set up immediately Labour took power in the city.

The combination of unemployment and this consolidation of the life of the Labour Movement led paradoxically to a decline in the militant demands and rank and file activity of the pre-1918 era and the period of the General Strike, when the S.T. and L.C. virtually ran the city. The power base of the Labour Party in the north and east of the city was secure even though a redistribution of seats in 1930 - bringing the total number of wards up to 24 with 72 councillors and 24 aldermen - strained to the extreme the electoral machine of the S.T. and L.C. In this situation and with a huge administrative machine to run attention became focused on day-to-day organizational tasks. The real roots of the Movement and its tradition of opposition to wars bred in the 1914-18 period were, however, never far from the surface. Appeasement and rearmament were constantly discussed in the trades council.(2.10) The events of the Spanish Civil War left an indelible mark on the city's Labour Movement and scores of workers went to fight for the Republic.

The post-Second World War period has been one of reconstruction and continued expansion in all areas of social and

welfare provision. Politically Labour has strengthened its hold on the city council. The first post-war municipal elections saw Labour gain an extra five seats bringing the state of the parties, including aldermen, to Labour 59, Progressives 39, Independent 1, Communist 1. This balance was maintained through the 1950s and early 1960s . Chapter Four analyses in some detail the party political battle in the decade 1967-1977 and examines the slump in the fortunes of Labour in the 1967-68 period.

With the government's restrictions on materials gradually being lifted, the housing and slum clearance programmes made remarkable progress. In Chapter Three this sphere of policy is discussed in depth because it was in opposition to aspects of the policy that the tenants' associations and many of the action groups were initially formed.

The Sheffield People.

W.A. Hampton summarizes the growth of Sheffield in the following way,

> "Sheffield is situated among the foothills of the Pennines, slightly away from the main communications network, so that the city grew by absorbing people from the surrounding countryside. There has been no great movement of population into Sheffield, either from overseas or from the more distant parts of the British Isles; nor has there been a high rate of emigration from the city. The general impression remains therefore, of a city which is homogeneous in its population, relatively static in its composition, and comparatively unaffected by the outside influences that affect a major centre of commerce or communications." (2.11)

During the few years since Dr. Hampton made this observation little has happened to alter the validity of his generalization. The name Sheffield is, of course, synonymous with the production of steel and the industrial structure of the city is to a very high degree concentrated on the manufacture and working of metal. Compared to other cities there is a relatively low level of industrial diversification. Hampton shows that 44% of the workforce in Sheffield are employed in the five industrial classifications connected with engineering and metals and that this proportion is considerably higher than many of the important regional centres.(2.12) Some significant changes have, however, occurred in the decade between the 1961 Census (the source of Dr. Hampton's statistics) and the 1971 Census so far as the employment pattern is concerned. The table below indicates that there was a fall of nearly 8 percentile points of people employed in the manufacturing industries together with a rise of just over 6.5% in the distribution and service sector and a rise of nearly 3.0% in government posts.

TABLE 2.2 Number of People in Employment by Industry in Sheffield.

| | 1961 | | 1971 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Agriculture | 420 | 0.2 | 310 | 0.1 |
| Mining | 1,533 | 0.6 | 2,620 | 1.1 |
| Manufacturing | 128,548 | 53.2 | 105,430 | 45.5 |
| Construction | 15,855 | 6.6 | 16,300 | 7.0 |
| Utilities and Transport | 18,641 | 7.7 | 15,660 | 6.6 |
| Distribution and Services | 75,145 | 31.1 | 83,570 | 36.2 |
| Government | 1,526 | 0.6 | 7,810 | 3.5 |
| TOTAL | 241,668 | 100.0 | 231,700 | 100.0 |

Source: Census 1961 and 1971 Industry tables, Table A and Occupation, Industry and Socio-Economic Groups, County report.

This is a continuation of the tendency noted by Hampton, who quotes the figure of a 17% decline in tool manufacture occurring between 1952 and 1965.(2.13) Nevertheless Sheffield still retains a hardcore of workers employed in the massive steel-making complexes of the Don Valley (2.14) or engaged in engineering, tool and cutlery workshops - usually small scale plant; three-quarters of the manufacturing shops in Sheffield employ less than 100 people. The nature of these industries also accounts for the high proportion of skilled manual workers in the city - 44% of the male workforce are in skilled occupations compared to the national average of 35%. The proletarian character of the city is enhanced by the extreme residential polarization of the manual and non-manual sections of the population. The distribution of Socio-economic groups 1-4 and 13 from the 1971 Census clearly shows the high concentration of those social groups in the south-west, while the north and east of the city register very low values.(2.15) This tendency has been a feature of the twentieth-century history of Sheffield. The early introduction of the electric tram enabled workers to move away from the city centre, while the construction of 'council estates' from 1925 onwards produced great enclaves of working-class residents. The middle-classes retreated into the south-western suburbs nestling against the moors of the Derbyshire Peak. The political repercussions of this severely polarized residential pattern are reviewed in a later chapter.

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CHAPTER TWO References and Footnotes.

2.1 See for example:

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Hawson, H.K., Sheffield : Growth of a City, 1893-1916 (Northend, 1968).
Pollard, S., A History of Labour in Sheffield (University of Liverpool Press, 1959).
Walton, M., 'Sheffield : Its Story and Its Achievements', Sheffield Telegraph and Star, 1948.
Population in Sheffield, 1886-1951, Sheffield City Library : Local History Pamphlet, no.2

2.2 One measure of the growth of trade union membership is found in the number of unions affiliated to the Sheffield trades council. In 1885 the council represented 6,000 members; in 1891 - 13,500; and in 1892 - 16,000. Figures from: Mendelson, J., Owen, W., Pollard, S., Thornes, V., 'The Sheffield Trades and Labour Council, 1858-1958', S.T. and L.C. 1958, pp.43-4.

2.3 See 'Census Atlas of South Yorkshire 1971', Map 14, Dept. of Geography, University of Sheffield (1974).

2.4 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit. 1958, ch.5.

2.5 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit. 1958, p.46.

2.6 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit. 1958, p.64.

2.7 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit. 1958, pp.62-4.

2.8 Strachey, E.J., The Nature of Capitalist Crisis (Gollancz, 1935).

2.9 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit. 1958, pp.83-5.

2.10 Mendelson, J. et al., op.cit., 1958, p.95.

2.11 Hampton, W.A., op.cit. 1970, p.38.

2.12 Hampton, W.A., op.cit. 1970, pp.38-40.

2.13 Hampton, W.A., op.cit. 1970, p.47.

2.14 Approximately one-third of the Sheffield workforce are employed in firms with over 500 employees.

2.15 University of Sheffield, op.cit. 1974.

## CHAPTER THREE. HOUSING POLICY IN SHEFFIELD 1900-1975.

In this chapter it is proposed to describe first the development of housing policy in the city, both as necessary background to the recent development of grassroots politics - all the tenants' associations and many of the action groups were formed to oppose or to negotiate on some aspect of policy or administration in housing; and second the development and redevelopment of the 'built environment' which has had significant repercussions on the shaping of party politics in the city.

The most detailed descriptions concern the post-1945 period, especially the massive expansion of the building programme - with a separate section devoted to the slum clearance, redevelopment and improvement strategy dating from 1955. To provide a general context for these programmes and policies a commentary relating the events in Sheffield to the national housing strategy has necessarily been included.

### House Building and Slum Clearance 1900-1939.

Before the First World War the vast majority of housing was provided on a private rental basis. For the few wealthy financiers investment in this sector was literally 'as safe as houses'. They regarded with scepticism and suspicion the growing involvement of the state in private property rights which was an inevitable result of the public health legislation of the late nineteenth century.(3.1) The experiences of the 1914-18 War and its aftermath confirmed the relationship. The notorious slogan of the Coalition to provide 'Homes fit for Heroes' incorporated the idea of developing a co-ordinated national social policy. In Sheffield, however, the programmes

of slum clearance and house building date back into the late part of the nineteenth century.

The period from the mid-1890's until 1914 was marked in the city by extensive population movements. In particular there was an exodus from what were then the central residential areas of Broomhall and Sharrow with massive increases by contrast in the East End and in the suburbs to the south and west of the city. Pollard suggests that, "The movement of population including some working class families to the suburbs was perhaps the most striking phenomenon of the age."(3.2) It should be added that the East End villages of Attercliffe and Brightside grew by over 40,000 in the twenty years up to 1914. The reasons for the changes are due to the overcrowding which was, and continued to be, a problem in the central areas, the expansion of industrial development in the Don Valley and the extension of the electric tram system which was taken over by the Corporation in 1896 and facilitated travel to the outlying suburbs. But the slum problem was by no means ameliorated by these movements and the Corporation found it necessary to undertake a number of schemes of slum clearance. The first in 1894 cleared several hundred houses from the Crofts area.(3.3) The costs, however, of rehousing was considerable, and so the Corporation decided in future to build their own housing on their own land. The first extensive scheme attempted on this basis was the construction of a working-class suburb in the High Wincobank area which by 1919 had provided over 600 new houses. These early projects were championed both by the emerging Labour Movement and by philanthropic organizations and reformers. The 'Sheffield Association for Better Housing of the Poor' was a leading pressure group with men such as

Charles Hobson and Tom Shaw associated with these developments. The trades council (S.F.T.C.) passed a number of motions pressing, among other things, for subsidised rents in municipal housing, rent control, Corporation land control and purchase, and the enforcement of minimum standards. Sheffield in fact became in the pre-1914 period something of a national standard bearer in its approach to housing. Encouraged by the 1909 Act (Housing and Town Planning) a number of comprehensive redevelopment schemes were published - only one, though, was a working-class area (Wadsley-Hillsborough).

The 1911 election was largely fought on the housing issue but despite this support for housing reform the real case of slum dwellers was hardly touched before 1914. A boom in house building from 1898-1911 certainly provided a big increase in total number of dwellings in the city, adding some 30,500 houses to an existing stock of 66,000. Overcrowding in the better-off sections of the manual working-class was eased but low income families simply could not pay the rents which were demanded to provide an 'economic' return on building costs and maintenance. Thus despite overcrowding in some areas there was estimated to be a surplus of over 5,000 houses in the city by 1914.(3.4)

In order to overcome these market problems it was decided at a national level in 1918 to provide subsidies to the local authorities - purely as a temporary measure. Under the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 (The Addison Act) the construction of houses was entrusted to local authorities; they also were given power to acquire land and pay compensation based on market values - in addition to the Exchequer subsidy. All losses on house building in excess of 1d.rate were to be met by the central government; the crucial partnership between central and local

government was thus established. The intention, however, to provide working-class housing at low rents proved to be more difficult than expected. These simple arrangements failed to produce the necessary number of houses of the type required. In 1920 the subsidies were extended to private builders who were given a lump-sum payment of £130-£160 per house or a maximum floor space of 1,250 square feet. The failure was almost certainly due to inflation which caused the local rate subsidy to become a much bigger burden than was at first imagined, rising to nearly £1$^{1}/4$ millions within two years.(3.5) The Government, however, attributed the collapse to the interference of subsidies in the private enterprise system. By the end of 1923 the entire national housing programme had petered out with only 250,000 completions - half the expected number. The estimated expenditure of £400 million was not reached until 1933, a decade later. In addition only a third of the houses could be considered as working-class accommodation. Recurring themes after 1919 are (a) that legislators failed to understand the repercussions of introducing housing subsidies, (b) they failed to see house building as a long-term project, and (c) that this policy had almost without exception benefited the middle-classes. In the decade 1920-30 over 1$^{1}/4$ million houses were built - 37% to let and 63% sold to owner occupiers. 'Council housing' had, however, come to stay now that the local authorities became obliged to provide cheap working-class housing.

'Owner' occupation was facilitated by a massive expansion in the activities of the Building Societies in the 1920s. Under the Chamberlain Act (1923) the Societies were given guarantees against any loss incurred in making advances to house purchasers. Investors were thus offered a safe yield

which was taxed very leniently. Throughout the years of economic slump there was a steady inflow of returning capital. From a figure of about £32 millions in 1923 the amount advanced by the Societies for mortgages had risen by 1929 to a staggering £268 millions. As a result of this consolidation of the Building Societies most of the new housing was deflected from the rental sector to more profitable owner-occupation. The landlords were quite simply undercut by the Building Societies.

As an interim measure, until the return of 'normal' conditions, the Chamberlain Housing Act also provided a subsidy of £6 per house over 20 years for both local authorities and private builders. In fact the Chamberlain subsidies remained in effect until 1930 and assisted the construction of 435,000 houses - 75,000 council houses and 360,000 for the private market. With the return of the minority Labour Government in 1924 the emphasis in public policy was altered to favour the local authorities. The Chamberlain Act continued but through the Wheatley Act of 1924 the local authority subsidy was raised to £9 per house over 40 years. Steps were also taken to improve the capacity of the building industry while rents in the private sector were frozen at their pre-war level. Under the Wheatley Act over 500,000 houses were built before it was abolished in 1933. The Labour Administration was, of course, short-lived and the Conservatives quickly reduced the subsidies claiming that building costs were falling.

Sheffield's share in these schemes was well above the national average with an overall balance in favour of the local authority sector. Under the Addison Act (1919) the Corporation built 2,430 dwellings to rent; under the Chamberlain Act (1923) they built 843 houses to rent with an additional 168 for sale:

but after their election victory in 1926 the Labour Group took advantage of Wheatley's subsidies (1924), building a total in the period up to the mid-1930s of 10,674 houses to rent with a small number for sale.(3.6)

By the end of the 1920s the housing situation in terms of absolute numbers had improved considerably. Nationally over 1½ million houses had been built since the Armistice, at a total cost approaching £1,000 millions. Nevertheless the situation in real terms was by no means as favourable as it sounds. First, the population had increased by over 2 millions with a consequent expansion in household formation. Second, nearly all private construction had been for sale and much of the municipal housing had been provided at rents beyond the capacity of the poorer working-class families. The process of 'filtering down' occurred very slowly and still left the bottom 20 - 30% in grossly overcrowded conditions.

Pollard shows that in Sheffield, "...according to the Census, the population of the city increased by only 9,544, between 1921 and 1931; but the number of families rose by 18,676, and since the number of 'structurally separate dwellings' increased by only 18,350, 'overcrowding' as measured by the excess of the former over the latter, increased by 326 families without separate dwellings."(3.7) He estimates that, by a very lenient official standard, 16.8% of the city houses in 1930 were classified as overcrowded, the worst zones being in the old inner-city areas where it was clear that the only solution to the problem was for wholesale slum clearance and a rebuilding and resettlement programme. This idea was in line with national policy in the 1930s and was encouraged by the initiative taken by Labour's Minister of Housing. Under the Greenwood Act of

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1930, specific subsidies for rehousing families displaced by slum clearance were to be given to the local authorities; instead of a fixed subsidy per house these new subsidies varied with the number of people rehoused. Higher subsidies went to urban areas with additional payments for expensive sites where accommodation was in flats. The Act also empowered local authorities for the first time to give rent rebates to poorer families and in addition required each authority to submit five-year programmes of house building and demolition to the Minister.

In most cities the problems were compounded by the back-log of housing needs dating from the 1914-18 period, and with slum clearance beginning to remove an increasing quantity of the housing stock, more building was urgently required. Despite Sheffield's good record, by comparison with almost every other local authority in the country, the waiting-list for council accommodation continued to grow throughout the period. There were 4,000 on the list in 1922; 7,000 in 1928 and in 1930, when the list had been closed for eighteen months, it still had over 6,000 people requesting a house.

The National Government in acute economic crisis abolished the Wheatley subsidy and cut all other subsidies except for those under the Greenwood legislation. In effect slum clearance was the only policy supported financially by the Exchequer. In the 1930s Sheffield achieved a real break-through in clearance of primary slum areas. By 1938, 9,587 out of some 13,000 - 14,000 houses in the central area had been condemned. From 1933 the rate of clearance was running at 3,000 houses per annum; at the end of a five-year period up to 1939 a total of 24,374 had been eradicated under various Orders. The building programme

to replace these houses and to expand on the general housing stock in the city progressed for a number of years at a higher rate than any other major population centre in the country. By 1939 Sheffield had a total of 27,000 municipal dwellings; the Wybourn, Woodthorpe and Arbourthorne estates were the first to be completed and the Parsons Cross and Shiregreen estates provided a further 4,294 houses by the outbreak of the war. These massive schemes involved a substantial movement of population within the city; it is estimated that between 1921 and 1951 a quarter of the city's inhabitants had moved from the older densely populated zones to the new, municipal suburbs or owner-occupied residential areas. A further 13,000 houses had been designated for clearance when the war intervened - causing destruction and damage to the housing stock as well as delaying the progress of the clearance programme.

An additional feature of the period up to 1939 was the genesis of town planning. As early as 1916 the Authority had a 'Development Committee', and in 1924 Abercrombie was invited to construct a plan for the city, based on the Town Planning Act of 1919. In 1932 a plan was also drawn up for a 'green belt' using the Town and Country Planning Act of that year to enforce the policy. The heritage of parks and open spaces which the city enjoys today date from this period. The conception of planning and integrating house building with the whole environment was well established, in fact as well as in principle, at the point when hostilities intervened.

The Housing Revenue Account.

By the mid-1930s the subsidy system was creating considerable confusion and inflexibility. Separate accounts had

to be kept for houses built under different Acts. The period of subsidy also varied; under the Acts between 1923 and 1933 the period was less than 60 years - any surplus made on the accounts had to be transferred to the Ministry or rents had to be suitably reduced. In order to avoid losses of revenue from its accounts, local authorities often selected tenants for different estates according to their rent-paying ability. The legacy of this system, that local authorities 'dumped' low-paid or problem families, is still an accusation made against Sheffield Corporation housing policy. To cope with these problems the Housing Act of 1935 consolidated all the accounts into one Housing Revenue Account - a common pool of rents and subsidies - theoretically enabling aid to be channelled to the needier tenants. This remained the basis of housing finance in the local authority sector until the Housing Finance Act of 1972 which established a completely new system of calculating housing subsidies.

The problem with the Housing Revenue Account was that as time went on the Corporation gradually learned to switch subsidy income for houses built in, say 1934, leaving a subsidy of £12 for 60 years, to more expensive houses built in 1964 having a £24 subsidy. Thus, if the 1934 house is let in 1964 at its full-cost rent, then the 1964 house can be let at a rent which is £36 below its full-cost rent. In practice this led to some major discrepancies in the overall pattern of provision because local authorities who did not erect houses when building was cheap, obtained an Exchequer subsidy which was too low to cover the gap between the amount the tenants can afford, or are willing to pay, and the current economic rent for new houses. Or, if an Authority decides to stop building it continues to

receive subsidies for houses built at half the present cost, although the tenants could afford to pay an unsubsidised rent. In short, some local authorities had more subsidy than they required and some less. The same situation applied in relation to capital debts - with some authorities borrowing when interest rates were low and others borrowing during periods of higher rates.

The results of 50 years of unco-ordinated housing policy in various authorities from 1962-63 is well illustrated by Nevitt's calculations of Exchequer subsidies per £1 of the housing debt.(3.8)

| Authority. | Exchequer Subsidy per £1 of debt. |
|---|---|
| Chelsea | 12s. 1d. |
| Salford | 7s. 3d. |
| Stockport | 5s. 6d. |
| Cardiff | 4s. 9d. |
| Oxford | 3s. 2d. |

The Post-War Period (1945-75).

National housing policy since 1945 has been very similar to that pursued during the inter-war period. The actual rates of subsidy have changed, but until the 1972 Act the principles on which they were awarded remained the same. Each subsidy was given for some specific purpose and was in no way related to the rent-paying capacity of the tenant. Payments were made for items such as the age of the subsidised house, the cost of land, high or low rise blocks of flats, for slum clearance, New Towns, etc. Subsidy was superimposed on subsidy under at least a dozen Housing Acts dating back to 1919.

During the Second World War the air raid damage suffered by the housing stock was severe - 200,000 were destroyed and

500,000 severely damaged. In addition, the building programme had ceased for the duration and was badly disrupted in the immediate post-war period. The (building industry) labour force was scattered and ancillary and supply industries were completely run down. Shortages of materials were exacerbated by the dislocation of international trade.

A vast number of men and women were returning home. Donnison suggests that there were 33% more births and 11% more marriages in the three post-war years than in the corresponding period before the war.(3.9)

Central Government controls on the rate of reconstruction were strict. Certainly at this stage there was no possibility of slum clearance; it was simply necessary for each local authority to build as many houses as possible within the Government allocations. Under the emergency Temporary Accommodation Act (1944) Sheffield was allocated 2,066 'prefabs' (3.10) but the Labour Administration, with Aneurin Bevan at the Ministry of Housing, moved quickly to initiate a building programme of permanent accommodation. The 'prefabs', originally costing £600 were by 1945 well over £1,000. Bevan introduced in the Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous) Act of 1946 new subsidies to encourage construction.(3.11) To ensure that houses were built to more generous specifications than ever before, 950 square feet of floor space was to be allowed instead of the pre-war 750 square feet. A general standard grant of £16.10s. per dwelling for 60 years was made with additional subsidies for building on high cost land - and for flats of four or more storeys with lifts. Interestingly, Nevitt estimates that these subsidies only brought council tenants' grants up to the level of subsidies through tax relief for owner occupiers in houses

costing £2,000 built on one-twelfth of an acre.(3.12)

By the end of 1946 half a million units had been made available over the country as a whole, 80,000 'prefabs', 45,000 conversions, 107,000 repaired, 25,000 in requisitioned houses and 52,000 new, permanent houses. The rush to build overloaded the industry and the target of 240,000 was reduced to 200,000. In fact the rate was held at 175,000 into the early 1950s. Under Labour, private enterprise was strictly controlled. Of the 900,000 permanent houses built by 1951 only 174,000 were privately built. In the early 1950s private building was gradually allowed to grow on the fringes of the local authority programmes, the rate determined by the prevailing economic climate. "By reducing the number of licences issued for the erection of houses by private persons, we shall secure that the local authority programme can proceed without any marked reduction."(3.13)

Serious shortages continued into the 1950s and the last months of the Labour Government saw a compromise over the question of standards with the 950 square feet regulation dropped in April 1951 to 750 square feet. The incoming Conservative Government followed this trend of declining standards (euphemistically called 'compact design') and it was not until the Parker Morris Report a decade later that this decline was reversed. The spade-work of the Labour Government, however, provided a spring-board from which the Conservatives cautiously reinstated the role of private enterprise in housing provision. In November 1954 the licensing of house building came to an end. The choice in the 1950s was, more than is usual, a question of quality versus quantity. Cullingworth estimates that if building had proceeded at the 1951 level there would have been 1,100,000 fewer

houses than were actually built by 1967.(3.14) By 1952 the brakes were completely released. The problem of building workers and materials was still present but with the run down of repair services and the decline of standards, the Conservatives' target of 300,000 was met in 1952. With their confidence in free enterprise gradually being restored it was the local authorities who now had to act as the flexible element in the housing programme. Private construction took up an increasing percentage of the total production of houses, rising from 15% in 1952 to 28% in 1954 and 45% in 1956.

In Sheffield a rapid start was made to the task of reconstruction. Initially an extension was made to the Parsons Cross estate adding 3,500 dwellings to the original pre-war scheme. The Foxwood, Richmond, Littledale and Woodthorpe estates were started. By the mid-1950s with building materials becoming more freely available new projects were started at Clifton Housteads, Basegreen and Bourden. The Stradbroke project produced 1,000 units and with the Hackenthorpe estate gave a considerable boost to the total in the city. Greenhill/Bradway was started in 1953 and was the first British example of the 'Radburn' type of layout - groupings of houses around a pedestrian park system - providing, on completion, over 10,000 dwellings. The housing strategy was basically one of building estates on virgin land away from the city centre - mainly to the south and south-east. From 1955 the redevelopment of slum clearance areas near the city centre was added as the second major aspect of the post-war pattern of development. (Slum clearance is dealt with in a separate section). The majority of the inner city redevelopments have taken the form of high-rise or megablock construction. It was thought at the time that these types of

structure would save land by increasing densities. In fact this has subsequently proved not to be the case largely because car-parking was not considered in relation to the overall schemes. The decision to build high-rise was taken in 1955 after a study tour in Europe. In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was considerable prestige attached to the use of block construction. A number of the megablock schemes attracted particular attention for their so-called imaginative use of Sheffield's hilly topography.(3.15) Government subsidies had in addition favoured the construction of flats in storeys since the Housing Act of 1946. The 'expensive site' subsidy under the Housing Subsidies Act 1956 encouraged the development of inner city clearance zones and the Act provided also increased subsidies for high-rise building. The 1961 Act gave additional stimulus with higher subsidies the higher the building went - £8 for 4 storeys, £14 for 5, £26 for 6, and £26 plus £1.15s. for each additional storey.(3.16) Subsidies, then, confirmed the trend towards high-rise development by providing financial incentives.

The shortage of building land within the city boundary meant that priority in the clearance of unfit houses was given to residential areas which would provide sites for redevelopment - Park Hill, Netherthorpe, Woodside, Burngreave, etc. Park Hill was, in fact, selected for the first post-war redevelopment scheme because much of the worst housing had been cleared before the war and those remaining were among the oldest houses contained already under a slum clearance order. The idea was to build a high density redevelopment on a site adjacent to the city centre and close to, but to windward of, a heavily industrialized area. The scheme had the additional virtue of

simplifying the future programme by constructing over 2,300 units on an area formerly occupied by only 800 terraced houses; thus creating a surplus of 1,500 dwellings for use in the clearance programme. The architects used the gradient of the site to build lateral decks running the entire length of the block ('streets in the air') and allowing direct access at ground level for all but the top tier. It was supposed thus to create a sense of street life and simultaneously dispense with the impersonal lift shaft.(3.17)

Construction on the Hyde Park flats was started in 1962. The project was meant to be complementary to the Park Hill scheme. It provides a massive 1,169 flats in a vertical and radially spread system. In design it is, therefore, radically different from the more lineal Park Hill flats. The blocks rise to as many as 17 storeys and the claustrophobic, slow, vertical travel of the liftshaft reasserts itself. The project has been significantly less successful than Park Hill. The capital at stake on these two contracts was in excess of £5 millions and there was some danger that any unexpected delays could disrupt the whole housing programme. The Gleadless Valley project (from 1956) counterbalanced this possibility by a flexible system of development in small batches which could be advanced or put back according to progress on the flats. The work on Gleadless in fact covered nearly 10 years during which time 4,500 flats, houses and maisonettes were built providing accommodation for some 17,000 people.

In the early 1960s the shortage of building labour increased interest in the use of industrialized techniques of construction, especially for low-rise housing. The idea of prefabrication had been out of vogue since the war because

traditional building materials were again available and were cheaper. It was in order to increase output without increasing the labour force that the so-called '5M' system of low-rise building was first projected in 1961.(3.18) As a member of the Yorkshire Development Group - a consortium of local authorities - it was possible to make the bulk orders necessary for the new period of prefabrication. Sheffield installed its first 'Hallam' house (built to 5M design) in 1963 and by 1965 the system had produced 3,433 completions. The overall target was raised to 2,400 a year in 1965 when it became apparent that more building land would become available. In order to reach the target 'non-traditional' methods of industrialized building were increasingly used and provided in the period 1964-69 between 20% and 45% of the completed dwellings. Since then the proportion has rapidly decreased until in 1971 and 1972 no dwellings were built by these methods.(3.19) During this time of prefabricated building the rate at which tenancies were becoming available reached the record pre-war level of 3,000 a year in 1964/65. By 1966 there were over 63,000 council dwellings in the city compared with 47,000 in 1961, an increase of over a third in 5 years.(3.20)

Statutory requirements make it obligatory for the Corporation to provide accommodation for people displaced from clearance areas, and the Land Compensation Act (1973) extends this obligation to all people displaced by compulsory purchase, clearance, demolition or closing orders. In fact, Sheffield has always offered alternative accommodation to the occupiers of houses, fit or unfit within these categories.

The speed of the slum clearance programme is largely determined by the rate of reconstruction, but in the mid-1960s

it was apparent that an additional factor had entered the equation. A number of management problems were arising because the housing mix was not catering for the requirements of some sections of the population in clearance areas; in particular old people, single people and childless couples. Old people often want to stay in, or as near as possible to, the area they came from, or at least to find alternative accommodation at ground-floor level. In January 1965 the Housing Committee accepted the recommendations of a study group to build the following mix:(3.21)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One Bedroom | - | 45% |
| Two " | - | 34% |
| Three " | - | 20% |
| Four " | - | 1% |

In short, the need for more small dwellings was recognized. In addition it was agreed to build up to 60% of one-bedroomed dwellings on city centre sites among existing private houses and 100% on infilling sites on old estates where site levels permitted. This programme has been generally adhered to up to the present time. In 1971 60% of the new accommodation was one-bedroomed flats - 45% for old people and 18% for single people or childless couples. The table below shows the reorientation over a larger period.

Dwelling Size.

| | Bed-sits. | 1B. | 2B. | 3B. | 4B. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1963-67 | 1% | 24% | 39% | 36% | - |
| 1968-73 | 4% | 46% | 35% | 14% | 1% |

On March 31st 1973 the Housing Department had under its management 75,872 dwellings. Over a third of these are flats (95% of which are post-war), 63% are houses and 1% bungalows. 62% of the total have been built since 1945.

In line with current housing policy the Housing Committee approved (in May 1973) in principle a four-year development programme, 1974-77, of about 2,000 houses per year. This means a reduction on the average number constructed over the previous ten years - although the annual totals have fluctuated between 1,795 and 3,651. In theory this reduction is to take place in order to divert more resources to the Rolling Programme for improving council dwellings (see 'Slum Clearance' section) - a programme that was parallel with the Housing Departments own maintenance duties. Where possible houses are dealt with for both purposes at the same time. In August 1972 the grants for the improvement of council dwellings totalled nearly 20,000 dwellings.(3.22)

In fact even this reduced building programme is unlikely to be met, certainly in the short-term, because of the financial crisis in the building industry, spiralling interest rates and the problem of retaining building labour. Since the Housing Subsidies Act of 1967 the Corporation has been obliged to accept tenders from construction companies that are within the Housing Cost Yardstick laid down by the Department of the Environment. The Yardstick represents the upper limits of expenditure which the local authority must not exceed having regard to site, standard of housing, densities and the average size of the families to be accommodated. Regional variations in building costs are also allowed for. In effect it is an attempt by the Central Government to control at the planning stage the total cost of building schemes but thereafter to let the local authorities develop the programme without further reference to them. This has produced a situation in which, since October 1972, Sheffield Corporation has not been able to accept any tenders because all the offers have been at least 30% above the

Yardstick (the level of which was fixed in May 1972). The Corporation has, therefore, to apply for special 'Market Condition' allowances, which defeats the whole aim of the yardstick as they cannot accept tenders until the allowance is agreed. The City Architect and Planning Officer reported to the Council that tenders in August 1973 were 70% higher than those received in the last quarter of 1972 and showed a 30% increase over the three previous months. For the first time since the war no new building was begun for a three month period up to the beginning of 1974.

At national level in 1972 the major change in the subsidy system has theoretically improved the financial position of the local authorities so far as house building is concerned. Basically the subsidy structure in the 1972 Act was a system of making up the deficit in the Housing Revenue Account of a local authority, after rents and certain compulsory rate fund contributions had been added into the H.R.A. But these rates of subsidy have been pegged while a complete revue of housing finance is undertaken. The rent allowance and slum clearance subsidies allowable under the 1972 Act remain unchanged.(3.23)

TABLE 3.1 Local Authority Housebuilding and Slum Clearance in Sheffield 1965-75.

| Year. | Dwellings in tenders approved but not started at year end. | Started. | Completed. | Houses cleared. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1966 | 1,553 | 1,863 | 2,522 | 697 |
| 1967 | 1,099 | 3,869 | 2,158 | 1,472 |
| 1968 | 1,684 | 1,592 | 1,939 | 1,623 |
| 1969 | 877 | 1,996 | 2,237 | 1,114 |
| 1970 | 1,067 | 2,141 | 2,281 | 2,235 |
| 1971 | 1,556 | 1,779 | 1,628 | 2,560 |
| 1972 | 685 | 1,856 | 2,107 | 2,610 |
| 1973 | 124 | 1,878 | 1,051 | 2,347 |
| 1974 | 370 | 1,120 | 1,849 | 1,751 |
| 1975 | 246 | 1,810 | 2,078 | 2,111 |

Source: DOE Local Housing Statistics England and Wales H.M.S.O.

As can be seen from the Table, 'Local Authority House Building and Slum Clearance in Sheffield', the building programme had recovered in 1975 from the slump in 1973 and 1974. Nevertheless the number of applicants on the council house waiting list, with the exception only of old people (due to the emphasis of single dwelling units in the building programme in the early 1970s ), is still as high as it was in total a decade ago and in the 'ordinary' category is significantly higher.

TABLE 3.2 Waiting List Registrations in Sheffield 1967-74.

| | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ordinary. | 10,845 | 10,304 | 11,469 | 11,196 | 10,086 | 8,566 | 9,293 | 12,088 |
| Single. | 1,287 | 1,141 | 1,202 | 1,148 | 1,114 | 1,018 | 1,128 | 1,288 |
| Aged. | 8,480 | 8,366 | 8,228 | 7,714 | 6,929 | 6,149 | 6,341 | 6,595 |
| TOTAL | 20,612 | 19,811 | 20,899 | 20,058 | 18,129 | 15,773 | 16,762 | 19,971 |

Source: Annual Reports of Housing Department.

This situation has arisen not only from the retardation in house building from the peak in the middle 1960s , but also from the excess of clearance over building. In the period 1970-75 exactly 49% of dwellings available for letting were allocated to families from clearance and redevelopment areas. This has reduced the opportunities for 'ordinary' council house applicants and has put pressure on the private rental sector through increased competition and a diminishing supply of privately rented accommodation - a result of the clearance programme itself. Recent tax changes and the state of the housing market have in addition encouraged landlords to sell their property into the owner-occupier sector when possible. The implications of these changes lie outside the scope of this discourse except to say that a 'Shelter' report on the plight of homeless families in Sheffield has noted a significant increase in the problem since 1973, with the tendency for the position to deteriorate.(3.24)

The Slum Clearance Programme (1955-1975).

Background Note.

In 1952, the year in which the Conservatives achieved a target of 300,000 houses built, there were in Great Britain a total of 13½ million dwellings; $6^{1}/4$ million were owner-occupied or municipally-owned while there were still $7^{1}/4$ million under private rental tenures.(3.25) Most of the latter were very old, with approximately 30% more than a hundred years old, and a further 30% over sixty-five years old. With the building programme running at such a high level, the Government became increasingly confident that private enterprise would solve the problems of general need in the housing market, and that local

authorities should, therefore, turn to renew their slum clearance programmes, largely abandoned since 1939.

This new orientation was implemented in the Housing Repairs and Rent Act (1954), the Housing Subsidies Act (1956), and the Rent Act (1957). According to their theory the bulk of the six million rent-controlled houses were thought to be 'essentially sound'. The problem was how to get landlords to do repairs without decontrolling rent (as shortages were still considerable). In the Housing Repairs and Rent Act generous improvement grants were provided and landlords could increase their rents if they improved property. The slum areas could obviously not be cleared simultaneously and so schemes of 'deferred demolition' were introduced under which houses could be acquired (at site value) by local authorities and patched up for the time being; Exchequer grants were provided for such schemes. For other houses requiring improvement, Mr. Macmillan stated that under the Housing Act of 1949, "Local authorities have powers, and in my view they have the duty, to advance money to individual landlords for the purpose of paying for repairs."(3.26) These little used provisions were extended and in the easier conditions of the mid-1950s it was hoped that they would be more frequently taken up.

The Government accompanied these measures with an attack on the level of council house building. The Housing (Review of Contributions) Order, 1954 reduced subsidies for urban and agricultural areas - bringing subsidies back into line with the tax relief of owner occupiers. Following this the Housing Subsidies Act of 1956 reduced all general needs subsidies to £10 per dwelling and departed from tradition by relieving local authorities from the obligation to make a contribution to Housing

Revenue Account out of the Rate Fund. Local authority housing programmes were to be cut by half and to be concentrated on the output of some 60,000 houses per year for slum clearance, with only 20,000 for new and expanding town development. New towns kept slightly higher subsidies under the Act. Flats received favourable treatment, £20 for 4 storeys, £26 for 5, £38 for 6 and £1.15s. for each additional floor. Flats for slum clearance purposes were given an additional £12, and a new 'extensive site' subsidy was also introduced. The system of housing allocations was abolished, leaving councils a free hand to decide on the extent of their building programme.

In preparing its housing policy during this period the Government asked the local authorities to provide estimates of the number of slum houses in their areas. Unfortunately the criteria for defining slums was not given, because the Government sent out no instructions, nor did they conduct independent checks. Large discrepancies are found in the material of the published summary called 'Slum Clearance' (England and Wales). (3.27) Some authorities, for example, returned no figures, while others returned all the houses they considered slums, even though there was no hope of clearing them within the five-year period under review; others (over half) returned the same figure for estimated unfit houses as for the clearance programme, while others returned only the number they hoped to clear in that period. In all 847,112 houses in England and Wales were thought unfit for human habitation, of which 375,484 were to be demolished in the five years. In the London area, for example, places such as Sunbury-on-Thames, East Barnet, Brentford and Chiswick appeared on a percentage basis to have two or three times more slums than St. Pancras, Islington, Paddington or Hackney. In short, even

as a moderately scientific attempt to assess the slum problem in England and Wales the report was derisory. It was important on two accounts: first, because it was used as the basis for the slum clearance programme and second, because it was used in later years as a yardstick of progress.

During the period of expansion of municipal housing in the early 1950s increasing costs and interest rates had largely been offset by increasing the subsidies. Under the new policy 'general housing need' was assigned to private enterprise and with subsidies directed towards one purpose (slum clearance) increasing costs could only be met out of higher rates and rents. By pooling subsidies the Government thought house building would be able to continue with only small increases. With financial onus on the municipal tenants, house building rapidly dwindled.

TABLE 3.3 The Decline of Council House Building 1955-61.

| Year | Local authority | Private |
|---|---|---|
| 1955 | 162,520 | 109,934 |
| 1956 | 139,977 | 119,585 |
| 1957 | 137,977 | 122,942 |
| 1958 | 113,146 | 124,087 |
| 1959 | 99,456 | 146,476 |
| 1960 | 103,235 | 162,108 |
| 1961 | 92,880 | 170,366 |

Source: Social Trends 1961.

Government confidence in the open market's ability to cope with the housing crisis was also held in relation to the question of the private rental sector. "Rent restriction is itself responsible for creating an artificial shortage by encouraging under-occupation and discouraging letting" ('Financial Times', 10th Oct. 1956). If a landlord did not do repairs it was because with fixed rents he had no incentive to maintain his property.

Rent increases it was thought would increase the number of dwellings to let, the decay of old houses would be stopped, and the owner-occupiers would be persuaded to provide more accommodation. The Government's proposals were contained in the Rent Act of 1957, probably one of the most bitterly contested pieces of legislation since the war. Privately owned rented houses were divided into three groups; the larger and better homes with rateable values of over £30 (£40 in London) were completely decontrolled; for the greater number of houses, rents were to rise by a level determined by their gross value and the extent of the landlords' responsibility for repairs; finally, the unfit houses were left to the local authorities to clear away. Decontrol was to be automatic (other than for 'sitting tenants') when the accommodation was let to a new tenant.

Unfortunately, few of the objectives in the legislation took place. Under-occupation actually increased in the two years following the Act. The amount of rented accommodation did not increase but declined and the trend towards owner-occupation continued. The reasons for this failure are located in the uncompetitive position of the landlord in the changed conditions of the housing market since 1919. Their economic position had been undermined by the expansion of the Building Societies, by the greatly increased rates of taxation resulting from the two Wars, and by the massive extension of state involvement in housing provision. The only place where private landlords could successfully compete with the Building Societies was in inner city zones; under the condition of decontrolled rents he could charge rents that reflected high land values and scarcity. The main threat to urban landlords comes from local

authorities' compulsory purchase order rights. The large 'reputable' property companies have increasingly sought shelter in investments in commercial buildings.

Clearance, Redevelopment and Improvement in Sheffield.

In Sheffield it was not until 1955 that it was possible to consider the question of recommencing the slum clearance programme. The building programme of the previous ten years was quickly absorbing much of the readily available land and prices were continuously increasing as the scarcity became more acute. The Council was having to make increasing use of its compulsory purchase powers to acquire new building land. On reconvening the clearance programme there were an estimated 13,500 unfit houses still on record for demolition from the pre-war period. Various surveys carried out in accordance with statutory obligations indicated that together with the temporary bungalows there were approximately 30,000 additional unfit houses.

The policy of clearance and development was to be undertaken and co-ordinated in a series of five-year plans, 1955-60, 1961-65, 1966-70, 1971-75. The first 'five-year programme' was commenced in September 1955 when the council agreed to allocate 50% of the tenancies becoming available to households cleared from slum areas. On this basis it was estimated that approximately 4,500 houses could be cleared during this period at a rate of 900 a year. The central objective was to clear the unfit houses from the pre-war list in residential areas to provide future building sites; the total clearance is as follows:-

TABLE 3.4 First Five-Year Programme of Clearance and Development (1955-60)

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of unfit 'grey' houses cleared | 4,421 |
| Number of fit houses cleared from redevelopment areas | 992 |
| TOTAL | 5,472 |

Source: Report of Town Clerk's Dept. to Housing Committee, Jan. 1971.

In the Second Five-Year Programme (1961-65) it was decided to improve the rate of clearance by increasing the allocation to two-thirds of all houses becoming available for letting, estimated at 1,600 a year. The strategy was also modified to allow a limited number of sites in industrial areas to be cleared in order to provide accommodation for industry being displaced from residential areas in conjunction with unfit housing. The basic requirement, however, still remained, the removal of the worst houses from residential areas to provide more redevelopment sites.

TABLE 3.5 Second Five-Year Programme of Clearance and Development (1961-65)

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of unfit and 'grey' houses cleared | 7,222 |
| Number of fit houses cleared from redevelopment areas | 266 |
| Number of unfit houses cleared in Street Improvements | 228 |
| Number of temporary bungalows cleared | 336 |
| Number of fit houses cleared for Tinsley Motorway | 238 |
| TOTAL | 8,290 |

Source: Report of Town Clerk's Dept. to Housing Committee, Jan. 1971

For the Third Five-Year Programme (1966-70) there was a significant change in the strategy for dealing with unfit houses. Anticipating an extension in the City boundary during the end of the period, more land would become available for housing development, and, in addition, the output of the Building Programme would be substantially increased by the introduction of non-traditional construction methods. On this basis the clearance programme was to include large areas of slum property in the industrial areas of the East End. In conjunction with this it was decided to increase the proportion of allocations (to new council lettings) by 50%, from 1,600 to 2,400. To meet expanding demand from displaced families for alternative accommodation within the same locality, certain large Comprehensive Redevelopment Areas containing substantial numbers of unfit houses were selected and their clearance phased so that the earlier stages when cleared and redeveloped would provide accommodation for the families displaced at the later stages. The Town Planning Officer was requested to prepare Master Plans indicating major road proposals, school requirements, open spaces and areas of sub-standard housing which might be improved. The areas selected were Darnall, Ellesmere/Grimesthorpe, Walkley, Lansdowne/Highfields and Heeley. A staging plan for the Darnall Redevelopment Area proposed clearance in three stages, 1970-75, 1976-80 and 1981-85, but these proposals were revised to complete clearance by 1980. In February 1968 the staging programme for the Walkley/Crookesmoor area was approved in principle to assist in the preparation of a Master Plan, a draft of which was considered in April 1970. The Walkley Action Group objected to the hold-up in giving improvement grants to some areas pending the selection of Improvement

Areas. Their representatives met the City Council in February and July 1970 and as a result modifications were made to the draft plan. The Ellesmere/Grimesthorpe clearance was planned to proceed through four phases, but the final phase had to be brought forward because the houses were deteriorating more rapidly than had been expected. In the redevelopment of Heeley, originally approved in principle in 1961, the first phase was cleared in 1965/66, because of the extremely poor condition of the area: the Heeley By-Pass was planned to coincide with clearance of the area but approval from the Ministry of Transport was not forthcoming.

During the Third Five-Year Programme, 7,095 families were rehoused from clearance areas, and 3,085 were awaiting rehousing from unfit dwellings subject to operative orders or because they were temporary bungalows. A time lag of over two years existed between the representation of a house as unfit and subsequent rehousing. The actual rate of rehousing, however, was controlled by the policy of allowing tenants a freedom of choice in selecting alternative accommodation and, of course, the creation of these alternatives. For example, in any block of unfit dwellings some families will move into new houses while others decide to move to existing corporation estates of their choice as and when re-lets become available; very often some households surrounded by vacant and deteriorating properties are left waiting for long periods.

In relation to sub-standard housing an experiment with five pilot areas containing approximately 1,000 houses indicated that, while owner-occupiers might be persuaded to make use of improvement grants, it was difficult to get landlords to improve their houses. It was decided, therefore, to use powers

under the 1964 Housing Act to declare a number of Compulsory Improvement Areas within which landlords were compelled to improve to a five-point standard if the tenants so desired; in the period 1965-69 ten such areas were delineated, containing about 2,400 houses. Sheffield always had a relatively good record regarding improvement grants and the number of approved schemes rose from a total of 5,598 by the end of 1965/6 to 13,390 by 1970/71, an increase rate of more than 2,000 per year, with a further increase to 19,978 by August 1972 when the last figures were made available. In addition, in the period from 1965/6 to 1970/71 over 9,000 Corporation-owned properties were improved up to the five-point standard.

The Fourth Five-Year Programme (1971-75).

In the three Five-Year plans 1955-69 a total of 20,378 families were rehoused from clearance schemes (unfit houses or temporary bungalows) and nearly all those on the pre-war programme had been dealt with; it was estimated that some 25,000 houses had still to be tackled. Now at the end of the fourth plan, it is assessed that rehousing and clearance will be completed by 1982, provided that the present rate of houses available for letting continues.

The Fourth Five-Year Programme anticipated that the rate of demolition would be maintained at approximately 2,400 a year. A Town Clerk's Report to the Housing Committee mentions that it was hoped to deal, in addition, with "the better type of sub-standard house by way of improvement instead of demolition." (3.28) Mention was also made of staffing problems in the Estates Surveyors Department as the areas under consideration contained a higher proportion of owner-occupiers. In the first year of the programme (1971/2) all the houses were carried forward

from the previous five-year plan: the second year was to contain the revised demolition of phase four of the Ellesmere/Grimesthorpe area, and 1973/4 was to contain houses which had been put back in the original programme because others had to be brought forward. The fourth and fifth years were to proceed as per the original programme, except that an advance in rehousing some families in Darnall would have to correspond with the handing over of new accommodation in Darnall. The staging for Darnall has, in fact, been amended to provide for clearance by 1980 instead of 1985. The total clearances are shown in the following Table:

TABLE 3.6 Clearance and Redevelopment under the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1970-75)

| | |
|---|---|
| Unfit and 'grey' houses | 9,098 |
| Fit houses in redevelopment areas | 63 |
| Temporary bungalows | 200 |
| Unfit in Wortley since 1/4/74 | 51 |
| Street improvements | 60 |
| Education requirements | 93 |
| | 9,565 |

Source: Housing Department Statistical Report, 1976.

In consequence of the 1969 Housing Act changes had to be made in this overall strategy, in particular, because it was no longer possible to declare new compulsory improvement areas, the Housing Committee decided to adopt a 'Rolling programme' of General Improvement Areas (G.I.A.) in three areas of private housing and on Corporation estates. The Master Plans (now known as District Plans) had been prepared for Darnall, Walkley, Ellesmere/Grimesthorpe and study groups were nearing completion of the plans for Heeley and Sharrow/Nether Edge (which includes the Lansdowne/Highfields area). In selecting G.I.As the

strategy was basically to go over the ground already incorporated by the improvement areas under the 1964 Act, and in these areas many houses had already been improved to the five-point standard but no environmental schemes existed. The reason for covering the same ground again seems unclear - except that this basis for improvement already existed. In addition, consideration was to be given to potential G.I.As on the residential fringes of clearance areas - which some of the original areas were.

The original scheme for the improvement of residential areas and pre-war Council Estates to range over a ten-year period and approved in October 1971 was as follows:

| | | | | TOTAL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1970/71 | Springvale | 12 | houses | 12 |
| 1971/72 | Darnall | 203 | " | |
| | Ellesmere | 410 | " | |
| | Elham Road | 244 | " | |
| | Walkley No.1 | 177 | " | 1,034 |
| 1972/73 | Walkley No.10 | 538 | " | |
| | Hinde House | 470 | " | 1,008 |
| 1973/74 | Norton Lees | 484 | " | |
| | Greystones | 590 | " | 1,074 |

This programme was to cover 3,121 houses but, owing to staff difficulties, the City Planning Officer and Architect have been unable to keep to this schedule. Early in the scheme the National Building Agency was appointed to undertake public consultation and the preparation of an experimental scheme for Walkley No.1 - subsequently declared a G.I.A. on March 1st 1972. The Agency was also asked to prepare plans for house and environmental improvements on the Wybourn Estate, this being declared a G.I.A. on July 5th 1972. The National Building Agency worked, in addition, on Walkley Areas Nos.2 and 3, both of which are now

in the G.I.A. programme. Springvale was declared a G.I.A. on June 7th 1972 and Ellesmere (Scott Road) on May 3rd 1972, and in the following twelve months Greystones, Ball Road, Hinde House, Elham Road, Norton Lees, Nottingham Street, Upperthorpe and parts of Darnall were added. Other areas to be included at a later date have been identified from within the Compulsory Improvement Areas - Walkley Nos.10 (Hammerton Road), 13, 14, 15; Writtle Street (Burngreave-Grimesthorpe District Plan); Sharrow Street and South View Road (Sharrow/Nether Edge Study Area); Birdwell Road and Low Wincobank (Wincobank District Plan), etc. This emphasis on renewal strategies has taken the following numbers of houses out of the clearance programme:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1973 | 1,041 | |
| 1974 | 657 | |
| 1975 | 2,645 | |
| | 4,343 | TOTAL |

The overall plan for clearance is co-ordinated and controlled by an ICL Project Evaluation programme using highly sophisticated network analysis techniques and a computer scheduling system; such a programme has been devised to link areas of clearance and large scale improvement in line with general strategy. There are, however, a number of problems in the forecast that disrupted the development of the rolling plan. The disfunctions which it is possible to identify at this stage are as follows. With the present staff shortage, in particular of experienced Public Health Inspectors and Valuers, only a limited number of houses in a G.I.A. can be processed each year. The Project Co-ordination Unit has had to evaluate the clearance and improvement proposals to identify bottlenecks in dealing with the plans. The PERT programme is improving efficiency but the

Department of the Environment remains notoriously slow in approving Part Three Orders which delays the specification of clearance dates and therefore the availability of sites for the Building Programme; this in turn slows down the provision of alternative accommodation for families due to be rehoused. With these constraints there is some confusion about priorities; for example, whether to improve houses which would otherwise be cleared - or whether to encourage owner-occupiers and landlords to improve dwellings which are not threatened. Linked with this is the problem that although it is policy to co-ordinate clearance areas with improvement areas in the locality, the pressure of Action Groups for improvement work to be done ahead of the redevelopment programme, or even to replace the redevelopment plan with improvement (as in Walkley), complicates the equation of priorities. The Nottingham Street G.I.A. in Pitsmoor illustrates the dilemma, for in this area unfit houses were originally programmed for clearance in the 1978-81 period, but prior to 1971 only 32 of the 552 houses in the area had been improved (grant aided) and it was a marginal decision whether to totally redevelop or to mix redevelopment and improvement. The decision to create a G.I.A. and to undertake a programme of overall improvement gave Nottingham Street a minimum life of thirty years. Financially and organizationally, decisions such as this will channel the resources into relatively few poor areas needing a greater amount of improvement work, internally and environmentally - but will nevertheless save them from the bulldozer; in better residential zones the same expenditure would cover a much wider area and more quickly. There is a basic question of allocating scarce resources, whether to channel them into poorer areas in advance of redevelopment,

or whether to give priority to improvement in a greater number of residential areas on the fringes of current redevelopment. An additional problem is that a large proportion of people in unfit houses are single, elderly, or elderly couples who wish to be re-accommodated in one-bedroom or two-bedroom ground floor flats in the same locality; in the majority of cases this type of accommodation does not exist. A 'crash' programme of old people's flatlets on a number of infilling sites is being undertaken and the Committee have also decided that where elderly people require accommodation in areas with a shortage of one-bedroom units, they may be offered the option of applying for a two-bedroom house in that area. Sheffield has a good record in the realm of 'improvement' and within the period of the Clearance Programme 1955-1975, more than 26,000 improvement approvals were issued relating to private houses and £6 1/4 million paid out to their owners.

A Rolling Programme to improve 28,664 pre-war council houses has been prepared of which 20,000 have already been improved to the five-point standard. The Wybourn Estate containing 1,740 houses has been a G.I.A. The improvements to council houses is dependent on the amount of labour that is available for the work, as there is a regional shortage of craftsmen in the building industry; any labour that is withdrawn from the new house building programme only prejudices the clearance schedule by cutting back on the availability of alternative accommodation. There is very little likelihood, therefore, of any acceleration in the improvement programme, either for private or Corporation houses. By the 31st December 1975, 2,913 council houses had been improved up to the ten-point standard. In addition, under current legislation there had been

only limited powers to compel private owners to improve their property, (unless a tenant appealed against a landlord's refusal to do maintenance or improvement work); but in December 1975 the Housing Committee decided to use powers under Section 9 of the 1957 Act amended by 1969 legislation, compelling owners to carry out those necessary repairs to bring their houses up to a required standard. This was thought essential, not only to put houses excluded from the Clearance Programme into good repair, but also to prevent improved houses from being allowed to deteriorate. The various measures taken by the Corporation in persuading owners to make improvements are here summarised; they were accurate in January 1976, although continual changes occur in the strategy.

i) Ten Compulsory Improvement Areas under the 1964 Housing Act - 2,389 dwellings.

ii) Eight General Improvement Areas under the 1969 Housing Act - 3,533 dwellings (including the Wybourn council estate, 1,740).

iii) Three Housing Action Areas under the 1974 Housing Act - 1,346 dwellings.

iv) Compulsory improvement action at the request of tenants who desired improved houses outside Improvement Areas. From 1970-75 a total of 319 dwellings.

The selection of Housing Action Areas has been simplified by data obtained from the 1971 Census; this indicates the proportion of houses in small areas (Enumeration Districts) lacking one or more basic amenities. With additional information a list of 150 E.Ds were grouped and ranked according to priority.

To test the condition of the housing stock in the city, the Corporation conducted a sample survey in 1971/72, the results of which are shown in the following Table:

TABLE 3.7 Condition of Housing in Sheffield Survey 1971-72

| | No. of dwellings L.A. or New Town | Other |
|---|---|---|
| Unfit Dwellings. | | |
| 1. In areas already declared under Part III of 1957 Housing Act | - | 7,144 |
| 2. In other areas to be declared Part III | - | 16,544 |
| 3. Not in Part III areas | 564 | 8,272 |
| | 564 | 31,960 |
| Dwellings Not Unfit. | | |
| 4. Up to 12-point standard | 38,728 | 57,904 |
| 5. Capable of improvement up to 12-point standard | 32,712 | 20,304 |
| TOTAL | 72,004 | 110,168 |

Source: Housing Committee Annual Report 1971-72.

Assuming this to be a reliable guide to the condition of the housing stock, the present strategy for dealing with unfit houses at a rate of 2,400 per year would probably take over 15 years (assuming that the building programme could be maintained - which seems unlikely at the present time). The 20,304 private houses capable of improvement could possibly be dealt with in ten years if the current rate of 2,000 per year is maintained. Improving the Wybourn estate to the 12-point standard has taken two years and, being a very old pre-war estate, many of the houses built since the late 1930's were considered to need less work to bring them up to the standard. At this rate it would take in excess of 30 years to complete the Rolling Programme for Corporation dwellings.

Summarily, Sheffield has taken every Government subsidy

as an opportunity to advance slum clearance, redevelopment and improvement programmes; but the magnitude of the remaining task makes one doubtful that the optimistic forecast of completing the Slum Clearance Programme by the end of the Sixth Five-Year Plan in 1985 can be achieved.

The following chapter looks at how the re-shaping of the residential pattern of the city's population has affected local electoral politics. The electoral context together with a number of issues which some aspects of housing, slum clearance and planning policy have created, is the background against which the emergence and development of community politics in the city is set.

CHAPTER THREE References and Footnotes.


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3.2 Pollard, S., A History of Labour in Sheffield (Liverpool University Press, 1959), p.185.

3.3 Pollard, op.cit., p.186.

3.4 Pollard, op.cit., p.189.

3.5 Nevitt, A.A., Housing, Taxation and Subsidies (Nelson, 1966), p.82.

3.6 Huges, V.M., History of Corporation Housing Schemes (1960)

3.7 Pollard, op.cit., pp.258-9.

3.8 Nevitt, op.cit., p.95.

3.9 Donnison, D.V., 'Housing Policy Since the War', Occasional Papers on Social Administration No.1 (Codicote Press, 1961).

3.10 Huges, op.cit., p.10.

3.11 Foot, M., Aneurin Bevan 1945-1960 (Paladin, 1975), see chapter 2.

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3.14 Cullingworth, J.B., Housing Needs and Planning Policy (Routledge, 1960).

3.15 The Surveyor, Extract January 1970.

3.16 'Ten Years of Housing in Sheffield, 1953-63', Sheffield Corporation (1963).

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3.21 Report of Town Clerk to the Policy Committee, October 1973.

3.22 Report of Town Clerk to the Policy Committee, October 1973.

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3.24 'Homeless Families in Sheffield', A 'Shelter' Report (December 1974).

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3.26 Speech to Annual Conference of Urban District Councils Association, June 1954, Ministry of Housing Press Release.

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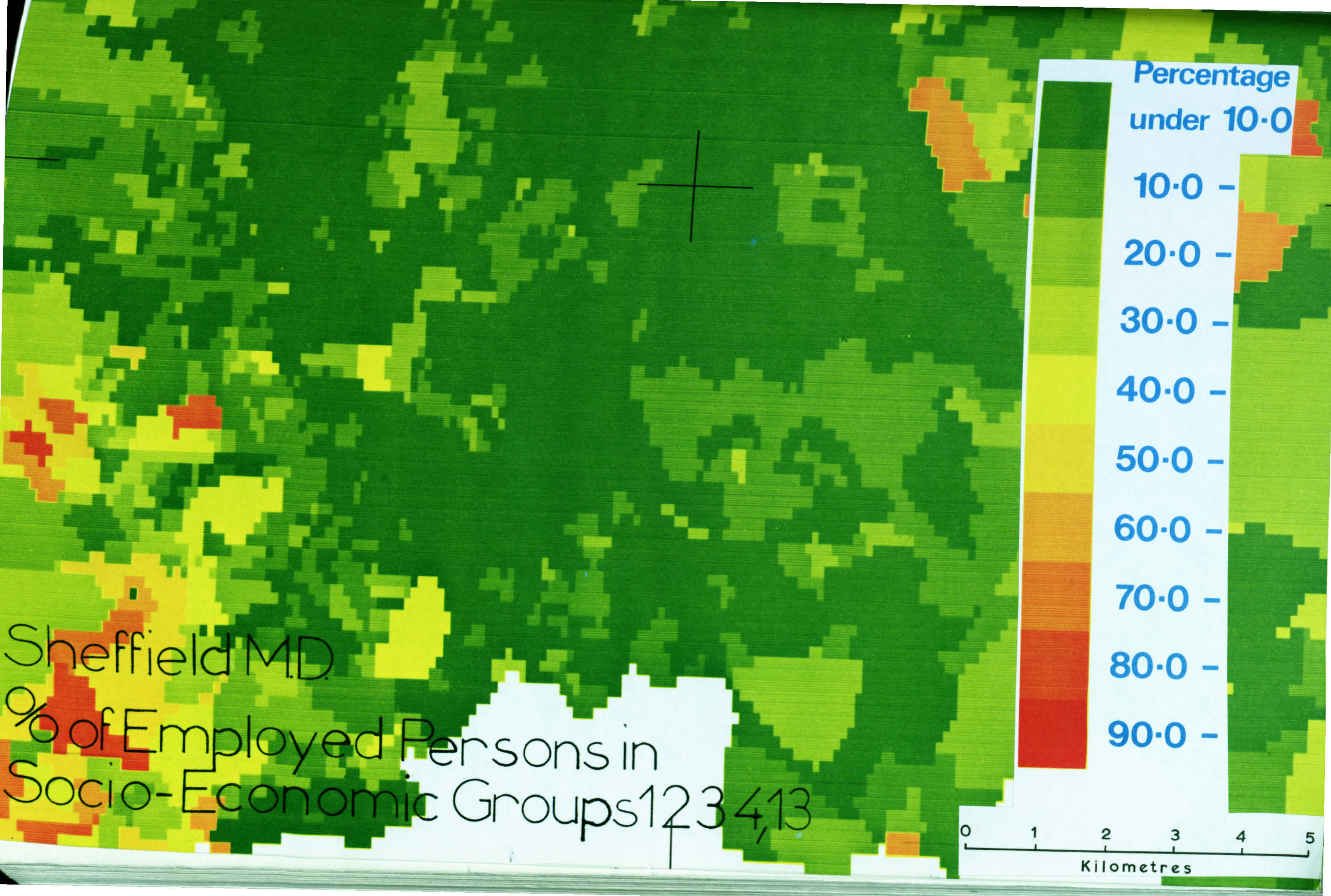
3.28 Report of Town Clerk to the Housing Committee, January 1971.

## CHAPTER FOUR. THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM IN SHEFFIELD.

The prolonged programmes of local authority slum clearance and house building in Sheffield, described in the previous chapter, have created a sharp residential polarization between the social classes. The manual workers remain in the inner-city terraces or have been dispersed into the outlying estates, or the megablocks and high-rise developments which surround the city centre, while the middle and upper-middle class groups have increasingly confined themselves to the south-western suburbs. This pattern of distribution can be seen clearly from the maps in the 1971 Census Atlas of South Yorkshire illustrated overleaf.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the residential segregation of the social classes has produced equally rigid patterns of party political support both at the national and local government levels. Only in the socially ambiguous areas which straddle the dividing line between the working-class north and east and the middle-class south-west has there been, in the post-war period, any degree of marginality in the voting pattern. Indeed, since 1945 there have only ever been three or four wards in which the result might be considered rather less than predictable. Later it will be suggested that both the action groups and tenants' associations developed as a response to what is effectively a Labour dominated two-party system in which third parties and independent candidates have rarely made any impact. The electoral arena is the almost exclusive preserve of the two main parties. The recent history of local elections in the city shows, however, that local factors can cut across national swings and decisively affect results. For example, the only occasion in the post-1945 period when there has been


Sheffield M.D.
% of Employed Persons in
Socio-Economic Groups 1 2 3 4, 13
Percentage
under 10·0
10·0 –
20·0 –
30·0 –
40·0 –
50·0 –
60·0 –
70·0 –
80·0 –
90·0 –
0 1 2 3 4 5
Kilometres

a change of control in Sheffield occurred at the 1968 local elections when a massive national anti-Labour swing was compounded by the re-drawing of the ward boundaries and possibly by the effect which an unpopular local council tenants' rent rebate scheme had on the turn-out and two-party swing in a number of wards. In the early 1970s the Liberal Party also won a number of seats on the local council largely due to a very intensive period of campaigning in one particular ward. This success was contrary to the record of all the other minor parties and independent candidates who without exception have been squeezed out by the dominant two-party, Labour/ Conservative system.

The overthrow of Labour rule in Sheffield in 1968 was the first time since 1932-33 that Labour had not controlled the city council and only the second time since they took control in 1926. An analysis of the election results at that period is, therefore, particularly illuminating because the contrast between the 'normal' pattern of voting and those divergent years serves to highlight key, underlying trends. In 1968 when virtually the whole country was controlled by the Conservatives, Sheffield would have remained in Labour control had it not been for the boundary revision and was the only one of the major urban centres to immediately return to Labour rule in the 1969 elections. Sheffield may be considered one of, if not the most, solidly Labour supporting cities in the country. Successful political opposition to this dominant hold is confined almost exclusively to the Conservatives. The city council is run, therefore, as a two-party system which excludes all other parties.

A key factor in the balance of power in the city in the 1967-69 period was the boundary reform which took place before

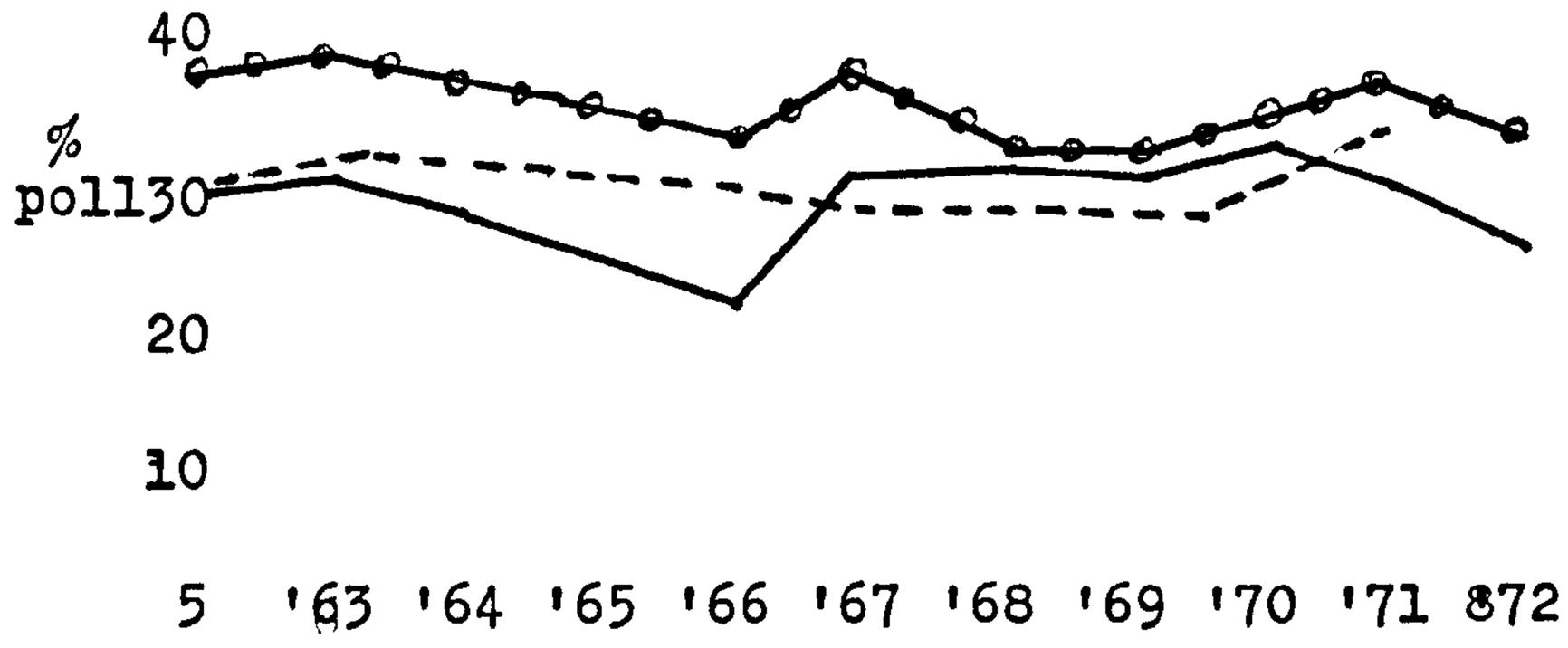
the 1967 election. The re-drafting of the ward boundaries had become necessary because of the rapid progress of the clearance and re-building programme during the previous decade. The size of the electorate varied from only 8,200 in the central Cathedral ward to over 25,000 in Norton. When the new units were introduced the composition and shape of every ward in the city had changed, five wards were completely dissolved and seven new ones were created. These new units still varied in size from 8,775 to 17,222 in order to take into account projected population movements in the continuing programme of urban renewal.(4.2) Partly because of this continuing imbalance, but mainly due to the Conservative landslide victories in the 1967 and 1968 local elections, the 'normal' political allegiance of these new wards was initially obscured.

From a local point of view the 1967 elections were unusual because the whole Council was elected rather than the customary one member from each ward.(4.3) The election was billed in the local press as a 'little general election' and the interest caused by the boundary changes and the more intense campaign must certainly have contributed to the enormous increase of 11% in the turnout compared with 1966. As can be seen from Table 4.1 this was in line with, though greater than, the increase in turnouts for the County Boroughs as a whole - 11% in Sheffield compared with 5% for the Boroughs. The effect of this big increase in the poll (on the results) can only be appreciated in conjunction with the two-party swing - that is to say, the change in the share of the vote which Labour and Conservative received.

It is not possible to give an accurate account of the swing between 1966 and 1967 because due to the boundary changes

wards were not comparable; however, a selection of wards with roughly similar boundaries suggests that the overall swing in the city was about 13% to the Conservatives. This was a 5% higher swing than that determined by the average of towns with over 100,000 population as a whole, and can certainly be explained by the very high poll (by Sheffield standards) - in short, the increased turnout was largely a Conservative vote. A big national swing which coincides with a local increase in poll is certain to exaggerate the local swing, assuming that the town swing is roughly in line with the national movement. In fact, so strong was Labour's customary position on the City Council in Sheffield that even the exaggerated anti-Labour swing was not sufficient to topple their control, despite the fact that nationally it was Labour's worst year since 1931. "Never in the history of local politics have so many authorities changed hands in so short a time."(4.4) At the 1968 elections, in line with the continuing national swing based on high turnouts, Labour did in fact lose control in the city. With a majority of ten on the Council (largely due to manipulating the Aldermanic elections) the ruling Labour group won only eight seats out of the possible twenty-seven, the remaining nineteen going to Conservatives. The swing figures for Sheffield indicated that there was an additional 3.8% advantage to the Conservatives compared with 1967; this figure was lower than the national swing of 7.0%. It seems that Sheffield anticipated the national trends in its 'little general election' year of 1967, as most of the pro-Conservative swing occurred at that time. The fall in the rate of increase of swing in Sheffield in 1968 suggests that the tide was beginning to turn back to Labour (see Table 4.2).

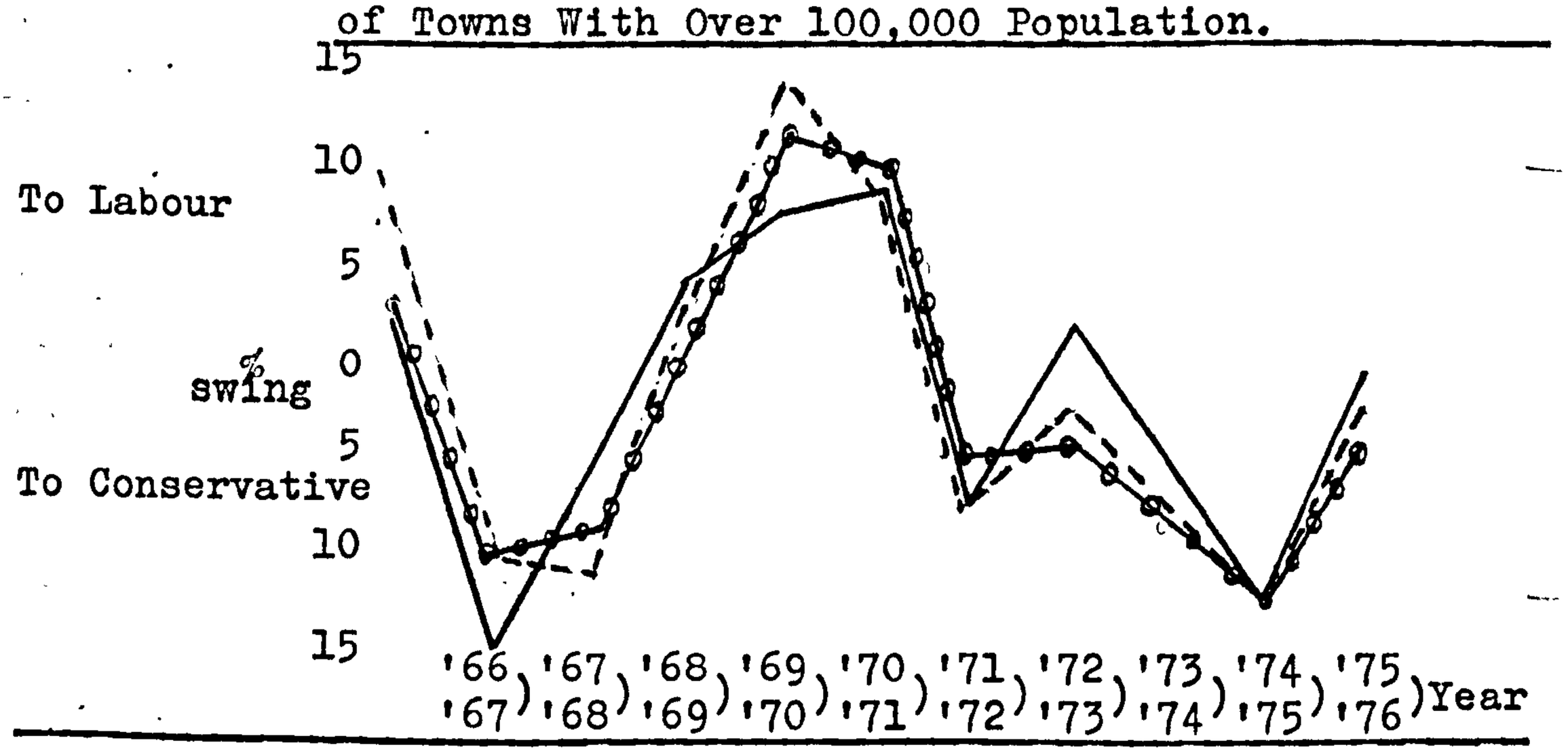
TABLE 4.1 Percentage of the Electorate Voting. A Comparison of Sheffield, Birmingham and the Average of Towns With Over 100,000 Population.




Key: Sheffield——— Birmingham- - - - - County Boroughs -o-o-o-o

Source: Registrar General Annual Report; 'Sheffield Year Books'; "Second City Politics" Newton K.(1976)

TABLE 4.2 The Swing of the Two-party Vote 1965-76. A Comparison of Sheffield, Birmingham and the Average of Towns With Over 100,000 Population.




Key: Sheffield——— Birmingham- - - - - County Boroughs -o-o-o-o

Source; Figures supplied by Michael Steed; from his analyses in 'The Economist'; Sheffield 'Morning Telegraph'; 'Sheffield Year Books'.

They nevertheless lost control of the Council - due to an overall swing in the two-year period of 17-18% against them, and also because the complete renewal of the Council in 1967 meant that the Conservatives won over twice as many seats as they would have done had two-thirds of the Council not been up for re-election. If the boundaries had not been changed in 1967 Labour would not have lost control of the City Council in 1968. Had this been the case, Sheffield would have been the only one of the major cities still controlled by the Labour Party. At the 1969 elections the national tide turned towards Labour but so heavy had been the defeats of the previous two years that they still controlled only twelve boroughs of over 50,000 population for the 1969-70 period. The twelve included Sheffield which was re-taken by Labour and was the only one of the major cities to be controlled by them. The other eleven boroughs were Barnsley, Merthyr Tydfil, Rotherham, Swansea, Wigan, Scunthorpe, Stoke-on-Trent, Ellesmere Port, Gateshead, St. Helens and Birkenhead. A decade later in 1977 the country was again in a period of sharp anti-Labour swings. Again, against a swing of nearly 6% to the Conservatives, Sheffield remained securely in the hands of the Labour Party. The County Council elections in May 1977 left only two Metropolitan Counties in Labour hands - South Yorkshire (securely) and Tyne and Wear (marginally). Although a number of County Council seats were lost in Sheffield most of Labour's losses in South Yorkshire were in the three other Districts (Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham) which make up the Metropolitan County. In short, in the two periods of massive anti-Labour swings in recent history, 1967-69 and 1976-77, (comparable only to the early 1930s ) Sheffield has shown itself to be the most enduring

Labour stronghold of any of the major centres of population.(4.5)

Local Factors in Election Results.

Recently it has been suggested that local factors have a relatively insignificant impact on council election results. "The conclusion must be that local factors have a relatively insignificant impact on local election results. In fact, the term 'local election' is something of a misnomer, for there is very little that is local about them and they tell us practically nothing about the preferences and attitudes of citizens to purely local issues and events."(4.6) While it is certainly true that Sheffield broadly swings in accord with the average for the towns, the boundary changes in 1966, which was a local factor, had a big crucial bearing on the outcome of the 1967 and 1968 elections. A second possible 'local component' in the power struggle in 1968 in Sheffield was an attempt by the Labour Group to impose a very unpopular and divisive rent rebate scheme together with differential rent increases and a 'lodger tax'. This scheme, introduced just before the elections, created a widespread protest movement and the rapid formation of tenants' associations on every major estate in the city. Did the controversy on the council estates have an effect on the results in Sheffield? Of the six wards which changed hands at the 1968 elections four were composed mainly of council houses.(4.7) In the six wards the anti-Labour swing averaged out at 7.3% compared to the figure for the city as a whole of 3.8%. Had the wards moved in accordance with the average swing Labour would have lost only one of the seats and would not have lost control of the Council. Of the two wards with the highest swings (over 11%) one is composed almost entirely of council housing and

the other has a high proportion of council dwellings. It seems likely, therefore, that the rent rebate issue did have an effect on the outcome of the 1968 elections but without a much more detailed analysis the conclusion must be accepted with caution. The proposed rent increases, for example, were different for different estates depending on age and type of houses; some of the tenants' associations were extremely active, organizing rent strikes, public meetings and lobbies of local councillors, others were relatively inactive: the turnouts in the wards which changed hands varied from only 22.5% to nearly 40%. All these factors may have an effect on the result in a particular ward and the relationship between them is very complex. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse them in any greater depth. It seems likely, however, that the rent rebate issue did affect the two-party swing due to Labour abstentions and a certain amount of switching to Conservative as a protest vote.

TABLE 4.3 Swing to the Conservatives in Selected Wards, Sheffield 1966-69.

| | % Swing 1967 | % Swing 1968 | % Swing 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attercliffe | + 12.3 | + 4.5 | - 4.6 |
| Birley * | Ø | + 11.6 | - 9.2 |
| Broomhill | + 8.1 | - 3.5 | - 6.5 |
| Burngreave | + 10.8 | + 4.5 | - 12.1 |
| Darnall | + 10.8 | + 6.3 | - 9.9 |
| Hillsborough | + 14.9 | + 6.9 | - 3.6 |
| Nethershire * | Not contested by Conservatives in 1966 | + 2.7 | - 3.9 |
| Netherthorpe * | Ø | + 6.7 | - 10.4 |
| Owlerton * | + 7.6 | + 11.2 | - 13.3 |
| Walkley * | | + 5.3 | - 4.8 |

* Wards which changed hands at the 1968 election.
Ø Wards created by the boundary changes in 1967 and no comparison is possible.
By convention + = swing to Conservatives; - = swing to Labour.
Source: Figures in Sheffield 'Year Books'.

Had the national swing not been so dramatic the issue might have been clearer; for Green suggests that: "The random nature of local factors means that their combined effect remains fairly constant in absolute size: so that when national change is small they will play a proportionately larger part in determining overall swing; but when national change is large their proportionate influence is small." (4.8)

In the subsequent period up to 1976 the electoral barometer rose decisively in Labour's favour, the new wards having settled into their pattern of alignments. This period of settling down can best be illustrated by a summary of what has happened in two of the wholly new wards created in 1967, Gleadless and Intake. Both are within range of the dividing line between east and west, but both have now established an undoubted pattern of Labour control. Initially, however, they both went to the Conservatives, Gleadless by a majority of 1,600 on a record poll of 50.5%. In 1970 both wards went to Labour, Gleadless by a majority of only 6 on another high poll. At all the subsequent elections Labour have held these wards with majorities ranging from 400 to 2,500. They are by no means the safest seats but a pattern of Labour control has now been established. Intake in 1972 produced a Labour majority of nearly 1,200 on a poll of only 27.5%, a fall of 8% from the previous year and 2.2% less than the Sheffield average. This was in a year when the national swing was once again to the benefit of the Conservatives. The fall in turnout is symptomatic of the change to a relatively safe Labour status as marginal seats tend to produce higher turnouts than safe seats due to more intense campaigning when the possibility of a change of control exists.(4.9)

Of the 30 seats which currently make up the Sheffield

Metropolitan District only two, Hillsborough and South Wortley, may be considered as really marginal seats requiring swings, measured from the 1976 base of only 3-5% to change hands. This pattern of one or two marginal seats is typical of the post-war era in Sheffield. Since the re-drafting of the ward boundaries in 1967 the areas previously of greatest marginality have, due to the new shapes and the population movements, become 'normally' safe Labour wards. The swings required to change hands in Heeley, Sharrow, Intake and Gleadless are in the region of 10-15%. As can be seen from Table Two 1976 was a year when the fluctuations of the previous period have settled on or near a point of equilibrium. Measured from that point a swing of 10% to the Conservatives would lose Labour only two seats. In 1975 a swing of nearly 11%, in fact, lost them three seats taking the state of the parties from Labour 69, Conservative 18, Liberals 3 to Labour 66, Conservative 20, Liberals 4. Labour has for the foreseeable future an impregnable hold on political power in the city.

In the period since 1945, with the exception of the elections in 1968 and 1969, the areas of competitive electoral contest in Sheffield have been few. Both major parties know with some precision the geographical extent of their support. In general, election results are predictable, and it is largely due to this factor that the turnouts at both national and local elections have consistently fallen below the national average. (see Table 4.1) Paradoxically it is the strength of the two-party system, dominated on the one hand by the twin machines of the Labour Party with the Trades Council, and on the other hand by the Conservative Party which has led to the lack of response to the ballot box. This is not, however, a simple relationship and

there are a number of exceptions. First, the more dutiful response of the Conservative vote in the middle-class suburbs has been mentioned and is a well-documented fact of political behaviour.(4.10) In Sheffield, for example, the turnouts in the middle-class wards have consistently been from 5-15% higher than the average for the city as a whole. The three wards illustrated in Table 4.4 are all very 'safe' Conservative seats but do not suffer from the same poor response at the poll as safe Labour seats in the East End of the city. Even in periods of anti-Conservative swing, 1970-72 on the Table, these wards still produce turnouts which are substantially higher than the other areas.

TABLE 4.4 Percentage Poll in Middle-Class Wards Compared to Sheffield Average.

| | 1967 % | 1968 % | 1969 % | 1970 % | 1971 % | 1972 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beauchief | 49.7 | 53.1 | 50.6 | 44.6 | 39.5 | 37.3 |
| Dore | 43.4 | 48.7 | 47.7 | 45.1 | 41.6 | 36.8 |
| Ecclesall | 42.8 | 42.7 | 35.5 | 35.0 | 32.7 | 30.9 |
| Average of Three | 45.3 | 48.2 | 44.6 | 41.5 | 38.0 | 35.0 |
| City Average | 33.4 | 33.9 | 32.8 | 35.1 | 33.4 | 29.0 |
| Difference | 11.9 | 14.3 | 11.8 | 6.5 | 4.6 | 6.0 |

Source: Statistics in Sheffield 'Year Books'.

Second, as outlined above, marginal seats invariably produce higher than average polls. Since the 1970 municipal elections, a third, and local exception in Sheffield's record of poor turnouts has been the successful intervention of Liberal candidates in the Burngreave ward - in the heart of the 'apathetic' East End. This success is mainly due to the work of one individual,

Francis Butler, who has stimulated turnouts not only higher than the average in Sheffield but, exceptionally, higher even than the national average.

As far as the general pattern of low turnout in the city is concerned, a number of factors need to be considered. It is popularly supposed, for example, that low polls are due to 'apathy'. But people who do not vote may in fact be expressing a number of responses. On the one hand they may be expressing a certain level of satisfaction with the provision of services and, while maintaining party allegiance, may acknowledge the predictable outcome - "I'm Labour, but there's no point in voting round here." Or again it may be a positive decision not to vote as, for example, in 1967 when some of the Labour vote registered its protest against the rent rebate scheme simply by not turning out - the effect of which was to produce a Conservative majority and a change in the scheme. This instrumental attitude towards political and social organizations is a common feature of working-class life. The success of Francis Butler in Burngreave may itself be seen in these terms. By his consistent advocacy of individual and community problems in the ward he has been able to exploit a weak and complacent Labour Party organization; but only by extremely hard work and persistent activity. Finally, apathy towards the ballot box is a response of those who are genuinely alienated from the political system through lack of knowledge, by social conditions, or who positively oppose the present political order.

Summarily, the polarisation of the vote between bedrock Labour support from the East End and council estates, and the hard core of Conservative support in the south-western suburbs was merely disguised by the boundary changes in 1966 - occurring

at a time of unprecedented anti-Labour swings. Even with the enormous national swing Labour would not have lost control of the city without the local factors. The rent rebate controversy possibly tipped the balance in 1968, bringing the Conservatives to power. The 'local component' may at certain periods be the decisive factor in the outcome of election results - measured, of course, against the general national swing. In addition, the performance of the electorate in particular wards, the way they vote and the size of the poll, is subject to fluctuation from the average due to such factors as the marginality of the ward, the social class composition of the electorate, the challenge of an intensive local campaign in a complacent, formerly secure, one-party ward (see next section of chapter), 'apathy' in safe seats, and so on. The political mood and character of individual wards must be viewed locally and city-wide patterns of political behaviour need to take into account the variety of local issues, events and circumstances which at certain times may play a decisive role in the control of power.

The Record of the Minorities.

It seems from this background to the recent political life of Sheffield that, with the sole exception of Francis Butler and the Liberal platform in Burngreave, the expression of discontent or protest through the ballot box is severely constrained. The Labour-Conservative monolith has been and remains virtually impregnable to any assault by other parties or independent candidates.

TABLE 4.5 Percentage of Electorate Voting for Each Party (1967-1972)

| | 1967 % | 1968 % | 1969 % | 1970 % | 1971 % | 1972 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Labour | 38.4 | 35.8 | 43.6 | 53.4 | 61.8 | 57.5 |
| Conservative | 57.2 | 58.1 | 51.7 | 43.8 | 32.7 | 36.6 |
| Liberal | 1.6 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 4.1 | 3.8 |
| Communist | 1.7 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Others (Either National Front or Independent) | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 1.1 |

Source: Figures in Sheffield 'Year Books'.

The so-called 'Liberal revival' which occurred after the 1970 General Election has made no lasting impression on this solid two-party framework, despite the pole of attraction provided by Butler's successes in Burngreave. Generally the Liberal Party has attracted a lower proportion of the vote than has been the case over England and Wales as a whole. At the parliamentary elections in February 1974 it fielded five candidates in the Sheffield constituencies - winning 44,027 votes; while in the October election it had representation in all six of the Sheffield seats, but even with an extra candidate its share of the poll fell.

| | Feb.1974 % | Oct.1974 % |
|---|---|---|
| Sheffield | 15.3 (44,027) | 14.9 (38,433) |
| England & Wales | 18.6 | 17.8 |

When Butler won the Burngreave ward by a slender majority (162) from Labour in 1970, he became the first independent Liberal councillor in the city for over 40 years.(4.11) At his re-election in 1972 Butler won by a majority of over 2,000.

His vote of 3,850 was, up to that time, the highest vote for any Liberal councillor elected in Great Britain since the War.

In the elections to the new County and District councils he topped the poll in the Burngreave/Firth Park area of the County, while three Liberals won the Burngreave ward by a majority of 1,152 from Labour. These remarkable achievements are largely due to Butler's success in breaking the middle-class image of the Liberals by his persistent work in the 'twilight' area which he represents. He was born in the area and, unlike the majority of councillors in the main parties, continues to live there.(4.12) "What has brought him support is his unashamed concentration on what he feels is the neglect his ward has suffered and his persistence in knocking on doors 'looking for trouble'."(4.13) But the striking feature of this intervention, as mentioned earlier, has been to stimulate in a previously 'apathetic' ward turnouts which are higher than the national average and exceptional in a previously 'safe' Labour seat in the east end of the city.

Other candidates from a variety of parties and organizations have not been able to imitate Butler's success and struggle to win only small proportions of the poll. The Communist Party, for example, with an individual membership in the city similar to the individual membership of the Labour Party itself, of under 1,000, has never been electorally successful, despite holding leading positions in the trade union movement. Normally they struggle to win even a half of one per cent of the poll.

In the May 1976 election the Ratepayers' Associations made some startling gains in South Yorkshire. For example, in Barnsley, in only their second year of serious organized intervention, they won over 27% of the poll and added five more seats

to the six gained from Labour in 1975. They have thus become by far the biggest opposition party to Labour in the Barnsley District. In Sheffield, however, where the Ratepayers fielded 13 candidates, they could muster only 7,531 votes which was only 5% of the poll, and nowhere did they even approach winning a seat. A comment by the Secretary of the Sheffield District Labour Party on the day following the results suggests why this should be the case; "There seems to have been a kind of polarisation going on in the seats where the two main parties have traditionally held power."(4.14) It seems in Sheffield third parties and independents rather than gaining from the present political and economic uncertainties are squeezed out as the electorate polarise around their traditional parties. The discrepancy, for example, between Sheffield and Barnsley, so far as the Ratepayers are concerned may be seen not only as the result of the higher increases in rates in the latter town but also as a reflection of the historical weakness of the Conservative opposition in Barnsley compared with the concentrated stronghold of Conservative support in the western suburbs of Sheffield.(4.15)

At the elections in 1968 some of the newly-formed tenants' associations themselves nominated three candidates but even with a membership of thousands in those three wards alone and despite the anti-Labour mood in the city their most successful candidate won only 631 votes, 17.2% of the poll in that ward. This graphically illustrates the paradox of the grip which the two-party system has on politics in Sheffield, and the difficulties of breaking the pattern faced by groups who stand outside it.

A campaign of a rather different nature, and a second example of special interest to this thesis, concerns the

intervention in the 1968 elections of Geoffrey Green - at that time a research student in the Politics Department of the University - who stood as an Independent in the Walkley Ward. Walkley was at the time the subject of a Corporation redevelopment plan entailing the demolition of the whole area over a period of several decades. Green lived on the edge of the clearance zone and with a few helpers circulated the area with leaflets. This produced over seventy letters of support for organized action against wholesale clearance of the area and it was on this basis that the Walkley Action Group was formed, initially acting as the mainstay of Green's election campaign. Standing on the slogan, "For more consultation between people and planners," he won a respectable 773 votes, which, despite being the biggest vote for a minority party (except the Liberals in Burngreave) or independent candidate since the war, was still only 17.3% of the poll. In a very close-run fight Labour won the seat back from the Conservatives by a majority of only 18. After the election the Walkley Action Group was formally constituted and at the inaugural meeting Councillors from both major parties attended as well as the Chairman of the Housing Committee and the City Architect.(4.16) This was the first of the succession of 'action groups' to emerge into the political life of Sheffield in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Since the 1967 and 1968 elections none of the tenants' associations and action groups have put up candidates at the elections. To make an effective intervention is an enormous task and for groups with limited resources and a relatively narrow range of interests it is not a viable tactic despite the propaganda value of these early campaigns. The Liberal intervention shows that it is possible at a ward level to break the

two-party system but it requires an intensive commitment by strong and popular personalities over a long period of time. For groups who campaign around certain limited issues there is little to be won in the party political competition. Confronted by a ready-made system of decision-making and administration under impregnable party control the range of strategies for expressing grievances and influencing the policy-making machinery is restricted. In a general sense, then, the tenants' associations and action groups must be seen to express a degree of alienation from the formal structure of local government. The question is whether this estrangement represents a feeling for a qualitatively different approach to local government, or whether it is a more limited expression of a demand for better channels of information exchange and more involvement in local decision-making within the established order. This is the theme of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR. References and Footnotes.

4.1 See the evidence of Hampton for the period 1945-1966 in 'An Analysis of Boundary Changes and Election Results in Sheffield 1945-1966'. Sheffield Constituencies Project (Jan. 1967), p.33.

4.2 Hampton, W.A., op.cit. (Jan. 1967), Chapters One and Two.

4.3 Hampton analyses the 1967 election in an article in Political Studies, Vol. XVI, No.2, 1968, pp.266-72.

4.4 The Economist, May 20th 1967.

4.5 To accurately verify this conclusion it would be necessary to make a comparative analysis of the results in the main towns and cities. Due to exigencies of time this has not been possible.

4.6 Newton, K., Second City Politics (Oxford University Press, 1976), p.16.

4.7 The four wards contained between 70-95% council houses. These figures were worked out from the Census Atlas and so are an approximation.

4.8 Green, G., 'National, City and Ward Components of Local Voting', in 'Policy and Politics', Vol.I, No.1, Sept. 1972, p.54. His theory is based on an analysis of the national and local components in local election results in Leeds and Sheffield between 1951 and 1966.

4.9 In addition the middle-class elements in the ward will boost the turnout (see evidence for this later in chapter). All the marginal seats in Sheffield produce higher average polls than the safe seats of either party. See Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (Oxford University Press, 1970), p.170. Also see the appendix in Steed, M., eds. Butler, D. and King, A., The British General Election of 1966 (MacMillan, 1966).

4.10 See for example, Blondel, J., Voters, Parties and Leaders (Penguin Books, 1963), pp.56-9.

4.11 Although until the 1960s the Opposition was technically a Conservative/National Liberal alliance.

4.12 Hampton, W.A., op.cit.(1970), p.202.

4.13 Morning Telegraph, April 4th 1970.

4.14 Morning Telegraph, May 7th 1976.

4.15 Neither do the Barnsley Ratepayers appear to be a 'front' for the Conservative Party; they regularly contest the same wards.

4.16 Hampton, W.A., op.cit.(1970), p.291.

## CHAPTER FIVE. "GRASSROOTS VERSUS THE SYSTEM?"

In the previous chapter politics in Sheffield was seen to be polarised between two uncompromising patterns of party allegiance. Third party and independent candidates were shown, with only one exception, to have been unsuccessful in winning seats on the City Council in the whole of the post-1945 period. Success, of course, is not always to be judged by winning a seat - elections offer a platform for promoting or publicising a minority interest or issue. But in Sheffield there can be no doubt that outside the two-party system the expression of discontent or opposition to the policies of the Council or the city administration is severely constrained.

Is it correct, therefore, to view the tenants' associations and action groups as a symptom of the alienation of the citizenry from the now traditional pattern of party politics in the city? Their very existence suggests that the established channels of political influence, particularly the local parties, were not able to encompass certain types of demands which some sections of the electorate were raising. But none of the groups reject per se the local government system. Rather they have to build a negotiating position for themselves using a variety of strategies and tactics. Only in a general sense may we speak, therefore, of the groups being alienated from the traditional political system and such a level of generality tells us little about the actual nature of the relationships between the groups and the decision-making machinery, or between the groups and their own communities. An analysis of these relationships is, however, likely to provide an appropriate basis for characterising grassroots politics.

In this chapter the degree of integration into or

estrangement of the groups from the formal political system is to be examined. To what extent do they themselves rely on or utilize the existing structures? What are their favoured contact points and channels of communication? To answer these questions three main areas of investigation have been selected. First, the extent to which the local councillors and officers associate with or, indeed, are members of the groups. Second, the strategies and tactics of the groups in raising and carrying through an issue; and third, their own assessment of the degree of success or lack of success in achieving their objectives. The information in this chapter and in many subsequent chapters is drawn from in-depth interviews of nearly all the Chairpersons and Secretaries of the action groups and tenants' associations in Sheffield.(5.1)

Councillors and Officers as Members of the Groups.

What is the nature of the relationship between the groups and their most immediate link to the political system, the local councillors? In formal membership terms 29% of the tenants' associations and 36% of the action groups have at least one of the councillors for their area as a member. This is, however, an overstatement of the real extent of their relationship. With the tenants' associations, for example, councillors are debarred from holding any official positions because of a non-party political clause in nearly all their constitutions. Certainly the councillors' residential qualifications would not justify normal membership. In fact, only one association was able to say that a councillor for their area, who was also a member of the association, actually lived on the estate. It would appear to be politically expedient for the councillors to maintain a certain level of

contact given the history of events in 1967-68 when the Conservatives came to power in the city due partly to the abstention of Labour voters on the estates over the rent rebate scheme. These results indicate, even today, an area of sensitivity between the tenants' associations and the councillors. How well or how badly the relationship works depends in general on the attitude of the councillors to the association. This is a theme to be developed during the chapter.

The spectrum of membership and non-membership of councillors among the action groups is very much broader than with the tenants' associations. This can be illustrated by the comments of a number of interviewees. Two groups, for example in areas which are traditionally Conservative strongholds, had a very contrasting relationship with their political members. In one group all three councillors belong to the organization: "They work for us in their own individual capacity as members of the group. One of the councillors is on our planning sub-committee and she has learned a lot from us." In the other area none of the councillors belong to the group: "All three are Tories and one of them said his support would be the kiss of death to the group. We have ignored them after this." In the Labour dominated sector of the city the range of response was equally wide. In one case it was reported that the councillor had been largely instrumental in setting the group up and had subsequently been the Chairperson. It should be said that this group consisted of a small cell of self-appointed professional people playing a 'caretaker' role towards a community much expanded by an influx of population into an overspill development. At the other extreme of attitude the Chairman of a group on the fringe of an extensive clearance and improvement area commented about

councillors as members: "No chance, the councillors are antagonistic and would have been an embarrassment in strategy-making." Another group inside a clearance and improvement area said that it was not their policy to have councillors in the organization as they wished to remain a non-party political group.

Several groups said that councillors had at one time been members of their organization but had either lost interest or resigned. One councillor, for example, had become the Chairperson on the first Steering Committee of a lively action group in a redevelopment area; some months later she resigned. A local community worker (a leading participant in the group) suggested that the role of a councillor, particularly in a leading position, was indeed an embarrassment: "This was an error of judgement, for it led inevitably to a situation where the policies of the group were at variance with a Council decision, and the councillor was put in the position of riding two horses going in opposite directions."(5.2)

At the same period (1970) - on the other side of the city - the Labour Party was in the process of losing a seat in the heart of the East End to the Liberal candidate Francis Butler whose campaign during the by-election was largely mounted on a critique of the redevelopment proposals for the area. Butler held a leading position in the action group which was being set up at about the same time as his election success and he has been closely involved with it subsequently. At the time of interview for this Survey, early 1975, he was vice-chairman of the group. In short, among all the organizations, particularly the action groups, there is a diversity of activity and involvement by the councillors. The views of the groups about the

councillors also vary considerably and are to be discussed in the chapter.

These general observations about councillor membership are similar in so far as it is possible to make a valid comparison with the work of Fujishen in his study of organizations involved in planning issues in Birmingham.(5.3) In his sample, Fujishen found that 52% of the groups had councillors as members but this figure included a number of organizations who were receiving financial aid from the Council and so were statutorily obliged to have a councillor on their committee.

Fujishen also found that 23% of his organizations had an M.P. in membership. As far as the Sheffield groups are concerned, however, there was virtually no contact with the M.P.s on any matters. In fact, in the whole Survey M.P.s were mentioned only twice in unprompted questions. The general view is that M.P.'s are rather remote from the day-to-day concerns of the grassroots organizations. In practice this situation is a reflection of the fact that at the local level a negotiation only very rarely 'breaks down' to such an extent that the groups have to turn the issue into a 'political' controversy which might at a certain stage involve the M.P. This theme is to be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

There is also very little evidence that local government officers belong to the Sheffield grassroots organizations. At the time of the interview, none of the leading positions in any of the groups was occupied by an officer; in the case of the tenants' associations this is hardly surprising, assuming that their salaries are likely to preclude them from living on a council estate. So far as the action groups are concerned, residential qualifications also seem likely to exclude most

middle-tier and upper-tier officers from membership, with the exception of two or three groups on the west side of the city. But even in those groups there was no evidence of the "series of elaborate networks of quasi-official and semi-official communications linking community organizations and local government departments" which Newton detected in his mammoth study of political organizations in Birmingham.(5.4) As Newton points out, however, many of the scores of organizations in his study are so well established and respected by the Corporation that officers can not only belong to them but also deal with some of the problems without fear of political repercussions. Fujishen, in his research, could find no evidence to suggest that the groups would ask officers and local government employees to use their positions to benefit the organizations. He also found that a very much lower proportion of community organizations (23%) had officers as members compared with professional associations (100%) or interest groups (66%). As far as the Sheffield groups are concerned it would certainly be very undiplomatic for an officer to associate too closely on an individual basis with groups whose activities in many cases involve conflict with his employer. They have the same problem as the one or two councillors mentioned earlier in the section, that of not wanting to ride horses going in opposite directions.

The two factors, therefore, which account for the apparently low level of participation from both councillors and officers are, first, the 'political' nature of the issues and second, their lack of residential qualifications for membership of community-based organizations.

Methods of Communication with the System.

The way in which a group promotes its cause and campaigns is, perhaps, the key to understanding the relationship between the voluntary movement and the local government system. Getting things done is after all the main, although by no means the only, raison d'etre of the groups. The survey was designed to find out how the groups raised an issue; which channels of communication and contact points were used; and then to assess their perception of what they had achieved and whether or not their activity was considered to have been successful. The first set of questions concerned an important issue in which the organization had been involved in the twelve months before the survey. These are listed below. Some were raised for discussion by more than one group representative and this is indicated by the number adjacent to each topic:

Issues Raised for Discussion by Interviewee.

Action Groups.

Recreational Facilities in Area (1)
Litter (1)
District Plan Proposals (4)
Public Enquiry into Road Proposal (1)
General Improvement Area (1)
University Expansion (1)
Slum Clearance Proposals (3)
Traffic (2)
Hospital Expansion (1)
Children's Playground (1)
Tree Planting (1)
Conversion of Wash-house to Community Centre (1)
Compulsory Purchase Orders (1)
Road Widening (1)
Conversion of Houses for Student Use (1)

Tenants' Associations.

Lack of Shops (1)
Rents (4)
Problems with Heating Bills (1)
Litter (1)
Opposition to Public House Site (1)
Electric Re-wiring (1)
Traffic (1)
Pavements (1)
Central Heating Problems(1)
Vandalism (2)
Fire Prevention (1)
Bus-Stops/Shelters (1)

The interviewees were asked, "How did you first of all raise the issue?" The replies to this question are summarized in Table 5.1 below.

TABLE 5.1 "How did you first of all raise the issue?"

| Method | Tenants' Association | | Action Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| n = | 32 | 32 | 28 | 28 |
| | 1st Choice % | 2nd Choice % | 1st Choice % | 2nd Choice % |
| Letter to councillor | 21.9 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 3.6 |
| Visit to councillor | 6.3 | - | - | - |
| Phone councillor | - | 6.3 | 3.6 | - |
| Letter to Department | 43.8 | 12.5 | 28.6 | 3.6 |
| Public Meeting | 21.9 | - | 39.3 | 3.6 |
| Press | - | - | - | 3.6 |
| Not raised by group | - | - | 17.9 | - |
| Other | 6.3 | - | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| Only one choice | * | 75.0 | * | 78.6 |
| TOTAL | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's survey.

Some of the groups raised their particular issue in more than one way and these are shown in the second columns, however, the vast majority of the organizations had only one preferred strategy. The responses have been classified according to the method used. The fact that nobody telephoned or visited a Department suggests scepticism about direct communication with minor officials, an impression confirmed by the probes. With the tenants' associations there appear to be three routes for

initially raising issues: writing to the Department, writing to a local councillor or having a public meeting. Easily the most favoured procedure was to contact the Department (41.2%) but this proportion falls far short of the results produced by either Fujishen or Newton in their Birmingham studies. Fujishen reports that, "Corporation officials were approached first by about 70% of the organization representatives." Newton quotes a figure of 69% of organizations whose first approach was to a Corporation department. The discrepancy between these figures and the action groups in Sheffield is even greater - only 28.6% using a direct contact with a department and only a handful of groups deciding, in the first instance, to approach their councillor.

Taken together the approach of the tenants' associations to the local government system, either through the administrative or political wing, amounts to a figure of 70.6%. But a similar total for both Newton's and Fujishen's work gives a result of 90.0%. The total for the action groups is only 35.8%.

From Table 5.1 these differences can be seen to result from the use of public meetings as a way of raising an issue. With the action groups it is the single most favoured method (39.3%) and nearly a quarter of the tenants' associations also used public meetings as their initial step. The use of public meetings by tenants' associations has, since the controversy of 1967-68, been the usual method of campaigning around the rents issue and it was this issue which all but one of the associations who used a public meeting chose to discuss. Rents are a political issue and the more usual letters to the Departments or to the councillors is not a tactic which has much meaning. The objective has been to build a movement of tenants whose combined

strength can then bring pressure to bear on the authorities. In short, it was the 'issue' which determined what type of strategy to adopt, given the power structure and the history of politics in the city. This same theme also applies to the popularity of the public meeting so far as the action groups are concerned. In a similar way a 'show of strength' as the initial tactic was regarded as an essential to the establishment of a group's reputation. For an organization standing outside the traditional political system to achieve a negotiating position, let alone succeed in their objective, requires certain credentials, the most important of which is to be seen to be 'representative' of the community from which they come. Several interviewees also implied that there was virtue in demonstrating the viability of 'public participation'. In the Labour-dominated areas, in particular, meetings were used more overtly as a political weapon to minimize the effect of, if not to exclude altogether, the councillors. This was due either to the group being anxious for detailed negotiations with the officers - in all cases the planning officers - or to an underlying feeling of discontent with councillors who were not really in touch with the issues - for example, the declaration of a General Improvement Area, a Housing Action Area, the details on a District Plan. One group commented: "After the meeting we went straight to the Department and ignored the councillors." Another group, having adopted the same strategy, commented: "A lot of detailed comment on the Plan (a District Plan) was accepted and incorporated by the officers, even the boundary of the plan was changed on our suggestion." In a Conservative-controlled area one of the groups having no contact with the councillors organised an extensive propaganda campaign. They had the advantage of being able to

meet the Labour group and of making representations to the Environmental Sub-Committee, as well as of writing to the Planning Department. They also corresponded with the Social Services Minister and met the Trent and Area Hospital Authorities. Operating a campaign at this level would, of course, be very difficult without legitimacy as to the representativeness of the group. Public meetings are, therefore, a necessary part of the campaign even though most of the work and negotiations are handled by a small committee. Where less contentious issues or problems are concerned, it is entirely possible for a small committee to deal direct with a Department.

Table 5.1 shows a figure of 17.9% in a category, "Not raised by group". In these cases it was the (Planning) Department itself which raised the issue. Here is a description by a group representative concerning their campaign to get a disused wash-house turned into a community centre: "The idea was actually raised by the Planning Department and the officers in the District Plan. It wasn't us who raised the issue. The issue crystallized a few interested individuals into a group. The government in fact turned down the proposal - this dragged on for six to eight months during which time we developed the organization in relation to other issues in the area." A number of other issues were raised by the Planning Department, inviting public comment on such things as Compulsory Purchase Orders, G.I.A. Declarations and District Plan proposals. This was done either through the press or by a planning officer addressing a group meeting. This policy of inviting public participation was particularly common in the early 1970's - a period when some of the ideas embodied in the Skeffington Report (5.5) were beginning to be taken up by some local authorities. It was also the period when a number

of groups had achieved considerable success in their campaigns. The Walkley Action Group, for example, had by that time saved their area from the bulldozer and forced the declaration of a policy of redevelopment and improvement instead. But for whatever reason, approximately 20% of the issues which the action groups discussed in the interviews were the result of an invitation from the Planning Department itself. Finally, a small number of the action groups were able to raise their problem directly at Committee or Sub-Committee level through a councillor/member of the organization. These appear in the 'Other' category.

The Second Stage.

An indication has already been given of the sequence of activity that some of the organizations followed after the issue was first raised. Table 5.2 summarises for all the organizations the answers to the question, "What did you then decide to do?"

TABLE 5.2 "What did you then decide to do?"

| | Action Group | Tenants'Association |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| | % | % |
| Nothing | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| Public Meetings | 28.6 | 6.3 |
| Contact Cllr. | 7.1 | 12.5 |
| Contact Dept. | 25.0 | 31.3 |
| Contact M.P. | - | - |
| Survey | 17.9 | - |
| Petition | 3.6 | 31.3 |
| Other | 10.7 | 12.5 |

Source : Author's Survey

The responses included in the table are the main avenues used by each group. Often they would be using a variety of methods simultaneously; for example, organizing a meeting with departmental officials while working on a survey of the area. The activity concealed in the 'Other' category consisted for the action groups of a planning department exhibition, a self-help scheme to convert a wash-house into a community centre, a councillor/member intervening on the group's behalf at committee level; and for the tenants' associations; taking part in a demonstration in London, meeting Yorkshire Electricity Board officials and meeting local police.

These figures also differ markedly from those produced by Newton and Fujishen in their studies. In the first place the number of groups deciding to do nothing after their first move - usually because of reaching a satisfactory solution - was significantly lower in Sheffield. Newton calculated that of the 100 issues at stake in his sample, 45 were pursued only as far as the first contact (45%). In Fujishen's sample about 30% dropped out after the first round. Among Sheffield groups an average of only 6.5% did not pursue an issue further. In addition, according to both Newton and Fujishen and to Davies (5.6), a protracted issue is more likely to become politicized, leaving the sphere of the local government officers and going into the hands of the politicians, both local and national, and to the press and other groups. The assumption is that the vast majority of issues do not become 'political' and are resolved bureaucratically. Certainly most of the issues handled by the Sheffield groups are not made into political issues - in the sense that, say, the council house rent increases, or the comprehensive school issue, have been - but neither do most of them progress through a neat departmental procedure. This is clearly reflected

by the statistics in Table 5.2 in which a high proportion of both sets of organizations are shown not to be using the formal channels in their follow-up stage. Some groups, as described earlier, mounted a campaign of propaganda and negotiation using a multiplicity of channels of communication and influence. With nearly all the groups, however, there was at this second stage an emphasis on 'self-help', the objective mainly being to mount and sustain pressure on the Departments. Over a quarter of the tenants' associations, for example, as part of their second stage tactics organized petitions, a well-tried and traditional method of bringing pressure to bear. Sometimes the organization of a petition would go hand in hand with the setting up of a public meeting; often a leading member of the Housing Department would be invited to speak. The Chief Housing Officer in particular (new to the post at the time of the interviews) was often asked to speak and when he did so seemed to have smoothed the waters very successfully. It was characteristic of the tenants' associations to direct their departmental enquiries to the Housing Department rather than the Planning Department; again the nature of issue determining the direction of the strategy. Direct problem-solving meetings were held with a number of departments and agencies, including the police, the Yorkshire Electricity Board and a number of Corporation Departments. Mention of the rent dispute was always avoided by the representatives of the Housing Department.

The self-help work of the action groups is more diverse and creative than the tenants' associations. For example, nearly a third of the action groups included a survey as part of their follow-up strategy. A number of these were very sophisticated and comprehensive pieces of social survey research and several were done in conjunction with the Planning

Department. (They will be described more fully in a later section on Communication). The group trying to get a wash-house converted to a community centre worked out their own scheme for redesigning the building, started a fund-raising campaign and made an Urban Aid application. Another group organized a tree-planting campaign in the area. Several groups were working on issues which were involved in an overall community development strategy, in several cases helped or organized by professional workers.

Success or Failure?

The respondants were questioned at the end of this section of the survey on whether they thought they had been successful or unsuccessful in achieving their objectives over the issue. The responses are summarised in Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3 "How successful do you consider the outcome to be?"

| | Tenants' Assocs. | | Action Groups | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| n = | 32 | | 28 | |
| | % | | % | |
| Very Successful | 59.4 | 81.3 | 21.4 | 57.1 |
| Successful | 21.9 | | 35.7 | |
| Neither Successful nor Unsuccessful | - | | 39.3 | |
| Unsuccessful | 12.5 | 18.8 | 3.6 | 3.6 |
| Very Unsuccessful | 6.3 | | - | |
| | 100.0 | | 100.0 | |

Source: Author's survey.

There is clearly a very high degree of satisfaction among the organizations with the results of their campaigns. The nature of the issues in which the groups were involved largely seemed to determine the response. Issues such as litter on an

estate, a traffic problem, lack of bus shelters and so on are amenable to solution in a way which vandalism or high rents are not. The large section of action groups (39.3%) which opted for the non-commital, middle category mainly said that because the issue was long-term they were not prepared yet to suggest success or failure.

Conclusion.

It was suggested in the opening paragraphs of this chapter that we would be exploring the degree of integration of the groups into the local decision-making system. The results of this investigation it was felt would indicate the extent and nature of the alienation of the groups from the traditional local government system. The findings may be summarised in a series of short statements. First, there is a low level of membership of the groups by officers of the council or from councillors. This is due to them not generally being resident in areas which the organizations cover and, especially for councillors, the political problems which might arise from membership of an organization which opposed or was critical of council policy. Second, the tenants' associations in the initial stages of a campaign relied heavily on established departmental channels or their contact with the local councillors. A third of the action groups used those points of contact and 20% were themselves approached in the first place by a Council Department. Councillors were seldom approached by the action groups; their most favoured individual strategy was to call a public meeting because it was important to establish 'representative' credentials. Third, few of the groups achieved satisfaction after first-stage contact. Fourth, in the follow-up

stage both sets of group moved towards a 'self-help' strategy, the tenants' associations commonly calling a public meeting or raising a petition. The action groups continued to use public meetings and in preparing their bargaining positions often undertook social surveys. Some groups quickly began to take direct action in the form of environmental improvements - tree planting, planning a community centre, providing playground facilities. Most of the action groups advanced simultaneously on a number of 'fronts'. Fifth, degrees of satisfaction with the outcome of their campaigns were high. The less enthusiastic response of the action groups reflects their involvement in longer-term issues about which judgements tended to be reserved.

The overriding impression is that the groups are to a surprising degree integrated into the general milieu of local government politics. It is a pragmatic response born of the realities of the sources of power and finance. Much of their effort is, therefore, directed towards establishing a strong negotiating position with the Departments. If they are 'alienated' from the traditional party political channels it is because over a range of issues the local political system has shown itself to be insensitive to certain needs and demands within the communities. In short, there is not a breaking-off of contact but on the contrary, the groups strive to build new lines of communication to bridge gaps in the existing structure.

CHAPTER FIVE. References and Footnotes.

5.1 The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix B.

5.2 Quoted in 'Participation in Practice, Case Study 1: The Sharrow Experience' in the Journal of Royal Town Planning Institute, April 1973, p.167.

5.3 Fujishen, B., 'Styles of Advocacy: The Roles of Voluntary Organizations in the Birmingham Planning Process', Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham (1975).

5.4 Newton, K., Second City Politics (Oxford University Press, 1976), pp.63-9.

5.5 Skeffington Report, Report of Committee on Public Participation in Planning, H.M.S.O. (1969).

5.6 Davies, J., Neighbourhood Groups and Urban Renewal (Colombia University Press, 1966).

## CHAPTER SIX WHAT THE GRASSROOTS DO.

In the previous chapter the relationship of the grassroots to the traditional party political system was introduced. The next sequence of chapters seeks to examine the internal characteristics of the groups themselves. There is, in fact, very little data on the political organization of voluntary associations despite the plethora of community studies and studies of pressure group activity which have appeared in the last two decades. In his recent discovery and analysis of some four thousand voluntary associations in Birmingham, Newton suggests why this imbalance in the literature should be of serious concern. The sheer quantity of groups is startling and "...the discovery of a large quantity of group activity does not necessarily mean the presence of a thriving pluralist democracy, rather we must ask questions about the active groups and the interests they seek to protect." (6.1)

A reassessment of politics outside the party system and the Whitehall apparatus is clearly important because very little is actually known about it, with the exception of the pressure group studies. And virtually all of these studies investigate campaigns round particular issues, usually at a national level, and which usually conform to one of the pluralist models of government.(6.2) But of equal and perhaps greater significance is, in Newton's parlance, the submerged, "less visible nine-tenths of the iceberg" - the hundreds and thousands of groups and organizations who rarely become involved in national politics but at their level are constantly accumulating small achievements. The point is that it may have been assumed that the whole of the group and pressure group world operates on the basis of the "visible tenth of the iceberg" simply because the existence of

the mass of organizations in the localities was not known about, or at least acknowledged as being significant.

The purpose of the following chapters is to contribute to the limited range of knowledge about grassroots organizations. The subject of this chapter is quite simply an examination of what the groups do. The origins of the organizations are to be described and an assessment made of how, and if, they have changed direction since their formation. This data will indicate the very distinctive quality of their contribution to the political life of the city.

A summary of why the groups were set up and what they are currently involved in is given in Table 6.1. The interviewees were given the opportunity, if they wished, to suggest subsidiary reasons why their group was established or subsidiary accounts of their current interests. Most groups were, in fact, quite definite about the principle reason for their establishment and offered one main response. So far as their present activities are concerned some of the organizations have lost the 'single issue' emphasis characteristic of their origins. This is particularly true of the tenants' associations, all of which wished to suggest at least two major activities which currently occupy them. In their case there has been a dramatic realignment of interest since the period in 1967-69 when most of the associations were set up. They originated at the time of the rent rebate controversy in the city or in the aftermath of the furore. One association which was set up in 1969, for example, and which is wholly geared towards providing social activities and a limited range of welfare provision, said that the Housing Manager had written to all the tenants in the block asking them to set up an association. It seems likely that moves were made

| | WHY SET UP | | | | PRESENT ACTIVITIES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Action Groups | | Tenants'Assocs. | | Action Groups | | Tenants'Assocs. | |
| | 1 % | 2 % | 1 % | 2 % | 1 % | 2 % | 1 % | 2 % |
| n= | 28 | | 32 | | 28 | | 32 | |
| Planning Proposals | 42.9 | 7.1 | - | - | 42.9 | 14.3 | - | - |
| Environmental Issue | 7.1 | 7.1 | - | 12.5 | 21.4 | 21.4 | - | 25.0 |
| Welfare | - | 7.1 | 18.7 | - | 14.3 | 28.6 | 25.0 | 28.1 |
| Tenants'/Community Hall | - | - | - | - | - | 7.1 | 56.3 | 25.0 |
| Rents | - | - | 43.8 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Social Activities | - | - | 6.3 | - | - | 14.3 | 18.7 | 9.4 |
| Housing Repairs | - | - | 18.7 | - | 7.1 | - | - | - |
| Clearance | 42.9 | - | - | - | 7.1 | - | - | - |
| Other | 7.1 | 7.1 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 7.1 | - | - | 12.5 |
| No Other | * | 71.6 | * | 75.0 | * | 14.3 | * | - |

Source: Author's Survey

to take the sting out of the tenants' movement and the reorientation of their interests and activities has certainly been dramatic. Whether this is in fact due to deliberate policy is, however, debatable, rather the tendency to retreat from the political issues has been abetted by the Housing Department asking the associations to take over the running of tenants' halls. Many of the most politically active groups have indeed failed to make the transition to stable organizations and have either disappeared or have only a 'paper' existence. Five such associations were traced.(6.3). The reasons for this are complicated but can be traced to such factors as the age and size of the estates, whether a tenants' hall existed or has subsequently been built, and so on. The age of the estate is perhaps the single most important factor because under the terms of the rebate scheme in 1967 older estates were worse affected and were to receive bigger rent increases than the newer estates. They tended as a result to be the most militant and active and at the close of the controversy were perhaps most demoralised because the protracted rent strike led to internal bitterness. The big, old estates were also those lacking the facilities, particularly meeting places, in which new activities could be based. Of the surviving associations nearly 60% mention the management responsibility for a tenants' hall as their most important current function. The commentary of one association secretary shows precisely what has happened:

"We started up over the rent increase, etc. in 1967. But since then we have felt our way towards a more socially orientated group. We are responsible for running the tenants' hall. We cover complaints over repairs and housing generally. If tenants get no

satisfaction we take it up. We use the bingo sessions to pass on information - it's better than calling a special meeting! We have bingo three times a week; coffee mornings for O.A.Ps, a Wednesday Club, whist drives, jumble sales, a gala and sports day once a year, the occasional pea and pie supper and a monthly dance. At the moment we are dealing with cracking and rising pavements and the problem of litter disposal."

This mixture of provision based on a range of social and leisure activities together with complaints over the state of the houses and welfare problems is characteristic of the current and stable long-term activity of the tenants' associations. Only a handful of associations even mentioned the rent issue and those that did raise it were organizational shells based on a few individuals and providing no other activities. Nevertheless, most of the properly established organizations while predominantly working on their social events also had a small informal 'political' section: a few individuals who were acknowledged to be interested in the 'political side'. Certainly in three or four of the associations a Communist Party member continues to hold a leading position, retaining an organizational link with the tenants' movement.

Dealing with Welfare problems is an important function of half the associations. The informal setting of a bingo session or a coffee morning provides the opportunity for people to 'sound out' a committee member on a problem and, if necessary, the association will make contact either with the local councillors or with the Department, depending on the problem. The associations are also constantly monitoring a whole range of environmental problems - the following were current at the

time of interview: packs of dogs, T.V. reception, street lighting, bus-timetables, traffic hazards, the siting of pillar boxes, children's playgrounds, lack of shopping facilities and vandalism; and there must, as a result, be a constant exchange of correspondence between the associations and Corporation departments. One association had organized a 'Spring Clean' on the estate but this was exceptional as virtually the whole tenants' movement quite correctly regard the Corporation as the provider of services. In this context it was also mentioned that because many Corporation workers live on the estates there would probably be opposition to a widespread 'self-help' initiative by the association who would to some extent be seen to be undermining job security. Their provision is geared, therefore, to the three spheres of social and leisure activities, the handling of individual welfare problems, and negotiating with the departments over a multiplicity of housing and environmental complaints.(6.4)

This pattern of settling down after an initial struggle with a shared problem on the estate(s) has been observed by sociologists in a number of studies of working-class communities. (6.5) The more general question of the relationship of organizations to their communities is to be discussed in a later chapter. The point, at this stage, being that it is very difficult to sustain a campaigning organization on the basis of one issue. The rent rebate controversy came, as it happens, to a definite conclusion with a change to the scheme. Either they changed their function or they disintegrated.

The same theory, however, is not so easily transposed to the action groups. They were formed around a general group of issues concerned with 'urban renewal' but they are, in the form

of organization they have taken on and in their ambitions, a very diverse set of groups. Some, for example, are composed of a closed clique or cell of professionals concerned in a philanthropic way for the community in which they find themselves. Others aspire to be much more representative of their localities and so must establish a certain amount of organizational machinery for gathering local news and disseminating information. These and other varieties of organizations are to be discussed in the next chapter.

The action groups have not changed their functions to anything like the same extent as the tenants' associations. This it could be argued is due to the groups being generally of more recent origin than the associations and so they have not had time, as yet, to adjust in the same way. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the case: most of the groups have had at least three or four years of existence and the patterns of role and function have had ample time to develop and evolve. Certainly the tenants' associations had adopted their 'established' roles well within that length of time. What, then, does Table 6.1 and the comments recorded in the survey tell us about the evolution of the action groups? First, the vast majority of the groups, having started on the basis of urban renewal issues, continue to regard planning and redevelopment as the focal points of their activity. Roughly a quarter of the groups have changed what they consider to be their main orientation but this diversification is in no instance towards social activity. Indeed, it is largely a question of definition where a planning proposal or involvement in a clearance scheme ends and concern for community halls, welfare problems and housing repairs begins. For example, one group reported: "...we are mainly involved in

housing, especially the problem of getting the Corporation to repair houses rather than demolishing them." This group appears in the 'repairs' column but could equally as well have been included in the 'clearance' column: the balance is one of interpreting their central priority. Nevertheless, the data does suggest a degree of diversification and the tabular presentation conceals a great wealth of subsidiary activity and a wide spectrum of methods of work, tactics and approaches to problem solving as well as, in some cases, the provision of services and facilities for the membership. By far the most active of the action groups in Sheffield, and also the biggest numerically, is a group in the south-west suburbs. The primary activity was again extremely difficult to categorize for the Table. Their secretary listed a whole range of involvements and activities, ranging from a constant monitoring of planning applications in the area and opposing them where necessary, "attempting to organise the group on a smaller neighbourhood basis, the provision of a luncheon club for the elderly, a youth club, a mother and child club (in homes on a rota basis), a retired neighbours coffee morning, various social events, a playgroup twice a week, an annual fete and we are working towards getting permission for a community hall or centre." No other group had anything like this range of activity. Three other groups mentioned that they had the occasional social event - all these were groups with identifiable dues-paying members. Nearly all the groups either said or implied that their main concern was with the "quality of the local environment", and to this end there was a plethora of activity - about half the total energy was directed towards negotiations with one of the Corporation departments, principally the Planning Department,

while the rest of the action was bound into what can best be described as 'self-help' activity. It would, perhaps, be appropriate to catalogue these two distinct areas of work in order to indicate the variety and range of involvements.

The groups in the redevelopment areas were mainly occupied in monitoring the demolition programme, checking on C.P.Os, arguing cases of alleged unfair compensation and generally trying to avoid the problems of planning blight. Several groups were systematically monitoring the planning applications for their areas and two were involved in campaigns to oppose industrial development in residential areas. As with the tenants' associations there is a constant and steady stream of correspondence to the Departments. At the time of interview this was on the following questions: two groups asking the Corporation to repair or convert houses; three groups concerned with the bus services; three groups wanting the installation of traffic lights; one wanting the re-routeing of a grid road to avoid demolishing two O.A.Ps' bungalows; one group monitoring the progress of their General Improvement Area; one group requesting the provision of nursery school facilities in their area; a problem with flooding; two groups negotiating the site for a community centre; two groups requesting the provision of a playing field; four groups making submissions in a public participation phase of the South Yorkshire Structure Plan; one group requesting information on clearance proposals in their area; a group dealing with problems with a rubbish tip; a group organising a tree-planting campaign; one organization concerned to save some local footpaths; one worried about schooling provision and wanting a Parent Teacher Association; one group negotiating over the University expansion; and three groups concerned about 'small local details' in the

District Plan for their area.

All the activity of the groups can in a sense be thought of as 'self-help'. But it was characteristic of most of the action groups to initiate their own programmes of direct action to improve the environment in their locality or to provide some form of service for their members or for the community as a whole. I shall mention here only a selection of the activities to illustrate the range and scope of the interests of the action groups. They are all directed towards the demands and needs in their particular communities. Two groups operating in what are sometimes called 'twilight' areas had set up Advice Centres which handled a broad spectrum of individual welfare problems and complaints as well as monitoring the redevelopment programmes. Both these groups, it should be said, are involved in professional community development projects; several other groups, without access to the same degree of professional help, had tried unsuccessfully to establish Advice Centres, and one group provided an occasional surgery for legal problems. Other groups provided playground facilities or pre-school playgroups. In the adult age ranges a number of needs were catered for in Mother and Child luncheon clubs or Mothers' lunch clubs and similar clubs for pensioners. One group was helping to raise funds for a community bus which would help the high proportion of elderly and handicapped people known to live in the area. Several groups were hoping to arrange for the provision of a Community Centre in their area. Three groups were organizing 'Spring Cleans' or 'Clean Up Weeks' using children to remove rubbish and litter from the streets or demolition sites. Two groups had been working on a tree-planting campaign.

There was a clear division between groups which had decided

not to put on social functions or did so irregularly and the small minority of groups who provided regular entertainment. In fact only one group had a regular weekly activity of this sort - a bingo session. And only one other group had a monthly entertainment, in this case a dance. Four groups were involved in annual galas or fetes in their areas. And as was mentioned in the previous chapter 40% of the groups were involved in a social survey of some aspect of life in their area. This list of activities is by no means comprehensive but it does suggest that the action groups are making a very distinctive contribution to the political life of the city by developing their own capacity to provide a limited range of services in the communities and by undertaking their own research into the problems and needs of the areas, as well as by their involvement in negotiations and pressure group politics with the local government itself.

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CHAPTER SIX References and Footnotes.

6.1 Newton, K., Second City Politics (Oxford University Press, 1976), p.88

6.2 See for example:-

Wilson, H.H., Pressure Groups - The Campaign for Commercial Television (Secker and Worburg, 1961).

Christopher, J., Capital Punishment and British Politics (Allen and Unwin, 1963).

Gregory, R., The Price of Amenity - Five Studies in Conservation and Government (MacMillan, 1971).

Heiremann, B.W., Politics and the Powerless; a Study of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (Oxford University Press, 1972).

Blank, S., Industry and Government in Britain (Saxon House, 1973).

Kimber, B.H., and Richardson, J.J., Campaign for the Environment (Routledge, 1974).

6.3 See also Baldock, P., unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "Tenants' Voice", University of Sheffield (1971).

6.4 For a comparison see Goetschuis, G.W., Working with Community Groups (Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1969), chapter 4.

6.5 Durant, R., Watling: A Survey of Social Life on a New Housing Estate (P.S. King, 1939).

Hodges, A.W., and Smith, C.S., 'The Sheffield Estate' in Neighbourhood and Community (Liverpool University Press, 1954).

## CHAPTER SEVEN ORGANIZATION.

The material in the previous chapter, describing the activity of the organizations, suggested that there is not only a great quantity of activity but also a surprising diversity of interests to be found among the groups ranging from pressure group politics and the provision of welfare facilities to leisure and recreational events. It is on the basis of this work that the grassroots groups are making a very distinctive contribution to the political life of the city. This is a recurrent theme of the thesis and will be more fully developed in the concluding sections. As it stands, however, the material on the groups' activity presents a very random and unstructured picture. The purpose of this chapter is to remedy the situation by describing the organizational framework within which the plethora of involvements, ambitions and work take place. This in itself is important data but in addition involves the consideration of a number of key themes in political sociology. For example, since the influential work of Robert Michels, it has been important to consider the relationship between the type of organizational structure a group adopts and its aims and objectives. Organization and activity, that is to say, are not independent objects of discussion, but have reciprocal effects on each other.(7.1) A second theme is the question of the distribution of resources among the groups and the effect that this has on their modes of operation. There has for some time been controversy on this point. The American pluralists, taking their cue from Dahl (7.2), suggest that the inequalities of resources are not cumulative and that what a group lacks in one respect it will probably make up in another. The contrary view, which is more in keeping with the findings of political

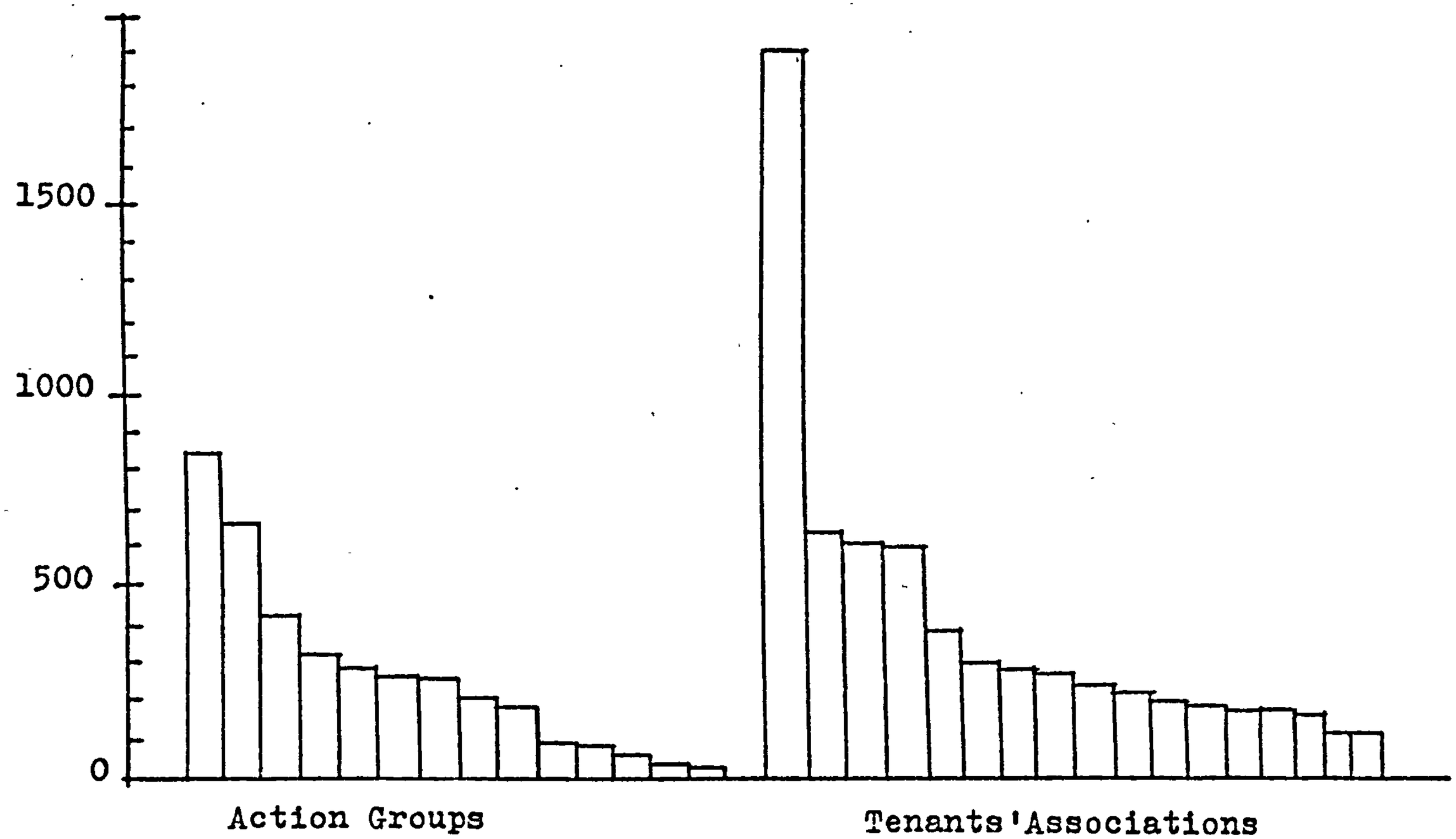
sociology generally, is that access to a certain level of resources is likely to be compounded into additional advantages. And conversely, that groups lacking access to important resources will be proportionately disadvantaged. Newton, for example, found that in his sample of groups in Birmingham, 60% had either a low or a high rating on three out of four resources - membership, income, paid staff and organizational development. (7.3) It is proposed to consider the resources of the Sheffield groups under broadly similar headings, but omitting 'paid staff' as none of the groups employed staff, which in itself is indicative of their milieu. As far as the controversy surrounding the characteristics of community organizations is concerned, there is no doubt that the groups in Sheffield are cumulative in their command of resources - the more activity they are involved in, the bigger the organizational establishment and the more activity they become capable of supporting. But this finding must be qualified by examining the aims and potentials of the groups. Sheer quantity of activity is not necessarily virtuous and some of the smaller and less-active groups make a considerable return on their limited investment of time and energy - their objectives being less ambitious and their tactics different from larger organizations. For example, the belief in 'citizen participation' or the tactical necessity to be able to prove representativeness when negotiating with an authority, was not shared by small, self-selected groups some of whom had access to and influence over the decision-makers by different routes.

The chapter will present material from the survey of groups in Sheffield under the following headings: level of activity; membership; internal organization; sub-committees; finance and conclusions.

Level of Activity.

Comparing groups on the simple basis of the amount of activity which each organization sustains was not an easy exercise, because devising a statistical technique to provide reliable results was problematic. In comparing different events and activities, what would be the criteria for weighting or scoring one action against another? How, for example, would it be possible to score an O.A.P.s coffee morning against, say, a tree-planting campaign? What would be the criteria for the score? The success of the activity? The number of group members involved in it? The number of face-to-face contacts in the community? Even if a scheme could be devised, the necessary amount of information was simply not available. It was decided instead to concentrate on internal organizational meetings and to assume that these internal sessions would in general be a reflection of the pattern of events and level of activities among the groups. Included in the statistical frame, therefore, are committee meetings, sub-committee meetings, executive meetings, other organizational meetings and, in addition, public meetings and 'membership-only' meetings which a few groups have. The comparison between the groups was made by awarding a score to each meeting and multiplying it by the frequency with which it occurred over a twelve-month period; the results are shown in the following table.

TABLE 7.1 LEVEL OF ACTIVITY SCORES




Source: Author's Survey.

Quite clearly activities are not evenly spread among the groups. There is no one general level nor even a clustering of activity at certain points. The chart, in fact, shows a cumulative pattern of scores with a gradual but increasingly rapid expansion in the totals at the higher end. The average score from both sets of groups is slightly under 300. 70% of the groups are below that level. Expressed as a ratio, 60% of the tenants' associations account for only 35% of the measured activity of the associations, while 60% of the action groups are involved in only 23% of their activities. The top half-dozen organizations have a concentration of work and activities which is many times greater than even the nearest groups on the scale. The enormous total of 1,807 for the highest scoring tenants' association is due to one factor, the bar facilities in the tenants' hall, which provides a guaranteed membership and a regular and very sizeable income. With its own hall, rooms and concert hall and its financial interest in the bar, this association is more like a Workingmen's Club than a tenants' association. It is the only group in this study to employ (part-time) staff. With that one exception, the variance in the scores is, in fact, far wider among the action groups than among the associations. It can be seen that there is a cluster of groups scoring well under 100 with the smallest two barely justifying to be called an organization. All these groups are proportionately many times lower in activity than the larger groups compared to the spread of scores among the tenants' associations. They are also much smaller than the smallest tenants' group. The explanation for these findings is to be found in the objectives and activities which the groups engage in and, reflecting these differences, the wide range of organizational

forms and styles adopted. In a previous chapter it was mentioned that the tenants' associations have had to change into 'social/welfare' organizations. Those who failed to make this transition have ceased to function due to the problem of maintaining the momentum of a campaigning group. Given the social orientation of their current activities, there appears to be a minimum point of establishment (at about 100 on the chart) below which it is not possible to organize a viable programme. By contrast, the very low scoring action groups characteristically do not arrange programmes of social or leisure activities and so do not need the network of sub-committees which organize the day-to-day running. Mainly they are composed of ten or a dozen people, usually from professional occupations, who regard themselves as acting as 'caretakers' to their community. These and other differences in organizational style are to be more fully discussed later in the chapter.

Clearly the grassroots organizations in Sheffield are not a homogeneous set of groups; and it should be remembered that all the groups are at different stages in their evolutionary cycle. The statistics and all the material have been taken at one particular time. While some of the groups are expanding, others are contracting, and some, because of decreasing or increasing support, are changing their functions. For example, one of the earliest of the action groups to be set up has achieved its original objective which was to save its area from a slum clearance scheme. At the time of interview the group was contracting its activity around a small nucleus of people who now see the role of the group as monitoring the progress of the programme of G.I.As and H.A.As, which have been substituted for the bulldozer. Their function has thus changed from being a campaigning organization based on genuine and not unrepresent-

ative support in the community to a mainly passive 'watch-dog' group. In this case no attempt has been made to develop a social/welfare orientation. The job has been done and the decision made (or, perhaps, not made) to become something different. In virtually every case, where an organization is expanding, they are doing so on the basis of providing either social events or various types of welfare facility and often a combination of both these. The self-help characteristics of the origins and early struggles of the groups are continued in the long term but are generally channelled into less controversial activities.

In order to clarify the different organizational types and to suggest the reasons why so many models exist it is necessary to examine certain key aspects of the groups' internal structure and arrangements. In order these are membership, the committee system, finance and membership involvement.

Membership.

The most basic element of any organization is its membership. In this study the attitude of the groups to their membership was a major factor in determining the style of operation adopted. There were indeed a number of different definitions of 'membership'. Using a formal definition - listed individuals who pay an annual subscription - only 40% of the action groups had such a membership. A further 40% said that they definitely did not have a membership and the remaining 20% of action groups claimed to have an informal membership consisting variously of people who attended their public meetings - "the number of people who agree with our ideas when we go canvassing" - by claiming that all the residents in their area are members of

the group (whether they knew it or not), or through contact with the residents 'set up over the years'. Two groups involved in professional community development projects were devolved into a number of neighbourhood or street units, and one of them used these small groups as the basis for identifying its membership. The groups which did not have members as such all consisted of small, closed cliques or cells of people generally not open to outside influences. In these cases usually one or two individuals decided to set up a group and then either invited participation from other organizations or simply established themselves through self-selection. "We have no formal membership; at the first public meeting responsibility devolved on to a number of volunteers, the nucleus of people have stayed together since then. Depending on the issues various other people have been drawn in and involved." The secretary of one small group described their method of maintaining the organization at its selected numerical strength in the following terms: "We find that as vacancies occur so someone emerges to take their place; we discuss their membership at a meeting. Usually they make a written application."

All but one of the tenants' associations have a formal membership. Surprisingly 60% had memberships totalling over 500 and three of them were over a thousand. These three were the same three groups which scored the highest totals in the level of activity analysis. Similarly the three biggest action groups scored the highest totals for activity. The most active action group had a membership of 800 and the other two had about 450 each. Not surprisingly a close relationship exists throughout the sample between the level of activity and the size of the membership. Although, as was suggested earlier, quantity of

activity and members is not necessarily a guarantee of quality, and many of the smaller groups considered themselves successful in their own terms. Indeed, a number of sociologists have observed that small, coherent groups can achieve both relatively and absolutely more than larger organizations because of the directness and discipline of their thrust.(7.4) Among the small Sheffield groups the amount of activity was low, but their objectives were limited and most groups considered that for their purpose they had a structure which was appropriate.

An important aspect of the statistics on membership concerns the point at which the groups achieved their highest membership. By comparing this with their current level some evidence can be provided as to the direction of the organizations' momentum, whether in fact they are growing, falling back, or perhaps have achieved a stable maximum size.

Half the tenants' associations said that their maximum membership occurred when they were first established. For all but two of the associations this was at the time of the rent rebate controversy in 1967. Many of the groups mentioned having an identifiable membership of several thousand at that time but that it was impossible to sustain the organization at that level on a long term basis. Two of the associations which had originated in 1967 said they had from then grown steadily on the basis of social activities and welfare provision. These two groups are currently the most active of the tenants' associations. Both these estates are relatively new and were not badly affected by the 1967 rent rebate proposals. They were therefore less active and smaller in size than the vast organizations that sprang up on the older estates where rent increases were higher. They quickly changed to a social orientation and both estates

were provided with a tenants' hall which is a prerequisite to developing a programme of social activities. Of the two associations established since 1967, one was set up by the Housing Department in 1970 when a new megablock unit of flats was opened; its role was to provide social activities in the tenants' hall. The second association formed during the early 1970's was on the old estate, and set up with the help of the Student Community Action group from the University. The first aim was to close down a Corporation refuse tip adjacent to the estate which was polluting the environment. Subsequently the estate was declared a G.I.A. which included improving the houses to the 12-point standard together with the provision of a Community Centre. The maximum membership of this association occurred at the point when improvements to the houses were commenced, improvements which necessitated people being temporarily moved from their homes. These findings confirm the pattern and sequence of events described in a number of studies (7.5) - that periods of organizational activity on council estates are closely related to periods of collective crisis usually resulting from the intervention of an external agency. At these times it has proved possible to sustain an organization of several thousands. Subsequently interest fades and the association either folds up or adopts a new role, almost without exception based on the provision of social activities. Whether this transition takes place or not is usually determined by the availability of meeting rooms or a tenants' hall on the estate and whether the particular issue or controversy had been resolved without demoralising the association. Assuming the availability of facilities it is possible to achieve a stable long-term and sizeable membership. This change of function acts as a

conservative influence on the political activities of the associations. Very quickly the idea of 'mobilizing the tenants' to force changes gives way to negotiations between the leadership and the Town Hall, sometimes via their councillors or sometimes by making direct representation to the individual departments. Whether some future controversy could temporarily reverse this sequence of events remains a distinct possibility. In the near future the cuts in local services might well be an issue which could resurrect the associations on some estates and develop a new campaigning role among the established groups; clearly these ideas are only speculative.

The patterns of change and development among the action groups are more varied than those of the tenants' associations because of the diversity of attitudes towards the question of membership. The small, cell organizations, for example, who did not have a membership as such, normally started with ten or a dozen people in the group and have remained at that size. Turnover is very low and the few who do leave are easily replaced. Most of these small organizations, however, also indicated that they have a periphery of informal 'members' which tended to expand or contract according to issues. Two groups specifically mentioned that their influence "varies with local issues." An example of this was the establishment in a number of group areas of G.I.As. The groups that did have a formal membership scheme were all more active and numerically stronger than either the cell groups or the more loosely structured organizations. All the large groups were established to negotiate changes in planning proposals for their area but these were not immediate problems as was the rent rebate scheme.

Their origins were therefore less dramatic than the tenants' associations and their membership has expanded gradually rather than by an overnight explosion in numbers. All the action groups with a formally organized membership described their maximum level of membership as their current figure. This position has been arrived at by expanding their areas of work and interest into the provision of various facilities - pre-school playgroups, mother and child, O.A.Ps' coffee mornings, etc. - and a limited range of more overt leisure activities. This growth of activity, however, has not diminished their 'political' work which has undergone a parallel expansion. Unlike the tenants' associations, larger action groups have not changed their roles but have gradually added new ones; not only maintaining a political role but also developing wider interests in the environmental and social problems of their areas.

A minority of groups (20%) stand between the small, closed organizations and the large groups with formal membership. These groups are in fact also run by a small number of activists but they do have a distinctive attitude towards membership. This attitude is based on having a very loose organizational structure and an emphasis on informality. This in turn is a reflection of the circumstances in which they were started and a definite philosophy adopted by their founder members. Two of the groups, for example, were established on the initiative of the Planning Department itself in order to encourage public comment on the District Plans. In one case, the Department contacted a National Council of Social Services community worker who took on the responsibility for establishing a project in the area - part of which was the formation of a group; the other group grew directly out of a Planning Department public meeting where a proposal to

set up a group was made. The aim has not, therefore, been to form a 'caretaker' organization, neither has it been possible to build a large formally organized group. This is due to a number of related factors; primarily that they are areas on the fringes of the clearance schemes and are therefore less disturbed communities than the inner-city areas, and secondly, they contain a high proportion of skilled manual workers. They are not, therefore, facing the threat of clearance but there are any number of environmental details which are considered to need attention. The influence of the social composition of the areas on the organizations is the subject of a later chapter. These intermediate groups do not, then, see it as their role to 'represent' the community from above but to exchange views and encourage public comment on the future of the area as well as, in the short-term, making small improvements to the area. In several cases this was seen as the first step to greater involvement of local people in the group but in the meantime it was necessary to operate an open system of organization with an informal approach to membership. This situation led these groups to suppose that everyone in the area might be considered a member of the group and that anyone who was interested could come along to committee meetings, public meetings, or involve themselves in the activity of the organization. The groups thus tended to expand their sphere of influence on the basis of the issues taken up. One group, for example, had a working party of fifty people organized to convert a disused wash-house into a community centre if and when the negotiations were successful. None of these groups had opted to encourage membership by developing a programme of social activities, but concentrated their effort into environmental issues - tree-planting, 'spring-cleans', consultation with

planners, providing evidence to the Structure Plan authorities, play facilities, better street lighting, etc. It is possible, then, to distinguish a variety of organizational types and it remains now to describe their internal structures and the way in which the membership, if any, is related to the central organization.

Internal Organization.

Without exception the groups and associations in this study are controlled by a small number of activists who meet on a more or less regular basis at committee meetings. Table 7.2 shows the breakdown of the frequency of the meetings of the main central committee.(7.6)

TABLE 7.2 Frequency of Main Committee Meetings.

| | Tenants' Associations. | Action Groups. |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| n = | 32 | 28 |
| Fortnightly | 28.1 | 7.1 |
| Monthly | 71.9 | 53.6 |
| Bi-Monthly | - | 14.3 |
| Irregular | - | 17.9 |
| (and less than bi-monthly) Other | - | 7.1 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's survey.

The 40% of action groups whose committee meets only six times a year or less are all cell organizations. That the tenants' association committees meet at least once a month is an indication of their formal and constitutional attitude towards organization which in general with the associations reflects the influence of the mainstream Labour Movement. As will be shown in the following

chapter, a high proportion of the leaderships has trade union experience. All the tenants' associations have written constitutions and all but one of these stipulated the election of the committee to be at an Annual General Meeting. The action groups by contrast had a variety of ways of legitimising the relationship between the members and the committee. Only 54% of the groups have in fact got a procedure for annually electing their committee and so nearly half, it should be said, do not have the most basic elements of democratic control; this having been noted, most of the groups gave the impression that for them their particular arrangements were satisfactory. Several of the cell groups indeed made a virtue of the fact of their self-selection. "The whole point about our group is that it isn't representative. If it was representative it wouldn't need to exist;" meaning that they saw themselves as catalysts. Others in this category disguised their lack of accountability under a number of vague commitments. "We are just people who are interested. Anybody interested in the committee can let me know." "We don't try to recruit members but people who are interested just come along."

The committees of the intermediate groups had all originally been elected at their first public meeting but had either not yet had another meeting or thought that a renewal of their mandate was not necessary. "Originally eleven names were put forward to the meeting and elected. The committee size has remained constant since then, although some replacement has been necessary." Two of the larger and more formal groups which both had neighbourhood organizations used these sub-units as the source of their main committee. In one case the whole committee was composed of delegates from the neighbourhood sections; in the

other, a proportion were also elected directly from the A.G.M. All the remaining action groups (50%) have annual elections in accordance with a constitutional requirement.

An additional avenue to participating in a group committee is by the co-option of outsiders or of members. Most groups could co-opt members on to the committee at any time; two recent examples included the necessity for a replacement treasurer, and another member who had developed an enthusiasm for paper collecting was brought on to the committee. In their attitudes to co-opting outsiders there was a marked difference between the tenants' associations and the action groups. Only 23% of the tenants' groups allowed co-option of non-members to the committee. Generally they expressed the view that having outsiders on the committee could lead to 'trouble'. During the 1967 rent rebate controversy, many of the associations were aware of problems caused by the International Socialist group. Those who currently were allowed on to the committee were all either councillors, community workers or clergymen.

The action groups were much less rigid in their attitude towards co-option; the small organizations who do not have elections rely on co-opting new members as their way of replenishing the committee. In the intermediate groups, with their easy-going 'constitutional' arrangements, co-opting was not really a problem because anyone can turn up to meetings; "...people turn up who are interested." Most of the larger, formal groups had at least one co-opted member; some mentioned inviting people on to the committee because they had a particular 'expertise' and these include, "friendly academics", policemen, community workers, students and councillors. 20% of the action groups had a co-opted professional community worker on the committee.

Sub-Committees.

Nearly half the total number of groups have sub-committees - in some instances an important means of channelling information to and from the membership, giving members an additional sphere of activity and influence within the structure of the organization. However, 40% of the sub-committees were simply off-shoots of a parent committee and were exclusive to the members of that body. All other sub-committees were composed of a mixture of ordinary members and people from a main committee. All but one of the tenants' association sub-committees were elected at the A.G.M., but only 20% of the action group committees were subject to election. This again indicates not only the different attitudes of these two types of group to organizational procedure, but also reflects the sharply contrasting activities. With the tenants' associations now based exclusively on social activities, their organizational requirements are predictable and without exception their sub-committees deal with one or more social activities - the angling club, the 'Wednesday Group', the social committee, the 'over 50s' group, the dance committee, the bar committee, entertainments committee, etc. It is significant, however, that the distinction between 'social' activities and 'welfare' activities is by no means clear, for not only do many of the social events provide a forum for social intercourse, but they also are often used by the members as a source of informal counselling. The action groups do not provide these regular and frequent social activities but if they do develop a 'welfare' role they stress the idea of providing services for particular needs - young mothers, pre-school play facilities, luncheon clubs for the elderly, etc. In fact only one of all the action group sub-committees was formally designated as a

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social committee. 70% of the action group sub-committees were dealing with what can broadly be defined as 'planning' issues. This figure will vary over a period of years because committees were often established and dissolved according to the particular issues which concern the groups at any one time. "We have small groups who come and go with the issues." "Sub-committees spring up as and when necessary. The Langley Street G.I.A. sub-committee is the only one at the present time."

Although it was not always the case, in general the large organizations were the groups that had sub-committees. 25% of the action groups and 30% of the tenants' associations had three or four committees. The biggest action group had, at the time of interview, seven sub-committees: planning, welfare, community and recreation, playgroup, luncheon club, publicity and fund raising. Several groups had 'monitoring' sub-committees; for example, one was following the expansion and redevelopment of the University, and another the Trent Area Health Authority plans for the local hospital - each topic had its own committee. Another group had a series of 'working groups', effectively sub-committees, who were again responsible for particular topics or issues: the Advice Centre, schools, social services, pollution, Land Use Transportation Study. With all these specialist sub-committees the qualification for membership, apart from general interest, was expertise. Very few were elected by or accountable to the parent body. In short, some group sub-committees are playing an important role as the one area in the internal structure where membership can be involved in day-to-day running of the group; they reflect very closely the scale of the organization's activities and the range of interests.

Nevertheless, the actual level of involvement of group

members, as a proportion, was low; the largest action group had fifty people involved in their sub-committees but the rest had less than twenty (remembering that over half the groups have no sub-committees at all). The four biggest tenants' associations had between thirty and fifty people involved in sub-committee work but the others, with sub-committees, had only small involvement of from six to ten members. This record of involvement compares favourably, however, with other organizations concerned with local affairs; for example, the performance of the groups in this respect is no worse than ward political parties in Sheffield and in some cases is significantly better.(7.7)

But with the exception of the half-dozen larger organizations, participation of the ordinary membership in decision-making was low. The estimates from interviewees regarding the proportion involved in organizational activity confirmed this finding; three-quarters of the tenants' association respondents thought that less than 10% were involved. It should be remembered that this figure is from a base of formal memberships usually of at least several hundreds and with relatively straightforward organizational tasks. The action groups with their less easily defined memberships produced a much wider range of responses; 25% of these groups claimed that all their members were active - this is conceivable in a small organization of not more than fifteen people. 40% of action groups, however, indicated that less than 10% of members were active in their groups; a further 20% of groups stated that between one quarter and one half of their members were involved. These findings raise a number of key questions which are to be taken up in the following chapters. In particular there is the question of the 'representativeness' of the organizations not only in the sense of their internal

democracy but also in the sense of their relationship to the communities where they operate. With organizations that draw their membership from restricted geographical areas these two facets of their representativeness are closely allied. That the participation of the membership in the decision-making section of the groups is low throws the role of 'activists' into sharp relief. It is their characteristics and role which is to be the central theme of the next chapter.

Finance.

The financial resources of groups are generally modest, but the tenants' associations appear to be steadily accumulating some sizeable bank balances from the profits of bingo and totes; this money is often left to accumulate since spending it can be a dangerous source of 'trouble'. Some groups plough the resources back to the membership through children's outings, Christmas parties and food hampers, etc.; their membership fees are also subsidised from this profit, the usual annual fee being 10p. Half of the action groups do not have any income from membership subscriptions although many had raised small sums of money from jumble sales and collections at public meetings in order to cover secretarial expenses. The groups collecting from their membership all charge either 25p or 50p a year, but with smaller numerical strength than tenants' associations these higher charges nevertheless raise comparatively small amounts and no group raised more than £200 by this method - most were between £25 - £100. Several of the respondents commented - "We don't need much money." Thus money resources are of marginal consideration in the overall balance of resources available to the organizations. None of them is in a position to employ staff and there appears to be

no correlation between their financial positions and their political activity. Basically their income is a subsistance resource - to pay hall hiring fees, secretarial expenses - it tends otherwise to be spent on social occasions, such as parties, galas or outings and is often raised specifically for these events.

Conclusion.

In the opening remarks of this chapter it was suggested that an examination of the groups' internal structures would not only provide the organizational framework to their activity but would raise for discussion a number of important themes. First there was the question of the relationship between the role of the groups and their type and style of organization and second, whether their effectiveness is enhanced or retarded by access to certain resources. As was suggested these themes proved to be interchangeable.

The comparison of the level of activity scores measured by the number and frequency of internal organizational meetings revealed not only an extremely wide range of scores but also the strong suggestion that there is a cumulative pattern in the way group activity builds up. Further examination, however, indicated that this was an over-simplified conclusion to draw; a measure of quantity of activity does not discriminate either qualitatively or by type of activity. In particular the level of activity in a group is not necessarily an indication of the scale of its political activity. For example, within the confines of certain objectives some of the low scoring groups were effective in achieving their aims, particularly in negotiations with city administrators. Indeed, it could be argued with some

justification from some of the small groups that their size and compactness is an advantage over more complex and unwieldy organizations. On the other hand, some groups are ineffective precisely because they are badly organized and small. This theme can also be related to later findings which show that the number of people with effective decision-making influence in the larger organizations is very small. Negotiating power rests in the hands of a minority of people, usually the members of the main committee, and even, in some cases, a minority of the committee itself. This is particularly the case with the tenants' associations who, having adopted a social/welfare role, often leave the conduct of negotiations with the Housing Department, councillors, etc., to one or two recognised individuals among the leadership. The larger action groups also tend to rely on a few principal characters but they have in addition a periphery of members who are nearer to the centre of power and can help to shape policy, particularly by serving on a sub-committee. It should be said, however, that these are still a small minority of the total membership and it has become clear that a key ingredient of the organizations is the quality of the leadership itself - the small nucleus of people who, irrespective of the size of the group, activate the organizational machinery. The next chapter will discuss their role in more detail.

A second important theme to emerge from this chapter is the influence of the issues on the shape and style of group activity; in addition this question has to be taken in the context of the histories and evolution of the groups. In this chapter one of the action groups was shown to have contracted into a small watch-dog organization from an earlier position as a campaigning group drawing a wide base of support from the

community; this change had occurred as the threat of the bulldozer receded. A second group currently sustains a membership of 600, precisely on the basis of negotiating changes to a clearance and redevelopment scheme. As the issues are resolved it seems likely that this group too will change its function and therefore its structure, possibly adopting the 'watch-dog' role or a more service-orientated role; or it may, of course, simply cease functioning.

Some of the larger action groups, because they are involved in long-term issues, not only develop a selection of services but also take up secondary issues which are more immediately open to solution or to influence. The impulse in these groups to demonstrate a degree of representativeness in order to justify and strengthen their bargaining position has led them to research local opinion and to gather information on a variety of issues in the community. Sub-committees take responsibility for conducting surveys and monitoring data as it becomes available. The groups thus expand their internal apparatus to meet the requirements of particular topics. The selection of these secondary issues clearly involves a number of value-judgements about the type of issue to be taken up, but the fact that they respond to certain problems and not to others does not mean that they are not reflecting a genuine feeling in the area.

The positions which the groups adopt on the question of representativeness, and the choice of issues they fight or the role adopted, largely determine their attitude towards membership. This in turn is a key factor in the organizational style adopted. There are basically three notions about membership. The principle definition, which is subscribed to by all the tenants' associations and 40% of the action groups, is of formal,

listed, dues-paying members. Second is the very loose definition adopted by the 'intermediate' action groups (20% of the sample) who generally aspire to having a formal membership at a future stage, but are not yet able to sustain the necessary involvement by the community. This is because they are not faced with a 'big issue' but are concerned with small, environmental problems. Until they can build interest they often suggest that "everyone in the area is a member," or, "all the people who attend our public meetings" are members. A further 40% of action groups do not see the necessity of having or aspiring towards a membership and in this way becoming representative of the area. This includes groups that have reached a stage in their history where they have lost their basis in the community because the issues have been resolved; the necessity to demonstrate a genuine representative foothold thus becomes superfluous as they adopt a much "lower profile".

These definitions in combination with a number of other factors suggest, at this stage, four distinct models of community organization. These are to be elaborated and further sub-divided in later chapters. They are (i) tenants' associations - large formal membership with activity based on social/welfare provision; formal and centralized internal structure. (ii) Major action groups - large formal membership; providing a range of services in addition to working on primary and secondary issues. Formal but more diffuse internal structure than tenants' associations. (iii) Intermediate action groups - an informal 'membership'; very loosely structured and working on secondary environmental issues; not yet expanded the self-help notion into service provision. (iv) 'Cell' action groups - no membership, but a tightly knit circle who have adopted a caretaker role vis à vis

their community; this could be by deliberate choice or resulting from the contraction of a campaigning organization.

On the question of resources, it is the case that the groups accumulate advantages or disadvantages rather than being able to compensate for weaknesses by developing other resources. For example, groups with their own premises can organize regular functions and can develop a stable membership which provides financial security. This accounts for there being no small tenants' associations (see level of activity table) because it is virtually impossible to sustain a social/welfare organization without a meeting hall. But some of the small action groups who chose a modest role for themselves are not disadvantaged by the lack of resources because their activity does not depend on the provision of services or on developing a representative base in the area. On the other hand, particularly among the intermediate action groups, the lack of facilities, of a paying membership and of a more developed organizational structure undoubtedly inhibits their progress. In the next chapter the important and influential resource, group leadership, will be investigated.

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7.4 See, for example, Bolan, R.S., 'Community Decision Behaviour : The Culture of Planning' in AIP Journal Sept.(1969), p.301.

7.5 Durant, R., Watling, A Social Survey (P.S. King, 1939), pp.42-9; Mitchell, G.D., Lupton, T., Hodges, M.W., Smith, C.S., Neighbourhood and Community (Liverpool University Press, 1954).

7.6 These findings correspond with those produced by Hampton and Beal in their survey of groups in South Yorkshire involved in public participation in structure planning. 60% of the committees in their sample met once a month or more frequently.
Hampton, W.A. and Beal, W., 'Methods of Approaching Groups in South Yorkshire'. Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning, Interim Research Paper II )1976), p.16.

7.7 See Chapter Eight. Also Waugh, A., 'The Changing Composition of Sheffield Labour Party 1945-1972', unpublished M.A. thesis (University of Sheffield).

## CHAPTER EIGHT THE ACTIVISTS

The much quoted phrase of Michels that "who says organisation says oligarchy" contains a number of key themes for the study of political representation. The principal question is that of the nature of the relationship between leaders and members in an organisation. According to Michels (8.1) it is absolutely inevitable, even in socialist parties who avow the notion of democratic accountability, that a gulf will develop between the leadership and the members. Is this observation equally as valid for small, community groups, as it is for mass political parties? It seems probable that it is - but for slightly modified reasons. And it is not only at the level of the internal authority structure that there are widely accepted grounds for criticizing political organisations, whether large or small. Their degree of representativeness is not only challenged by the oligarchical control of decision-making power but also in the social characteristics of the leaders themselves. Very often they are seen to be untypical of the membership. Bottomore (8.2) and Stacey (8.3), for example, show that the activists in voluntary associations from the towns which they studied were more middle class and more highly educated than the population as a whole. In addition, both studies reveal that a small number of these same people belonged not to one but to many different organisations. Associational life is thus seen to be generally unrepresentative of society in two related ways; first, that there are a small number of 'joiners' who control a wide range of groups and second, that they are predominantly middle class. Conversely, more recent

work has shown that a large minority (35%) belong to no organisation at all.(8.4) These findings serve to open up a major critique of one of the pluralist models of the political organisation of society. In this model there is a stress on the role of voluntary associations and pressure groups as channels of communication between the public and government. This view ignores the fact that a diversity and multiplicity of groups does not in fact necessarily imply mass involvement. As Newton points out, social pluralism does not lead to political pluralism. (8.5)

In the sphere of local party politics both the Maud Report and Hampton (8.6) among others illustrate that local councillors also differ from the general population in that they too are more middle class and have a high proportion of the elderly and the retired within their ranks, and under-represent women, manual workers and young people. It has also been suggested that the grassroots activists in ward Labour Parties have become increasingly orientated towards the middle class sections of society, both in personnel and, as a consequence, in policies. Hindess (8.7) argued that, 'there has been a vicious circle of decline in the more working class areas of cities with a consequent shift of power towards the more middle class areas. This in turn affects party policy and leads to a further decline in the more working class areas.' In fact, there are strong grounds for criticizing the Hindess thesis and these will be taken up later in the chapter. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that most of the reputable evidence indicates that in many spheres of voluntary associational activity certain sections of the community are heavily over-represented and large sections

have little or no representation. In geographically based community groups such an imbalance, if it were shown to be the case, might certainly be regarded as diminishing their acceptability in terms of traditional ideas of democratic control. The concern in this chapter is, therefore, to see precisely who the activists in the groups are. As the people with decision-making power it is the leadership in the organisations who are of primary interest.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. First, the individual characteristics of the leading officers of the groups are examined. Second, a recent study of the characteristics of ward Labour Party activists in Sheffield (8.8) provides an opportunity to compare the two sets of profiles, and third, an assessment of the role of the activists in the shaping of the concerns and style of groups is to be made. Taking up the theme of the previous chapter, how important is the leadership as a resource?

Individual Characteristics.

The index of occupation and socio-economic status is the key characteristic and has frequently been shown to be related to other indices. The socio-economic data on chairmen and secretaries of groups is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. Almost without exception those key posts were held by the leading activists in the groups.

TABLE 8.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of Action Groups and Tenants' Association Activists.

| n = | | 28 | 32 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEG | | Action Groups % | Tenants' Associations % | |
| 1 | | - | - | |
| 2 | | 3.8 | - | |
| 3 | | 3.8 | - | |
| 4 | Non-Manual | 26.9 | | 28.2% |
| 5 | 84.5% | 34.6 | 6.3 | |
| 6 | | 15.4 | 21.9 | |
| 7 | | - | - | |
| 8 | Skilled Manual | 3.8 | 34.4 | 40.7% |
| 9 | 11.4% | 7.6 | 6.3 | |
| 10 | Unskilled Manual | 3.8 | 18.7 | 31.2% |
| 11 | 3.8% | - | 12.5 | |

Sources: Author's Survey.

Both types of group heavily over-represent certain socio-economic groups. As far as action groups are concerned the overwhelming preponderance of people from non-manual occupations exceeds expectation because most of the groups are located in areas of the city where these higher status SEGs are found in only small numbers. But it is precisely from that small minority, especially professionals (SEGs 4 and 5), that the action group leadership is drawn. This suggests that the middle classes are not only 'joiners' but that some of them are also initiators, and they fulfil that role even where they are a minority. The fact that they elected to live in such areas suggests that they may have a heightened sense of altruism reflected in their choice of profession. Commitment to one

of the 'caring professions' (8.10) often involves a residential commitment as well. Given that the council estates are thoroughly working class in social composition, non-manual workers are also over-represented among the leadership of the tenants' associations; 'Junior' non-manual and skilled manual workers account for over 70% of the activists. Unskilled workers are under-represented but far less so in the tenants' associations than in the action groups. Although the tenants' groups more generally reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the Sheffield electorate, nevertheless, judged by the areas in which they operate, neither organisation is led by people typical of their community. There is a strong tendency for the higher status occupations to dominate the leaderships.

TABLE 8.2 Socio-economic Status of Activists compared with the Sheffield Electorate.

| SEG's | Sheffield Elect.% | Action Groups % | Tenants' Assocs.% |
|---|---|---|---|
| n = | | 28 | 32 |
| 1, 3, 4 | 7 | 31 | 0 |
| 2, 13, 14 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 5, 6, 7, 12 | 27 | 50 | 29 |
| 8, 9 | 24 | 11 | 41 |
| 10, 11, 15 | 25 | 4 | 30 |
| 16, etc. | 14 | 0 | 0 |

Sources: Author's Survey and Survey of the Sheffield electorate. Results in Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (OUP, 1970).

The index which is most commonly related to socio-economic status is that of education. Certain types of educational qualification are heavily rewarded in terms of occupational

expectancy; for example, entry into most of the higher professions is dependent on having a university degree. Nearly 40% of the action group officers possess a university degree, whereas none of the tenants' association officers has a degree and over 70% have no educational qualifications whatsoever.

TABLE 8.3 Highest Qualification Achieved by Activists.

| | Action Groups.% | Tenants' Assocs. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| Qualification. | | |
| No Qualification. | 17.9 | 68.8 |
| "O" level. | 10.7 | 18.7 |
| "A" level. | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| Teachers Diploma. | 14.3 | 6.3 |
| University Degree. | 39.3 | - |
| Other. | 3.6 | - |
| Not Answered. | 7.1 | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

The proportion of action group representatives with higher educational credentials is astonishingly high, not only untypical of the population as a whole but also of the middle classes themselves (8.11); their education has been longer, the range of educational experience wider and their qualifications are higher. By contrast only one of the tenants' association officers has been on a full-time course of further educational study (Table 8.4). The action groups' leadership contain a high proportion of highly educated middle class activists while the tenants' association officers are

predominantly skilled workers with a very modest educational record - mainly of part-time day-release courses or evening classes.

A comparison of the ages of the two sets of activists also reveals significant contrasts (Table 8.5). Nearly half the action group organisers are under 35 years old, but only 12% of the tenants' association officers are in that category. The main nucleus of tenants' activists, 65% are drawn from the 45-65 age range. It is surprising to find such a difference between the two types of organisations and particularly that so few young people are involved in tenants' associations. Reasons for these contrasts will be discussed more fully in the next section in relation to a comparison between groups and ward Labour Parties. There can be no doubt, however, that the functions which the tenants' associations now fulfil, based on the provision of social and welfare facilities, are not attractive to young married couples from working class backgrounds. Young professionals tend on the other hand to seek socially rewarding activities which may be seen as an extension of their professional activities as teachers, clergymen, or social workers.

TABLE 8.4 Further Education of Activists.

| Type. | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Assocs. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| None. | 7.1 | 53.1 |
| Correspondence/Evening. | 3.6 | 12.5 |
| Full-time/Polytechnic. | 17.9 | 6.3 |
| Part-time/Polytechnic. | 21.4 | 21.9 |
| Full-time University. | 35.7 | - |
| Part-time University. | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| Other Part-time. | 7.1 | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

TABLE 8.5 Age of Activists.

| Age. | Action Groups % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| 20-24 years. | 7.1 | - |
| 25-34 | 39.3 | 12.5 |
| 35-44 | 14.3 | 18.7 |
| 45-54 | 7.1 | 43.8 |
| 55-64 | 14.3 | 18.7 |
| 65 + | 17.9 | 6.3 |

Source: Author's Survey.

Another contrast related to this basic division between the organisations is an index which describes the degree of attachment of the activists to Sheffield. The index was measured by reference to such things as the number of social ties which the respondents have, whether they were born in Sheffield, how long they have lived in the city and so on. All the tenants' association officials were found to be native to the city, but only half the action group activists had been born in Sheffield. Over 35% of the action group officers have lived in the City for less than 10 years (Table 8.6). Compared with the Sheffield residents as a whole this is a very high rate of immigration into the city; over 85% of the Sheffield population were born in the city. (8.12).

Data was also collected on the respondents' social ties to the City which again revealed a strong contrast between the two sets of activists. Over 75% of tenants' association activists have at least half their relatives living in the City while the comparable figure for action group activists

is under 30%. Furthermore, nearly 60% of the latter sample reported that less than one quarter of their relatives lived in Sheffield, including nearly 40% with no relatives at all in the city. Over 70% of the tenants' association officers said that all their friends lived in Sheffield. Only 18% of the action groups officers felt that all their friends lived in the city but well over 50% said that over half their friends were resident in Sheffield. Taken together, the data in Tables 8.7 and 8.8 gives a clear impression of one group of officers being very rooted in the area with the vast majority of their friends and relatives near at hand, while the other group has more limited social ties. The latter situation is characteristic of mobile professional sections of society but is untypical of the Sheffield residents as a whole. The action group activists' commitment to the city is not, however, superficial; on the contrary they play an important role as catalysts against native parochialism. As relative 'outsiders', however, their task is exceptionally difficult for they may be seen to be seeking 'community' as a source of identity. This may be characteristic of mobile middle classes and in some circumstances it can cause conflict and dissent in the stable, long-term community.(8.13).

TABLE 8.6 Length of Residence in Sheffield of Activists.

| Duration. | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| Less than 2 years. | 3.6 | - |
| 2 - 5 years. | 21.4 | - |
| 6 - 10 years. | 10.7 | - |
| 11 - 20 years. | 7.1 | - |
| Over 20 years. | 57.1 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's Survey.

TABLE 8.7 Number of Activists' Relatives who live in Sheffield.

| | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| All. | 14.3 | 40.6 |
| Over half. | 14.3 | 34.4 |
| Quarter to half. | 10.7 | 12.5 |
| Less than quarter. | 17.9 | 12.5 |
| None. | 39.3 | - |
| Not applicable. | 3.6 | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

TABLE 8.8 Number of Activists' Friends who live in Sheffield.

| | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| All. | 17.9 | 68.8 |
| Over half. | 53.6 | 18.6 |
| Quarter to half. | 21.4 | 12.5 |
| Less than quarter. | 7.1 | - |
| None. | - | - |
| Not applicable. | - | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

Within the City itself, however, internal movements are considerable, especially among tenants' associations' officers. Doubtless this is a factor from the redevelopment of the housing stock since the mid-1920s. The action groups' representatives have a record of much less internal mobility due partly to the history of recent immigration among a majority of their number; but also the longer-term and native residents in the sample have been attached to their part of the city for very long periods. This is confirmed in the Table 8.10 summary of information on duration of residence at current addresses. Twenty-five per cent of the action groups' leadership have lived at their present addresses for over twenty years. The bulk of tenants' association activists having lived at their current addresses for over six years suggests that they are well-established members of estates - many being original occupants. Over 70% of the action group activists are owner-occupiers with only 14% in privately rented tenures - statistics which again indicate an imbalance in their representativeness of the communities which are more equally balanced in the distribution of tenures.

TABLE 8.9 Number of Residences in Sheffield.

| | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| 1 | 25.0 | - |
| 2 | 28.6 | 12.5 |
| 3 | 17.9 | 25.0 |
| 4 | 10.7 | 25.0 |
| 5+ | 17.9 | 37.5 |

Source: Author's Survey.

TABLE 8.10 Duration of Residence at Current Addresses.

| | Action Groups. % | Tenants' Associations. % |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| Less than 2 years. | 10.7 | - |
| 2 - 5 years. | 39.3 | 25.0 |
| 6 - 10 years. | 17.9 | 37.5 |
| 11 - 20 years. | 7.1 | 25.0 |
| Over 20 years. | 25.0 | 12.5 |

Source: Author's Survey.

The picture finally emerging from this data is of two very contrasting groups of people. On the one hand tenants' association activists - drawn mainly from skilled manual and junior non-manual occupational groups, having few educational qualifications and only the basic minimum schooling; mostly middle-aged and all rooted in Sheffield by birth, social and family ties and, of course, living exclusively on council estates. The action group activists, by contrast, have distinct but less rigid profiles falling into two main types. The principal group consists of young geographically mobile professionals who are highly educated: higher even than the average for their occupational class, and who are owner-occupiers with social ties extending well beyond the boundaries of the city. A smaller secondary group contains people more rooted in the city who are older than the primary group and are also mainly owner-occupiers whose occupational status although mixed tends to be lower than the principal group; they are distinguished by a strong degree of attachment to

Sheffield and to the area in which many of them have lived for at least twenty years.

Membership of Other Organisations.

Several studies have produced evidence suggesting that membership of voluntary associations is not evenly spread among citizens. On the contrary a relatively few people, tending to be drawn from the educated middle class, belong to a large number of groups. This has been shown to have important consequences so far as one version of the pluralist theory of the political organisation of society is concerned. (8.14).

TABLE 8.11 Organisational Membership - Number of Organisations.

| Belonging to:- | England (excluding London) | Sheffield | Action Group Officers | Tenants' Association Officers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| No Organisation. | 35 | 35 | 12 | 12 |
| One Organisation. | 25 | 24 | 4 | - |
| Two or Three Organisations. | 27 | 27 | 28 | 53 |
| Four or more Organisations. | 13 | 13 | 56 | 35 |

Source: Community Attitudes Survey: England, Table 32, Hampton W.A. 'Democracy and Community', p.145, survey of Sheffield Action Groups and Tenants' Associations.

Table 8.11 summarises data on the number of organisations to which the Sheffield action groups and tenants' associations activists belong, a comparison being drawn with statistics for England. Of course all the activists in the illustration belong to at least one organisation - their own group or

association; the figures in Table 8.11 give the detail of any additional organisations to which they may belong, indicating in both cases that the activists in the groups are 'joiners' par excellence. This is particularly the case in the leadership of action groups where a majority belong to at least four organisations, and more than a few had six or seven connections. Table 8.12 illustrates the types of organisation to which they belong. In virtually every category of organisation both types of group outnumber the national and the Sheffield figures by a considerable amount.

TABLE 8.12 Organisation Membership - Types of Organisation.

| Types of Organisation. | England (excluding London) % | Sheffield % | Action Group officers % | Tenants' Assoc. officers. % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organisations connected with work: | | | | |
| Trade Union. | 20 | 25 | 24 | 50 |
| Professional Assocs. | 6 | 6 | 40 | 19 |
| Club to help workmates or colleagues. | 7 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| Business group or club. | 2 | - | 8 | 6 |
| Social or Sports club at work. | 13 | 15 | 20 | 31 |
| Anything else connected with work. | 3 | 2 | - | 12 |
| Public bodies or committees: | 2 | 1 | 28 | 19 |
| Organisations connected with Politics: | | | | |
| A political party or association. | 9 | 3 | 16 | 25 |
| Church or Religious Group: | | | | |
| Church club or group. | 5 | 5 | 32 | 6 |
| Social club connected with church. | 4 | 4 | 12 | - |
| Any other organisation connected with church. | 2 | 3 | 8 | - |

TABLE 8.12 (cont.)

| Types of Organisation. | England (excluding London) % | Sheffield % | Action Group officers % | Tenants' Assoc. officers. % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civic or Community Group: | | | | |
| Parent/Teacher Assoc. | 4 | 2 | 20 | 6 |
| Any other civic group. | 1 | 1 | 12 | - |
| Organisation connected with welfare: | | | | |
| Charitable organisations. | 4 | 3 | 24 | - |
| Voluntary welfare group. | 1 | 2 | 20 | - |
| Any other welfare group. | 1 | 1 | 16 | - |
| Organisations connected with education and training: | | | | |
| Organisation for further education. | 3 | 3 | 20 | - |
| Military training group. | 1 | 1 | - | 6 |
| Youth training group. | 2 | 1 | 8 | - |
| Nursing or First Aid. | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Any other. | 1 | 1 | 12 | - |
| Other groups connected with leisure activity: | | | | |
| Sports team or club. | 9 | 8 | - | 19 |
| Club for games. | 7 | 7 | - | - |
| Dance club. | 2 | 2 | 4 | - |
| Club for hobbies or pets. | 2 | 3 | 16 | - |
| Music, drama, jazz, art club. | 3 | 3 | 12 | - |
| Motoring association. | 7 | 4 | 5 | 25 |
| Any other. | 3 | 3 | 20 | - |
| Other Social Clubs: | | | | |
| Fraternal or Ex-Servicemans Club. | 7 | 2 | - | 13 |
| Women's social club. | 3 | 2 | - | - |
| Workingman's Club. | 9 | 20 | 12 | 44 |
| Youth Club. | 1 | 2 | 8 | - |
| Old people's Club. | 3 | 2 | - | 6 |
| Any other. | 4 | 3 | - | - |
| Anything not covered: | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| No clubs or groups: | 35 | 35 | 12 | 12 |

Sources: Community Attitudes Survey: England, Table 53, Hampton, W.A., 'Democracy and Community', pp.147-8, and Author's Survey.

Both sets of activists diverge markedly from the national and Sheffield figures but there are a number of important differences between the officers of action groups and those of tenants' associations. Primarily the latter belong either to an organisation connected with work or to social or leisure activities; 50% belong to a trade union (twice the figure for the Sheffield electorate as a whole); only a small minority are involved in a public body or voluntary association. The action groups officers, by contrast, invariably belong to at least one (often three or four) public or voluntary organisations; membership of trade unions is surprisingly high considering their occupational backgrounds. Similarly, their membership of a political party may be considered high given that many of the action groups originated directly or indirectly as a method of by-passing the party political system. But the findings are consistent with results described in an earlier section which suggested that the alienation of the groups from the traditional system was not as great as might be expected; and one of the action groups was organised by a ward Labour Party. A high proportion of church affiliations among the action groups officers, roughly a third of the sample, reflects the initiative taken by those organisations in establishing community development projects and in their general concern for the well-being of the communities.

In summary, the action group organisers are eager 'joiners' of voluntary bodies. Tenants' association officers belong to organisations connected with their work, and frequently belong to social clubs but rarely to voluntary associations, with the exception of political parties. This evidence confirms previous

findings which suggest that there are groups of 'joiners' and that this may be the case particularly with activists in an organisation. The contrast between the middle class professionals with their heavy involvement in voluntary groups and the skilled workers with their orientation to work and leisure commitments is a striking, although not unexpected, discovery.

Action Group and Tenants' Association Activists compared with Ward Labour Party Activists.

In a recent study of the changing social composition of the Sheffield Labour Party (8.14) a considerable amount of information was collected on the characteristics of ward activists. The ward is the smallest geographical unit used by the political parties and may be considered comparable in scale to a community group; thus it is possible to compare the activists at the grassroots in both ward Labour Parties and community groups - in some cases they are the same people! Waugh's study was designed in response to the work of Hindess (8.15) who, on very scanty evidence, argued that in relation to the Labour Party, 'there has been a vicious circle of decline in the more working class areas of cities with a consequent shift of power towards the more middle class areas. This in turn affects party policy and leads to a further decline in the more working class areas.'

Waugh set out to discover whether the composition of the Sheffield Labour Party had changed over the years in line with the Hindess prognosis. His examination of major components of the political organisation - constituency officers, trades and labour council political executives, the members of the

City council and the City council Labour Group executive - revealed that there had indeed been a change in the occupational backgrounds of these people during the post-war period. A major change was the dramatic demise in trade union officers and full-time political agents who in the immediate pre-war period provided 37 per cent of Labour councillors, declining to 11 per cent by 1952 and slowly fading into extinction by 1972. The 'middle class', or more accurately people from the 'welfare professions', had on the other hand steadily increased their position in the constituency parties and at City council level but they had never been more than 50 per cent of the representation. In addition, 'manual workers' were shown to have been remarkably consistent over the years and, at the time of Waugh's investigation in 1972, had doubled their post-war percentage on the Labour Group E.C. and Group officerships. Waugh sees the rise of professionals in the Party as a logical consequence of the 1944 Education Act but indicates that over half come from families with manual occupational backgrounds. Moreover, Waugh's analysis of political activists in the Ward Labour Parties shows that 'middle class activists, in the Sheffield W.L.P's at least, appear to be very much in the political tradition of the Labour Party.' Thus there are strong grounds for criticizing the Hindess thesis both in terms of the data - there clearly has not been a 'vicious decline' in working class representation in Sheffield, and also in terms of his explanation of the increase in the number of activists and councillors drawn from the professions and their political attitudes.(8.16).

Waugh analyses the social characteristics of two samples of ward activists, those in the six 'safest' Labour Party Wards

and those in the six 'most hopeless' Labour Party Wards, on the assumption that these would broadly represent the 'most working class' and the 'most middle class' wards respectively. We have, therefore, the possibility of comparing the action group and tenants' association activists with two distinct groups of Labour Party activists. Are the latter also members of the 'joiners'? Could the wards in working class areas be more representative of the community than appears to be the case with some of the action groups? The impression revealed by a number of indices provides some convincing answers. There are many parallels to be drawn between the variety of activists in these organisations. The middle class wards and the action groups both contain a preponderance of professionals. A difference between these two types of organisation is that the wards are located in one geographical area of the city, whereas the action groups are found in a variety of differing zones and this factor accounts for a slightly wider range of status groups represented in the action groups. The middle class wards, however, have predominantly middle class activists and similarly the working class wards are mainly workers. All but two of the action groups are east of the middle class suburbs but these groups are nevertheless led by people from the small minority of high-status occupation groups. It should be said, of course, that neither the wards nor the community groups represent a true cross-section of the population in their areas. The point is that the action groups, so far as their leadership is concerned, are even less representative than the Ward Labour Parties.

Parallels between the Ward Labour Parties and their counterpart community groups are also found in the age ranges of activists. A majority of the middle class ward activists and the action group activists are under 40 years, while the working class organisations both fail to attract into positions of responsibility more than a small number of people from this age range; they are, by contrast, run by the over-50s, the ward parties being noticeably patriarchal. Waugh suggests that this may be due to young people being driven away from the inner-city areas in order to set up a home, but presumably most would move into the outlying council estates and the figures there suggest that equally they fail to become involved in their new areas; there is unlikely to be a single explanation for this. A number of studies have shown the variety of ways in which community life evolves in working class estates. Wilmott and Young, for example, suggest that in some situations working class couples tend to retreat into the nuclear family while maintaining a regular pattern of visiting parents in the old community.(8.17) Lupton and Mitchell thought: 'for many people, membership of or connection with the Centre is a sign of social inferiority.' (8.18) Considering the types of activity which tenants' associations tend to arrange this would seem a likely explanation for the failure of the younger generation to become actively involved. Their horizons are more orientated to the acquisition of a home and family, and to maintaining links with their peers and relatives in neighbourhoods from which they moved.

TABLE 8.13 Occupations of Activists in Ward Labour Parties, Action Groups and Tenants' Associations.

| Occupation category. | Middle Class ward. | Working Class ward. | Action Group Officers. | Tenants' Association Officers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| n = | - | - | 28 | 32 |
| Business proprietor, director or manager. | 3.8 | 5.7 | 7.6 | - |
| Professional. | 80.8 | 9.4 | 61.5 | 6.3 |
| Other non-manual. | 7.7 | 18.9 | 15.4 | 25.0 |
| Skilled manual. Foremen. | 7.7 | 56.6 | 11.4 | 40.6 |
| Semi and unskilled manual. | 0 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 28.1 |
| Occupation not given. | 0 | 5.7 | - | - |

Sources: Author's Survey and Waugh, A. Unpublished M.A. thesis.

TABLE 8.14 Age Range of Activists in Ward Labour Parties, Action Groups and Tenants' Associations.

| Age Ranges. | Middle Class ward. | Working Class ward. | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| n = | - | - | 28 | 32 |
| Under 21 | 1.9 | 0 | - | - |
| 21-30 | 21.1 | 11.3 | 25.0 | 12.5 |
| 31-40 | 34.6 | 7.5 | 32.1 | 6.3 |
| 41-50 | 17.3 | 13.2 | 14.3 | 40.6 |
| 51-60 | 19.2 | 30.2 | 10.7 | 34.4 |
| 60 + | 5.8 | 37.7 | 17.9 | 6.3 |

Sources: Author's Survey and Waugh, A. Unpublished M.A. thesis.

The enthusiasm which young professionals bring to action groups or middle class wards again reflects the social milieu in which these people circulate. As was shown earlier, the action group leaders tend to be considerably more mobile than Sheffield's population - 50% were not born in the City and over 35% have lived there for less than ten years. Relatives and a high proportion of friends also tend to live outside Sheffield. This often leads to a self-conscious search for 'community'; and membership of the white collar 'caring' professions will tend to stimulate concern for individual areas based on self-interest, defence of property rights, belief in 'involvement', and so on. The pattern, regardless of explanation, is clearly the same for wards in middle class suburbs where there is a noticeably high proportion of new arrivals to the City.

TABLE 8.15 Length of Residence in Sheffield.

| | Middle class wards. | Working class wards. | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| n = | - | - | 28 | 32 |
| 0-10 years. | 48.1 | 7.5 | 35.7 | 0 |
| 11-20 years. | 15.4 | 0 | 7.1 | 0 |
| 20 + years. | 36.5 | 92.5 | 57.1 | 100.0 |

Sources: Author's Survey and Waugh, A. Unpublished M.A. thesis.

TABLE 8.16 Full-time higher education.

| | Middle class wards. | Working class wards. | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| n = | | | 28 | 32 |
| University. | 57.8 | 1.9 | 35.7 | - |
| Polytechnic training. | 23.0 | 3.8 | 17.9 | 6.5 |
| Other. | 2.0 | 0 | 7.1 | - |
| None. | 19.2 | 94.3 | 39.2 | 93.5 |

Sources: Author's Survey and Waugh, A. Unpublished M.A. thesis.

The educational backgrounds of activists follow a predictable pattern. Nearly 75% middle class ward activists went to grammar or private schools and 65% of action group activists were similarly educated. From tenants' association leaders 75% went to elementary and secondary modern schools but left in their early teens; only 17.6% went to grammar schools and this figure is surprisingly high as most of them will have been too old to benefit from educational reorganisation under the 1944 Education Act. In working class wards only 15.1% of activists went to grammar schools, the others following similar limited educational paths to the tenants' association organisers. The achievements in higher education by middle class ward activists and action group officers is extraordinarily high by comparison with the general population and, as Waugh points out, in relation to Labour Party activists these levels are far in excess of even the whole middle class itself. Slightly lower performances by the action group members reflect their generally lower socio-economic rating, the reason for which was explained previously.

Waugh did not collect comprehensive data regarding membership of other organisations, however, he did show that trade union membership was high among ward party activists at over 65%; and all these activists were individually members of a political party. Under these headings other differences occur between ward leaders and community group activists. Only 16% of action group officers and 25% of tenants' association officers are members of a political party; in addition only 24% of action group activists belong to a trade union, although 40% belong to a professional association, but the definition of trade union rules out a fair comparison in this respect. It is clear that action group organisers are involved in a greater variety of organisations, especially voluntary and welfare groups, whereas ward activists are more inclined to political organisations such as the Fabian Society or the World Poverty Action Group. Tenants' association officers compare very closely with working class ward activists where 50% belong to a trade union and have few commitments outside their political activity. Among tenants' association activists 25% belong to political parties dividing equally between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. Thus the action group and tenants' association activists are considerably more connected with party politics than the average Sheffield citizens of whom 3% are party members (8.19) - but the focal points of their 'political' interest seem to lie outside mainstream party activity.

The Role of the Activists.

The question raised in the introduction to this chapter, concerning the nature of the relationship between the activists and the ordinary membership of groups, had been hinted at in the previous chapter which described the organisational structure and styles of the groups. The number of people shown as being involved in committee and sub-committee work was low, the statistics being confirmed by the general assessment of the interviewees themselves; and over a third of the organisations did not have a formal membership as such: the link between 'leaders' and 'members' being either a non-question or else the activists were intent on building a membership at some future time. With or without a membership, the role of the activists is crucial in shaping the style and functions of the groups: they make the decisions, undertake the negotiations, call meetings, produce the newsletters. Not surprisingly, they are self-perpetuating - nearly all the principal officers had held their positions since the origin of their particular group, terms of office which ranged from six months to ten years.

There are constraints, however, on the decision-making power of the leadership. The community studies (which will be discussed in the next chapter) show that the mixture of class composition, history and traditions, dominant industries, etc. - the social milieu - substantially influence the way community groups are organised in different localities. The old-established working class communities, for example, rely heavily on the tradition of informal co-operation, while in a socially mixed suburb the tendency is for organisational

activity to polarise on class lines. The social and linguistic skills of the higher socio-economic groups makes involvement in formal bodies a rewarding experience - usually at the expense of the lower social groups who will retreat into their own organisations or out of activity altogether.(8.20) Rex, indeed, develops this idea by suggesting that the most important factor in the relationship between a voluntary association and the community is precisely the way in which value and meaning systems are externalized.(8.21) Group membership means different things to different people but in general, members have an instrumental attitude towards a group: they regard an organisation from the point of view of self-interest - whether or not it is providing a service or fulfilling certain tasks. On a day-to-day basis they will be content to leave the running of affairs to leaders and will come into activity themselves only if their own demands change or the services they receive from a group break down. One of the reasons for the restricted scope of some smaller groups may be precisely their failure to penetrate the community networks, especially as most of them are run by high status professionals or relatively new residents in the area. The role or services provided may be of interest only to like-minded people. In the closed, 'cell' groups the activists are not a 'leadership' as such because the organisations have no general members and a very restricted public face. Having chosen this style of operation the activists exert almost total control over the group. In the more open, public orientated groups the leaderships are also in the main tightly-knit but are required to be more responsive than the cell groups to outside events and the will of the members. At the early stages of

group formation the activists initiate and guide discussion and tactics. The issues may compel a wide public interest - a slum clearance scheme or rent increases - but in some of the smaller groups and at a later stage in the other organisations the issues and debate may not be taken up in the community. Usually the group is compelled to adopt new or additional functions and the activists have a key role in determining precisely what the new orientation is to be. But the long-term stability of a group is also deeply rooted in the nature of the communities themselves and this long-term maturity depends on the activists selecting an appropriate role for the organisation to play within that context. The next sequence of chapters take up in some detail the relationship of the groups to their communities.

CHAPTER EIGHT. References and Footnotes.


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8.5 Newton, K. Second City Politics (O.U.P., London, 1976) pp.83-5.

8.6 Hampton, W.A. Democracy and Community (O.U.P., 1970) p.188.

8.7 Hindess, B. The Decline of Working Class Politics (MacGibbon and Kee,1971)p.12.

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8.10 Parkin, F. Middle Class Radicalism (Manchester University Press, 1968) p.180.

8.11 'Robbins Report', Report of the Committee on Higher Education, H.M.S.O. 1963, Appendix I, Table 1, p.39.

8.12 Hampton, W.A. op.cit.,(1970) Table 5.3, p.102.

8.13 Pahl, R.E. Patterns of Urban Life (Longmans, London, 1970, pp.90-8.

8.14 Waugh, A. op.cit.,(1972)

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8.16 Baxter, I.R. 'The Working Class and Labour Politics' in Political Studies, Vol.xx, No.1, March, 1972.

8.17 Young, M. and Willmot, P. Family and Kinship in East London (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 1957) pp.137-8.

8.18 Mitchell, G.P. et al, Neighbourhood and Community (Liverpool University Press, 1954) p.93.

8.19 See Hampton, W.A. op.cit. (1970) p.147.

8.20 See, for example, Wilmott, P. and Young, M., Family and Class in a London Suburb (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 1960) or Pahl, R.E., op.cit. (1970).

8.21 Rex, J. Race, Colonialism and the City (Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 1973) pp.20-3.

## CHAPTER NINE THE COMMUNITY STUDIES

This chapter and the following two chapters are all concerned with the relationship between the groups and their communities. Around this general concern are two specific themes both of which are central to the political theory of grassroots activity. First, the numerous community studies produced in the last two or three decades testify to the great variety of experiences of 'community'. How do these various experiences affect the conditions under which voluntary associations and local political organisations form, and how will the different conditions affect their development? Having already suggested the significance of the 'issues' in this process of origin and evolution, to what extent, if at all, need this finding be modified by an examination of the influence of different types of community and area characteristics? That is, how do different experiences of 'community' affect political behaviour? The second theme concerns the mechanics of the relationship between a group and its community. This implies examining the channels of communication between the groups and the residents, and defining the links with other organisations in the vicinity. Given that the groups are not technically representative of their areas, a free flow of information to and from the organisations can certainly be considered a compensating factor. Might it, indeed, be the case that information exchange is a better means of reflecting local opinion over certain issues than a formal, 'once and for all' democracy? The question of the links to other groups and organisations is important because a number of strands of pluralist theory suggest that the formation of alliances and

coalitions over some issues can be predicted. The material in this study finds no evidence whatsoever to support that view; on the contrary the groups are characterised by their insularity and parochialism in respect of other organisations. Neither, on the other hand, is there any suggestion of the development of conflict between the groups and neighbouring organisations in the area.

In this chapter we are drawing on the evidence from the most important of the community studies published in Britain since the early 1950s, supplemented where necessary by American material, especially the work of Gans, on the conditions under which organisations form and how they develop. These studies verify a number of observations made in earlier chapters concerning the role of the leaderships and the pattern of evolution of the organisations over the first few years of their existence. A series of recent studies suggest a different emphasis for the interpretation of community and the role of community groups in local politics. These interpretations are not, however, incompatible with the more 'traditional' view of community. The traditional community studies and the 'non-locality' understanding of the origins and development of community may be seen as providing different perspectives on the rich and complex patterns of urban social and political life. In the following chapter the groups are seen to operate in a tension between their notion of a community of neighbours and the necessity to adopt a territory which is compatible with their bargaining position vis à vis the local authorities. They are forced to make a political response because they are initially issue-orientated groups. The boundaries which they adopt are, as a result, much more widely cast than the small-scale idea of a 'home-area' on neighbourhood and the population

they contain is consequently more diverse and its investment of time and interest in the group more partial.

There are, broadly speaking, two distinct schools of community studies both of which have valuable observations and experiences to share on the nature of community organisation. The division reflects not only the changing nature of urban life but also, as a result, a developing approach to community studies. The first school includes those studies produced in the 1950s and early 1960s which examine finite, geographically-defined communities, usually with reference to what were seen as key sociological components - the occupational and industrial structure of the town, the type and degree of extension of kinship ties, the stages in the family cycle. A second school of more recent studies sees community resulting from external, 'non-locality' factors, such as competition for housing, or the maps of planners and administrators - essentially as something that is imposed from outside. This view is opposed to the earlier notions of an accretion of sentiments and family attachments and has been pioneered by the work of Pahl, Rex, Harvey, Gans, Suttles et al. Pahl (9.1), for example, in his discussion of Young and Wilmott's (9.2) early, seminal study 'Family and Kinship in East London', makes the following remark:

> "...the research was carried out between 1953 and 1955. Television was hardly part of the culture then; few working-class people had motor cars, and consumer goods such as washing machines and refrigerators were much rarer in working-class homes than they are now... the impact of consumer durables on style of life is not as revolutionary as, for example, advertisements would have us believe. However, television has kept many men at home when they might have gone to the pub or club ... the increasing ownership of private cars will enable an increasing proportion of the working class to keep in touch with extra-familial kin who live some distance away."

There are more recent statements on the urban social environment, both planned and unplanned, which have compelled attention - racial diversity, high-rise accommodation, urban transport systems, and so on. The reappraisal has occurred first in terms of the indices which were previously being used and the significance attached to them and secondly as a move towards understanding the processes at work in the formation of urban life. This view is implied by Gans (9.3) writing in 1962.

> "Characteristics do not explain the causes of behaviour, they are clues to socially created and culturally defined roles, choices and demands. A causal analysis must trace them to the larger social, economic and political systems which determine the situations in which roles are played and the cultural content of choices and demands, as well as the opportunities for their achievement."

These systems determine income distribution, educational and occupational opportunities and, in turn, fertility patterns and child-rearing methods in addition to the entire range of consumer behaviour. Gans then goes on to point out that the study of urban ways of life should nevertheless begin with an analysis of characteristics which, if held constant, may be a clue to discovering which behaviour-patterns can be attributed to features of the settlement and its natural environment.

Maurice Broady's (9.4) study of the organisation of forty-one Coronation street parties in the Rock Ferry area of Birkenhead is a particularly interesting piece of research in the context of this review because essentially he was trying to find out the conditions under which people would be motivated to join in local social activities and, secondly, to determine the factors which influence the emergence of local leaders. The area of Rock Ferry is an example of what Broady sees as a

'respectable' working class community. It is 'better' than the 'rougher' adjoining areas and despite the physical juxtaposition social distance is maintained. Characteristically there is a respectable concern for individual and family privacy, 'We're good neighbours with everybody; but you can be neighbourly without letting people over your door-step.' 'We keep ourselves to ourselves.' 'There is no sitting in each other's houses like there is in some streets.' Broady finds that the residents are 'particular' and make it a matter of pride to keep out of debt, even in periods of unemployment. The key to the development of any organisational form outside the family is a pattern of informal neighbourliness which has been built up over the years out of shared experiences and in times of common adversity. For example, an informal collection for a wreath, or to help someone who is ill, is not uncommon but on the other hand a response in this collective way to, say, a marriage or a birth is unusual. When co-operation does take place to meet a particular purpose, the activity is spontaneous and no one is thought to have a primary organisational responsibility. Broady did find, however, that on certain issues or tasks a particular person might be thought of as having a special qualification - for example, one woman was known as the 'Labour woman' while another had the reputation of advising on children's ailments. In twenty-five of the streets there was a person who was regularly called upon to organise bus-trips and in nine of the streets someone who organised a money club. This tradition of informal co-operation formed the background for the organisation of the Coronation Street parties.

The decision to organise a party was usually made by a

small group of neighbours in the street; sometimes children pushed their parents into action because other streets were already making preparations. There was, of course, an unwillingness to get involved as it would mean extra work and additional strain; especially it might involve trouble. 'Trouble' may be expected of any kind of social intercourse; its significance is suggested by the large number of synonyms such as 'unpleasant', 'disagreeableness', 'itch', 'bother', 'upset', which are commonly used in its place. It was very common to hear an organiser comment about a party, with some relief, that 'there wasn't a word afterwards', which means there had been no complaints. The organisers feared their neighbours' displeasure over some aspect of organisation and feared they might be criticised behind their backs. Hence they took precautions to avoid outbreaks of trouble: 'so there will be no argument, so as not to give them a chance to talk.'

Probably the most critical job was the collection and handling of money because it was especially likely to lead to trouble. Thus two people would go round collecting and at least one woman would accompany the organiser in the purchase of food and prizes. Accounts would be strictly kept although there was considerable reluctance to actually check the balance sheet. The treasurer or organiser would normally insist upon a check in order to avoid 'insinuations'. When insinuations did occur it was often over a very small matter such as not sharing out equally any left over cakes; in one street there was trouble because only enough bunting was bought to decorate alternate houses.

A major component of the organisational framework was the dislike of formality although of the forty-one organisers

twenty-four were 'customary organisers' and had had previous experience in the Co-operative Women's Guild or the Labour Party. There was a definite hostility towards formal committees which it was said 'only start little differences'; their members it was thought tended to become jealous and to find themselves at cross-purposes with one another. In the comment: 'it was not just a committee, we all worked together', the apprehension of formal organisations finds a clear expression: a criticism of the traditional way of conducting business is implied. The idea of chairman was vigorously avoided so that everyone 'could chip in'.

We may glean from Broady's observations two key factors in the development of organisations in a particular type of working class community. First, arising from the difficulties and problems of life in the area, there was a strong tradition of informal co-operation. Normally the mechanism will only operate under certain circumstances of adversity, but in the organisation of the street parties to celebrate the Coronation the same network can respond to other instrumental activities. Secondly, the suspicion of formal organisation, leading to trouble, and the apprehension of having an official chairman, 'the one who bangs the hammer', indicates a general feeling of reluctance to grant a position of formal status to any of the neighbours. Pahl's quote from Simmel, one of the founding fathers of modern sociology, suggests why this should be so:

> 'In general, and reserving many modifications, we can say that the lower a group is as a whole and the more, therefore, every member of it is accustomed to subordination, the less will the group allow one of its members to rule it. And, inversely, the higher a group is as a whole, the more likely it is that it subordinates itself only to one of its peers. In the first case, domination by the member, the like person,

is difficult because everyone is low; in the second case it is easier because everybody stands high.' (9.5)

Two studies (9.6) of neighbourhoods in Liverpool, Ship Street and the wider dockland area, support many of Broady's observations about life in an old established working class area and confirm Simmel's idea that the lower a group is in status the less likely it is to allow one of its members to dominate. The areas described by Kerr and by Mays are similar in many respects to the Rock Ferry area of Broady's study. According to Mays there is a widespread hostility towards members of the community who are willing to shoulder responsibility and act as leaders in organising leisure-time activities. Such people are likely to be described as big-heads. The very act of joining an association can be thought of as a deviation from the usual pattern of social life. In Ship Street itself very few people were members of an association, the only exception to this being trade union membership but this too was rarely in an active capacity. Although the vast majority of people in the area were Roman Catholics, church attendance was very low, and few people belonged to any of the numerous clubs which the church runs. As in the Rock Ferry neighbourhood the emphasis in social life was almost exclusively centred on primary kinship relationships. Outside the family, voluntary associational activity consisted of loosely organised groups formed for a particular instrumental purpose - such as running a football team from a local pub.

A working-class community of a rather different character is the West Riding mining village of 'Ashton' studied in 1956 by Dennis, Hendriques and Slaughter.(9.7) With a population of nearly 13,000 the town lies near the centre of the Yorkshire

coalfield and is 15 minutes bus ride from a sizeable town of 43,000, and 5 minutes from a town of 23,000. Ashton people tend to think not in terms of miles but of bus times. As a community the village is welded together by a number of different forces and influences from those of Rock Ferry or the Liverpool dock areas. First, Ashton is a geographically isolated community whereas the others were sub-areas within a broader urban setting and were distinguished from their neighbouring areas by social as well as physical distance. Second, Ashton is a community dominated in its pattern of social life by the men, whereas the others were markedly female dominated. Third, the evidence produced by Dennis et al reveals a striking inter-relationship between the attitudes developed through the collective experience of working down the pit and the family and associational life of the town.

Although Ashton is geographically isolated, the degree of involvement in the community varied quite considerably; the women in particular were forced to travel outside the town for work and very often for shopping. Conversely the retired miner who worked in the pit all his life and found all his leisure activities in Ashton itself hardly ever strays from the confines of the town.

Both Rock Ferry and Ship Street had a consciousness of their superiority to the neighbouring groups and, as Klein (9.8) comments, 'though also aware, without much caring, that other remote groups were better off.' On the other hand, at Ashton there were no neighbouring groups worse off than the miners so that comparisons tend to be made with better off sectors of the population in other towns.

But what characterises Ashton in particular is that it is dominated by one industry - coal mining. The collective experience of mining coal in difficult and often dangerous conditions coupled with the operation of shift working creates the basic framework of life. At the heart of this whole process is the wages-system of payment which has a particular structure in the industry and for a life-long miner has an earnings cycle which contrasts with the ordinary manual worker. Starting in his teens the miner will progress to the top of the scale by the mid-twenties where, as a face-worker, his earnings are comparatively high. In his forties he becomes progressively less able to do the strenuous work at the face and will probably finish his working life on repair and surface work as a lower paid day-wage worker. At any time in this cycle even a minor injury or ill-health can temporarily or even permanently reduce his earning capacity. The authors ascribe to this pattern a number of key aspects in the social life of the community. For example, the very disagreeableness of the work means that the women are considered more fortunate than the men. She cannot, therefore, put pressure on her man to work and yet without his economic contribution she will be unable to provide 'a sound comfortable place to eat and sleep for parents and children; a place where they can enjoy privacy, if they ever feel the need of it, and very important, a haven for the tired man when he returns from work.' This economic relationship is at the heart of family life. In the authors' view, 'there is a business-like division of duties and of work to which the development of affection and companionship is accidental.'(9.9) For virtually her whole married life the woman's role is circumscribed by the family and kin. She will only regularly

see her husband over meals or in bed and she is excluded from all the other areas of a man's life, '...the club, the pub, the bookie's office, the trade union, all the places where men do talk together are closed to women.' The only exception is the Labour Party and even there the women's role is primarily on the social side.

Clearly the organisation of voluntary associations is restricted by this basic male/female division which overshadows all aspects of life from the intimate family circle to the daily experience of work and to the activities which lie outside family and work. The major voluntary association connected with work is, of course, the trade union, and in normal times attracts active involvement from only a small proportion of the membership. In the pubs and working men's clubs the branch committee members meet informally in the 'best room' which is noted for the higher level of its conversation and bestows a prestige on those men. It is through this position of respect that union decisions can be enforced by invoking community pressure. The story is told of one Ashton miner who blacklegged in the 1926 lock-out. On his death, twenty years later, not even his own sons would attend the funeral.

The colliery band is a source of pride in certain quarters but, '...for most people the satisfaction of hearing of the success of the band is the limit of their interest. Ashton people know nothing of the competitions in which "their" band does badly, but if it does well there is widespread comment.' The rugby team has a much wider following with attendances at home matches varying from 2,800 to 10,000. The supporters' clubs '...organised dances, social events and selected a "Rugby League Queen".' A certain amount of prestige for the

town is also gained by the cricket team and the St. John Ambulance Brigade. An important focus of social life for the young people in Ashton is the weekly dance held at the Miners' Welfare; in their whole life, for many of them, the Dance may be the only place where the male and female lives cross paths.

There were six working men's clubs in Ashton at the time of the research with a combined membership of 6,850. Seven pubs fulfilled a similar purpose. Apart from weekends, women are either, by tradition or by club constitution, excluded from club membership. The authors' view that the danger and uncertainty associated with a miner's life imposes upon the majority of them a leisure in which the main organisations are thriftless co-operatives for the purchase and sale of beer is basically a correct summing up of the mainstream of associational life in Ashton.

In complete contrast to Ashton the Hertfordshire 'commuter villages' discussed by Pahl (9.10) in his study 'Urbs in Rure' and of one particular case-study of 'Dormersdell' (9.11) and published under the title 'Class and Community in an English Commuter Village', investigates the organisational life of a small but socially heterogeneous community. Pahl's studies offer a graphic illustration of the meeting of town and country, class and class in the context of an unplanned residential middle-class dominated suburb and he is able to highlight the contrasting attitudes and instincts of the populations through their interaction in the life of the community.

Characteristically of an 'unplanned suburb' (9.12) migration into the area was slow, beginning in the 1920s, and in the case of the Hertfordshire villages was predominately, though not exclusively, a middle-class phenomenon. Since the war the rate

of influx has increased considerably with between 45% and 65% of the migrants to the three villages arriving since 1945. The inflow has been mainly of middle-class families as is shown in Pahl's analysis of the proportion in each class (as defined by the Registrar General's occupational categories) who were either 'established' or 'newcomers'. For the middle class group only 19% were established (pre-1941) while 81% were newcomers. The figures for the working class categories were 71% established and 29% newcomers. The implantation of the new, mainly middle class residents created a suburb containing two socially segregated communities - the locally orientated, established, primarily working class community and the middle class community, more mobile, newer, and orientated to London as much as to the village itself...'when new mobile managerial and professional commuters move into a village, they live in a completely different social and physical world from the working class, and this has the effect of polarizing the community on class lines, replacing the traditional hierarchical structure.'

In the Dormersdell study the social class mixture was particularly unbalanced with a large section of professional and managerial workers concentrated in a wooded area slightly away from the village centre, while the more established working class residents occupied an area of council housing nearer the centre. Pahl then presents a great deal of evidence to show that the geographical and the social divisions in the village are mutually reinforcing. He quotes one of his middle-class respondents, 'It's a split between classes. The working class are more class conscious because of an inferiority complex... but anyway the old community has been killed by commuting.' The wife of a technologist was less explicit, 'The Wood people

are energetic and run things and the village people complain; but they do nothing themselves, so what is one to do?' In the village, of course, there was a rather different view of things. 'We used to do our own entertainment until the Wood took over the Village Hall ten years ago. There used to be dances every week and now they're only occasional. The badminton is only for Wood people. They tend to be snobbish when there's no reason to be: you know people when you work in their houses.'

The divisions which these rather jaundiced views imply of middle-class domination presents, however, a rather false view of the way in which the relationship between the classes operates. While the Women's Institute and the badminton club have indeed taken over, the working-class villagers themselves monopolise the football club and the Youth Club, while there is some uneasy mixing of the two classes at the Cricket Club, the Horticultural Society and in church. The resentments which both sides tended to hold were more a function of lack of contact than of apathy or deprivation. The traditional working-class residents, Pahl thought, resented the collapse of the old hierarchical system and the way in which they were now associated with a less respectable, new working-class sector. The non-traditional workers for their part saw the segregation from the middle-class as a symptom of the wider inequalities in society. In his commentary on the study Pahl presents the feelings of the middle-class residents in the following terms:

> 'The middle-class people come into the rural areas in search of a meaningful community and by their presence help to destroy whatever community was there. Part of the basis of the local village community was the sharing of the deprivations due

> 'to the isolation of country life and the sharing of the limited world of the families within the village. The middle-class people try to get the "cosiness" of village life, without suffering any of the deprivations, and while maintaining a whole range of contacts outside.'

The non-involvement of the working-class prevents the amount of mixing necessary for the middle-class definition of what Pahl calls the village-in-the-mind and this is felt to be 'a pity'.

The evidence from Willmott and Young's study of Woodford - a planned middle-class residential suburb - suggests that a very similar pattern of events has occurred in the more truly urban community. In this case the middle-class residents are attempting to create what might be called a suburb-in-the-mind; as the authors say, '...the working-class do not feel welcome in many of Woodford's clubs and societies. Most people feel more comfortable with members of what they think of as their own social class. Middle-class people in particular, seeking to create a kind of "community" for themselves through organisations, want fellows with whom they feel at ease.'(9.13)

In this study, however, Willmott and Young are making a comparison not only between middle-class and working-class populations in Woodford but also between the pattern of life they found in the suburb, with the traditional working-class community in Bethnal Green. 'An obvious question to ask is whether this pattern of family and community life is peculiar to the working-class - and in the cities, to the older central areas.' As in Ashton, Ship Street and Rock Ferry the majority of people in Bethnal Green have lived there all their lives and are surrounded by a network of family and kinship ties, all of which makes for what Willmott and Young call an

'unforced sociability'. 'Of course there are clubs in Bethnal Green - the place is well supplied with University Settlements and Youth Clubs, and there are the usual British Legion branches, political organisations and the rest - but for most people they are not essential for meeting others and mixing with them.'

In the suburb, however, the pattern of family relationships undergoes a fundamental change because the family unit is cut off from the extended kinship network. Working-class people having moved into the suburbs revert to an increasingly nuclear family centred existence with far more joint husband and wife activity than in the traditional communities. In the Woodford study Willmott and Young nevertheless found that working-class residents generally tended to retain closer family ties than did their middle-class counterparts; they live, for example, closer to their parents - 42% of the sample had parents living in the same borough, while the figure for the middle-class respondents was only 26%.

Comparison of Proximity of Parents.

| Parents' Residence | Woodford | | Bethnal Green |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Middle Class | Working Class | Working Class |
| Same Dwelling | 8% | 11% | 12% |
| Within 5 minutes | 6% | 10% | 29% |
| Elsewhere in Borough | 12% | 21% | 13% |
| Outside Borough | 74% | 58% | 46% |

The middle-class people had a higher proportion of cars and frequently mentioned letter-writing and telephoning as ways of keeping in touch with their families; they would more often spend their holidays visiting relatives than did the working-class

residents. The pattern of family visiting reflects the social divisions in the area: the higher the occupational category the further away from Woodford the parents tended to live and as the socio-economic grouping declined so the number of parents living close to the area increased.

In the later chapters of the Woodford study Willmott and Young look further at the question of whether people make up for less family visiting by other activity. Indeed in variety and volume of activity there is a much fuller associational life in Woodford than in Bethnal Green,

> '...from the Park Residents' society to the Floral Arrangement Group, the Markhams Singers to the Knighton Players, the Snaresbrook Ladies' Hockey Club to the Aldersbrook Tennis Club, the Archery Association to the Snaresbrook Riding School. Whether the avowed purpose is to play golf or squash, to act or sing, to advance the cause of literature or Conservatism, the United Nations or local trade - whatever the overt purpose, one result is that you meet other people.'

The question is what sort and what class? In fact, nearly all these organisations were middle-class preserves. In Woodford nearly twice as many middle-class people had attended a function in the previous month, and over half belonged to at least one organisation. The leadership whether in the churches, the clubs or any of the other groups was the preserve of the upper echelons of the middle-class itself. Church attendance was strongly related to social class - although only a minority even of the middle-class attended regularly. Even at the 'pubs' working-class people were found to be less frequent attenders than their middle-class neighbours. Willmott and Young noted that in addition to having less time and money the pubs in Woodford had a very different atmosphere from the cosy Bethnal Green pubs.

Church Attendance.

| | Middle Class | Working Class |
|---|---|---|
| Attended in Previous Month | 34% | 17% |
| Not Attended in Previous Month | 26% | 26% |
| Never Attend | 40% | 51% |

The exclusion of working-class people from associational life of Woodford was also found to be actively encouraged through the use of fees, references and the restriction of some clubs to certain types of people - trades, professional workers and so on; in addition to the informal pressures of linguistic skills, time and money. '...Woodford's working class do not belong so often. Institutional sociability has little to offer them.' For the middle classes the adoption of 'suburban' values leads them to 'seek a kind of "community" for themselves', while in the suburban setting the working-class residents make an instrumental response by adapting their previous life style to the new setting.

More detailed evidence of the response made to suburban living is to be found in Gan's classic study of the Levittowners. Although an American study his information is very pertinent to this discussion and exemplifies a type on the Thornesclassification - a planned, residential middle-class suburb. His observations support many of the conclusions of both Pahl and Willmott and Young. In particular Gans considers the crucial source of behavioural response to be 'class subculture'. In the Levittown context he distinguished three such types of class subculture, the most important of which belonged to a group called the lower middle-class who made up approximately 75% of the Community. Gans describes the social milieux of this sub-group in the

following terms:

> 'One reason for the child-centredness of the lower middle-class family is that such a family type is nuclear - that is consisting only of parents and children. In America the clanlike extended family is highly valued only in the working-class, in some ethnic groups of all classes, and for other reasons in the upper class. Lower-middle class people still love and visit their relatives, but if they are too far away to visit, they are not especially missed, for lower-middle class people are able to make friends. Their social life is informal and involves primarily neighbours and friends met through organisational activity.' (9.14)

In the working-class sub-culture the husbands and wives have much more segregated roles than in the middle-class groups. 'The husband is the breadwinner and the wife rears the children. Whenever possible, husbands spend their free time with other male companions, women with other women.' In terms of attitudes towards organisational activity, working-class people found it difficult both to relate to strangers and to become involved in organisations whose values and interests often conflicted with their own. 'In a middle-class community then, people of working-class culture stay close to home and make the house a haven against a hostile outside world.'

A small proportion of managers and professionals had also found their way to Levittown, at least temporarily; this small group adhere to the third sub-culture - the 'upper middle-class'. 'Theirs is the culture of the college educated, cosmopolitan population, trained to be interested in and to participate in the larger world. Home and family are somewhat less important to this than to other classes...' Consequently their attitude towards organisational activity is very different from the other two groups. 'Upper middle class people participate not only in voluntary associations but in the entire community. As

cosmopolitans, they want to shape the community by national values which may not respect local traditions.'

In the section "The Impact of Community" Gans assesses the relative influence on these different sectors of the population which result from their move to suburbia. The lower class group initially reported more unintended changes because they had thought less specifically about the future and were surprised by unexpected effects. After two years a second interview found that the class differences had more or less vanished and even those who had thought a lot about their life before moving reported more unintended than intended change. 'The major unintended effects are increased organisational activity and more visiting (half the respondents mentioning the former, 14% the latter) but 25% are now negative ones - not having enough friends or missing parents back home.' The effects of depression and loneliness were most serious among the working-class people who were cut off from friends and relatives in the cities. It was not the move itself which produced these effects, but the move from one type of city life (the working-class 'urban village') to another. Apart from the increase in visiting and of joint family activity the most frequently reported change was the increase in organisational activity. Altogether 73% of residents belonged to a local group, although about three-fifths of all membership was to be found in churches and church-related groups; just 30% belonged to secular organisations.

In the groups themselves Gans, like Pahl and Willmott and Young found a 'definitional problem' with different sections of the community having competing aims and objectives. For example, in the local voluntary associations the upper middle-class tended to hold the cosmopolitan view of slow growth with an emphasis on

the substantive programme whereas the locals (lower middle-class) wanted to go for rapid growth in order to put the organisation on the map in the community. 'At a more latent level, organisational struggles were reflections of class differences, intertwined with religious ones and the ever present split between the locals and the cosmopolitans.'(9.15) The definitial struggles which the groups invariably had produced considerable insecurity which in turn led to a rapid rejection of dissidents. 'Loners' and 'idealists' were quickly got rid of to be followed by people of lower or higher status. Thus within a few years, conflicts over the speed and direction of growth became irrelevant and the teething crisis was replaced by a stable size of group with a routine programme.

The development of associational life in working-class suburbs has been extensively documented in recent years but as an example of the common 'planned residential' type there is no substitute for returning to the seminal research of Durant (9.16)(Ruth Glass) which was undertaken before the Second World War on the Watling Estate in North London. At the time when Durant made her study (1935-37) the estate had been in existence for nearly ten years and she was able to analyse the changes to the social structure and associational life which had occurred during that period. In essence Durant was again asking the question - had Watling become a community?

The site of the Watling development in an area of formerly undisturbed agricultural land with a periphery of middle-class suburbs created a considerable amount of friction between the new and the old communities. The new residents, most of whom came from the inner London areas of St.Pancras and Islington, were characterised by Durant under one of three headings - the

categories related to the varying amounts of economic security. The majority group (44%) consisted of small families usually with one wage earner who enjoyed relatively high pay and some degree of job security. For this reason this group was also the most geographically stable. Secondly, a group (26%) consisting of large families also with relatively high earnings and thirdly (22%) an unstable and mobile selection of large families often with more than one wage earner, but all with relatively low wages. The latter group were particularly, though not exclusively, vulnerable to changing economic circumstances. 'Economic crisis or a rise in prices, unemployment or sickness, or sometimes even marriage of earning children causes disruption of the household economy and often compels removal from the estate.' Rents were two to three times greater than in the original areas, husbands had high travelling costs as there was very little employment in the immediate vicinity of Watling, while the wives often found shopping in unfamiliar markets more expensive. Problems such as these were compounded in many cases by considerations of status. '...At Watling, where more households with better incomes have settled, the wireless next door becomes an obligation to bring home a wireless.' The previously 'balanced budget' frequently compelled people to move back into London. 'During the ten years which have passed since the first houses were occupied the total number of families who have lived on the Estate is nearly twice its maximum capacity. One out of every two families which have ever come to the Estate moved elsewhere before the end of ten years. Almost half of all families stayed there less than five years.' By a process of selection and re-selection the final social composition of the Estate tended towards securely employed

manual workers with small, young families.

These factors, which are largely external to the suburb itself, were crucial in the formation and development of the communal and associational life of the Estate. Common to the pattern of social life in the suburbs the family became the basic social unit and it was through the interaction of neighbouring families that the first social contacts were developed. The hostility of the surrounding suburbs forced the council house dwellers to seek their own segregated social life. From this desire coupled with some complaints about the Estate itself a Residents' Association was set up in 1928 - with their own newspaper 'The Watling Resident' reaching practically every house on the estate. Nevertheless, by the spring of 1929 membership of the Association had fallen to only 90 and the co-operation which characterised the organisation had given way to competition and conflict. This was due in part to the high turnover of residents many of whom had not shared the early problems, '...problems of adjustment to the Estate (became) an individual experience for each family and their solutions became extremely individualistic too.' About this time a variety of other voluntary organisations were establishing themselves on the estate, acting to draw support away from the Residents' Association itself. Durant mentions a Horticultural Society, the District Nursing Association, various national organisations such as the Townswomen's Guild, the Co-op and the Labour Party: and in particular the churches - both Protestant and Catholic - were emerging as a strong attraction, drawing approximately 1,000 adults each Sunday. 'At the end of this early period, in the summer of 1931, the Estate had acquired much of the likeness of a town and had lost much of its earlier

resemblance to an intimate community of people. The people themselves had become more like strangers to each other. In other words, a housing estate which is faced with its specific problems is more likely to develop social consciousness and keenness for local unity than a modern town pursuing its daily routine...while new instruments of corporate activity had been created, the old communal enthusiasm had markedly waned.'

By 1936 when Durant made her study, a Community Centre had been open for some three years with a full-time secretary running the building. But the number of people involved in the Centre was very small - only 6% of the adult population were members and over the two years of the study only 73 members paid the full subscription. The Centre itself was badly situated and drew most of its support from the households within a 300 yard radius. The social composition of the members, and especially of the officers, was not typical of the estate as a whole; for example, 81% of the officers worked locally compared to 32% for the total population of Watling. None of the 21 principal officers in the sample came from the large family, one wage, type; nearly all came from the relatively well-off small families - the group with the most time to spare and the least mobile section of the community. The children attached to the Centre through a number of different activities were shown to be better than average performers at school than their contemporaries.

Frankenberg (9.17) succinctly sums up the Watling experience in these words: 'There is a familiar pattern of initial loneliness followed by unity against the outside world, giving rise to an agitational Residents' Association. This achieves its tasks and most of the inhabitants settle down to

a home-centred but small group orientated social life. A minority is drawn from one status group - in Watling, the respectables.'

Two case studies, of an estate in Liverpool and an estate in Sheffield, appear in a University of Liverpool publication 'Neighbourhood and Community'.(9.18) Both studies provide some additional insight into the working-class experience of suburban life. The Liverpool estate exemplifies the type referred to in Thorne's classification as a 'planned working class industrial' estate. The Sheffield example (Wybourn) is a planned residential development but differs from the Watling estate, which was also in that category, because it was designed initially to accommodate families from a single inner city slum clearance zone.

The Liverpool estate studied by Lupton and Mitchell, 'is situated near a village on the outskirts of the city. It was built in 1942-43 to provide accommodation for the families of workers who had been moved to the area under the Control of Engagement Order, to furnish manpower for nearby factories engaged on important war production.' The estate containing nearly 500 'prefabs' was hastily constructed on an isolated site eight miles from the city centre and adjacent to a village. The first families who moved in had only the minimum of facilities, both inside the dwellings and outside, but the planning and layout of the estate were thought to be good, providing adequate shopping facilities and a Community Centre.

'Some of the families had left behind them not only comfortable houses of their own but also relatives and friends. The prospect of rebuilding their lives in such surroundings appalled them...(but) they were able to live together as families, a very important consideration at a time when so many were broken up by the war. With these things in mind, the new residents set

to work to make themselves as comfortable as possible.' Again these factors led to the early formation of a Residents' Association, whose purpose would be the improvement of their living conditions and the general social amenities of the estate. Initially the Association negotiated with the Ministry of Aircraft Production and the City Council over matters such as buildings and equipment, rents and re-letting and various services - gas, water, transport, and so on. This representative function was confirmed at the 1946 elections to the Parish Council in which six village members were unseated by Resident Association members. The authors considered the members of the committee, the majority of whom were skilled workers, well able to carry out their duties - a number of them possessing leadership experience in trade unions and the Labour Party. But despite this there soon emerged disagreements and splits both within the organisation and the residents on the estate. A particular source of controversy was created by the decision to install a bar at the Community Centre. 'The bar has become very popular with some residents, but there are others who claim that but for its existence and the type of person frequenting it, they would use the Centre and help to extend its activities. So long as there is a bar there, they refuse to join.' Moreover some of the smaller special interest groups - the youth club, the dramatics group - were forced to break away from the Centre both because the building was unsuitable and because it was not possible in the context of the association to resolve the conflicting 'overt and popular idea of community' with sectional interests.

The attitude of the non-members, however, revealed a more fundamental split in the community as a whole. 'To many people

membership of, or connection with the Centre is a sign of social inferiority and it is at the heart of the problem of the social divisions of the estate.' Lupton and Mitchell based their analysis of this division not on occupational, family or educational criteria but on what they saw as the self-ascription of a superior social status, 'assumed status', as a technique of adaptation to the new conditions in the working-class suburb. The authors also noticed the tendency for smaller family units to assume a higher status than their fellow tenants, leading them to withdraw from communal activity of any sort - except significantly the Parent-Teacher Association. The comparison with Watling is interesting because on the London Estate it was precisely those higher status residents who were responsible for maintaining the public life of the Community Centre.

The Sheffield study reveals another variation on the theme, a variation in which organised communal activity ceased altogether. In many ways this estate is the least 'suburban' of those mentioned because it is close to the city centre, although isolated from it by a railway and waste-land (now the Hyde Park flats and motorway link road), but more significantly because the families were moved from a nearby slum clearance zone and were automatically rehoused with their previous groups of neighbours. In this way the social life of the old community was transplanted and in many respects preserved in the new surroundings. 'This isolation has probably been very important in stimulating local consciousness and also in insulating the residents from other ways of living.'

The difficulties involved in the transfer were immense, particularly because at a time of severe unemployment higher rents were incurred and the expense of buying new fittings and

furniture was considerable. Indeed, 'about one fifth of those who moved to the estate during the first four years left again fairly soon. The majority stayed, however, and in 1930 nearly 70% of the tenants declared that they preferred the new conditions to the old.'

According to a local report 40% of the heads of Households were unemployed in 1930. This the authors, Hodges and Smith, consider to be an important factor in the development of community life 'as it provided a common background of experience and need which made the residents willing to co-operate in various kinds of social activities...' - a similar heritage of struggle which was noted in the Ashton study. The shared experience of life in the old community will certainly have 'helped to generate the feeling of "belongingness" which now exists.' The amount of inter-marriage which takes place on the estate also contributed considerably to the integration of the estate - a situation more typical of an old established 'traditional' community than a suburb. From the parish register the authors of the study found that two-thirds of the inhabitants married on the estate did in fact marry another resident.

One initial effect of the move of groups of households was a lack of any one preponderant age group on the estate but very rapidly the proportion of children under the age of ten rose until in 1931 a figure twice the national average was recorded.

The life of a number of voluntary associations which assisted in the period up to 1939, however, was short-lived. A gardening club, a tenants' association, and a community centre were all founded on the basis of problems of adaptation to the new environment or because of unemployment. But by the end of the 1930s amelioration had been brought to these problems and

all three organisations collapsed as a result.

The authors do note, however, that the transference of traditional working-class values resulted in a continuation of the network of mutual assistance in times of crisis. As in Rock Ferry, Hodges and Smith found a number of families who were called on to help with laying out or with confinements and it was still customary for certain people to collect money for funeral wreaths. They noticed also a disparity of social status between people living at the 'top end' and those at the 'bottom end'. This is due to the disparity in the status of the original slum clearance areas, that the houses built later at the top were of slightly better construction, and for some reasons, possibly council policy, there were some very poor families living at the bottom end. Nevertheless, these discrepancies are only marginal features and the creation of this division, 'is an attempt by "respectable" people to dissociate themselves from the general reputation of the estate.'

The 'Non-Locality' View of Community.

A widely held view now believes it a fallacy to see a community as a self-contained unit (after the school of Chicago ecologists (9.19)), because description cannot be considered as a substitute for explaining the processes by which people choose or are constrained by their social, political, geographical and economic environments; in the phrase of Gans, 'the socially created and culturally defined roles, choices and demands.'

The idea that communities are defined by external forces has been elaborated and examined systematically in a number of recent studies. They pose a very different view of the concept of community from many of the earlier studies in their rejection of certain assumptions about the role of kinship, shared sentiment

and common locality as central components in community life. As a result their interpretations of the motives involved in the formation of local voluntary associations are somewhat different from the earlier work. Platt (9.20), for example, goes so far as to suggest that the view of community taken in the Bethnal Green studies was a reflection mainly of what the authors thought society ought to be like. Bethnal Green was a place where the working-class: 'were sufficiently different to be interesting and to subscribe to values which accidentally coincided at some points with their own.' Such a sweeping judgement is not warranted if the variety of experiences of community suggested in the last section is borne in mind. That is to say, in the particular example of Bethnal Green the factors of kinship and local identity held a greater significance than in other types of area, or at least played a different role in the formation of community life than in, say, a socially mixed residential suburb. When analysing any one area the question is to assess the relative influence of a multiplicity of factors which certainly include shared sentiment, kinship ties and so on, but always within the framework of questions of occupational status, social class and relationships determined by a general administrative and political structure. These relationships are to be examined in this section with particular reference to the work of Rex, Pahl, Harvey and Suttles.

The urban environment is the product of forces external to any one area or locality. This is clearly demonstrated in relation to the question of housing provision - the creation of new stock and the uses to which existing stock is put. In the course of this section the particular problem of housing supply will be shown to be crucial to the formation of local

associational life. We may first of all see the question in terms of the history of housing policy. In Britain in the twentieth century, changes in the basic structure of the housing market have rapidly transformed the social and morphological face of all the centres of population. These changes may be summarised as follows. State intervention in the housing market in the 1920's combined with the emergence of the Labour Party both nationally and locally, as the organised political expression of the working-class movement, created within a decade the 'council-house-estate'. During this same period the rapid growth of the Building Societies ensured that the lower-middle and middle classes were able to find a relatively secure access to owner-occupancy by borrowing capital. The concomitant development in the built environment was the ring of suburbs which now surrounds every town and city centre of any size. As a result of these major changes in the housing market and the creation of 'housing policy' the privately rented sector which predominated in the nineteenth century has been progressively undermined. More recent changes in social policy - adverse taxation and local authority slum clearance programmes - have hastened this decline. In the provincial centres privately rented accommodation amounts now to between 15% and 30% of the total and is destined to wither away within the next few decades. The Inner London Boroughs are an important exception with 49% at the time of the 1971 Census. This anomaly is mainly due to the contrasting occupational opportunities in Central London where a mass of white-collar and service jobs attract a vast inflow of young executives, barmaids, secretaries and other people who need to be near the city centre.

The evolutionary process in the housing market may take

many forms; a stable built environment reflecting in its present function social values and characteristics quite separate from a preceding historical period. Pahl (9.21) cites the case of the large-roomed housing of the old Czechoslovakian middle-class which in the socialist system have become flats for workers. 'Those living in the flats of those previously in a privileged position themselves gain privilege in the new situation.' In the British context the 'urban game of leapfrog', as Rex (9.22) puts it, is characteristic of nearly all the major centres of population. The upper middle-class moves out of the city centres, the middle and lower middle-classes leap further out into the 'suburbs' and the working-class progressively moves to a comparable suburbia created by the local authorities in imitation of the middle-class style of housing. This very basic characterisation takes on any number of local variations and to a certain extent is being reversed as land scarcity and house prices increase. For example, the question of scarcity of land together with a change in architectural fashion have created zones of densely populated high-rise megablocks close to the city centres, or again, the recent phenomenon of a centripetal movement of office workers and intellectuals back into the inner-ring seeking owner-occupancy and improvement grants in areas of relatively cheap short-life housing.

The general process by which urban resources, and in particular housing, are distributed and the spatial structure built up is described in a number of studies by Pahl (9.23) - on social structure and spatial structure and the distribution of resources and facilities in the 'socio-ecological environment'. Pahl begins from a statement of two main theoretical postulates.

First, that there are fundamental spatial constraints on access to scarce urban resources and facilities which are basically expressed in terms of time/cost distance. For example, the same wage for doing the same job in different parts of the country does not necessarily lead to an equal access to life-chances; this will vary according to the proportion of income spent on housing, journey to work, journeys to facilities and so on. The second postulate is that there are fundamental social constraints on access to scarce resources which reflect the distribution of power in society and are illustrated by the functioning of bureaucratic rules and procedures and by social 'gatekeepers' who help to distribute and control urban resources - planners, social workers, estate agents, property developers. Pahl refers to these processes as 'socio-spatial' and 'socio-ecology' systems. A central dynamic of the urban system, according to this thesis, is inevitable conflict for access to scarce resources. Education, jobs, housing as scarce resources are all potential sources of conflict. The main modifying factor in these patterns of relationship is the intervention by public authorities and powers into the distributive process. This intervention may either underline the differential reward system already operating or may modify it. The type and nature of intervention will depend on a number of factors - the political system, historical situation, the values of the administrative and care-taking professions, and so on.

The prognosis which is posed by Pahl's work is simply that the locality in which a person finds himself is largely a product of these processes of allocation. In the housing market in particular there are a variety of competitive pressures caused by the market system of distribution or by the bureaucratic

procedures of local government administration. Blair (9.24), for example, describes the conflict between a variety of less privileged sub-classes each with their own vested interests. He quotes the case of owner-occupiers in old inner-city properties who may work to encourage the local authority to get rid of planning blight or of Commonwealth immigrants but will oppose slum clearance projects that may adversely affect their possession of property. It would be instructive to develop this perspective and examine in more detail the exact nature of the economic relationship between different groups of people in the urban social system. The particular problem is to find out whether these different and competing groups cluster residentially and, if they do, what are the implications for the definition of community characteristics. The work of the American social geographer David Harvey and the British sociologist John Rex are key sources in this debate and so I intend to outline as briefly as possible the central aspects of their positions.

Harvey, in his book 'Social Justice and the City' (9.25), and also in a number of articles, is concerned to demonstrate the links between finance, capital and community life. He considers a particular form of rent, class-monopoly rent, as the key to the urban social system. Using the classical Marxist definition Harvey states that: 'Class-monopoly rents arise because there exists a class of owners of "resource units" and the land and the relatively permanent improvements incorporated in it, who are willing to release the units under their command only if they receive a positive return above some arbitrary level.' In the urbanised world of capitalist societies there arise definite 'class interests' based on the ability or lack of

ability to command scarce resources. For example, a group of low-income tenants, unable to command access either to owner-occupancy or public housing, have no alternative but to seek accommodation in the privately rented housing sub-market. A landlord seeking, say, a 15% per annum return in an area where there is an abundance of low-income units will rationally reduce maintenance and actively disinvest until some properties are so poor that they will be taken out of the market; whereupon scarcity is reproduced and rents will begin to rise again until a 15% rate of return is obtained. Harvey cites a second example of the realisation of a class-monopoly rent between 'speculation-developers' and suburban middle and upper-income groups: in this case the sense of social status and prestige opens up an opportunity for housing in various areas to command higher or lower prices with the degree of access depending on income levels. In the free market economy the speculator-developers try to ensure that current land and housing values reflect future returns and so seek to organise externalities to enhance the value of existing developments.

From these examples Harvey goes on to develop an hierarchical model of the institutional structure which class-monopoly rent produces. For example, the rent taken from a low-income tenant is passed on through the landlord living in a middle-income suburb to the speculator-developer; and as it seems virtually impossible that the process could operate in the reverse direction there would seem to exist a hierarchy at the top of which are the organisations of finance capital.

In addition, there is also a geographical structure to the housing market which directly contributes to the realisation of class-monopoly rent. In the context of Baltimore City Harvey

outlines the following main features. First, there is the inner city area - the main locus of the conflict between landlord and low-income tenants; the latter are mainly black, poorly organised, exercise little political control and are to all intents and purposes trapped in this sub-market. Second, the white ethnic areas which are dominated by home ownership financed by small, community based savings and loan institutions without a strong profit motive. Third, the black residential area of West Baltimore which emerged in the 1960s; here low to middle income blacks without access to local loan associations, financial institutions and the Federal Housing Administration (due to discrimination) resorted to a scheme called a 'land-instalment contract'. In this process of legal financial theft the speculator buys up property and then, having added his profit margin, sells the house by interposing his credit between the purchaser and the financial institutions, taking out a conventional mortgage and a loan. The speculator retains title to the property until the loan is paid off whereupon the purchaser can begin paying the normal instalments to build up equity in the house. Thus the cost of buying a house can be as much as twice that of a similar dwelling in a white ethnic area. Strong pressures are exerted on white middle-class groups to move to the suburbs where speculator-developers are ready to accommodate them. The so-called 'black tax' is, of course, a class-monopoly rent. A similar process of extracting a class-monopoly rent operates in a number of areas of high-turnover but in this case financed by a combination of mortgage/bank finance and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insurance. Various programmes to end the discrimination against blacks permitted the financing of home-ownership for low or moderate

income groups who have no money for a down-payment. In the high turnover sub-markets which were created speculators can easily pick up houses cheaply and after some cosmetic work sell through the insurance programme. Class-monopoly rent is imposed in the form of an 'exit tax' on whites and a black or low-income 'entry tax'. The fifth of Harvey's geographical sub-markets are the middle income group areas. These were the creation of F.H.A. programmes in the 1930's and conventionally financed by Federal savings and loan institutions. The inner-edge of this sub-market is under some pressure, however, because the finance houses are sensitive to breaks in these areas which result in a gradual erosion as speculators move in to fill the vacuum. Typically there is a political struggle at this boundary as the middle income groups seek to preserve their position from erosion. The sixth and most affluent section can use savings banks and commercial banks and rarely resort to F.H.A. guarantees; usually they can fend off speculative incursions and will move only on the basis of their own preference.

The system which is created is a product of history. It changes in the course of time but in the short term a certain degree of rigidity permits the extraction, in one of its various forms, of class-monopoly rent. The implications of Harvey's work on residential structure and the processes underlying the formation of communities are, of course, very important. The supposition from this work is that the most active agents in the shaping of residential areas are the finance houses mediated through investors seeking to realise a class-monopoly rent. The relationship between this view and more conventional sociological models is extremely complex. But, in short, Harvey argues that considerations of race, prestige, life-style, community solidarity

are not irrelevant to understanding residential differentiation but actually improve the conditions for the extraction of class-monopoly rent because they help to maintain the sub-market units. These groupings are identical to the 'housing classes' described by Rex and Moore in the Sparkbrook study and the same conclusions apply to the situation which Harvey found in Baltimore. Individuals can strive to move from one sub-market or housing class situation to another, but none can choose the actual structure in which they are involved. 'The general proposition we are left with is an intriguing one: in producing new modes of consumption and new social wants and needs, the urbanization process concomitantly produces new distributive groupings or consumption classes which may crystallize into distinctive communities within the overall urban structure.'

HOUSING SUB-MARKETS, BALTIMORE CITY. 1970.

| | Median income* | % Black occupied d.u.'s | % Units owner occupied | Mean value of owner occupied | % Renter occupied | Mean monthly rent. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inner city | 6259 | 72.2 | 28.5 | 6259 | 71.5 | 77.5 |
| 1. East | 6201 | 65.1 | 29.3 | 6380 | 70.7 | 75.2 |
| 2. West | 6297 | 76.9 | 27.9 | 6963 | 72.1 | 78.9 |
| Ethnic | 8822 | 1.0 | 66.0 | 8005 | 34.0 | 76.8 |
| 1. East Baltimore | 8836 | 1.2 | 66.3 | 8368 | 33.7 | 78.7 |
| 2. South Baltimore | 8785 | 0.2 | 64.7 | 6504 | 35.3 | 69.6 |
| Hampden | | | | | | |
| West Baltimore | 9566 | 84.1 | 50.0 | 13,842 | 50.0 | 103.7 |
| South Baltimore | 8941 | 0.1 | 56.9 | 9741 | 43.1 | 82.6 |
| High turnover | 10,413 | 34.3 | 53.5 | 11,886 | 46.5 | 113.8 |
| 1. North-West | 9483 | 55.4 | 49.3 | 11.867 | 50.7 | 110.6 |
| 2. North East | 10,753 | 30.4 | 58.5 | 11,533 | 41.5 | 111.5 |
| 3. North | 11.510 | 1.3 | 49.0 | 12.726 | 51.0 | 125.1 |
| Middle income | 10,639 | 2.8 | 62.6 | 13.221 | 37.5 | 104.1 |
| 1. South-West | 10,655 | 4.4 | 48.8 | 13,470 | 51.2 | 108.1 |
| 2. North-East | 10,634 | 2.3 | 66.2 | 13,174 | 33.8 | 103.0 |
| Upper income | 17,577 | 1.7 | 50.8 | 27,097 | 49.2 | 141.4 |

* Weighted average of median incomes for census tracts in sub-market.

Source: 1970 census.

The central position held by housing in the urban social system is a notion largely formulated in Rex and Moore's classic study 'Race, Community and Conflict' (9.26). In this they suggest that the nature and existence of urban communities is predicated by larger, external forces that shape the housing market, '... that the basic process underlying urban social interaction is competition for scarce and desired types of housing. In this process people are distinguished from one another by their strength in the Housing market, or more generally in the system of housing allocation.' In the specific context of Sparkbrook in the mid-1960's Rex and Moore distinguished seven major 'housing class' situations. (i) The outright owners of large houses in desirable areas. (ii) Mortgage payers who 'own' whole houses in desirable areas. (iii) Council tenants in council built houses. (iv) Council tenants in slums awaiting demolition. (v) Tenants of a whole house owned by a private landlord. (vi) Owners of houses bought with short term loans who are compelled to let rooms in order to meet their repayment obligations. (vii) Tenants of rooms in a lodging house. For any particular locality the model will, of course, depend on the kinds of housing available and the form of allocation. There are many different histories, many types of housing stock. Pahl (9.27) offers a housing model from one of his commuter villages in Hertfordshire. In this instance he deduced an eight-fold classification. (i) Large property owners. (ii) Salaried immigrants with some capital. (iii) 'Spiralists'. (iv) Those with limited capital. (v) The retired. (vi) Council house tenants. (vii) Tied cottages and (viii), other tenants, and local tradesmen and businessmen. There were to be found definite clusters of interest built upon the possession of property and

buildings, each reflecting certain social values and status positions and each under competitive pressures of one sort or another. In Sparkbrook Rex and Moore found a larger bureaucratically allocated section than in most countries; discrimination could operate in this sector as well as in the free market sector, and there were certain forms of tenure, especially those of the resident lodging-house landlord and the lodging-house tenant, which were to be differentiated from the owner-occupier and the tenant of a whole, privately-owned house, in that tenures of this kind were the most insecure of all.

The social behaviour of people is, of course, the product of a multiplicity of influences; their position in the 'housing class' system is only one of these. This is acknowledged by the authors of the Sparkbrook study who also point out that the notion of housing classes as a sociological model is only a simplified one - they are offering 'an ideal type which may help to illuminate the complex world of social reality'. People in the particular context of the 'zone in transition' will react according to previous cultural experiences, religious backgrounds, kinship ties, job opportunities. There is another set of objective factors which mould the formation and structure of social relations, namely, the housing class situation, or as Rex describes it in a later article, access to the 'means of residence'.(9.28). In short, the differences of access to housing resources and the security of tenure does not necessarily lead to a common consciousness of belonging to one or other of the groups. The question, therefore, becomes one of looking at the sources of the alternative forms of consciousness to which members of a housing class choose to give their loyalty, or to define as their social context. An integrative mechanism which blurs in varying

degrees the conflicts inherent not only in the competition for scarce and desired housing facilities but also in the general social and industrial system was considered by Rex and Moore to have two main sources. First, that there was a system of 'status grading of the ways of life of various neighbourhoods', in which people would aspire from a lower to a higher position and presumably would have different insights into and knowledge of the facts of the hierarchy. Second, that the whole process of the formation of housing classes 'might be overlaid and distorted by another fundamental process in which immigrants into the city form colonies which might provide the means to partial temporary pluralistic integration, but which would also act as a springboard from which immigrants might launch themselves into the city and its social and cultural order'.

The reconciliation of the potential conflicts and the expression of ethnic, religious and political values is largely the role and work of a variety of associations in the area. Rex and Moore found that the ability of the different ethnic communities to utilise and adapt their organisational life varied considerably:

> 'The Irish are well equipped both with a colony structure in the period of transition and with the means to assimilation. The West Indians are marked by their colour, but their culture is less distinctive than that of the Irish. They are lacking in organisations and in commercial influence. They want acceptance into the host society... the Pakistanis are culturally and racially distinct... they form, in a technical sense, a pariah group, being in the society but not of it. They have clear conflicts of interest with the society and have organised themselves to pursue these conflicts and to reach some adjustment compatible with their interests. On many levels of organisation they are better equipped than either the Irish or the West Indians. It is out of the interaction of these three groups with an English community in a decaying urban district that Sparkbrook's social system has to be fashioned.' (9.29)

The associations whether they be political parties, churches, tenants', immigrants' or community associations provide, at least in part, the means by which special interests are advanced; they also 'institutionalize the aggressive and defensive sentiments of the various groups'. The national and international links of many of the groups and their 'universalistic' ideas served in some ways to inhibit the performance of this function. Clearly, while the factual and material basis of class inequality - in housing and society generally - can be recognised, a variety of interpretations can be made to explain one's own situation on the position of other people in the system.

In a later article Rex develops his argument about the role of voluntary associations in the inner-city context.(9.30) The crucial point for the relationship between community life and the groups is the way in which values and meaning-systems are externalised through associational forms. Rex, for example, considers that the development of a housing class into a conscious 'class-for-itself' should be sought in the study of urban associations. 'The area in which one would begin to look for a partial development of housing classes so that they become classes-for-themselves is in the study of the organizations, norms, beliefs, values and sentiments of the associations, which exist in profusion in the city.'(9.31) He develops the argument outlined in Chapter Two of 'Race, Community and Conflict', to point out that whatever the overt function of an organization - churches, political parties, drinking clubs, community associations and so on - they are better understood 'as the agencies either of incipient housing-classes-for-themselves or of immigrant colonies.' Thus all the organizations in Sparkbrook played, in varying degrees, a number of roles the most important of which were: (i) the overcoming of social isolation;

(ii) acting as 'trade unions' on behalf of the members; (iii) of doing pastoral or casework amongst the members; (iv) 'elaborating new meanings, norms and belief systems.' And, of course, as a minimum requirement an association must display elements of organizational form; the affiliation of members, with officers, clients and supporters. Rex claims that these functions and facilities are the basic means through which a housing class starts to become a class-for-itself. For Marxists the point at which true class-formation begins is a crucial area of investigation but the actual mechanism of this process has never been fully elaborated. As Rex says, 'The Marxist tradition has never adequately clarified what is involved, sociologically speaking, in the formation of a class-for-itself.'(9.32)

A very different view of housing as a basis, or even a partial basis, for the development of class activity is taken by the neo-Marxist school of urban sociologists. Castells, for example, argues that the growing homogeneity of the workforce in the factories and offices may actually be offset by increasing differentiation of residential types and status groups which leads to 'the ideological integration of the working class in the dominant ideology.'(9.33) According to Castells, in his seminal text, 'The Urban Question', a class activity arises out of the contradictions which develop from imbalances in the allocation of resources to the two key elements of capitalist society, production and consumption. Castells argues, in a position derived from the French philosopher Louis Althusser, that in such societies the workforce must continually be replaced and provided with certain life-sustaining facilities, such as housing ('the reproduction of labour power'). Under present day conditions, however, other amenities such as schools are also a requirement to ensure that the workers are of functional use to capital ('the extended

reproduction of labour power'). Together the simple reproduction of labour power and the extended reproduction of labour power are achieved by private or collective provision in the form of a 'means of consumption'. The key to Castells' thesis is that in modern capitalist states the means of consumption are increasingly provided by the state in a collective form. He sees this as the source of a major political and economic contradiction in capitalism because the structural necessity to maximize profit creates a tension between the means of production and the means of consumption with the former always dominant. The 'urban problematic' is seen as the arena in which the struggle to resolve this basic dispute takes place. "The theme of 'the urban' seems to connote the processes of simple and extended reproduction of labour power, while emphasising the particular conditions of their realization. In more concrete terms, in the advanced capitalist societies, we are witnessing an increasing collectivization of the conditions underlying these processes, since there is a technico-social interpretation of the productions and activities necessary to it and since the concentration of the means of production and their administration involves a parallel concentration of the means of consumption. In such a situation, the urban refers not only to a spatial form, but expresses the social organization of the process of reproduction."(9.34)

The relationship between Althusser's famous text, 'For Marx' and Castells' book, 'The Urban Question' is central to understanding the philosophical basis of the neo-Marxist school of urban sociologists. From his position as an activist on the left of the French Communist Party, Althusser argues that the real task of philosophy is to make a political intervention into theory. Castells frequently argues in his works that any political struggle in the urban context is only profitable if it leads to a raising of

political consciousness which he explicitly relates in the French context to the militant wing of the Communist Party. This link between theory and political practice has, of course, been a key theme in all the great Marxist writers, especially Lenin. Castells, indeed, argues in a passage reminiscent of the well-known text of Lenin (9.35) that spontaneous social movements will never develop beyond a reformist, 'trade union consciousness' without the infusion of Marxist theory and organization. Without the agency of a revolutionary organization to weld the struggles to the broad anti-capitalist movement consumption issues will produce 'consumer trade unionism'. Conversely, 'The new questions posed by the urban problematic are expressed in action that reopens the road to revolution in our societies by linking other forms of conflict with those arising from the productive system...'(9.36)

The central position of Althusser's revision of the classical understanding of the works of Marx and Engels revolves around the question of when and how a pre-revolutionary 'conjuncture'(9.37) can result in an actual, qualitative transformation of society. Althusser argues that under the conditions of developed capitalism the classic Marxist notion of the clash between labour and capital is no longer a guarantee of social change. While Marx recognised the crucial role which the state and ideology play in this process, the penetration of those two factors has produced hitherto unrecognized complexities which must modify the conditions of a revolutionary conjuncture. "...that a revolution in the structure does not ipso facto modify the existing superstructures and particularly the ideologies at one blow (as it would if the economic was the sole determinant factor) for they have sufficient of their own consistency to survive beyond their immediate life context, even to recreate, to 'secrete' substitute conditions of existence

temporarily." (9.38) A revolution can only develop, therefore, when a multiple set of circumstances 'fuse into a ruptural disunity'. Castells suggests that in the urban system - in the contradictions of the consumption process - a significant contribution to this convergence of social disintegration is being made. But if these movements do not lead in the direction of revolutionary rupture but remain within the confines of radical protest or 'participation' they will only lead to the perpetuation of the existing social system.

This conclusion has been a major source of criticism of Castells because the method is highly deterministic - that given the right set of circumstances and correct leadership real 'urban effects' can be achieved. As Pickvance points out, 'This appears to me to ignore what is not only a major theoretical problem but also a major problem for political practice, namely, how, in Marxian terms, does a class-in-itself become a class-for-itself? To answer by the implementation of a revolutionary political group simply moves the question one step further back: under what conditions is this possible?' (9.39) Following Rex's development of the Sparkbrook study, Pickvance argues that Castells' discussion of urban social movements is weak because he does not consider all the circumstances of how a social base becomes a social force. This should include consideration of the context of an issue, the organizations, the value systems of the participants, other sources of loyalty and identification and so on. Pickvance is also critical of Castells for dismissing the possibility of urban effects occurring in any other way than through structural contradictions. Pickvance quotes, for example, a number of French and British studies which show how groups were able to use institutional methods for achieving their goals. "...'mobilization of the social base' is only one way in which urban effects are produced. My aim is not to

deny that mobilization is an important source of social change... but simply to argue that both types of action are empirically important, and that neglect of either is unjustified."(9.40) Taking 'social change' as a concept which includes both major and minor changes Pickvance suggests that governmental institutions are also a source of change, "and to this extent must be treated as sources of urban effects in the same way as social movements." (9.41) Consequently, the 'movement centred' approach of the neo-Marxist further weakens their theory of social change. "It is only when particular local authorities are made the subject of study that it will be possible to attribute the 'urban effects' in particular cases to the actions of urban social movements, authority policy and other urban actors."(9.42) Castells, on the other hand, defines urban social movements in terms of certain types of result or effect. Without these specific effects the organization is not an urban social movement but a reformist or 'protest' group. Pickvance sums up his critique of Castells in the following terms "...organization plays a greater role in social movements than simply permitting the linking of contradictions. It is suggested that the survival and success of such movements depends on the resources they are able to obtain, free or through social exchange, from organizations in the community, from higher levels of hierarchies, and from the personal networks and multiple position of their members. This is true irrespective of whether the underlying theory of political action stresses mobilization of the base, institutional means, or personal relations, though in the latter case it is more patent."(9.43)

Criticism has also been levelled at Castells for the use he makes of the notion of collective consumption. This leads back to the initial observation in this section that different residential types and residentially based status systems, according

to Castells, create not differentiation but 'ideological integration'. Saunders, however, shows in his case-study of Croydon that social class divisions based on an owner occupier/council tenant split was precisely a basis for mobilization; in this case to defend the dominant social and political ethos of middle class owner occupancy.(9.44) As Saunders suggests, Castells' use of the concept of a collective means of consumption is not in itself wrong but has been wrongly applied. "It is apparent that a crisis in the provision of collective means of consumption, far from bringing non-capitalist classes together, may serve to drive them even further apart...a shortage of housing resulting in political agitation by the homeless may well be seen by owner occupiers (and possibly by some secure council tenants) as a threat to their values."(9.45) In addition, it is precisely in the arena of <u>collective</u> consumption, where Castells locates the major dysfunctions between production and consumption, that urban movements would be expected to form. However, claimants, public transport users, or more pertinantly, council house tenants are no better equipped for the sustained achievement of real 'urban effects' than private sector consumers.

In his reformulation of urban sociology Castells offers a 'materialist' understanding of the notion of community. "Space is a real element and not a conceptual unit." His interpretation arises out of the attempt to provide a proper subject matter for the discipline against the general 'theoretical objects' of all previous urban sociology which, Castells argues, has not had a specifically 'urban' content. "Thus, while there is no field of reality which can be termed 'urban', urban sociology has in fact tended to tackle two types of problem: (1) relationships to space; and (2) what may be termed the process of collective consumption." (9.46) So what has previously been thought of as 'urban sociology'

has in reality been a sociology of space and a sociology of collective consumption. "Urban sociology, as such, has no specific real object." Castells says that these two fields of study can, however, if tackled with a correct theoretical system, become a valid arena of analysis. He suggests that there are three possible theoretical approaches - the study of the production of social forms, the functioning of the social system and the structure of the semantic field. By placing these ingredients with the real objects, that is to say, space and collective consumption, what is constituted is a new theoretical field. "The study of space and the process of collective consumption, at these three levels, in relation to structures and in relation to actors, and following the three approaches indicated, constitutes a new theoretical field...this field is not that of a new urban sociology, but is simply a redefinition of the real problems tackled and discoveries made within the ideological field described as urban sociology."(9.47) For example, Castells recognises the use of the term 'community' to describe the spatial coincidence of a social unit and a social system but he rejects the notion as a theoretical object because there is nothing that particularly delimits 'community' as separate from the social relations of capitalist societies in general and is, therefore, an ideological statement. However, as Pickvance suggests, if that definition of community is accepted it is possible to open up Castells' own idea of functional integration by studying the economic basis of spatial differentiation (c.f. Harvey's work on Baltimore) and how different social systems operate and in particular the circumstances under which a social base becomes a social force. For Pickvance a theoretical method such as this provides a very definite urban real object, which he calls the 'sociology of community'. And as he points out in nearly

all his subsequent work Castells has concentrated only on the historical materialist approach ('the study of the production of social forms'). "It implies focusing on 'the study of transformations of the relationships between society and space' rather than the functional integration or semantic field of a spatial unit. One of the interesting areas for further development lies in the use of all three approaches....adoption of a historical materialist approach need not exclude certain other approaches." (9.48) Castells' revision of the subject matter of urban sociology, whether or not we accept the label 'urban sociology' has widened the perspectives of the discipline but he fails to draw the conclusions of some of his own theoretical reworking, particularly by rejecting the existence of 'urban real objects' and the consequences which flow from such a position.

One recent attempt precisely to construct a theoretical understanding of the sociology of community is to be found in the work of the American sociologist Gerald Suttles. In his work he relates the emergence of community organizations to his understanding and interpretation of the nature of community. Indeed, Suttles proposes that the very notion of 'community' is concerned about how residents defend themselves from external adversaries and that a particularly advanced form of this defence is the establishment of an organization. In the book 'The Social Construction of Communities' (9.49), mainly written by Suttles, the folk and traditional understanding of community as an internally coherent collectivity based on family ties and neighbourly sentiment is replaced by a model which emphasises the role of external organizations, 'adversaries and advocates', in the formation of the urban community. Furthermore, it is suggested that 'the contemporary local urban community need not be seen as a detached and primordial solidarity but is best conceived of as a pyramid

of progressively more inclusive groupings, in which each level of sociocultural integration parallels the hierarchy of 'adversaries' or 'advocates' who face residential groups.'(9.50)

The most elementary features of the urban community, Suttles indicates, are its identity and its boundaries. The former may be distinguished by any number of dimensions or attributes, but they seem to devolve around a single cultural principle, namely, that an identity is established by the most apparent differences from other areas. Thus a neighbourhood may be thought of as belonging to a particular ethnic or racial group, even if that group is not a majority of the population in the area; it will nevertheless be distinguished on that basis. Identity is thus determined by comparison and by dialogue with other adjacent communities in addition to the ideas of a number of external agencies - the local press, town planners, estate agents, etc.

Outside influences are equally important in the development of boundaries. For example, a street which is said to separate one area from another achieves its significance only partly because it is a physical obstruction, for additionally it represents a social barrier across which a resident may find himself in an unselected and even dangerous social setting. The identity and boundaries of a community cannot thus be seen to result only from internal development of relations among co-residents. What distinguishes one area from another is the social model of community of which there are several main types; they exist together in a hierarchy of community units reflecting, among other things, governmental and administrative divisions and telescoping into each other - albeit in a fragmentary fashion. Within the urban setting Suttles finds that there are four basis levels in the hierarchy of communities. From the point of view

of the residents the most elemental grouping is the network of face-to-face acquaintances who share the same street or block of flats, or who shop at the same local shops. This is the equivalent of the 'home area' discussed in a number of British studies and is characterised primarily by the direct knowledge and recognition of those who happen to live close by, or who use the same facilities. Usually the extent of the home area will differ from person to person and so will not constitute a neighbourhood or have a named residential identity. It is an area which has particular significance for children as it may represent the confines of their play area and thus have a prescribed definition rather than the more egocentric interpretation of the adult.

The second stage in the hierarchy of communities is the one which Suttles calls the defended neighbourhood. This is the smallest area commonly known both to its members and to outsiders. It is 'an area within which people retreat to avoid a quantum jump in the risks of insult or injury they must take by moving about outside the area.' The size of the area may be large or small, although there is an upper limit, depending on the nature of the area; for example, in an inner-city zone the defended neighbourhood may be as small as a single building or block of flats. These defended neighbourhoods are determined by the fear of invasion from adjacent communities: 'it is the mutual opposition rather than primordial solidarity alone which gives the defended neighbourhood its unity and sense of homogeneity.' (9.51).

The defended neighbourhood may or may not have an official identity, but it is characteristic of the third tier of community, the community of limited liability, that it has formal recognition - a name and specific boundaries which have been drawn

up over time by a variety of external agencies, planners, the press, business groups. Because these groups have different requirements and sometimes compete with one another about the way in which cities are to be divided there tends to be a mosaic of overlapping communities of limited liability so that a resident may find himself living in several areas. Participation in the community of limited liability is as a result voluntary rather than being prescribed on the basis of residence alone. "The local community organization, improvement association, political interest groups and other organizations attract only a portion of the local residents. In turn, action on behalf of the community of limited liability becomes specialised and self-consciously orientated toward limited issues (housing standards, pollution, tree removal and so on). The residents' interests are thus only partially captured by narrowly localised community groups." (9.52). Suttles suggests that the ineffectiveness of many community groups must be accounted for by the fragmentation of interests and loyalties resulting from the community of limited liability. And since the residents of any one area will only have a few common 'adversaries or advocates' they can be aroused only temporarily and on the basis of only one or a few issues.

The fragmentation of the community of limited liability is much less than in the fourth dimension of the urban community typology, the expanded community of limited liability. This level is almost hypothetical but is made visible by terms such as the East End or West End of a city and sometimes is the subject of government policy or a programme of housing, transport, social service, etc. Occasionally, community groups may attempt to organise on the basis of such a large constituency, although their claims are usually poorly justified by their membership.

This level of centralisation causes problems for smaller groups who may have to resort to more militant tactics to make their voice heard. Larger-scale community organizations might develop to match the scale of their adversary - be it a business firm, a political programme, a planning proposal, or whatever. Often these organizations will take the form of a confederation of smaller groups, attempting to expand membership, developing a more professional and high status leadership and speaking to a wider range of issues.(9.53).

Summary and Conclusions.

In the twentieth century the two-fold process of the dispersal of population from the city centres and the decanting of the rural population has created an increasingly suburbanized society. As relatively new, yet extensive, statements on the urban landscape, the variety of types of suburban community provide an ideal opportunity to assess the factors which generate the formation of associational life. Attention was initially given to a number of studies of what has been called the 'traditional working-class community' because they themselves display distinctive patterns of associational life and also because the response of people moving from these older communities into the suburbs has not meant the sudden acquisition of a new 'suburban way of life' but an adaptation of traditional life styles to the new surroundings and the new social setting.

What is this tradition? In working-class communities the most important element in the public life of the area is the tradition of informal co-operation, especially to be found during times of adversity - unemployment, ill-health, deaths and so on. The attitude to formal organization is as a result one of suspicion in case the traditional patterns and networks are

disrupted. In time certain individuals may develop a reputation, as 'the labour woman', or 'the money collector', but a self-ascribed status gained through membership of a formal committee is likely to lead to friction and even hostility - 'the man who bangs the hammer'. The general attitude towards community organization is thus one of instrumentality - to fulfil a specific need which may arise from time to time, such as Coronation street parties. In the event, action will emerge spontaneously, particularly calling on the fund of 'customary organisers' and so that people can 'chip in' according to their means. In the case of the pit village the instrumental attitude found expression through the formally organised trade union. This is due to the factors of geographical isolation and the very strong relationship between attitudes developed in the process of winning coal - the physical toil, the history of economic crisis, dangers of ill-health and accident, that it is an exclusively male occupation - and family and community life. In the community loyalties are very tightly knit and the penalties for breaking these codes of behaviour are severe.

In the suburbs class stratification is equally as influential in setting the context for the development of associational life as in the single class communities. Generally speaking, social class mixing in a village or an urban community leads to polarization between the classes. The reason for this may be found not only in the relative affluence of the various groups but also in the social milieux in which they live. The greater physical and social mobility, for example, of people in the higher socio-economic groups often leads to a deliberate search for a community ideal as a means of securing rapid attachment to an area. In addition particular types of linguistic and social skills associated with managerial and professional occupations

make associational life rewarding for those people who possess these attributes but normally leads to the withdrawal of lower class groups. For the former this type of activity is expressive, for the latter the response is on the one hand to continue to foster relationships with their other kin - which the expansion of car ownership assists, and on the other hand to a tendency in everyday life to retreat into the nuclear family.

As in Dormersdell certain organizations with an instrumental purpose - the football club, the youth club, etc. - will be preserved as working-class strongholds, but the Women's Institute, the Community Hall and so on were taken over by the middle class with an uneasy alliance round the churches and cricket club. Gans noted that in Levittown the division of activities polarized around the dominant lower middle-class subculture which resulted in both the lower class and upper middle group being eased out. It has been noted in several studies that upper middle-class groups with wider social horizons may opt either to withdraw from localized activity or else intervene in leadership positions.

In working-class suburbs associational life develops in response to a number of factors. On an entirely new estate it is common for there to be an initial unity among the tenants against an unfriendly and often hostile host community. Peter Collison's (9.54) graphic description in 'The Cutteslowe Wall' illustrates an example where council housing was added to a street formerly containing only private housing. The private residents built a wall to separate themselves from the unwanted intruders, much to the consternation of the local authority. This kind of external reaction combined with complaints and problems about design and facilities on the estate usually leads to the formation of a tenants' association. As things settle

down, other organizations get going and new people (who have not shared the early problems) move in, the association will split up leaving a minority to carry on the organization. This minority is often drawn from a particular status group on the estate. These groupings may polarize for a number of reasons - place of origin, financial and job security, family size, educational level and so on. In some cases, of course, associational life will cease altogether after the initial transfer has been faced.

The studies of Rex, Harvey, Castells and his followers and of Suttles suggest that we need to see the concept of community and the place of community organizations within it in a broad, social dimension. Suttles suggests that there are four main dimensions of community. These four dimensions - the home area/face block, defended community, community of limited liability and the extended community of limited liability - do not, of course, form a regular and totally integrated pattern, they are in fact very fragmented. But in looking for explanations of the behaviour of community groups and in developing our conception of 'community' they are invaluable models. They show the potentialities and limitations of community groups in local politics and within the complex web of urban social and political system provide group activity with a definite location. For example, the criteria for the selection of territorial boundaries by a community group, which reflects a certain perception of 'community', are made more explicit, and the key note, hinted at in the work of Rex and Harvey, and which is made explicit by Suttles, is that the very notion of community is most purposefully defined as the potentiality of residents to organise themselves. The sense in which this is wholly an internal response is limited. Rex and Harvey make clear in their portrayal of how the housing market operates that most people are constrained

in their choice of residential area. With the exception of the face-to-face level of community, which by its very nature has little organizational potential, community is constructed by a combination of pressures which are mainly external to the area. Under certain circumstances the latent force within the residential 'solidarity' may take on a formal shape as an organization, a community group, voluntary or political association of some sort.

Castells argues that the organizations should be classified according to the effect that is obtained by their intervention. This leads him to identify three types of organization which correspond to the results of their action - protest, participation and 'urban social movement'. He argues that issues of collective consumption, urban issues such as housing and transport, which are not related by the groups involved to the wider class struggle at the industrial and political levels will become 'reformist' and so in reality not change anything but on the contrary perpetuate 'class monopoly capitalism'. "From the point of view of the revolutionary political opposition, the place of urban contradictions, and of the struggles that derive from them, in overall strategy, depends on its judgement of the conjuncture of the class struggle and on the characteristics of the economic and political organizations of the dominated classes."(9.55) But the notion that the authorities will not grant any concessions which change the balance of forces in the arena of collective consumption is a weakness in the neo-Marxist argument and their failure to analyse the role of, for example, the local government apparatus as a source of power and decision-making has been widely criticized. The idea that only structural contradictions produce urban effects is not borne out by much of the evidence. Moreover, despite the movement-centred analysis of the Castells school, their explanation

of the key question in Marxist sociology of how a social base becomes a social force (a class-for-itself) has a number of faults. To suggest that the political line of the leadership of urban movements is the sole determinant of achieving 'urban effects' is extremely mechanistic. As Pickvance argues, Castells' method does not consider all the circumstances of how a social base becomes a social movement, the context of an issue, the organizations involved, different sources of loyalty - problems, for example, associated with Suttles' idea of the 'community of limited liability', and so on. Rex, in fact, in the development of the Sparkbrook study, made precisely the point that a major weakness of the Marxist position is their explanation, or rather lack of explanation, of what is involved in the formation of a class-for-itself. The work of Rex himself, of Suttles, Pahl, Pickvance and others has over a number of years been working towards such an explanation and taken together with the recent developments in the neo-Marxist understanding of urban politics are advancing the boundaries of our understanding of the processes of organizational development within our towns and cities and their implications for the polity as a whole.

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## CHAPTER TEN. BOUNDARY SELECTION AND AREA CHARACTERISTICS.

The question of the definition of community remains a key problem in understanding the role of community groups in local politics. Without an agreed model of community it is very difficult, if not impossible, to suggest what rights and responsibilities, if any, could or should be devolved into the communities. How a definition could be arrived at for that purpose can, of course, only be speculative. One of the key ingredients, however, in such an exercise would be the views of community groups themselves. Without a substantial degree of approval from them the establishment of a community tier of local administration would be futile. The material from the survey of the Sheffield groups provides some evidence on how they perceived their own political community. The findings suggest that it is not easy to escape from the influence of agencies outside the community itself, neither is there a definition of community which can readily be adapted to the demands for 'community control' or even a more limited devolution of local government powers. The problem is of finding a locus of internal identity to which people would actively respond. The range of competing loyalties are numerous and 'community' for many people is as much a trap as it is a positive and creative force. In addition, the level at which people feel most strongly attached to their community - the 'home area' containing a few houses or a street - is so small as to be functionally meaningless from the point of view of government. It is certainly not the level from which community groups emerge; their constituencies are very much larger.

The respondents were questioned in some depth about the

reasons for their choice of territory, or more correctly, they gave reasons for their choice of boundaries. The first part of the chapter discusses these replies. Following this an examination is made of the internal characteristics of the areas using various indices from the 1971 Census. This analysis has been made very much easier by the recent publication of an atlas which has mapped a selection of key indices using information from the small area (enumeration district) statistics. Does the idea which a group has about its area correspond to an internally coherent social unit, measured by such indices as social class, housing tenure, quality of the housing stock, educational level and so on? Is there an index or combination of indices which might be thought of as providing favourable ground for the development of voluntary associational activity? These questions will be discussed by constructing a typology of the groups' areas and later combining this with the material from an earlier chapter on their organisational characteristics. In addition, as the work outlined briefly in the previous chapter of the contemporary school of urban sociologists suggests, an understanding of the perceptions and definitions of community is crucial to our developing knowledge of urban society.

Boundary Selection.

What are the groups' own criteria for boundary selection? What do these choices suggest about their perception of community? Why have some areas been excluded from a territorial claim by a group? What is the relationship between area issues and functions? Do their original boundaries, selected for definite purposes, continue to be appropriate to their long term, continuing role?

While to some extent each group had a different emphasis in the reasons for their choice of boundaries there is a very definite general perspective governing the selection. Their perception of 'community' is most closely related to the issues in which they were initially involved. The crucial factor of the issue is once again in the forefront of the discussion. But it is not the only factor and in itself conceals a more complex process. The choice of boundaries by the tenants' associations shows clearly the nature of this process. In every case the associations chose the 'estate', irrespective of its size, as their area. The only decisions which had to be made, in a few cases, concerned the precise lines to be drawn between adjacent estates. And where this problem existed it was always resolved by selecting a convenient major road to delimit the areas. The use of the 'estate' as the territorial boundary is derived from two main sources. First, each estate has a very distinctive identity which is due to the particular history, the architectural style and differences of social composition. The history of the building programme was outlined in an introductory chapter. There are the early pre-war brick built suburbs with long established populations many of whom moved en bloc from the slum areas. They are areas primarily of unskilled manual workers with a higher than average level of unemployment. Following the war these estates were in some cases added to and expanded with massive new developments taking place in new areas, followed by the high-rise and megablock complexes, the prefabricated low rise estates (using the '3M' design) and more recently a new generation of brick built suburbs. Each estate, therefore, has a certain character, reflecting its geographical location, architecture, history and people. Especially on the poorer, old estates or

in the high-rise developments the tenants do not readily acknowledge these identities because the comparisons are not favourable.

The second source of boundary selection based on the estate are the administrative divisions which the Housing Department use especially for the purpose of calculating and collecting rents. This itself reflects some of the features outlined above, the age and design of houses on the estate, where they are located and so on. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter it was the rent issue which provoked the formation of most of the tenants' associations who were bound to organise on an estate basis because the new rent levels affected each estate differently. The divisive effect that this policy of differential increases, as previously described, weakened the position of the tenants' movement in the City. The older estates tended to be more militant because they were to suffer larger increases. The boundaries of the estates have, then, been acquired from the earliest stages of planning. Indeed, perhaps the most important influence in boundary selection can be traced back to the drawing boards of the estate designers. Only in a very secondary sense may the associations' choices be thought of as responding to an internal 'community' and where this is the case it is often made by comparison with other estates, whether 'better' or 'worse', 'new' or 'old', or if on the right side of the town. Essentially the boundaries are defined by external agencies - architects, planners, administrators - to which the tenants in periods of collective protest will adapt their own organisational units.

The Action Group Boundaries.

The selection of boundaries by the action groups is more complex because it involves a greater variety of components, but the influence of external agencies and organisations was again very apparent. The replies of the action groups to the questions in the survey 'Why did your group choose its particular boundary?' are summarised in the following table.

Table 10.1 Reasons for Choice of Boundaries.

| | % |
|---|---|
| n = | 28 |
| Ward. | 7.1 |
| Planning Study Area. | 39.3 |
| Clearance Area. | 7.1 |
| Natural Area. | 42.9 |
| Don't know. | 3.6 |
| | 100.0 |

Source: Author's Survey.

The term 'natural area' had a number of meanings but it was frequently used as the explanation for the boundary. Probes for more detail showed that features such as main roads, canals, rivers, council estates, industrial development, parks, were used to mark out the territory. 'The geographical integrity of the area is obvious.' Four of the groups also mentioned under this heading the term 'village', referring to old pre-industrial settlements which have carried their historical identities through the periods of population expansion and now the term comes into wider circulation in a period of decline and change. In fact, hardly any remnants of the villages remain except the name and

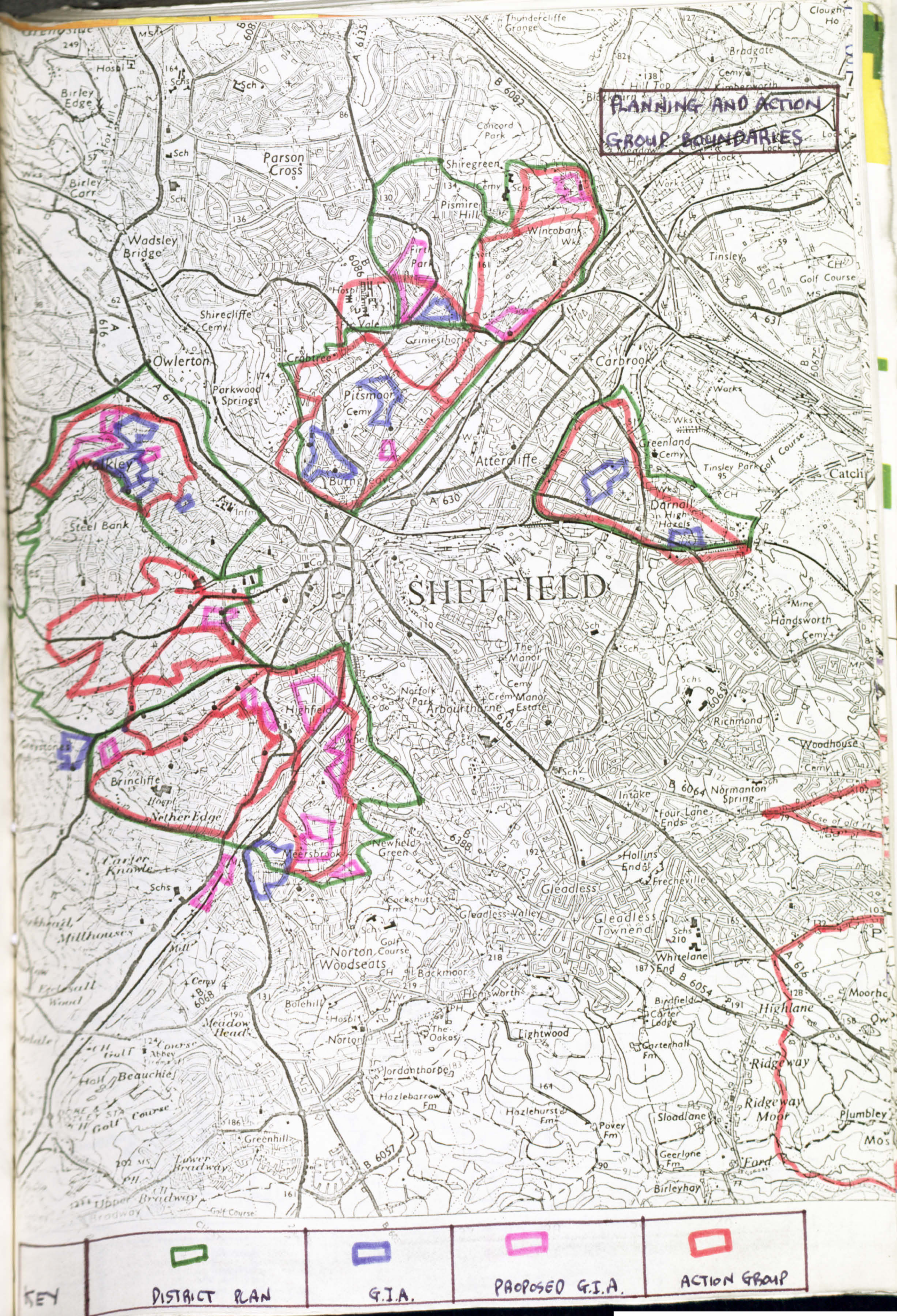
the sentiment attached to it by the present day residents. The 'villages' were also defined by distinct physical features as well as the historical claim to fame. One of the villages was identical to the local postal district. Their names all appear on the sub-regional Ordnance Survey Maps (1 : 50,000 First Series) the equivalent of the old one-inch - to-one-mile sheets. Indeed, most of the action group areas and council estates appear on the scale of map and in the process of boundary selection this kind of official recognition is important. It shows that the groups' judgements about their 'community' is not self-generated but reflects a whole series of factors among which the ideas and work of outsiders is crucial. This is most clearly seen with those action groups, nearly 40%, who gave as the main reason for choosing their boundary the division of sections of the city into planning study areas by the Planning Department of the Council. The publication of District Plans was the most frequently mentioned source of group boundaries from these official maps. In these plans wide ranging and detailed proposals are written down concerning the future planning of 'districts' in the City. It was in response to the issues raised in these plans that the groups were set up.

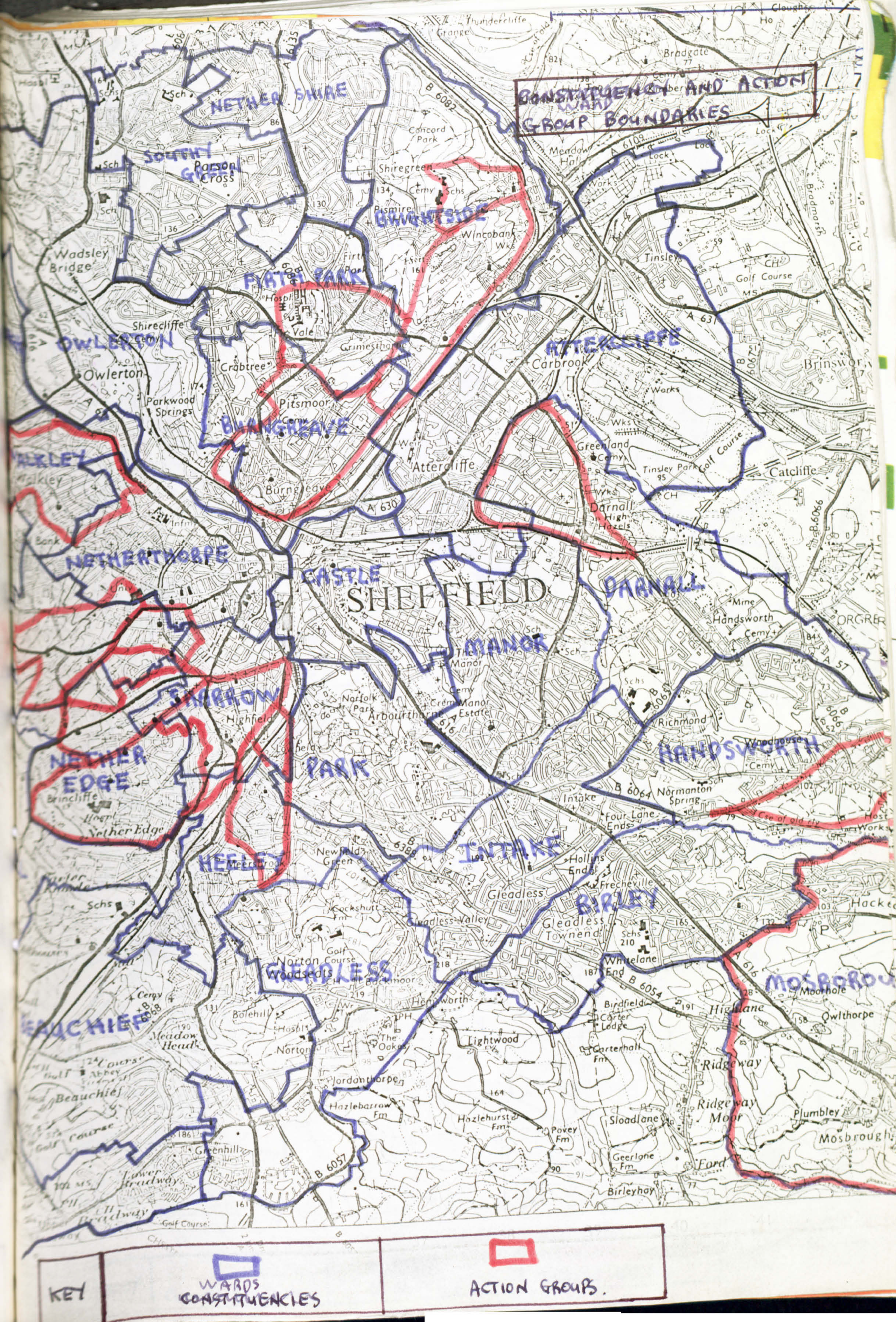
There was some feeling among the respondents that the District Plan units were too big or were not in keeping with their own perception of the 'natural' area. Two groups in fact persuaded the Planning Department to change the outline of their plan to relate more closely to their own assessment of the appropriate boundary. Another indignant respondent was also influenced by the establishment of the District Plan but his group failed to get the planners to change their minds: 'The District Plan boundaries are ludicrous. The action group boundary

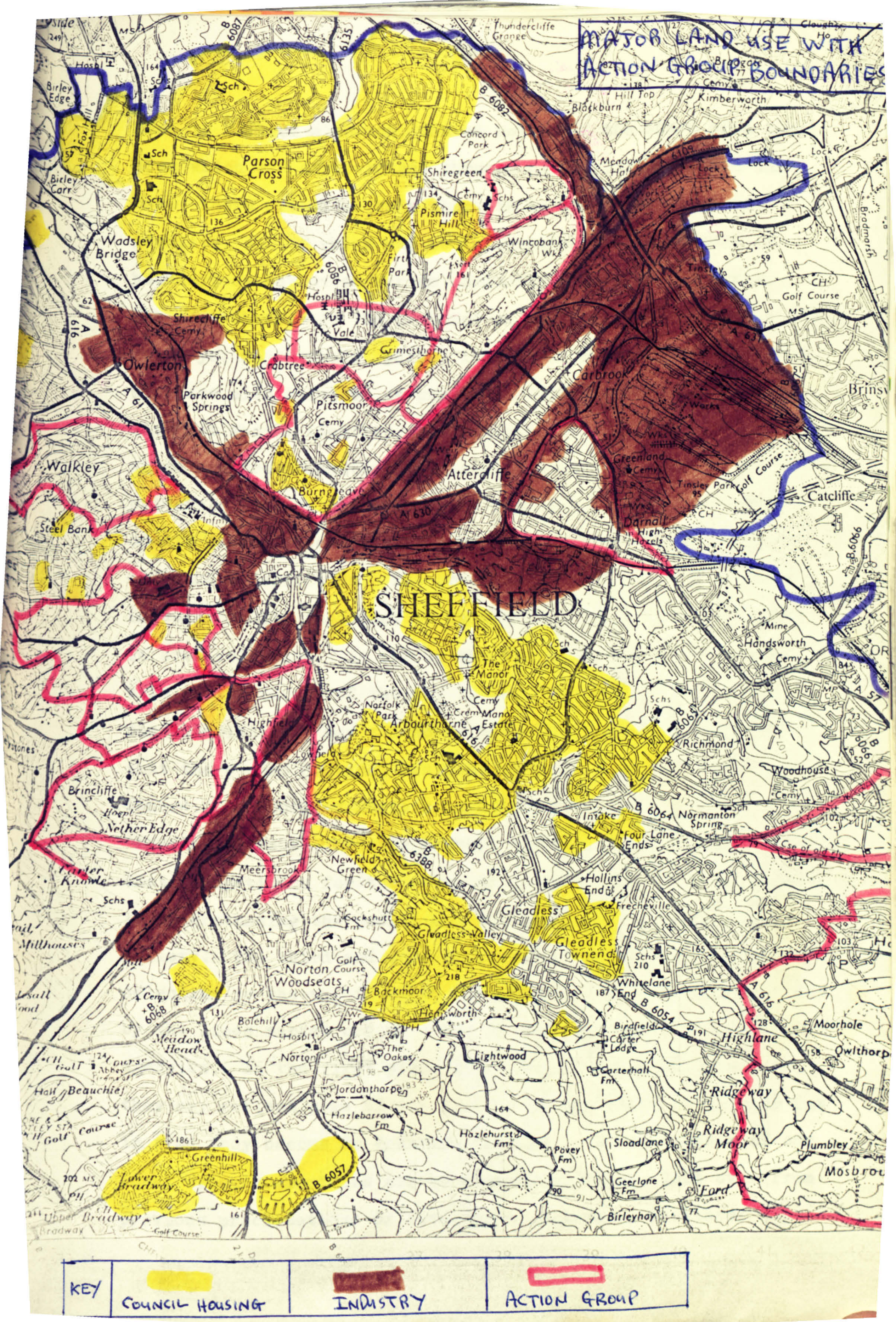
is loose and doesn't coincide with any "official" area. It is a natural area centred on the shopping centre and limited by the hill ridges.' Even when the boundaries of the group were not coincident with the District Plan units they were drawn up in response to what were seen as bureaucratic, 'paper', definitions. In fact, in the example mentioned above the divergence was not as great as the interviewee claimed. One group designed their boundaries as a result of being left out of a planning area. 'I think ours is a natural area but it mainly results from being a left-over area having been excluded from the Sharrow/Nether Edge Study Area and the Crookesmoor and Fulwood Plans.' The effect of exclusion was felt by a number of groups whose boundaries partly resulted from being adjacent to other action group areas. They felt that it would be wrong to overlap or compete in any way with other groups.

A further example of boundary selection based on administrative units came from one group who selected the ward as their unit. This is not surprising as the group was set up mainly on the initiative of the local Labour Party who were concerned to monitor an expansion of population in their area due to an overspill development.

There are, then, a variety of ways in which a group may select its boundaries. The process involves a certain degree of conflict between developing and maintaining their identity as 'community' groups and the necessity to respond pragmatically to the territorial units which the local government agencies used for the purposes of rent assessment, planning proposals, slum clearance schemes or whatever. The areal basis of the issues proves to be a key component in the groups' own perception of their political 'community'. These units, however, were often


PLANNING AND ACTION GROUP BOUNDARIES
SHEFFIELD
Parson Cross
Wadsley Bridge
Owlerton
Walkley
Shiregreen
Pismire Hill
Wincobank
Tinsley
Carbrook
Pitsmoor
Burngreave
Attercliffe
Darnall
Greenland
Highfield
Arbourthorne
Richmond
Woodhouse
Brincliffe
Nether Edge
Meersbrook
Gleadless
Gleadless Townend
Norton Woodseats
Heeley
Lightwood
Highlane
Ridgeway
Ridgeway Moor
Beauchief
Greenhill
Lower Bradway
Upper Bradway
Birleyhay
Sloadlane
Handsworth
Normanton Spring
Intake
Four Lane Ends
Hollins End
Frecheville
Whitelane End
Birdfield
Carter Lodge
Carterhall Fm
Hazlehurst Fm
Hazlebarrow Fm
Jordanthorpe
Povey Fm
Geerlone Fm
Ford
Plumbley
Moorhouse
Golf Course
KEY
DISTRICT PLAN
G.I.A.
PROPOSED G.I.A.
ACTION GROUP


CONSTITUENCY AND ACTION GROUP BOUNDARIES
NETHER SHIRE WARD
SOUTHEY GREEN
BRIGHTSIDE
FIRTH PARK
OWLERTON
ATTERCLIFFE
BURNGREAVE
NETHERTHORPE
CASTLE
DARNALL
SHEFFIELD
MANOR
SHARROW
NETHER EDGE
PARK
HANDSWORTH
HEELEY
INTAKE
BIRLEY
GLEADLESS
BEAUCHIEF
MOSBOROUGH
KEY
WARDS CONSTITUENCIES
ACTION GROUPS.


MAJOR LAND USE WITH ACTION GROUP BOUNDARIES
Parson Cross
Wadsley Bridge
Owlerton
Walkley
Shiregreen
Pismire Hill
Wincobank
Firth Park
Hillsborough
Kimberworth
Blackburn
Hill Top
Meadowhall
Tinsley
Carbrook
Attercliffe
Darnall
Catcliffe
Brinsworth
Handsworth
SHEFFIELD
The Manor
Manor Estate
Arbourthorne
Richmond
Woodhouse
Norman Spring
Intake
Four Lane Ends
Gleadless
Gleadless Townend
Gleadless Valley
Frecheville
Hollins End
Whitelane End
Highlane
Ridgeway
Ridgeway Moor
Ford
Moorhole
Owlthorpe
Plumbley
Mosborough
Lightwood
Norton
Norton Woodseats
Meadow Head
Beauchief
Greenhill
Lower Bradway
Upper Bradway
Bolehill
Meersbrook
Newfield Green
Brincliffe
Nether Edge
Steel Bank
Birley Edge
Birley Carr
Fox Hill
Shirecliffe
Crabtree
Grimesthorpe
Parkwood Springs
Pitsmoor
Burngreave
Concord Park
Thundercliffe Grange
Tinsley Park Golf Course
Golf Course
KEY
COUNCIL HOUSING
INDUSTRY
ACTION GROUP

seen to reflect a common, shared notion of the shape of a local area which was acknowledged through history, mapping and land use. There are three main elements in the creation of an identity, all of which may be influential in the process of boundary selection so far as community groups are concerned. The most obvious is the presence of physical obstructions - canals, railways, major roads, parks, industrial development and so on. They are also selected as practical barriers between areas of district social identity, for example, between areas of housing which are predominantly owner-occupied and those which are mainly privately rented tenures. These barriers do not, therefore, create communities but they may be used as the starting point for such a definition. The predominant type of housing tenure is sufficiently important to separate out as a distinct factor in area selection. As far as the community groups are concerned, this factor is one of the key indices in their internal social characteristics. Rex and Moore noted in their Sparkbrook study that there were distinct residential zones based on housing tenure. A number of authors have developed the theory of 'housing classes', notably Harvey, and with Rex and Moore consider that 'competition for the means of housing' is <u>the</u> central notion in understanding the social and political mechanism of urban society. The third and most influential factor in group boundary selection is the way in which a community comes to be identified by the lines marked off on a map by any number of administrative agencies. In the first place these may be quite arbitrary or they may reflect some of the factors in the other categories but in time they become an enduring feature. 'A vast number of our local urban communities are an historical debris left over from previous proclamations of developers, planners, boosters, map-

makers, sociologists, newspapers and businesses in search of a clientele.' (10.1) In the particular case of the community groups in Sheffield proposals contained in District Plans and in a new rent policy meant that many groups had to construct units which attempted to mirror those used by the Planning and Housing Departments. The groups had to respond in this way in order to legitimate their negotiating position with these agencies. It might be thought of as the first step in their attempt to claim representative credentials over certain issues in the area. Thus while simultaneously trying to match the local government authorities they are trying not to lose their identity as 'community' groups. The type of community which the groups describe corresponds very closely to the 'community of limited liability' described by Janowitz (10.2) and elaborated by Suttles in his book 'The Social Construction of Communities'. This theme will be taken up in the summary and conclusions to the chapter. Given that the groups all have clear definitions of their boundaries it is proposed now to examine the internal social characteristics of the group areas. Do these selected territories correspond to an internally coherent social unit? Is there an index or is there a combination of indices which provides favourable ground for the development of voluntary associational activity? Do the social area characteristics affect the type and organisational structure of the group?

## Internal Social Characteristics of the Group Areas.

First, we shall present a short introduction to the use of Census data in social area analysis; and second, a brief commentary on the general distribution of the key indices in Sheffield. Following this a short profile of each group territory

is presented in the context of constructing a typology of the group social areas. This typology will be used in a later chapter in conjunction with the simple typology of organisational characteristics which was described in Chapter Seven to develop a more thorough classification of community political organisations (10.2). In 1965 small area census data became available for the first time for some parts of the country. Subsequently a number of studies have used this data. The first substantial research was undertaken by Elizabeth Gittus who analysed 1,800 enumeration districts from the Merseyside area and 1,700 from Hampshire, using material from the 1961 Census.(10.3) She used over sixty indices, including housing tenure, socio-economic groupings, proportion of households in overcrowded accommodation, exclusive use of families to the basic amenities and so on, in a complex statistical component analysis to determine which indicators provided the greatest degree of variation between enumeration districts. She concluded that the most basic variable was the number of persons per room in each dwelling. Earlier work on Census material, although not using enumeration district (E.D.) data, showed the relationship between the socio-economic indices and the development of the residential pattern in Oxford.(10.4) A follow-up study using small area information showed that the most significant indicator of residential segregation was the age at which formal education terminated.(10.5) Studies of Crawley, parts of London, Dagenham and Swansea have all successfully used small area data to examine and describe the social characteristics of the particular town.

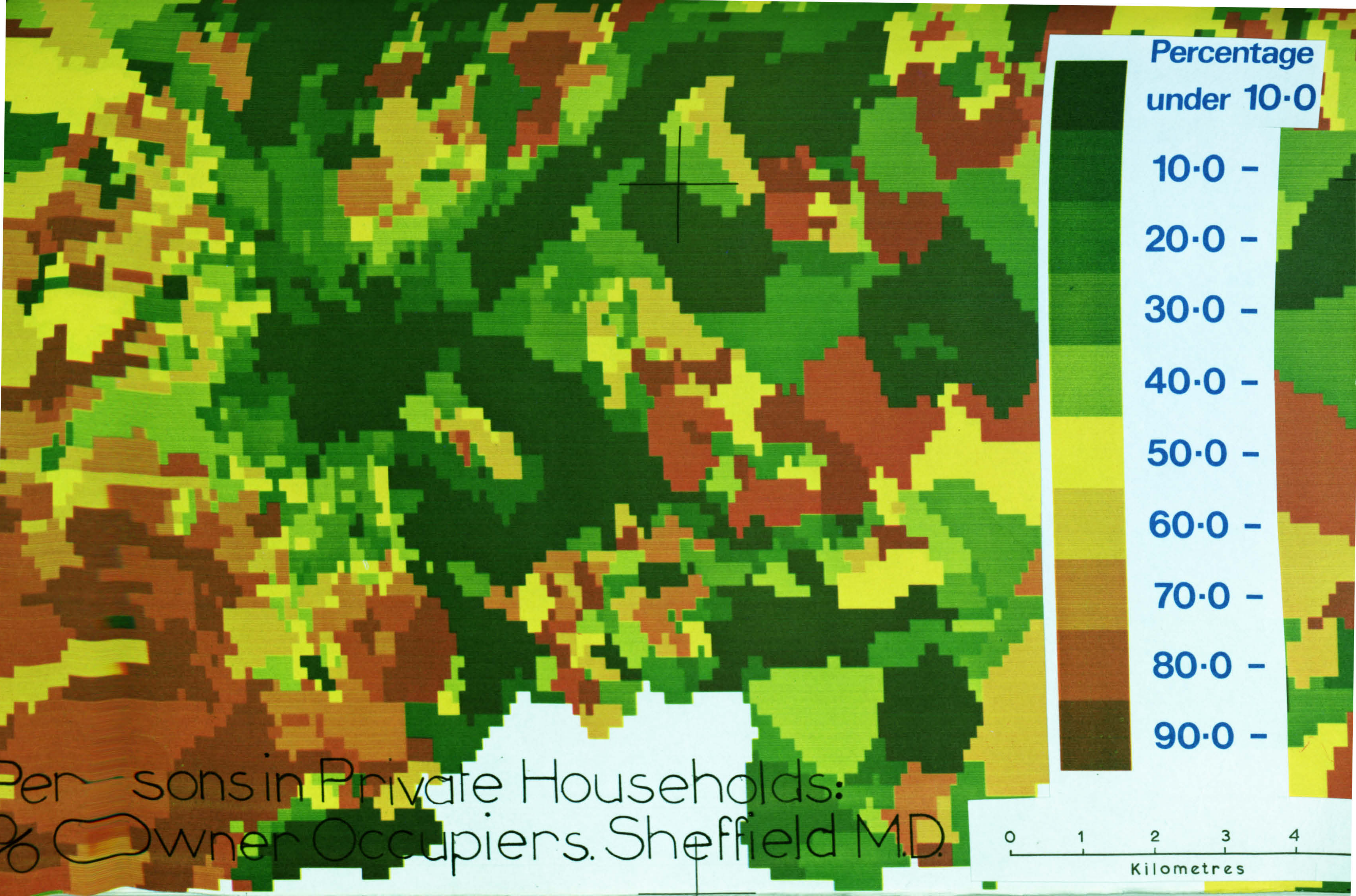
The opportunity, however, has not been widely available to examine <u>maps</u> of small area census data. With the recent publication of the 'Census Atlas for South Yorkshire' by the

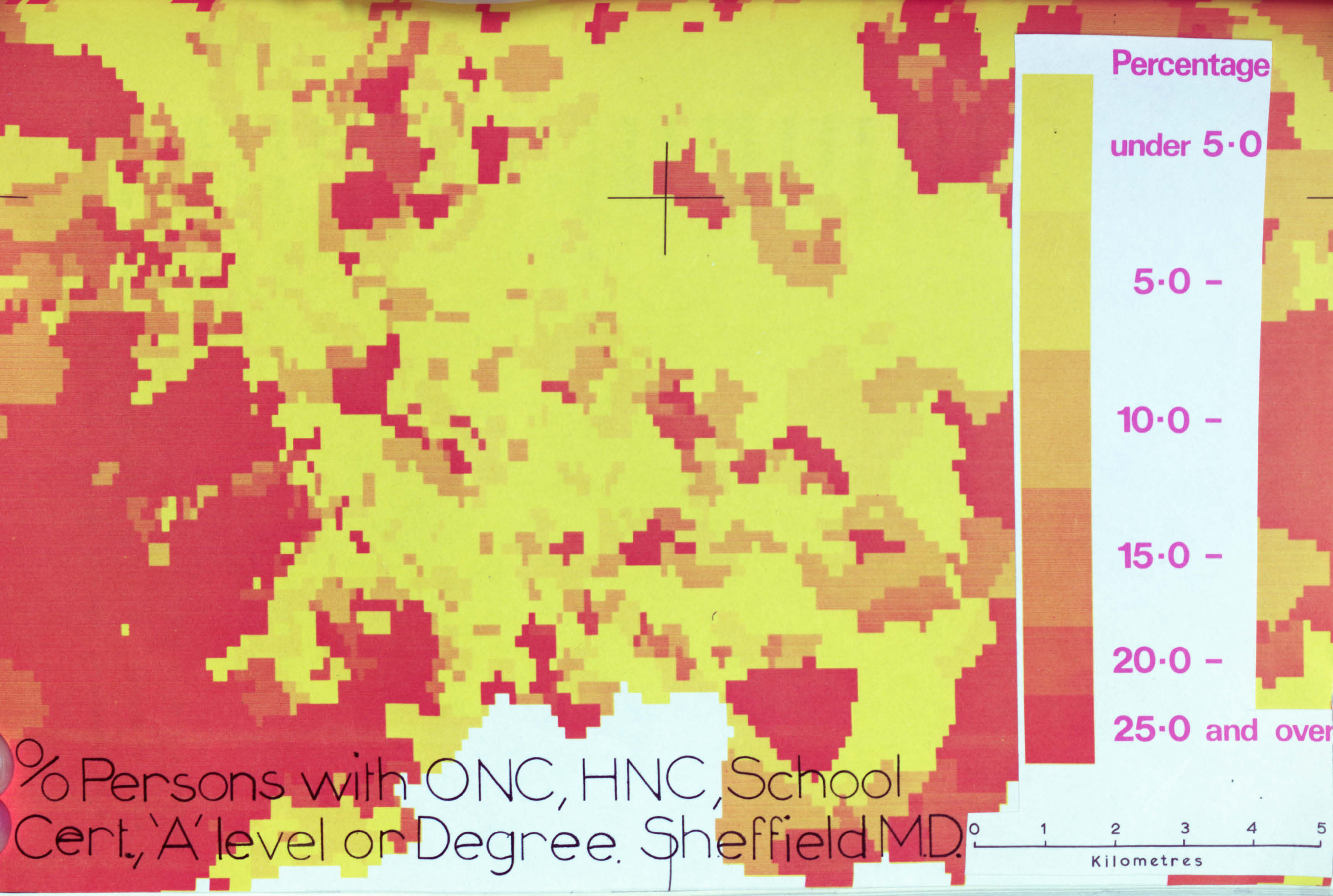
Geography Department of Sheffield University just such an opportunity does now exist. A selection of thirty-seven key indices from the Population and Household files of the 1971 Census have been chosen, with each map showing, through a system of graded colours, a value for each E.D. in the county. (10.6) The detail of these maps makes it possible, in areas with a high density of population, to identify information for individual streets while at the other extreme general patterns of distribution at a City-wide and regional level are easily identified. Exact numerical values for each E.D. can also be obtained, if necessary, from the computer tapes which store all the Census information. This super-abundance of data, in fact, poses the problem of what level of detail it is meaningful to investigate. The ease with which the relationship between different indices is observed is an important function of the maps. For example, the widely accepted link between home ownership and the high socio-economic groups can readily be affirmed from the Census Atlas; less obvious relationships can also be made, such as a proportionate increase in houses lacking at least one of the basic amenities with an increase in unfurnished tenancies. In the typology of action group areas an attempt has been made to elicit the most important of these relationships across a spectrum of indices - socio-economic indices, housing tenure, access to amenities, age structure of the population, educational attainment and car ownership (as a simple measure of relative affluence and mobility). In the text only the basic findings are presented; the detailed analysis appears in an accompanying appendix. The typological data is prefaced by an introduction to the indices.

Introduction to the Analysis of Census Data.

The residential distribution of people in socio-economic groups is widely regarded as the most important of the indices in census information. It is the index which most frequently correlates with other primary data such as density of population, educational attainment, the quality of the housing stock, etc. The map in the Census Atlas which shows the proportion of employed people in S.E.G.'s 1-4 and 13 - professional and managerial occupations - confirms the observation made in the introductory chapters about the social segregation of the population in Sheffield. Over the majority of the City the values tend to be very low, less than 10%, but in the south-west sector there is a major concentration of people in the high socio-economic categories, reaching values of 90% in a number of enumeration districts. The tendency of higher and lower socio-economic groups to congregate in residential zones has frequently been observed; but from the map the distribution of the intermediate S.E.G.'s 8 and 9 - foremen, supervisors and skilled manual workers - are also shown to follow distinct patterns of distribution. A number of the action groups are located in areas which contain a high proportion of supervisory and skilled workers.

Closely related to the residential distribution of the socio-economic groups there is a clear pattern in the distribution of the three main types of housing tenure. Sizeable areas tend to be dominated by one type of tenure. Often areas of three or four square kilometres have over 90% of all households in one type of tenure. The vast areas of council housing can clearly be seen while the three industrial valley areas continue to sustain a sizeable residue of 19th century terraced housing which is mainly privately rented accommodation. The zone of


Percentage
under 10·0
10·0 –
20·0 –
30·0 –
40·0 –
50·0 –
60·0 –
70·0 –
80·0 –
90·0 –
Per sons in Private Households:
% Owner Occupiers. Sheffield M.D.
0 1 2 3 4
Kilometres




% Persons with ONC, HNC, School Cert., 'A' level or Degree. Sheffield M.D.

owner-occupiers in the south-west suburb is the largest single block of households under one type of tenure. But owner-occupancy is by no means confined to that sector and small pockets with high percentages can be found in the areas of the City which straddle the boundary between east and west and the areas between the industrial valleys and the council estates to the north and south-east of the City centre. These areas are the location for a number of action groups, areas which are the subject of redevelopment and improvement programmes. It can be seen from the maps that they are heterogeneous with sharp contrasts on a street-by-street comparison in their characteristics - type of tenure, socio-economic structure of the population, household amenities. Within their boundaries some of the groups can be seen to contain district neighbourhoods based on the social class and housing tenure indices, for example, areas with a high proportion of supervisory and skilled workers together with high percentages of owner-occupiers.

The index of educational attainment has also been very closely linked with socio-economic factors. Indeed, over the majority of the City the achievement of school certificates, O.H.Ns and H.N.Cs is low. Once again it is only on the west side of the City that the scores are high. The division between areas of high and low achievement of those qualifications is very sharp. Three of the action groups are within the high scoring zone while most of the others are in the low scoring areas but have to a greater or lesser extent a number of E.D.'s with moderate or high levels.

As a measure of the quality of the housing stock the census asks for information on three basic amenities - access to a hot water supply, an inside W.C., and the presence or absence of a

fixed bath or shower. There are still a number of highly populated sectors of the inner-city where upwards of half the households lack access to at least one of these amenities. In five of the action group areas between 60% and 85% of households lack at least one standard amenity. The two main clusters of action groups - in the zone which straddles the division between east and west and on the north side of the north-easterly arm of the Don Valley - are in the marginal and very mixed zones so far as the quality of the housing stock is concerned, making them the focus of the improvement and redevelopment schemes. With such mixed characteristics it might be thought difficult to represent a consensus of opinion on the future of the area.

The Council Estates.

The council estates, although dominated by one type of tenure and all having access to the basic amenities, are nevertheless quite varied in other respects. The age structures of the populations, for example, vary considerably with high proportions of older and 'mature' middle-aged people on the older estates. But on the key indices of social composition there is little significant variation. A few estates have slightly more residents in the high socio-economic groups than the very low general average. The variations, however, are never more than a few per cent. One of the small, new estates returns a figure of 4.3% with professional qualifications but all the others are less than 2.5%. It seems unlikely that variations in age structure and small variations in social composition will have any marked effect on the success or failure of tenants' associations or on the structure of the organisations. By contrast the variety of the action group areas does suggest the possibility that

differences in organisational characteristics and tactics might well be influenced by the social background. For this reason the action group areas are now to be classified into a social area typology.

Typology of Action Group Areas.

In the following table the numerical values for each of the indices used in constructing the typology are given. These are area totals; much of the interest it should be remembered is in the contrasting values of sub-sections within the locality. Social area characteristics tend to be grouped in zones so, to a certain extent, the location of groups geographically will be a factor in assessing their position in the classification. The major division of the City into two sectors based on social class composition can clearly be seen on a number of the Atlas maps and it is this factor which clearly distinguishes two of the groups which are positioned in the area of transition between east and west. BANG and NENG (10.7) are the only groups in the study which do not have a majority of residents in their areas in manual occupations. The skilled and unskilled manual socio-economic categories 8-11 amount to 18.6% and 37.6% respectively. Nearly 30% of employed persons are in the high S.E.Gs (1-4) and consequently the area scores highly on the indices of educational attainment and professional qualifications. Both areas also have a high proportion of furnished tenancies which is the characteristic accommodation of intermediate non-manual workers, an occupational category which includes students. Car ownership in the areas is higher than other sectors of the City. Based on these secondary indicators and the primary index of socio-economic status NENG and BANG are the first placed in

| TITLE OF INDEX | INITIALS OF GROUP | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BANG | BGAG | BBAG | DAG | ERAG | FVAG | HAG | MWAG | NENG | PAG | SAG | WAG | WDAG | WRAG |
| Owner occupiers% | 32.1 | 53.1 | 21.6 | 37.8 | 44.9 | 59.8 | 48.2 | 30.5 | 54.1 | 28.2 | 34.6 | 48.8 | 33.3 | 70.5 |
| Private tenants% | 65.3 | 44.6 | 69.5 | 57.5 | 51.8 | 30.2 | 50.0 | 18.2 | 44.4 | 42.2 | 57.5 | 45.8 | 23.1 | 27.1 |
| Unfurnished tenancies % | 31.4 | 42.2 | 39.7 | 55.4 | 35.5 | 23.9 | 44.7 | 17.9 | 21.9 | 38.3 | 52.1 | 43.4 | 22.9 | 26.4 |
| Furnished tenancies % | 34.1 | 2.5 | 29.8 | 2.2 | 16.3 | 6.3 | 5.3 | 0.3 | 22.7 | 3.8 | 5.4 | 2.4 | 0.2 | 0.7 |
| Council tenancies % | 3.2 | 1.9 | 8.9 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 9.6 | 1.8 | 49.7 | 1.0 | 29.1 | 7.9 | 5.8 | 43.3 | 2.3 |
| Shared dwellings % | 12.5 | 1.2 | 23.0 | 0.9 | 7.6 | 5.5 | 2.9 | 0.5 | 8.1 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Over one person per room % | 3.9 | 8.2 | 10.7 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 6.5 | 6.8 | 4.8 | 10.4 | 7.3 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 5.9 |
| Exclusive use of all three amenities % | 61.3 | 40.6 | 46.0 | 13.8 | 50.8 | 60.1 | 37.6 | 77.8 | 65.2 | 44.4 | 22.5 | 37.1 | 72.3 | 62.7 |
| Lacking one amenity % | 38.7 | 59.4 | 54.0 | 86.3 | 49.2 | 39.9 | 62.4 | 22.5 | 35.2 | 55.5 | 77.5 | 63.9 | 27.7 | 37.3 |
| SEG's 1-4 and 13 % | 28.7 | 5.8 | 10.0 | 4.3 | 11.9 | 7.1 | 5.9 | 11.8 | 28.0 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 8.3 | 7.3 | 3.2 |
| SEG's 8-11 % | 18.6 | 76.8 | 50.5 | 75.6 | 40.7 | 62.6 | 69.4 | 63.9 | 37.6 | 69.4 | 64.6 | 61.9 | 71.7 | 76.3 |
| Professional qualifications % | 34.4 | 2.5 | 14.7 | 0.5 | 10.7 | 3.8 | 1.8 | 4.9 | 19.7 | 0.8 | 2.7 | 4.3 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| With one car % | 44.1 | 32.8 | 27.8 | 24.4 | 36.7 | 36.8 | 35.4 | 44.8 | 48.8 | 25.2 | 26.3 | 34.4 | 38.5 | 45.2 |
| Born in New Commonwealth % | 3.4 | 3.4 | 18.5 | 3.9 | 3.4 | 5.5 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 7.8 | 10.3 | 6.3 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 1.0 |

Source : Computer Print-out of 1971 Small Area Census Data.

the typology of areas.

| Group 1 | OO % | FT % | SEG 1-4 % | SEG 8-11 % | Professional qualifications. % | Three Amenities. % | Cars. % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BANG. | 32.1 | 34.1 | 28.7 | 18.6 | 34.4 | 61.3 | 44.1 |
| NENG. | 54.1 | 22.7 | 28.0 | 37.6 | 19.7 | 65.2 | 48.8 |

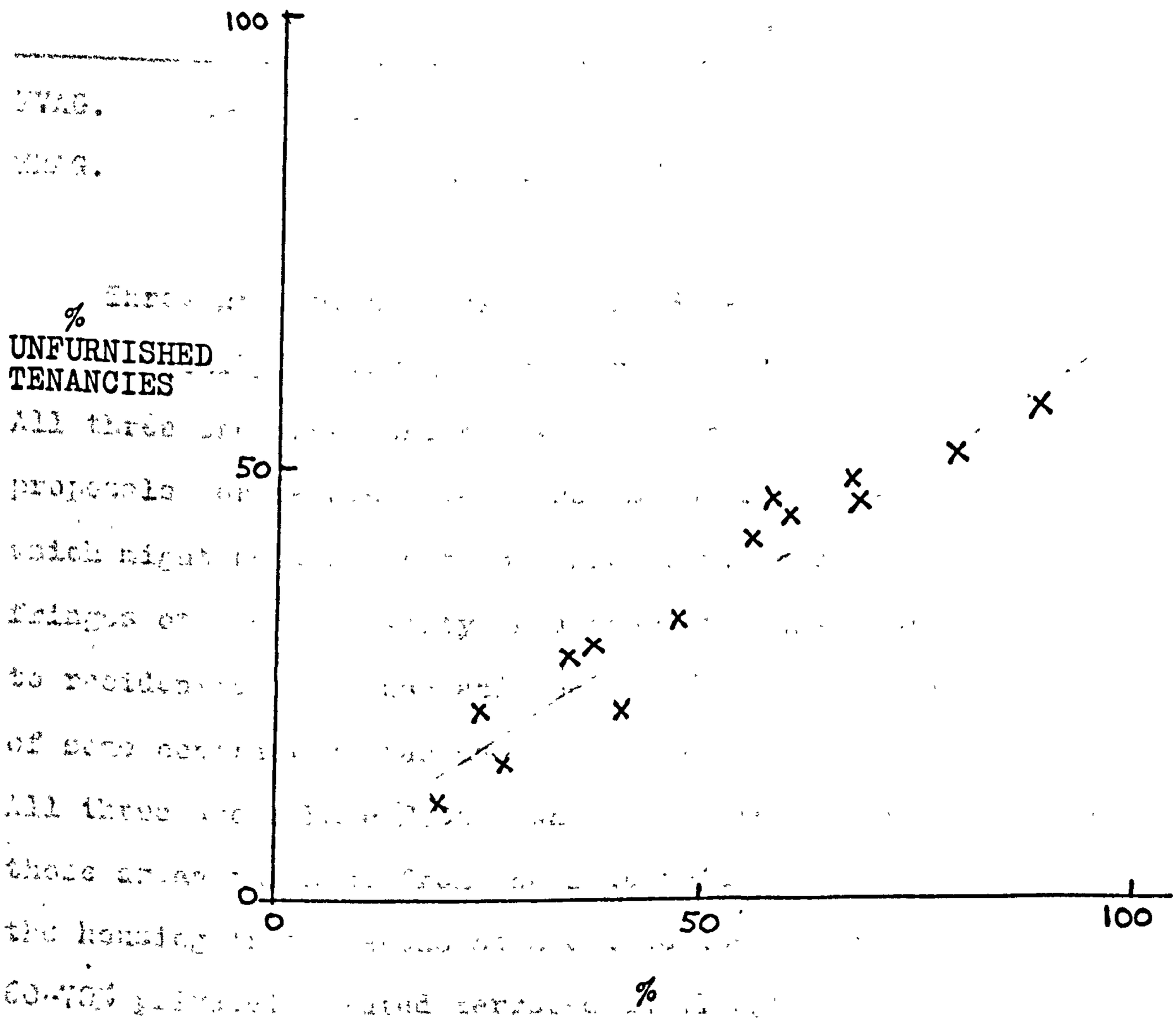
Two equally heterogeneous areas adjacent to the BANG NENG groups share some of the social characteristics but have differences which are significant enough to separate them. ERAG and BBHAG areas both have a higher proportion of manual workers - between 40% and 50% - and have a lower percentage in the high status S.E.G.'s, 12% and 10% respectively. The overall total of non-manual workers distinguishes both areas from the other groups in the City and like BANG and NENG groups have a higher proportion of professionally qualified people. The quality of the housing stock is, however, poorer than the other two areas and the proportion of unfurnished tenancies is more typical of the inner-city zones than the fringe areas. The BBHAG area has a very distinct identity which is a product of the high proportion of immigrants (18.5% New Commonwealth) and students who live in the locality but the area is, like the other three, very mixed socially. There is a high proportion of people in shared dwellings - 23.0%. The two groups are taken together in the typology because of the relatively high non-manual content in the socio-economic structure.

| Group 2 | OO % | FT % | SEG 1-4 % | SEG 8-11 % | Professional qualifications. % | Three Amenities. % | Cars. % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ERAG. | 45.0 | 16.2 | 11.9 | 40.7 | 10.7 | 50.8 | 36.7 |
| BBHAG. | 21.6 | 29.8 | 10.0 | 50.5 | 14.7 | 46.0 | 17.8 |

To the east and north, the City is consistently working class. But within this monolithic social structure there are significant variations in the indices: between skilled and non-skilled workers; housing tenure; access to the basic amenities; and so on. All these factors are bound to the fabric of the growth and development of industrialisation with massive population movements and dramatic turns and changes in land and dwelling use. The two action group areas in the City with the highest proportion of owner-occupiers are to be found in this eastern sector. The WRAG and the FVAG are both located in a zone north of the industrial valley of the River Don and south of the massive pre- and early post-war Council housing developments. Although uncharacteristic in the proportion of owner-occupier, 70.5% and 59.8% respectively, both areas share a high proportion of manual workers, 76.3% and 62.6%. It is noticeable that those E.Ds - with a high concentration of owner-occupiers are also the areas which have a high proportion of skilled manual workers and that these proportions are directly related in these localities. Related to this mix of indices is access to the three amenities - 60% in the two areas as a whole. When there is a higher percentage of unfurnished tenancies a correlation can be made to lack of access to the three amenities. In general, this link is statistically demonstrable. The graph below shows for the action group areas the relationship between unfurnished

tenancies and lack of access to at least one of the standard amenities.

Table 10.3 Correlation between Unfurnished Tenancies and Households Lacking Access to One Basic Amenity.




Source: Census Data (1971).

Both WRAG and the FVAG areas have an above average proportion of the population in the age range of 15-44 but they differ significantly in the index of educational achievement with the FVAG area having a large number of E.Ds scoring a value of over 20% for people with school leaving certificates, whereas the WRAG

scores are very low. This discrepancy is largely due to the presence of a major hospital whose main catchment area for nursing and ancillary staffs is the FVAG area itself. Otherwise these two groups share social indices which are broadly similar.

| Group 3. | OO | pt | Uft | Sd | Lack one Amenity | SEG's 1-4 | SEG's 8-11 | Prof. qual. | One car. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| FVAG. | 59.8 | 30.2 | 23.9 | 5.5 | 39.9 | 7.1 | 62.6 | 3.8 | 36.8 |
| WRAG. | 70.5 | 27.1 | 26.4 | 2.3 | 37.7 | 3.2 | 76.3 | 2.9 | 45.2 |

Three groups, HAG, WAG and BGAG, which are not adjacent geographically, nevertheless share important characteristics. All three are areas which have been the subject of extensive proposals for redevelopment and improvement but are not the areas which might be described as 'inner-city' zones. They are on the fringes of the inner-city in a zone of transition from industrial to residential land use and contain within them neighbourhoods of some contrast so far as the housing indices are concerned. All three areas have E.Ds which are predominantly owner-occupied, those areas furthest from the industrial valleys. By contrast the housing in the areas adjacent to the industrial zone are 60-70% privately rented terraced dwellings, many of which lack access to the three basic amenities and with the expected high proportion of manual workers. The division between these two types of area is most marked in the BGAG area which in fact consists of two 'villages'. The socio-economic composition of the three areas is broadly similar but the WAG area has a higher proportion of its population in the high status groups, 8.3%, compared to 5.9% in HAG area and 5.8% in the BGAG area. The

WAG territory has, in addition, a higher proportion of intermediate non-manual workers giving a total of approximately 35% in the non-manual categories. (28% and 20% for the other groups respectively). The factor which distinguishes these areas is the quality of the housing stock which is poor when measured by the standard of household access to the three amenities.

The two action groups to the west of the City, set in an urban rural setting typical of much of South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire, both share many social and demographic features. Their populations are less concentrated than in the city centre areas and as a result are more polarized socially. There are quite extensive areas of council homes in both areas. In a number of E.Ds in each area the proportion of residents in the high socio-economic groups is relatively large, 20-30% and as high as 60-70% in one isolated E.D. But overall the social class figures for the areas are similar to those in the two categories above. The residential polarization is confirmed by some of the indices, notably for car ownership and educational attainment. The lower status areas tend also to be an older population although the MWAG area is currently undergoing an influx of young families into the overspill development.

The three remaining ones, PAG, DAG and SAG are all typical inner-city zones containing a high proportion of privately rented, terraced, working-class housing. The quality of the housing stock is generally very poor as these are some of the oldest dwellings in the City. In DAG and SAG 75-95% of households lack access to at least one basic amenity. In PAG the overall situation is modified because 30% of the dwellings in the area are relatively new council flats universally provided with the three basic amenities. Without that element in the housing stock the figure

rises into the 80% region along with the other two areas. All these localities show the feature of the residential clustering of skilled manual workers in addition to small fringe zones in which owner-occupancy is higher than the average for the area with a higher proportion of non-manual workers. In those small zones we find also most of the 'professional workers' and the highest level of educational attainment - elsewhere the values for both those indices are universally low. The composition of the class structure is similar to many such areas in the East and North sections of the City with 65% to 75% manual workers and 4% to 5% in the high S.E.Gs's and a further 15% to 20% in the intermediate non-manual categories. The proportion of households with a car is also low with values of 24% to 28% recorded in all the E.Ds.

There are, then, a number of individual variations from area to area but generally speaking these three 'twilight' areas have major features in common in relation to the history of the housing stock and its condition, the pattern of tenure in which it is held, the socio-economic composition and distribution of the working population and a number of other indices - age structure, car ownership and the low educational level apart from a few isolated groups of E.Ds.

Conclusions.

In the introduction to the chapter the absence of a definition of community was suggested as a major problem for local political organisations because of the link between theories of representation and the models of 'community' which have been or might be adopted. The first part of the chapter was designed, therefore, to assess the groups' own perceptions of community and the

decisions which they made regarding their political boundaries. They were shown, in general, to be compelled to adopt a constituency which to a large extent reflects the judgements of external agencies - planners, local government administrators, map makers. The groups needed to acquire an appropriate unit of 'community' in which to frame their bargaining and negotiations with the authorities. Such a unit was often seen to correspond with a 'natural' area but in every case was far larger than the 'home area' or 'defended neighbourhood' model of community. In scale, although not in the actual configuration of their boundaries, they are similar to that of the political wards.

The proposition that the groups cover an internally coherent social unit was then considered; but their boundaries were not found to enclose cohesive units. The mixture of socio-economic, housing and population data is very pronounced even on a street-by-street comparison. The broad division between 'working-class east' and 'middle-class west' is a clear feature, but below this sub-regional level the contrasts are often strong and mixtures varied over quite small areas. And the group boundaries are seen to be far too extensive to contain a homogeneous population based on their built environment. This finding applied rather less stringently to the council estates.

We may still, however, pose the complex question whether there is an index or combination of indices which might provide favourable ground for the development of voluntary associational activity. In Chapter Eight the 'activists' were shown to play a key role in shaping the style of the groups and they are generally drawn from higher socio-economic backgrounds than the populations in their areas. But <u>all</u> areas in Sheffield contain certain proportions, albeit small proportions, of these

occupational categories; and therefore what might be seen as the basic prerequisite is met whether a particular area has an organisation or not. In general there are few, if any, primary correlations between an area's characteristics and the formation of a group. There are, however, a number of secondary relationships which trace a path between the social/environmental features of an area and the organisations. Once again the question turns on the presence of an issue or a series of issues. For example, the poor quality of the housing stock in inner-city areas or places which are marginal to the industrial and residential sectors of the city is the background against which redevelopment programmes and clearance schemes are evolved. In short, area characteristics establish the context for policy proposals given the wider acceptance of certain minimum standards of housing and environment which are set by national government and society in general. It is the 'housing' rather than the 'population' data which is of principal concern in the equation between areas and organisations.

In Table 10.4 the information on the area characteristics - the typology described earlier in the chapter - is combined with the typology of groups which was presented in the conclusion to Chapter Seven, 'The Organisations'.

Table 10.4 Typology of Action Groups by Organisational Style and Area Characteristics.

| Social Area. | Group. | Type. | Group. | Type. | Group. | Type. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Category 1 | BANG | a | NENG | a | - | - |
| " 2 | ERAG | c | BBHAG | b | - | - |
| " 3 | FVAG | b | WRAG | b | - | - |
| " 4a | WAG | c | HAG | a | BGAG | b |
| " 4b | WDAG | c | MWAG | c | - | - |
| " 5 | SAG | a | DAG | c | PAG | a |

KEY: a = large formal organisation.
b = informal, 'intermediate' organisation.
c = 'cell' organisation.

This again shows that there are no significant links to be drawn between the style/type of group and the area in which it operates. There is no clear, general picture. However, there are some patterns which again derive from the issues. For example, both the groups in Category 3 are 'informal, intermediate' organisations and this clearly results from the absence of a primary issue around which support can crystallize. Similarly in Category 4b but in those cases the activists have taken on a 'caretaker' role keeping the group exclusively to themselves. The influence of the activists in these settings is very strong. It should be remembered, however, that events can quickly change the form of the organisation. This has been the case with two groups in Category 4a, WAG and HAG; HAG currently mobilizes a big formal membership in the protest against redevelopment proposals. WAG had at one time a similar basis of support but

having largely won their particular battle the group has now contracted into a small, watch-dog organisation. Only in the middle class areas in Category 1 may the influence of area characteristics be thought of as being as important to the style of the groups (both big, formal organisations) as the issues and the activists are elsewhere.

## CHAPTER TEN. References and Footnotes.


10.1 Suttles, G.D., The Social Construction of Community (Chicago University Press, 1972) p.242.

10.2 Janowitz, M., The Community Press in an Urban Setting: The Social Elements of Urbanism (Chicago University Press, 1952).

10.3 Gittus, E., 'An experiment in the identification of urban sub-areas', Transactions of the Bartlett Society, 2 (1965) pp.107-135.

10.4 Collison, P. and Mogey, J., 'Residence and Social Class in Oxford', American Journal of Sociology 64 (1959), pp.599-605.

10.5 Collison, P., 'Occupation, education and housing in an English city', American Journal of Sociology 65 (1960), pp.588-597.

10.6 Census Atlas of South Yorkshire, Dept. of Geography, University of Sheffield (1974).


10.7 See Appendix A for full title of organisation.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN. METHODS OF INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN THE COMMUNITIES.

On the basis of the evidence which has been presented so far, it would be difficult to make a case for regarding the groups either as being representative of their areas or of having an internal power structure with an acceptable degree of accountability of activists to members; their own claims to be representative of the areas are extravagant.

Table 11.1 Self-defined Degrees of Representation.

| | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| | % | % |
| Very Representative. | 28.6 | 34.4 |
| Representative. | 35.7 | 46.9 |
| Neither. | 17.9 | 12.5 |
| Unrepresentative. | 7.1 | - |
| Very Unrepresentative. | 7.1 | - |
| Do not know. | 3.6 | 6.3 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's Survey.

In a sense these findings could be the starting point for a critique of community politics; and certainly entering into negotiations or bargaining with local authorities can be inhibited unless a broader basis of legitimacy can be demonstrated. There are a number of countervailing factors, however, which permit modifications to the harsh conclusions which might be drawn from the groups' obviously unjustified claims and their weak credentials. First, the definition of the term 'representative' is by no means

clear from the point of view of community groups; in general there is a good deal of confusion about the terminology which is popularly used to describe democratic institutions. 'For we are obsessed with the idea of democracy as direct participation - as if we lived in the polis of Athens, the Rochdale Co-op, or the Carlton Club - or else with perfecting representative institutions as the next best thing in a world that has most unfortunately grown too large for direct participation. But we are only at the beginning of seeing democracy as communication....' (11.1). Secondly, as was pointed out in previous chapters, the relationship between a community group and its community has rather different terms of reference from that of, say, a formal political party within a given locality. None of the community organisations can claim accountability through the votes of the electorate. But it can be argued that voting per se has been given an exaggerated significance: the simple act of marking the ballot form certainly does not imply control and, arguably, at best expresses consent. Certainly the involvement of community groups in local politics may be seen as a symptom of the inadequacies of the formal democratic system to deal with a certain range of issues. Not surprisingly, therefore, their methods for developing a representative base in the communities are different. In addition, the sociology of community organisations, described earlier in this section, has an important bearing on political and voluntary associational activity. The social composition of an area substantially moulds the nature and style of the organisational milieu.

All the groups in this study were involved in various ways in gathering and disseminating ideas and information. This reflects the seriousness with which many groups take their

representative functions. Tactically they need to prove a first-hand knowledge of and liaison with the community, otherwise it will be difficult to establish themselves as bona fide organisations; and so, to some extent, the weaknesses in their internal systems are counterbalanced by the links which they make with the communities. In this respect they contrast very favourably with the local ward political parties, although the evidence on the latter is selective and scanty.

There are four main forms of contact: public meetings, social surveys, newssheets, and links with other organisations both city-wide and local. The fourth method is of particular significance for a number of reasons: the establishment of a neighbourhood council 'tier' of local government will necessitate inter-group liaison; also, (according to Dahl and other proponents of one version of pluralist theory), the formation of alliances and coalitions should be an expected part of community politics. In the survey, probes for evidence on these points were made through three areas of questioning: whether other organisations overlapped with the work of the groups; whether they were supported by other organisations in the area; and whether they were opposed by other groups, either in the City or locally. On the basis of evidence presented in an earlier chapter we expected the level of conflict with the local political parties and councillors to be minimal: only one group mentioned the local political parties as opponents. This proved to be the case in general. There was very little evidence either of the development of conflict at a community level or, on the other hand, of the formation of alliances. The groups, in short, are characterised in this respect by a high degree of parochialism. This conclusion will be elaborated later, after discussing other major forms of

information exchange which the groups have developed.

Methods of Information Exchange.

The most direct contact with the communities is made through public meetings; all the organisations under survey held public meetings, but the size and frequency with which they occurred varied considerably. Table 11.2 shows the number of meetings that groups had held during the twelve months before the survey. 50% of action groups and nearly 65% of tenants' associations had had either no meeting or only one or two in that previous year.

Table 11.2 Number of Public Meetings in the One Year.

| n = | Action Groups. 28 % | Tenants' Associations. 32 % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 14.3 | 12.5 |
| 1-2 | 35.7 | 53.1 |
| 3-4 | 17.9 | 28.1 |
| 5-6 | 10.7 | - |
| 7-8 | 14.3 | - |
| 9-10 | - | - |
| Over 10 | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's Survey.

Although the tenants' associations appeared to have held relatively few public meetings, many of the respondents mentioned constant communication with both their membership and the wider community at their regular social and sporting activities: bingo sessions, in particular, often being used for passing on complaints and welfare problems to the committee or to an individual activist. Formal public meetings tended to occur only when there

was an outstanding issue of policy to be discussed - very often concerning the latest rent increase - and at these sessions the political wing of the organisations quickly move into operation. The action groups do not have the same potential for informal feedback as do tenants' associations but nearly a third of the groups had held at least five public meetings in the twelve months prior to the interviews.

Respondents were also asked for their assessment of the number of people who turned up to their most recent meeting for clearly the size of meetings is an important factor in the success the groups have in linking with their communities. The response needs to be interpreted with care. Small, regular meetings will produce more people over a twelve month period than one or two large meetings, and attenders of frequent, small meetings are likely to be regular attenders. Nearly 50% of tenants' association meetings and over 60% of action group meetings had more than 50 people attending. By standards of public meetings at local election campaigns these figures are certainly very creditable, especially as the most recent meeting was not their largest meeting of the last twelve months.

Table 11.3 Numbers attending Most Recent Public Meeting.

| | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| | % | % |
| 0-10 | 3.6 | - |
| 11-25 | 7.1 | 28.1 |
| 26-50 | 21.4 | 12.5 |
| 51-100 | 32.1 | 18.7 |
| 101-200 | 21.4 | 21.9 |
| 201-300 | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| 301-400 | - | - |
| D.K. | 7.1 | 6.3 |
| N.A. | 7.1 | 6.3 |

Source: Author's Survey.

Table 11.4 Subjects of the Most Recent Survey.

| | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| | % | % |
| C.P.O./specific streets. | 39.3 | 12.5 |
| Area information. | 39.3 | 6.3 |
| Road traffic. | 10.7 | - |
| Welfare. | - | 12.5 |
| Other. | 3.6 | 6.3 |
| N.A. | 7.1 | 62.5 |

Source: Author's Survey.

The majority of action group meetings were concerned with aspects of the planning of their area, including: Architect's Department's representatives describing the design of new flats; meetings to discuss the South Yorkshire Structure Plan; reviews of the District Plan proposals for the area and the action needed as a result; the organisation of a campaign against a road-widening scheme; a proposal to close part of a street making it safe for the local adventure playground; to report back on a meeting with the Trent Area Health Authorities concerning hospital extensions; and two meetings which heard the results of a survey on the possibility of students being moved into C.P.O. houses and considered the resulting action to be taken. There was clearly an emphasis on 'issues' rather than on the provision of facilities, welfare activities, etc.

Due partly to the time of year when the interviews took place and also to the infrequency of tenants' association meetings, 50% of their most recent meetings had been the A.G.Ms; otherwise, meetings were concerned entirely with specific issues: cuts in

estates was the production of news-sheets. 65% of action groups and 70% of the tenants' associations had a news-sheet. Many of the tenants' productions were struggling to keep going - a third having produced only one or no edition in the twelve months before the survey. Action groups were much better organised, over half having published four or more editions during the year; this figure underestimates the real performance because several groups had been formed less than six months before the survey. Overall, nearly 40% of action groups had distributed either a regular monthly or bi-monthly sheet. This was usually a duplicated A4 size production containing a leading, front-page article with a variety of articles, entertainments and, most importantly, columns devoted to letters from local people, councillors, and others. Certainly most of the action group productions had a definable style - an emphasis on a simple, cheap format with short articles, a few cartoons and an events page, often including church services and related activities. Distribution was by sale from door to door, by delivery to members of the organisation only, or free distribution throughout the whole area. Fifteen per cent of the whole sample had in addition arranged for a local newsagent or shop to take copies for sale or to take away.

Table 11.5 Number of News-sheets in the Last Twelve Months.

| n = | Action Groups. 28 % | Tenants' Associations. 32 % |
|---|---|---|
| 0/1 | 7.1 | 21.9 |
| 2/3 | 21.4 | 18.7 |
| 4/5 | 7.1 | 18.7 |
| 6/7 | 7.1 | - |
| 8/9 | - | 12.5 |
| 10/11 | 10.7 | - |
| 12 + | 10.7 | - |
| N.A. | 35.7 | 28.1 |

Source: Author's Survey.

| Table 11.6 | Distribution Procedure. | |
|---|---|---|
| | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
| n = | 28 | 32 |
| | % | % |
| Whole District. | 32.1 | 59.4 |
| Members Only. | 10.7 | 6.3 |
| Door-to-Door. | 21.4 | 6.3 |
| N.A. | 35.7 | 28.1 |

Source: Author's Survey.

The use which the organisations make of public meetings, surveys and news-sheets indicates the seriousness with which many of them take the criticism often made of community groups that they are unrepresentative of the area. Although they cannot claim electoral accountability, they do demonstrate a conscientious attitude towards gathering and exchanging opinions in their localities over certain specific issues. In this respect they clearly reflect a substantial cross-section of opinion in the areas.

On a more general level it may be appropriate to return to Crick's theorising on the question of representation and participation. 'What I am getting at is something that should offend nobody - for it is only a theory: that the maximization of participation is a false hope to pursue in the name of democracy, compared to, for a prospect of real change, a maximization of communication and publicity.' (11.2). In both subject matter and in method the grassroots organisations, especially action groups, may be performing more efficiently at communicating to their public than is the case with ward parties. For example, an analysis of 36 ward Labour parties in Manchester found 'dull meetings and sparse attendance; indeed, it is only by keeping

their meetings small that some wards are able to curb discussion of business sufficiently to get anything done at all.' (11.3) Milne and Mackenzie confirm this finding in their discussion of the 1955 General Election in Bristol North-East. It is interesting to note that even during a campaign the average attendance at Labour Party public meetings was only 30, a much lower average than the community groups in Sheffield during a normal period. (11.4)

Relationship to Other Organisations.

An important theme in pluralist literature concerns the extent to which alliances and coalitions form and dissolve over issues; at a 'community' level it is thought that weak organisations are bound to look for support in order to strengthen their influence. The reasoning behind this model of political activity requires that a healthy and stable democracy needs mechanism for resolving conflict which does not challenge the status quo. However, a number of recent studies have challenged both the theory and the empirical evidence of this school of thought. Newton, for example, reporting on the findings of his survey in Birmingham says, 'It seems that coalition-building in the world of community pressure groups is not especially common, and certainly not nearly as common as unilateral activity on the part of isolated organisations. As many secretaries pointed out, there was no need to complicate life further by bringing in other organisations when most of the matters concerning them could be dealt with on a one-to-one basis with the relevant public body in the city.' (11.7) Groups may look round for support if their early initiatives are unsuccessful but, in his sample, issues rarely reached that stage. Newton concludes: 'Once again, the evidence suggests that pluralist theory applies to a relatively

small number of special issues.'

With the community groups in Sheffield there was a similar lack of coalition-building, with the exception of the tenants' associations' original dispute with the local authorities over a rent rebate scheme. But this too was a relatively short-lived issue and, as Hampton (11.8) shows, there were various strands of opposition to the rent policy within the tenants' associations' co-ordinating organisation, leading to a split between 'non-political' and 'political' associations. Ten years later, the survey conducted for this thesis examined both tenants' associations and action groups on the extent to which they felt they were opposed by any other organisation covering Sheffield as a whole. An overwhelming majority of groups do not consider themselves to have City-wide opponents. (Table 11.7). Under this heading only one group mentioned the Labour Party. This shows the extent to which the tenants' associations have changed their role since their formation, and confirms a suggestion that few of the groups envisage themselves as being in conflict with the local governing party. At a local level the figures were very similar; expressions of opposition from other local groups were minimal and there were no cases where the small-scale conflict that did exist had any practical repercussion.

Table 11.7 The Sense of Opposition from other Sheffield Organisations.

| | Action Groups. | Tenants' Associations. |
|---|---|---|
| n = | 28 % | 32 % |
| Yes. | 7.1 | 18.7 |
| No. | 89.3 | 81.3 |
| Others. | 3.6 | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

Table 11.8 Opposition from Groups in the Local Area.

| n = | Action Groups. 28 % | Tenants' Associations. 32 % |
|---|---|---|
| No. | 82.1 | 100.0 |
| Ratepayers/Residents Association. | 3.6 | - |
| M.Ps. | 3.6 | - |
| Councillors. | 3.6 | - |
| Community Associations. | 7.1 | - |

Source: Author's Survey.

It would seem logical (although never made explicit in the pluralist model) that intra-community and City-wide opponents would be identified, otherwise it would be unnecessary for the pattern of coalitions and alliances to which they give such high priority. They are content, rather, to identify a constantly changing 'kaleidoscope' of allies and opponents with an emphasis on consensual pluralism in which the groups all have access to a range of resources and in which there is a balance of material and intellectual advantages.

In parallel with their reluctance to identify possible areas of conflict, the Sheffield groups were equally unable to provide an expected level of interchange with other organisations. A number of questions explained this point. First, they were asked whether there was any overlap at a local level between their own role and that of other organisations; they were asked to name as many as possible but only two columns proved to be necessary: the majority either not naming any other group or at most only one. Nearly a third of the action groups had some overlap with other action groups. An explanation of this rather surprising

finding is found in another set of statistics, this time summarizing the extent of their links with other groups. (Table 11.10).

Table 11.9 Overlapping Organisations in the Locality.

| n = | Action Groups. 28 % | | Tenants' Associations. 32 % | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. | 2. | 1. | 2. |
| No. | 35.7 | - | 21.9 | - |
| Churches. | 10.7 | 3.6 | 21.9 | 6.3 |
| Clubs/Societies. | 7.1 | 10.7 | 18.7 | 21.9 |
| Other Action Groups/Tenants' Associations. | 32.1 | 3.6 | 15.6 | 6.3 |
| Political Party. | 3.6 | - | - | - |
| Community Association. | 7.1 | 3.6 | 21.9 | - |
| Other. | - | - | - | - |
| N.A. | 3.6 | 78.6 | - | 65.6 |

Source: Author's Survey.

Table 11.10 Links with other Organisations.

| n = | Action Groups. 28 % | Tenants' Associations. 32 % |
|---|---|---|
| None. | 17.9 | 12.5 |
| Other Action Group/ Tenants' Association. | 71.4 | 12..5 |
| Sheffield Amenities Council. | 7.1 | - |
| Other. | 3.6 | - |
| Co-ordinating Committee. | - | 75.0 |

Source: Author's Survey.

Many action groups had an informal and friendly relationship with their neighbouring groups and in some cases these links amounted to an 'overlap' of functions. There was perhaps some confusion about the distinction between 'overlap' and 'links'. This could not be said, however, to provide evidence of a widespread network of coalition-building. The links rarely had any practical consequences so far as negotiating or fighting an issue was concerned. Attempts to link the groups into a Sheffield-wide organisation similar to the tenants' associations Co-ordinating Committee failed, and some people deplored this feature: '... this is an action group weakness... we have no successful integration in the Sheffield area, but instead have groups on a narrow and fluctuating basis... we need better co-ordination and contact.' Others felt that such contact was neither necessary nor desirable: '...we tend to avoid contact with other groups - especially the better-off neighbourhood groups.'

About half the groups were affiliated to another organisation, such as the Sheffield Amenities Council, the Conservation Society, Sheffield Council of Churches, and two groups were allied to the Association for Neighbourhood Councils.

Tenants' associations had very few links either on their estates or outside them. The majority nominally belonged to the Sheffield Co-ordinating Committee of Tenants' and Residents' Associations, but this body has declined in influence since the late 1960s and is virtually moribund. Summarily, with the exception of a certain fraternal relationship between adjacent groups, there was very little evidence of any attempts, at any stage in the in history so far, to form alliances. All the organisations in the study were characterized by their parochialism.

A third area of internal linkage was found in the groups' perception of the support which they get from other organisations. This, it was felt, might well be an indication of potential that exists (in addition to formal links with other groups) for the development of broadly based alliances in the community. The sort of alliance around which a neighbourhood council might well evolve rather than a temporary pluralistic coalition. It was disappointing to find virtually no expression of feelings of support, with the one exception - that of the churches; nearly fifty per cent of both types of group felt that they had support from one or more of the main church denominations. The dearth of support from other sources is not, however, surprising in view of their introvert character. Equally it can be argued that these organisations, especially the action groups, do not readily find allies because the role which they play in the communities is unique. They would be unlikely to receive party political support (and they do not), but neither are there many other organisations attempting the range of activities which engage groups. Certainly there is an overlap: between the tenants' associations and local community associations, for example, and also between some action groups and an amenity organisation; but in general their role as negotiators over certain community related issues, and as the providers of services and welfare facilities, is not a role which is very often duplicated. It is not surprising, therefore, to find low levels of both support and opposition; and that in so far as they seek alliances, it is with neighbouring action groups. The main thrust of their effort is focused on attempts to develop representative credentials over the range of issues in which they are involved. To this end their work is also centripetal -

essentially inward-looking and pulled in that direction by the pragmatic necessities of their chosen role.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN. References and Footnotes.

11.1 Crick, B.R., Political Theory and Practice (Allan Lane, The Penguin Press, 1972), p.136.

11.2 Crick, B.R., op.cit. (1971), p.157.

11.3 Fienburgh, W., 'Put Policy on the Agenda', in Fabian Journal, February, 1952.

11.4 Milne, R.S. and Mackenzie, H.C., 'Marginal Seat' 1955, Hansard Society (1958).

11.5 Hindess, B., The Decline of Working Class Politics (MacGibbon and Kee, 1971), p.59.

11.6 Waugh, A., 'The Changing Composition of Sheffield Labour Party', unpublished M.A. thesis (1974).

11.7 Newton, K., Second City Politics (O.U.P. 1976), p.82.

11.8 Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (O.U.P. 1970), chapter 10.

# CHAPTER TWELVE. COMMUNITY GROUPS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS.

The establishment of a statutory system of neighbourhood councils in the 'unparished' areas of England currently commands all-party support.(12.1) Any enabling legislation has not, however, reached even the preliminary stages of a formal introduction to Parliament, although the opportunity will certainly arise several times in the next two or three years, for example, in the legislation which follows the Inner Area Studies.(12.2)

In the lengthy debate which has surrounded the issue of the introduction of 'urban parishes' very little evidence has been collected or examined concerning the role and position of existing community groups vis à vis neighbourhood councils. The existence of a large number of grassroots organisations has been noted at several points in the thesis and it follows that, to a certain extent, their support for the introduction of a statutory system of local councils is a precondition of the success of the venture. At the present time information is still being collected, and ideas concerning the nature and role of neighbourhood councils are being vested. The perspective from which the Sheffield groups have been researched gives the data in this thesis a special poignancy for the debate. Information on the style and characteristics of local political organisations has been presented in conjunction with a detailed account of the specific nature of the relationship that these groups have with the local government system; it is precisely on the detail of this relationship that the character and role of urban neighbourhood councils hinge.

The chapter will look in particular at the place of community groups in a statutory system of local councils; at some of the

main problems of evolving and introducing a widespread network of neighbourhood councils; and at how the decisions that need to be made might be informed from the evidence in the thesis. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part describes briefly the background to the demand for an urban network of neighbourhood councils and points to a number of discrepancies in the official view of local representation and also to a number of disparities in the provision of a local tier of government which currently exist in the various divisions of the kingdom. The second section considers data from the thesis, together with other relevant research findings, on the characteristics and style of neighbourhood government and is designed to highlight the problems inherent in the relationship between the local authorities and community groups involved in the political process. There are contradictions in this relationship stemming from the structure of the decision-making process but a number of the Sheffield groups might be considered as embryonic neighbourhood councils and from these we can learn something of the distinctive character of local political organisations. The world of community groups is extremely heterogeneous and this itself provides the framers of the enabling legislation with a difficult range of problems. A central dilemma is that the statutory imposition of neighbourhood councils from 'above' is contrary to the spirit and purpose of community groups. The second section of the chapter is sub-divided under the following headings: The Representative Function of Neighbourhood Councils; Neighbourhood Council Boundaries; Neighbourhood Councils and Community Groups.

Why Urban Neighbourhood Councils?

The organisation and management of local government has become increasingly centralised and bureaucratic. Accountability to the electorate is seriously impaired by the reduction of some 12,000 councillors, over the country as a whole, resulting from the recent reform of local government. Even before this, against a background of fewer and less certain channels of communication and the growing demands of a plethora of community groups, the idea of neighbourhood councils had been put forward. (12.3) A specific impetus was given to the demand for a new type of local government institution by the setting up of the Association for Neighbourhood Councils in February 1970 and by the publication of their first major piece of research in a document called 'The Hornsey Plan'. (12.4) Prior to this the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England (12.5) opened the debate on the possibility of a new statutory tier of community government. Their research findings were particularly significant in this respect. They found among their sample a widespread sense of identification with a geographical 'home area'. Nearly 75% of the respondants were aware of a home area and, except in small towns, this was almost always the size of a ward or smaller. The research conducted by the ANC also found widespread interest in the home area although they detected a considerable degree of variation in perception of the home area in different parts of the country.(12.6) Dr. Hampton's research in Sheffield produced a figure of 85% who felt attached to a home area.(12.7) To what extent a home area could become the basis for a political unit was questioned in an earlier chapter. It is an individual and not a social construction. Nevertheless, all these sources pointed towards a widespread interest in and

perception of the local neighbourhood.

The implications of these findings for the reformed local government system were subject to widely differing interpretations. In recommending a two-tier system the Royal Commissioners proposed the establishment of 'local councils'. 'We always recognised that units of the size appropriate for the operation of services must be under-pinned and complemented by other representative bodies to express the interests and sense of identity of the more local communities.'(12.8) A Minority Report written by Derek Senior expressed a very different view.(12.9) His suggestion for 'common councils' broke with the administrative view of the majority report. 'Its [common councils'] role as the voice of community feeling and the instrument of community self-help must be made incapable of being confused, in boroughs and urban districts, with the administrative role of their former local authorities writ small - very small.'(12.10)

The views of the Majority Report were (nevertheless) broadly incorporated into the White Paper and eventually the 1972 Local Government Act itself. As Hain points out, '...the only concession to an additional body at the very local level of urban areas came in the form of an encouragement of non-statutory bodies.'(12.11)

For various historical, but nevertheless curious reasons, an anomaly was introduced into British local government by including in the legislation provisions for Wales and Scotland (12.12) to establish 'community councils'. Why England should apparently be disenfranchised in this respect has no logical explanation. Darke and Walker suggest that this stems from central governments' tendency to give disproportionately favourable financial and political consideration to the interests of Scotland and Wales.(12.13) But in practice for both countries

the proposals have been implemented in a fragmentary and unsystematic way. In Wales the six biggest towns are effectively exempted from the duties of provision leaving only the rural areas and fringe boroughs to be covered by the Welsh equivalent of the English parish councils. In Scotland, where parish councils were abolished in the 1930s, special consideration needed to be given to the pressures for a local form of democracy. Following the recommendations of the Wheatley Commission, (12.14) the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 empowered district or island councils to set up community councils whose role would be 'to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which these authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to be expedient and practicable.'(12.15) They are to be funded by the district council. The emphasis on the complementarity of these organisations to the local authorities throws into question the desire of the framers to give the community councils as free a hand as possible and not regard them as a third tier. In practice their implementation has caused some problems. Edinburgh, for example, refused to take part in the initial consultative phase.

In England the disparity between town and country requires some amplification. In rural areas parish councils have been retained in the post-reform period with greater powers and wider recognition. Planning Departments, for example, now have the statutory duty to consult with parish councils on planning applications in their area and previous constraints on the rights of parish councils to spend money have been abolished. There are

approximately 7,000 parish councils and 65,000 parish councillors. The councils vary considerably in size, influence and expenditure; many have little more than a paper existence.(12.16)

Perks suggests that the history of inactivity among many parish councils has been and continues to be encouraged by higher authorities on grounds that they are better equipped to provide the service or deal with the problems. 'It is worth making the point that this process of suffocating by kindness would not be possible were it not for the system of concurrent powers under which parish councils, though more powerful than ever before, can do little or nothing that the district councils cannot do... ideally, parish councils need some powers which they and they alone can exercise.'(12.17)

But the law demands that in parishes with more than 200 electors the district councils must hold elections every 42 days until a council is elected. In this way vast rural and semi-rural areas of the country are covered, in theory, by a permanent and moderately powerful tier of community government. To what extent these powers and responsibility can be equated with the role of urban neighbourhood councils remains open to debate. The ANC's model neighbourhood council is often referred to in their literature as an 'urban parish council' which may be misleading because urban community politics has a very different character to rural parishes and such a parallel might be restrictive. But there can be no doubt, given the enhanced powers of the parish councils, that the densely populated urban areas are to that extent disenfranchised and until this situation is remedied the disparity between town and country remains a major anomaly of the local government system.

The Representative Function of Neighbourhood Councils.

In his speech in February 1973 the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, spoke of Neighbourhood Councils as being an essential step to 'making democracy articulate...for individuals and families who feel themselves deprived of any say in the decision of, to so many of them, large and remote organisations who, week in week out, take the decisions which dominate so much of their world.'(12.18) The Government's Consultative Paper on Neighbourhood Councils in England which followed in 1974 emphasised this theme of representation because, 'current trends in management thinking in local government are liable to absorb the individual councillor into the general work of the council to a greater extent.'(12.19) They suggest that Neighbourhood Councils should have the role of representing 'to operational organisations (central and local government, firms with factories in the area, etc.) the needs and wishes of the local community.' And according to the Scottish Royal Commission on Local Government (the Wheatley Report) the role of community councils is to be, 'a broadly-based unit, with an official standing, to which the local community as a whole can give allegiance and through which it can speak and act.' This view was proposed as a response to the reduction in the councillor/elector ratio. Much of the official literature has stressed, therefore, the representative function of the neighbourhood and community councils. Whether in practice the implication of more open and responsive local government will be achieved is open to question. The assumption that smaller units solve administrative problems does not take seriously the distribution of power and authority throughout the structure. Indeed, it has been suggested that the proposals for a community level of government is in fact an attempt to absorb

the radical community actionists into the system. 'If community action must be brought within a recognisable institutional framework, the form is like a mini-town hall, and would slot into the void left by local government reorganisation...'(12.20) The radical community actionists overstate the case, but there can be no doubt that the dilemma of either imposing councils on communities or leaving initiatives to voluntary effort with the consequence of restricting the powers and service-providing role has not been solved. The publication of the Government's Consultative Paper on Neighbourhood Councils does, however, show a more developed understanding of the particular character of community politics. In it a much wider role for N.Cs is suggested than in any of the previous Commission Reports and study papers. The Paper suggests that a typical Neighbourhood Council would 'organise or stimulate self-help within the local community to improve the quality of life for residents as a whole', would help people in need of special facilities and would try to foster 'a sense of community responsibility'.

There was every indication from the Sheffield groups that their general objectives were broadly similar to those outlined in the Consultative Paper. For example, the range of self-help activity was shown, in Chapter Six, to be very diverse. The important point was made there that a particular event or series of activities frequently concealed secondary purposes. The weekly bingo sessions were often used as a forum for information exchange - the place where individuals often raised personal problems with a committee member or sometimes directly with a councillor. In addition to the mass of information changing hands at regular group functions all the organisations had undertaken social surveys to gather data about the condition of the area, or

residents' views on issues of local concern. The integration of the representative function with the day-to-day activities of the groups is a unique feature of community politics; it is an important finding because criticism is often levelled at community groups for being unrepresentative. It is clear, however, that on certain issues, having gathered information, called public meetings, exchanged correspondence in their magazines and so on, they are in a far better position to accurately reflect the general feeling of the community than councillors or local political parties. This view is supported by the recently available findings of the INLOGOV investigation into voluntary neighbourhood councils.(12.21) Their nationally selected sample of councils, 'did make representations, to their authorities especially, mostly about environmental and amenity matters. They did not usually deal with big issues like employment. They usually carried out various useful social services, from the care of the elderly to running advice bureaux, community newspapers, carnivals...' The research also observed that, apart from the obvious channels such as public meetings, many of the activities were enhancing the ability and potentiality of the organisations to carry out their representative function. '...activities and doing things for the neighbourhood are the very stuff of making oneself known to the neighbourhood.' Communication is a precondition of representation.

Neighbourhood Council Boundaries.

One of the most formidable problems facing the framers of neighbourhood council legislation is the extent to which they can lay down guidelines for the drawing of council boundaries. The difficulty is to find a balance between local perceptions

of community, the range and scale of functions the councils are asked to perform and their representativeness. For the community groups in Sheffield the question of a territorial definition and the significance of boundary selection is discussed in Chapter Ten where it was observed that a tension exists between the groups' pragmatic response to the decision-makers - requiring relatively large units to establish a negotiating legitimacy - and the sense of community which is derived from the individual internal character of the place, generally a smaller unit. It is very clear that the origins and construction of 'community' is a highly complex social process.(12.22) The point was made in the earlier chapter that the 'social' community is frequently determined by stigmatizing 'worse' areas whose major identities result from these wholly negative associations and features. Some very sensitive decisions would need to be made if the intention were to produce a comprehensive cover of neighbourhood councils.

Attempts have been made to produce maps of neighbourhood boundaries for towns in England. The authors of the Hornsey Plan asked the respondants to their survey to draw on a map their perception of his/her home area. By combining these individual units Hornsey was relatively easily divided into 10 areas with an average population of 9,600. Reading went into 13 areas with a similar size of population; Worcester divided into 16 smaller units of 4,700 average population and in Gillingham it appeared that the wards would be acceptable, ranging from 4,900 to 12,200. In his survey Hampton found that 90% of the respondants in Sheffield were able to give a name to their 'home area' or the area in which they lived. Some 40 names were consistently mentioned, suggesting a fairly comprehensive cover of the City.(12.23)

Hampton and Chapman attempted to delineate neighbourhood council boundaries for Sheffield using totally different criteria - existing administrative units.(12.24) They superimposed old development plan boundaries, school catchment areas and polling districts and were able to identify 65 administrative neighbourhoods estimated to include a population of 390,000 out of a total for the City of 540,000. As was shown in Chapter Ten, groups in Sheffield had very clear perceptions of their boundaries, based on their estates in the case of tenants' associations and on a variety of factors - usually a 'natural' area or a planning department unit - in the case of action groups. A comparison between the Hampton/Chapman units and the actual boundaries of the groups reveals a low level of coincidence of the two types of unit. Nearly 70% of the groups shared less than a 40% overlap. The remaining 30% of groups, however, had over 60% of their boundaries in common with the administrative areas. It is difficult to suggest what a good figure for coincidence would be but for practical purposes it would seem that a purely administrative view of the boundaries does not match the perceptions of the local groups themselves. The discrepancies result from the particular <u>issue</u> orientation of the groups and because they are forced to adopt a political view of community which combines elements from the 'administrative' and 'social' view of community but is mainly moulded from the initial political and bargaining activity of the organisation. In considering the guidelines for drawing neighbourhood council boundaries the framers of the legislation will have to decide whether weighting will be given to the combination of individual perceptions (as in the Hornsey Plan), an administrative view of community, or from the 'political' communities used and delineated by existing groups. Finding a

balance of population sizes in relation to the functions and to ensure representativeness is not an easy task. Imbalances and discrepancies have already been observed by Clarke in his analysis of the early phase in the development of Community Councils in Scotland.(12.25) He found, for example, that in Glasgow the population sizes of the Councils vary from over thirty-six thousand to only 390. These two Councils are bound to play very different roles, for the smaller group will be more accessible and responsive to individual needs but may not command sufficient internal resources to generate service provision and the larger, Glasgow East Council, '...will need to build upon or stimulate a complex network of smaller organisations and confine its own role to one of co-ordination.' And being potentially a very powerful body, Glasgow East may find its relations with local community organisations, pressure groups and political parties very problematic not least because they are all likely to demand representation. Clarke found that although the City-wide averages for the five areas he studied ranged from populations of six to ten thousand - similar to the Hornsey Plan - within each area the Councils varied by many thousands; from 2,800 to 20,500 in Hamilton, 1,457 to 17,627 in Motherwell and 2,773 to 16,546 in Aberdeen, variations far in excess of the inter-city averages.

Evidence from Sheffield groups suggests that there is a solution to problems of size and function and the question of groups combining 'social' and 'political' roles. This is simply to operate a 'two-tier' system. Two action groups in Sheffield ran very successful federal organisations with a central committee overseeing the group and accomplishing certain tasks such as running an advice centre (each group had such a centre) or collating and analysing a survey, or representing the group to

the local authority, while the 'street groups' or 'neighbourhood groups' had an independent life and undertook, for example, services such as ensuring the distribution of blankets to elderly people during power cuts or distributing the newsletter. These street groups are much closer to the 'home area' spoken of in much of the literature and some people certainly seem to identify more easily with this level of community. A number of other groups also had a street-to-street division of their area for specific purposes, normally for leaflet or newsletter distribution. But it can be observed that people also identify with a 'natural' area - which may be the old pre-industrial village, or a particular geographical area - whose constituency is very much bigger than the home area. Politically this is also an appropriate level to operate at and is probably the best level at which to organise the distribution of certain services. There is also a sense in which residents in a poor or disadvantaged 'home area' would prefer to identify with the broader community of which they are a part and through this attachment raise their status. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the process of labelling areas through boundary selection is a very complex process and if a statutory system of neighbourhood councils were adopted would need very careful consideration.

The Challenge of Neighbourhood Councils.

Many details of neighbourhood council organisation will need to be examined if legislation is introduced to establish a statutory system, but the key to resolving these questions will be the precise nature of the relationship between councils and local authorities. The central problem is that the authorities are certain to be unwilling to support organisations which

oppose or potentially oppose some aspects of council policy; the problems of the Home Office Community Development Projects highlights the dilemma. And there is good reason to suppose that this attitude applies to the neighbourhood council movement, because this debate also raises the broader questions of the sources of both local and national decision-making power. However, if the evidence from Chapter Five truthfully expresses the attitudes of the Sheffield groups to the local authorities, the notion of mutual antagonism which is said to exist must be re-examined. It was shown, for example, that the most preferred strategy of the Sheffield tenants' associations in raising an issue was to contact one or other side of the local government system - that is, through a councillor or a department. The action groups also favoured those routes but relied in addition on self-help or pressure group tactics at an early stage; organising public meetings, conducting a survey and so on. But these actions were directed, in a pragmatic way, towards bolstering their negotiating position with local decision-makers. A successful public meeting, for example, provided a necessary credential of representativeness. Thus both types of organisation were well aware that they stood in a bargaining situation and would adopt a strategy which suited both their own capacity as a group and the nature of an issue. The organisations do not, then, in a pejorative sense 'oppose the system'; all the evidence shows that they take up specific items of policy, especially housing and planning, but not broader issues. Only at a very late stage, having tested a number of channels, will they 'politicise' the issue. Neither should it be overlooked that at one stage the planning department itself was actively encouraging 'public participation' in District Plans.

It is also clear from the Sheffield material that community groups involved in local politics are extremely parochial. It seems unlikely, transferring this observation, that the local authorities would ever be confronted by a neighbourhood council 'movement'. This applies equally to the local political parties who were not in any direct sense regarded as opponents by the groups. Just one group mentioned their local party in this respect. Other remarks about local parties came from a group who had close links with a Liberal councillor and another group in a Conservative controlled area who thought that their councillors were irrelevant given the balance of political forces in the City. Neither the political nor the executive wings of the local government system need fear, therefore, a direct challenge to their positions. It is surprising to discover just how easily the neighbourhood councils would fit the role of complementing the higher authorities which the Commissions and Reports on local government reform have suggested. To what extent they could change the balance of power away from bureaucratic central management to a more open participatory style of local government is debatable. It is true that the community groups stand in a negotiating position with the authorities and that this would not be the basis for the relationship between statutory neighbourhood councils and officialdom but the sources of power are extremely entrenched. The challenge of the neighbourhood councils might more appropriately be viewed as a long-term attempt to make the authorities more responsive to the needs of the communities. As we have pointed out at earlier stages in the thesis, the drive towards efficiency through rational planning and management has emphasized method as against need. The role which the neighbourhood councils must play is to urgently redress the balance of

decision-making and administration towards the consumers of the services and away from the management problems of the 'providers'. The questions of public participation and consumer control are not, therefore, luxuries that cannot be afforded in periods of economic constraint but are central to the reorientation of the local government system. This demand is implicit in the involvement of community groups in local politics who both seek greater accountability and, in their day-to-day activity, demonstrate the particular character of community politics and its potential. These are not the demands of hostile revolutionaries but of mature citizens who in a very real sense seek to complement the work of the higher level organisations. For example, as Darke and Walker suggest, it is increasingly obvious that Social Service Departments cannot monitor the problems and needs of all the elderly citizens (12.26) but at a local level that is precisely the role that a neighbourhood council could play. Such a role challenges neither the professional skills and competence of social workers nor a necessary complement of overall planners and administrators but indicates that a harnessing of local and central effort is simply the most effective means of provision.

The existence of neighbourhood councils would not, of course, interfere with the rights of independent community groups or pressure groups; however, over certain issues a council might act as the forum for co-ordinating a campaign. Conflicts which inevitably break out over the problems of resource distribution may thus be given a more acceptable framework of communication both internally and in city-wide negotiations, for example, over the routeing of a new road, the location of new industry, council house rents and so on. In the majority of mundane and uncontentious issues and activities very little conflict is generated or

perceived to exist in the communities. Only one group mentioned, with some feeling, the existence of an unfriendly group in their locality - a residents' association in a higher class section of the area.

Neighbourhood Councils and Community Groups.

The Government's Consultation Paper on Neighbourhood Councils (12.27) proposes a much broader role for neighbourhood councils than any of the previous official documents. In addition to representing the community to 'operational organisations' a typical neighbourhood council would also, 'organise or stimulate self-help within the local community to improve the quality of life for the residents as a whole', would help people in need of special facilities and would try to foster 'a sense of community responsibility'. Chapter Six outlines the type and range of activity in which the Sheffield groups are involved. And clearly there is a close resemblance between the ideas in the Consultative Paper and the work of the groups. The interim Report of the INLOGOV research also substantiates ideas in the government's document. The key point is that in their day-to-day activities and with their ambitions and hopes the community groups in Sheffield display many of the features which are recognised as being characteristic of neighbourhood councils. This judgement must, however, be reassessed in the light of the description in Chapter Seven of the organisational types and styles of the groups. Not all the groups shared the necessary element of accountability to their memberships which would be a prerequisite of a neighbourhood council. The whole question of 'membership' was shown to be problematic. 40% of the action groups consisted of closed cliques of 'caretakers'and did not have a membership as

such. A smaller number of 'intermediate' groups also centred on the efforts of a few activists who had not yet been able to stimulate the development of a formal membership but clearly subscribed to the philosophy of representation and accountability. It would be fair to say that a number of these groups had reserves of helpers who could be called upon for specific purposes, one example of which was the conversion of a disused wash-house into a community centre. Given extra help and the stimulus of a new status such groups might well form themselves into a neighbourhood council; the fact that they already treat everyone in the area as members brings them close to this ideal - although it should be remembered that under present circumstances their inability to attract a formal membership is symptomatic of their lack of development. The larger action groups, perhaps 40% of the sample, who pursue a wide range of activities and issues and who have sizeable formal memberships, demonstrate even more clearly the spontaneous demand for a non-party political form of community 'government'. To raise these particular groups into a formal part of the local government system would not alter very considerably what they are already doing. To an extent it would release them from the constraints of lack of resources, of difficulty of communication with the authorities and the political parties and their unrepresentativeness measured by a formal vote. The Association for Neighbourhood Councils put the argument in a slightly different way. 'Many pressure groups are socially unrepresentative. For example, few tenants' associations can hope to contest a planning application on equal terms with professional architects or planners. The ANC is convinced that only a statutory body can redress the balance at present weighted against voluntary groups.' (12.28)

There are two senses in which the groups as they are currently constituted may be considered unrepresentative. First, in the literal sense of democracy an acceptable degree of accountability to the communities does not exist - elections of representatives or councillors, as a first step, need to be more thoroughly organised. Second, groups may express only a partial view of City politics, winning new resources at the expense of other less well organised areas or less competent groups. For both these reasons establishing a statutory system of neighbourhood councils would be advantageous, although even under these conditions the problems would not necessarily be eliminated. The question of power at higher levels is an ever-present reality and necessity. Nevertheless, neighbourhood councils would be able to organise and encourage improvements because of their legal standing, their command of resources and their usefulness to the local areas. Many of the Sheffield groups demonstrated that they were themselves well placed to cater for various needs in the community - helping the aged, providing pre-school facilities, assisting the adult literacy campaign and so on. These are initiatives which stem from the interest that people have in their own home areas.

Taken together these factors suggest a different though complementary role to that of the local political parties, a role which is clearly in keeping with the ANC's own ideas. 'Neighbourhood Councils will be not so much a new tier of local government but rather a new form of representation, with the opportunity to encourage co-operative help and neighbourliness.' (12.29)

Many of the action groups and tenants' associations in Sheffield considered as embryonic forms of neighbourhood councils, certainly verify this view.

## CHAPTER TWELVE. References and Footnotes.

12.1 As far back as 1965 the Conservative Political Centre produced a pamphlet called 'New Life for Local Government' supporting a neighbourhood level of local government. As Prime Minister, Harold Wilson spoke enthusiastically in favour of statutory neighbourhood councils. Neighbourhood Councils are official Liberal Party policy. In the debates in the House of Commons leading up to the Local Government Act of 1972 members from all parties expressed support.

12.2 The Association for Neighbourhood Councils commented on the Inner Area Studies Consultants Reports in the following terms: 'Previous action on inner city problems has suffered from a lack of central direction from government and we welcome the present initiative to deal with this. But it has also suffered from a lack of a "delivery system" to ensure the effective use of resources with the active participation of people living in inner city areas. Neighbourhood Councils, with the availability where required of statutory status, are the most effective way of meeting the second lack.' ANC. 'Inner Area Studies - comments to the Secretary of State for the Environment', 1st March, 1977. Hain optimistically suggested that 1977 would see the Neighbourhood Council legislation. Hain, P., 'Neighbourhood Councils and the Central Authorities'.

12.3 Skeffington Report. 'People and Planning': Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning.(HMSO, 1969).

12.4 Baker, J. and Young, M., 'The Hornsey Plan - a role for neighbourhood councils in the new local government', ANC. Third Edition, April 1971.

12.5 Royal Commission on Local Government in England, 1966-69. CMND 4040-1. H.M.S.O. (1969).

12.6 op.cit., ANC (1971).

12.7 Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (O.U.P., 1970), pp.108-109.

12.8 Royal Commission (1969), op.cit., para. 282.

12.9 Senior, D., 'Memorandum of Dissent', in CMND (1969), vol.2, pp.4040-1.

12.10 op.cit., Senior (1969), para. 450.

12.11 Hain, P., 'Neighbourhood Councils and the Central Authorities', in Community Development Journal.

12.12 Local Government (Scotland) Act, H.M.S.O. (1973).

12.13 Darke, R. and Walker, R., Local Government and the Public (Leonard Hill, 1977).

12.14 Royal Commission on Local Government in Scotland 1966-69, Wheatley Commission, CMND 4150, 2 vols., Edinburgh. H.M.S.O.

12.15 Local Government (Scotland) Act, para. 51 (2).

12.16 Research into public participation in the North-East Lancashire Advisory Plan found that nearly all the 41 parish councils had been surprised at being consulted and that only 5 had actually made any representation or comments on the plan. Stringer, P. and Plumridge, G., 'Consultation with Organisations on the North-East Lancashire Advisory Plan', Interim Research Paper No.3., Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning, Sheffield University, Dept. of Extramural Studies, 1974.

12.17 Perks, H., 'The Role and Potential of Parish Councils', in Local Government and the Public (eds.) Darke, R. and Walker, R. (Leonard Hill, 1977).

12.18 Speech by Harold Wilson, 'Democracy in Local Affairs' published in the 'Edinburgh Series' of policy speeches, 10th February 1973 (Labour Party) 1973.

12.19 'Neighbourhood Councils in England', Consultation Paper from D.O.E., July, 1974.

12.20 'Community Action Nationalised', in Community Action , No.15, Aug-Sept., 1964, p.10.

12.21 Draft Report of the Investigation into neighbourhood councils carried out by Humble, S. and Talbot, J., Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1977.

12.22 Suttles, G., The Social Construction of Communities (University of Chicago, 1974).

12.23 Hampton, W.A., op.cit. (1970), pp.109-10.

12.24 Hampton, W.A. and Chapman, J.J., 'Towards Neighbourhood Councils'; two articles in Political Quarterly (1971) vol.42.

12.25 Clarke, C., 'Community Councils : Power to the People?' in The British Political Sociology Yearbook (ed.) Crouch, C. (Croom Heln, 1977).

12.26 Darke, R. and Walker, R. (eds.), op.cit. (1977), pp.80-4.

12.27 Consultation Paper, D.O.E., op.cit. (1974).

12.28 Bob Dixey, 'A Guide to Neighbourhood Councils', Association for Neighbourhood Councils, 1975.

12.29 Bob Dixey, op.cit. (1975).

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN. COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCAL POLITICS.

The content of this thesis has arisen from the presence in Sheffield of a large number of community groups which have been active in the political life of the city from the mid-1960s onwards. Two types of organisation, action groups and tenants' associations, were selected for special study as these groups shared a number of common characteristics but also suggested contrast in other respects. Both sets of organisation stand outside mainstream party politics but clearly are politically involved and have made and continue to make a very distinctive contribution to the politics of Sheffield. They are based on geographical communities and within the framework of 'community' have intervened in a variety of housing and planning policy decisions. Of special interest to the student of local government is the opportunity afforded by their existence to observe and analyse an unusual, spontaneously evolved set of organisations which stand at the interface between the local authorities and the public. Relatively little is known about such organisations although they have often been quoted as the source of demands for greater public participation in local government and as a sign of the growing inability of current procedures and representative institutions to cater for certain types of public demand. It has been the purpose of this thesis to provide a systematic account of a sample of politically active community groups. This has been done as a response to the dearth of information on such groups and as a contribution to the practical questions of representation and decision-making in local politics. Throughout we have attempted to link this evidence to the wider theoretical debates on urban politics. This chapter takes the form of a final statement and discussion of the main findings and major themes of the thesis.

Under the heading, 'Councillors, Parties and the Public Response', we discuss the reasons for the intervention of the groups into local politics. This is seen essentially as a response to faults in the traditional representative system. The second section, 'Issues and Community Organisation', describes the organisational forms and strategies of the groups in the sample. Emphasis is given to the crucial relationship between those factors and the nature of the issues which confronted the groups. Although the activists, discussed in the third section of the chapter, were shown to be generally untypical of the population the efforts of the groups to represent the views of their communities off-set the deficiencies of their own internal democracy. The relationshi between leaders and members is very complex. The question of the impact of the groups on Council policy is discussed in the following section. There have been substantial changes in the programmes of demolition, rebuilding and improvement in many areas of the city arising directly from group activity. With all the groups and associations there has been a continual process of negotiation and bargaining with the departments on detailed aspects of the local environment. The day-to-day social and leisure activities of the tenants' associations and some of the larger action groups have acted as a medium for the transmission of views, complaints, ideas and welfare problems; creating a constant stream of correspondence and representation to the departments of the Council. In the section called 'Community and Boundary Selection' we show that these negotiations have forced the groups to adopt a 'political' view of their community boundaries with horizons far broader than the 'social' communities of the homely, neighbourhood areas. This discussion leads on to a consideration of the nature of the theory of community in urban politics and the factors which generate political mobilization

in the urban context. Finally, under the heading, 'Forward to Grassroots Democracy!?' we review the debate on the modern theories of democracy and suggest some implications, particularly for the widely held and practised representative view, arising from the text of the thesis.

COUNCILLORS, PARTIES AND THE PUBLIC RESPONSE.

The repercussions on the traditional theories of political representation of a network of politically active community groups are potentially far reaching. The more radical activists in the groups are mistaken, however, in considering their organisations as an embryonic alternative system or as an alternative political label at the ballot box to the two-party domination of Sheffield. If either of these blueprints were to be considered as the basis of their impact the groups would have to be judged as outright failures. In fact the main body of evidence suggests a very different and arguably more worthwhile interpretation of their role and functions.

Based initially on a narrow platform of grievances against the local authorities, the groups cannot sustain a prolonged or comprehensive challenge to the political programmes of the parties. They can never expect, therefore, to win the broad support of the electorate even in their own localities. The local parties, however, often seem to be unreceptive and unresponsive to issues created by housing and planning policy which at certain times are major problems to the electorate in an area - issues such as slum clearance phasing, house improvement grants, council house rent increases and District Plan proposals. The very consistency of this range of issues and grievances which are common to the groups shows that their reactions are not arbitrary but are consequent upon specific areas of public policy. There are grounds, therefore

for a critique of some aspects of the traditional representative basis of local government which has been rigidly maintained in a period when provision has expanded dramatically. And at a time when local authorities are statutorily bound to invite public participation in some aspects of planning and housing policy very little thought has been given to the actual mechanisms of information exchange and public involvement or to the political repercussions on the traditional methods of representation.

The role of local councillors in statutory public participation exercises has not been made clear and both the councillors and the political parties have remained inflexible in the face of new ranges of demand from an increasingly articulate electorate. Particularly in relation to the policy and administration of housing and planning which often strike with great immediacy to the individual citizen there has been little attempt to adopt a more responsive relationship. As McKay and Cox point out, the Labour Party having consistently championed the idea that public housing should play the major role in providing accommodation for working class citizens, have also held that the poor quality of the housing stock could be simply transformed by programmes of clearance and rebuilding.(13.1) That the latter assumption was first of all questioned by the local communities has not often been recognised in the literature on post-war British housing policy. While problems in the macro-economic framework forced a re-evaluation of public expenditure, leading to an emphasis on improvement policy in the 1970s, opposition to wholesale clearance was developing in those communities marginal to the worst remaining slum areas and it was from these areas that many of the protest groups were to emerge.

In their defence, there have been innumerable problems for the councillors to cope with in the preceding years. Since 1974 there

have been fewer councillors often covering bigger constituencies and more significantly in Sheffield (which retains the previous ward boundaries) they bear an increasingly heavy burden of committee work. The evidence of the Robinson Committee on the Remuneration of Councillors shows that the time spent by councillors in attending, travelling to and preparing for Council and Committee meetings has risen from 29 hours per month in 1964 to 54 hours per month in 1976.(13.2) And, as we have seen, membership of a politically active community group has more than once proved to be an embarrassment to a councillor who is bound by the party whip to accept certain decisions and it is precisely against some of these decisions which the local groups are in active opposition.
Official recognition of these problems has not been matched by an ability to provide solutions. Statements from the advisory bodies and committees of inquiry invariably invoke slogans about maintaining a healthy democracy but suggestions rarely stray beyond improving the management structures or lines of communication to the public.

The public itself use the existing system as best they can. As individuals they continue to contact the councillors or deal directly with departmental officers, a minority exercise their annual vote, a few serve on public bodies such as school management committees and mere handfuls join the local political parties. For citizens with outstanding grievances public enquiries into planning matters do exist and the office of the local government ombudsman accepts evidence of maladministration. But for groups of people and sections of the community over a certain range of issues neither the traditional representative system nor the official remedies carry sufficient redress or protection. The inability or unwillingness of the councillors to monitor substantial bodies of opinion in their ward against planning or housing proposals

has left a vacuum.

ISSUES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION.

What form does the response of the groups take? We have already shown that it is not possible for the groups to compete against the 'system' or against the political parties at the ballot box. Their political reflexes are essentially pragmatic - they exist in the first place to get certain things done or to stop something happening - and it is self-evident that policy making and executive action reside in the existing corridors of power. Both types of organisation rely heavily on raising an issue in the established channels. And often those groups which appeared not to be making early approaches to the traditional system were, in fact, attempting to establish a favourable bargaining position with the authorities. Often it was necessary to prove their 'representativeness' before approaching the negotiations. For some groups showing that they represent a body of opinion is a very much easier task than for others. An issue such as a slum clearance programme on the fringes of the inner-city where decisions to demolish are debatable can produce very rapid support and the organisation can quickly establish a large, formal membership with a committee of activists accountable to the body of the group through elections at a public meeting. As the threat of clearance recedes this support soon dissolves, leaving a 'watchdog' committee of hard-core activists or the group will disappear completely. Normally in areas where the issues are less immediately compelling it is not possible to establish a group with formal membership and the group may have to rely for its credentials on the evidence it can collect from social surveys or at small public meetings. A third type of organisation dispensed altogether with a general membership. This type preferred instead to use their own contacts

with local councillors or in the departments to achieve specific, usually small-scale, objectives. The organisational style and structure of the group is determined, therefore, by a number of interrelated factors. The issue on which the group forms establishes the broad parameters of the organisational type. In order to sustain a large membership there needs to be a clear, central issue. But the campaigns around such issues tend to be of finite duration. Subsequently the group folds up, contracts or changes its function. The latter process involves either adopting a series of secondary issues or of providing services to the membership, very often both of these. It was fascinating to discover from the interviews a clear pattern of evolution and metamorphosis both in structure and function over a period of years. The tenants' associations in particular all evolved towards the provision of social/leisure activities as the main focus of their work in a period of eighteen months to two years from the original issue (of the rent rebate scheme). If they had not achieved this transformation by the end of that period they invariably folded up. Objective factors such as the existence of a tenants' hall or suitable meeting place on the estate played an important part in determining the outcome as well as the morale of the organisation in the aftermath of the rent strike. It should not be forgotten, of course, that apparently socially orientated tenants' associations nevertheless almost always concealed a hard-core of political activists (often Communist Party members) and that information exchange and individual grievance handling is constantly taking place within the weekly activities of the organisation. The issues that are adopted and/or services provided by the action groups are more definitely the prerogative of the small nucleus of leading activists.

THE ACTIVISTS.

Whatever the quantity of work engaged in and the numerical size of the organisation there is always a small group of activists at the helm. In common with the findings of a number of studies of voluntary organisations the 'social profiles' of the group activists were found to be untypical of the population generally. Critics of the groups have ample evidence to support the contention that voluntary associations and especially their leaders are unrepresentative. It is a truism of political sociology that leaderships are rarely representative of the average citizens but it is surprising to find such emphatic evidence of this among the 'grassroots' organisations.

The Michels thesis that 'who says organisation says oligarchy' is certainly vindicated even within these small community groups. Michels' work is valuable to the student of local politics because he shows the complexity of the relationship between leaders and members and compels us to look closely at what groups claim for themselves in the public forum and at their internal practices. His pessimistic conclusion about the problems of establishing healthy, democratic practice is a very practical lesson and warning to community groups. The 'Iron Law of Oligarchy' can be seen, however, so far as the groups are concerned, in the light of a number of countervailing factors. The representative principle is strong in English local government and the groups are compelled to prove a degree of representativeness to support their negotiating positions. In addition, the memberships tend to have instrumental attitudes towards the group and would only become involved at crucial points in a campaign. Their work might best be interpreted in the light of Crick's understanding of public participation: '...we are only at the beginning of seeing democracy as communication - as the maximization of a free flow of information

and the enhanced guidance of a far more positive feedback of information and knowledge between rulers and ruled. Participation in societies as large as ours is valuable only if it leads to increased communications.'(13.3).

Unfortunately the groups face a local government system which is at best ambivalent towards voluntary effort and at worst downright hostile. The 'free flow of information' which Crick speaks of is inhibited by managerial prerogative in the executive wing and by apprehensive political parties which tend to see the groups as a challenge to their power. The position of the groups is similar to that of a trade union negotiating with an employer over disclosure of information for collective bargaining purposes. There is no ready or freely given exchange of information leading to rational action.

IMPACT ON POLICY.

The extent to which the groups would themselves claim to have changed the policy of the Council is limited. Their interests in general are too parochial for anything except a limited critique of policy. They certainly have not been offering a sustained, strategic criticism or suggesting radical alternatives. They have been saying that so far as their areas are concerned council policy does not suit the particular circumstances; or that there are gaps in provision. The responses of individual groups to policy issues may therefore vary quite considerably. For example, a number of groups were completely opposed to the idea of total clearance of their area, or of some parts of the scheme, while others did not oppose clearance proposals but objected to the methods of implementation, especially timing and phasing. Most of the groups claimed a high degree of success in promoting their point of view and ultimately in changing the course of events. The Council were

amenable to alterations in phasing or to introducing phasing so that disruption to the life of the communities was minimized during clearance and on-site re-building schemes. Skilful opposition to one clearance scheme eventually led to its abolition and later the declaration of a series of General Improvement Areas - taking advantage of the 1969 Housing Act. This Act represented for the first time in a generation of housing policies the view that clearance was not necessarily the solution to the poor quality of the British housing stock. But the impetus for this change of direction in policy in the Sheffield context was undoubtedly provided by the campaign of the action groups. Subsequently it became Council policy to co-ordinate clearance areas with improvement areas in any particular locality but this re-orientation was also subject to criticism from a number of groups who pressed for improvement work to be done ahead of the redevelopment programme. In addition, as reported by the Town Clerk's Research Section, pressure from a number of action groups channelled money into small areas through intensive improvement schemes. These areas gained at the expense a greater number of better placed residential zones which would have benefited from a limited injection of capital. For example, in the Pitsmoor area of Sheffield 552 houses in one neighbourhood were programmed for clearance in the 1978-81 period. However, due to action group pressure, the area was eventually created a General Improvement Area with a commitment of high expenditure and an intensive programme of internal and environmental improvement to ensure at least 30 years future existence. Decisions such as this pulled resources into relatively few, poor areas needing a great amount of work - but saving them from the bulldozer - rather than spreading resources into less marginal zones. That such decisions were taken testifies to the

ability of some groups to intervene successfully to defend a parochial viewpoint. Whether these changes of policy were in the best interest of the city as a whole under conditions of scarce resources remains debatable. For current purposes the important point is that the decisions occurred at all.

In other policy areas many low level decisions were taken in response to action group pressure. Details in the draft District Plans were altered on the suggestion of the groups and on two occasions the boundaries of the Plan areas were changed to meet the requirements of local groups. Indeed, the Planning Department itself sponsored a number of 'public participation' exhibitions precisely to monitor local opinion and the action groups were only too willing to respond. So far as the council tenants' organisations are concerned their impact on the initial rent dispute with the local authority is difficult to determine. A rent rebate scheme was eventually carried through but as Hampton suggests, '...the alterations made in response to the protests indicated that the tenants' campaign was effective. Both party groups on the city council changed their policy during the course of the dispute.'(13.4) As this dispute receded into history and the tenants' associations turned increasingly to leisure activities and welfare provision there have been few attempts to intervene directly in housing policy. At the level of the neighbourhoods, streets and individual homes, however, there is an incessant stream of correspondence and representation to the various departments of the Council over aspects of the local environments - the provision of pedestrian crossings, bus shelters, new pavements, street lighting, the welfare of the elderly and the young and the conditions and state of repair of individual houses and flats. The associations, acting as advocates on behalf of the tenants, are constantly monitoring their estates, discussing priorities and

the detailed implementation of changes and improvements. Without being able to quantify accurately these demands and questions or measure the extent to which changes actually reflect pressure and bargaining, in any single year the sum of the hundreds, even thousands, of small negotiations must be considerable.

COMMUNITY AND BOUNDARY SELECTION.

The groups often find it necessary to reflect in their choice of constituency similar or identical boundaries to those used by the agencies. This is part of their attempt to build a negotiating case with the authorities or at least to establish a rapport; literally, common ground. That the groups have to concede a bargaining stance over the very fundamental issue of defining their 'community' reveals their defensive position. As community groups there is a groundswell of opinion that localism is an inherent part of their distinctive character. People readily identify with areas which are immediate to them and have been shown to take a keen interest in their 'home areas' or neighbourhoods. But the 'political' boundaries which the groups are forced to adopt are far bigger than the homely neighbourhood areas. The groups are thus caught in a tension between adopting territorial units which are expedient for the purposes of bargaining and the more restricted horizons of the 'social' communities. Invariably they defer to the former because of the demands of their political campaigns and because for other purposes they can and do devolve into smaller units. But this situation highlights the groups' pragmatic view of community; and that the 'home area' is not yet in itself the territory from which to develop political action. Whether indeed there is any definition of community that helps to demonstrate how political activity develops in an urban context has been called into question by the work of Castells. As we have seen in

Chapter Nine, Castells argues that the term 'community' should be rejected because it is an ideological concept; although he recognises the geographical coincidence of what he calls a social unit and a social system. There is nothing that distinguishes the term 'community' from the social relations of capitalist society in general. However, Pickvance with his notion of a 'sociology of community' and in particular Rex in his development of the Sparkbrook study are critical of the 'hardline' Marxist and neo-Marxist position for not considering all the circumstances of how political action is mobilized in the urban context. According to both Pickvance and Rex this should include such things as the context of an issue, the nature of the organisations involved, other sources of loyalty, the value systems of the participants and activists and we might add the social characteristics of the communities themselves. This thesis has sought to discuss such factors in relation to the Sheffield groups. To reject, as Castells does, the idea of community and community groups as irrelevant unless they are part of an 'urban social movement' has led to a tautologous position which defines groups in terms of certain types of achievement. As Pickvance suggests, '...the survival and success of such movements depends on the resources they are able to obtain, free or through social exchange, from organizations in the community, from higher levels of hierarchies, and from the personal networks and multiple positions of their members. This is true irrespective of whether the underlying theory of political action stresses mobilization of the base, institutional means, or personal relations...' The evidence from the 'community studies' as well as some of the work of new schools of urban theory testify to the fact that the nature of the communities and how they are structured is crucial to understanding the types and character of the political organisations that come from them.

The instrumental view of community is characteristic of the nature of 'community' in twentieth-century urban civilization - fragmented and transitory. Community means different things for different people at different stages in the life cycle. The theoretical explanation of this situation is found in Janowitz's concept of the 'community of limited liability' in which people's involvements are both partial and increasingly specialized under the impact of outside pressure.(13.5) As external institutions and agencies change so the meaning attached to community undergoes adaptations and metamorphosis. Janowitz thus showed the crucial role of extra-community influences in the process of defining community. Politically this argument might be adapted to support a greater emphasis on localism because the areal basis of government is not simply a question of administrative efficiency in relation to size of area but raises the issue of what are 'meaningful political communities.'(13.6) Wood argues that the stress on function has meant that little attention has been paid to the problem of considering the organisation of government in relation to a group's ability to express preferences. In a similar vein Hampton, in his study of Sheffield, argues that a healthy political pluralism is one way of counterbalancing the large administrative units of local government.(13.7) But the problem remains that without an agreed definition of community it is very difficult to suggest what rights and responsibilities should be devolved into the local areas.

## FORWARDS TO GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY!?

Definitions of democracy are as old as democracy itself. As our social systems have increased in size so interpretations and definitions have flourished. Everyone agrees with the significance of democracy but there is little agreement about what it

actually is. In its purest, literal, sense, which today has strong syndicalist overtones, all the citizens participate in running the decision-making machinery. But in one version of the American pluralist theory it can mean quite the opposite. The people periodically select their governing élite and beyond this mass participation is actually a threat to 'democracy' and in any case it is an observable feature of modern society that people do not participate in politics, thus 'apathy' is a central feature of contemporary democratic systems, and essential to its preservation. As Pateman has shown, however, this view of democracy, originally proposed by Schumpeter and advocated by many Anglo-American writers on the subject, contains serious errors both of factual analysis and theoretical perspective. The assumptions which nearly all this school make, that 'democracy' refers to the national institutions, to the ruling élites at that level, to the primacy of periodic elections and above all to the dangers which would arise to the stability of the social system if the electorate should endeavour to participate other than in selecting the ruling group, are in almost every respect misplaced. Moreover, 'It is not difficult to see that, for the theorists under consideration, these standards are those that are inherent in the existing, Anglo-American democratic system and that with the development of this system we already have the ideal democratic polity.'(13.8) Pateman's argument suffers, however, from not exploring the central notion of the 'theorists of contemporary democracy' which is the plural nature of modern society and the role of government within it. The justification for the idea of periodic re-selection of the ruling élite is not simply that the masses are apathetic or incapable of more direct involvement in the political system (although that is certainly implied in many of the pluralist writers and sometimes explicitly stated) but that the citizens are able to

express their will and self-interest through membership of local and national pressure groups which lobby government on their behalf. Wolff in his critique of pluralism identifies two principle pluralist theories of the relationship between groups and government: the 'referee' theory, in which the job of government is to lay down certain rules within which conflict and competition occur; and second, the 'vector-sum' or 'give-and-take' model wherein government issues laws which reflect and are shaped by lobbying and pressure brought to bear on the legislators by the plurality of organisations in society.(13.9) Dahl in particular has developed the rationale for this theory and a considerable body of evidence in support of it. He claims to be able to demonstrate the fairness of the system, both empirically and prescriptively, because groups which lack access to certain resources, say money or manpower, can compensate in other directions by, for example, organisational skills or personal contacts, or by forming coalitions and alliances with other groups. Participation in the decision-making process of government is, therefore, neither necessary nor justifiable. As we have seen, however, the evidence of this thesis suggests precisely the opposite of the influential American version of pluralism: the groups are parochial and attempts to build coalitions are rare and have been short-lived, group resources are unbalanced and they do not see themselves as being in competition (or conflict) with other groups.

In summary form, the two major propositions of the pluralist model of society and political organisation fail on two counts. First, because the idea of society as a kaleidoscope of groups and collective interests mediated by government is not an empirically accurate model. For example, as Bachrach and Baratz have shown, no account is taken in the pluralist model of government of the

power of 'institutional bias' and of 'non-decision'. And second, following from this initial proposition, the rationale for the exclusion of ordinary citizens from active involvement in decision-making and government, apart from voting, cannot necessarily be justified except in terms of the internal logic of the pluralist model; in short the pluralist position is tautologous.

There is no doubt, however, that 'traditional' democratic theory always presupposed an immediate and evident relationship between the individual citizen and government. As Wolff points out, "Whether in the form of 'direct democracy', as Rousseau desired, or by means of the representative mechanism described by Locke, the state was to confront the citizen directly as both servant and master."(13.10) Pateman shows that Rousseau's idea of participation included not only the access of citizens to the decision-making process and a means of protecting individual interests but more important than these is the psychological and educational effect on the individuals. "...the central function of participation in Rousseau's theory is an educative one using the term 'education' in the widest sense."(13.11) Once the method of participatory government has been established the whole system becomes self-sustaining and increasingly effective because the more a citizen participates the more capable he is of doing so and, it should be added, the freer he becomes because he is at least partly responsible for the laws of the society. For later theorists, in particular J.S. Mill, it was logical for this educational/ participatory experience to be primarily related to the local level of government. "We do not learn to read and write, to ride or swim, by being merely told how to do it, but by doing it, so it is only by practising popular government on a limited scale that people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger."(13.12) J.S. Mill further proposed that industry as well as local government

was an arena in which individuals could be educated into the practical government of society. With the development of private enterprise industrialism there was an additional arena of decision-making over which individual citizens needed to exercise a similar control by active involvement in the decisions of the company. Pateman follows this conception of Mill by presenting evidence in support of the participatory theory of government in an industrial context where a sense of 'political efficacy' is developed especially in lower level decision-making.

A number of comparisons may be drawn between Pateman's observations concerning decision-making and participation in industry and the position of the politically active community groups in Sheffield. The involvement of skilled workers in the factory organisations and in the Sheffield tenants' associations is a particularly striking comparison especially as many of the associations' leaders were active trade unionists. This confirms the evidence from the community studies that skilled workers take more easily to participative activity as a means of confirming their social status within the manual classes of workers. Skilled workers traditionally take a leading role in industrial and trade union activity. Political theorists, in the traditional school of democracy from Rousseau onwards, would predict that activity in the industrial context and in the communities would be mutually reinforcing. A comparison may also be drawn between Pateman's finding of greater interest in 'low level participation' - shop floor issues - and much of the day-to-day activity of the tenants' associations and the action groups in monitoring and bargaining over the condition of the estates, areas and individual properties. Far from being a retreat from 'political' activity as some commentators suggest, these issues whether on the shop floor or on the

estates are the staple activity of working class organisations in which leaderships are tried and tested and the organisations themselves established. Time and again the community studies imply or point directly to the conclusion that working class organisations are normally instrumental in their functions. Thus it would be wrong to see the evolution of the tenants' associations from their initial confrontation with the Council to the more stable, long-term activity of providing services to the estates as, in some senses, a defeat or a retreat into non-contentious social activities. We have shown that within these day-to-day activities there is a constant accumulation of low-level gains for the communities. And within the groups the potential exists to break out into more direct political action although many of the associations are chastened by their previous experiences and wary of running into unnecessary 'trouble'. This is not to say that a challenge to the policy of the Council could not be mustered if circumstances required. But that level of activity is only an occasional recourse because it is large scale, involves a great deal of work and is known to be difficult to sustain. As we have shown, there is a high level of concealed self-help, welfare and bargaining activity within the routine functions of the associations and groups and this is important work not only for the experience which the participants gain and the evolution of community organisations but for the sheer quantity of small-scale change which results. Neither the neo-Marxists nor the Anglo-American pluralist position should disparage the self-activity of working class communities as irrelevant except for certain prescribed functions. For as Rex suggests, the mechanisms of the development of political activity, in Marxist parlance the question of how a 'class-in-itself' becomes a 'class-for-itself', are highly complex and subtle processes

in which appearances need to be carefully examined.

Careful examination should also be given to the implications for the existence of such groups on the representative system currently operating in local politics. The representative model of democracy allocates local councillors the task of mediating between the electorate and the local government. But, as we have shown, events and changing circumstances have found the councillors under increasing pressure and the needs of the public in some important respects are not being met by them. A diminishing degree of accountability between councillors and public has not been matched by any change in the representative system. It has always been the strength of the liberal view to recognise and adopt change when necessary. As was suggested in Chapter Twelve the idea of Neighbourhood Councils might be the most effective and fair way of utilizing the energy of these groups. Their self-help activity is typical of what Neighbourhood Councils would be expected to be involved in - managing tenants' halls, producing community news-sheets, providing pre-school playgroup facilities, blankets for the elderly in the winter, tree planting campaigns and so on. These things simply are best done at the level of the communities themselves. In their advocacy role the Councils would not be challenging the established representative system; the groups do not see themselves as being in competition with the political parties. Rather, their plethora of invention and energy should be seen as complementary to the overview of policy that councillors are required to take. Neighbourhood Councils could help encourage voluntary initiative, provide funds for a selection of local services and perhaps give the voluntary movement a broader view of the issues and problems of scarce resources outside their parochial interests, because the groups are extremely inward-looking.

Their activities are quite different from those of the local political parties and could be an important and healing complement to the over-stressed local government. The groups do not seek conflict but often have it thrust upon them. They do not threaten the equilibrium of the existing local government system but to ignore their warning could indeed be threatening. These groups and the idea of Neighbourhood Councils should be seen within the best traditions of British local politics. To recall the words of J.S. Mill, "...it is only by practising popular government on a limited scale that people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. References and Footnotes.

13.1 McKay, D.H. and Cox, A.W., The Politics of Urban Change (Croom Helm, 1979), p.136.

13.2 Committee of Inquiry into the System of Remuneration of Members of Local Authorities (The Robinson Committee) Report Volume 2 (HMSO 1977).

13.3 Crick, B., Political Theory and Practice (The Penguin Press, 1972).

13.4 Hampton, W.A., Democracy and Community (Oxford University Press, 1970) p.276.

13.5 Janowitz, M., The Community Press in an Urban Setting: the Social Elements of Urbanism (University of Chicago Press, 1952)

13.6 Wood, R.C., 'A Division of Powers in Metropolitan Areas' in Maas, A. (ed.) Area and Power (Free Press, 1959).

13.7 Hampton, W.A., op.cit.(1970).

13.8 Pateman, C., Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge University Press, 1970) p.15.

13.9 Wolff, R.P. et al, A Critique of Pure Tolerance (Jonathan Cape, 1969) p.19.

13.10 Wolff, R.P., op.cit. (1969) p.14.

13.11 Pateman, C., op.cit. (1970) p.24.

13.12 Mill, J.S., Essays on Politics and Culture, ed. Himmelforb,G. (New York, 1963) p.186.

# APPENDIX A

The organisations which were included in this study are as follows. In each case the Chairperson and Secretary of the group were interviewed as it was thought likely that they would be the most knowledgeable members.

| Name of Group | Name of Interviewee | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Brightside and Grimethorpe Action Group (BGAG) | Mrs. A. Jackson<br>Mr. C. Brailsford | 25/11/74<br>28/11/74 |
| Broomhall and Broomspring Action Group (BBAG) | Mrs. A. Howard<br>Rev. A. Belling | 10/1/75<br>11/1/75 |
| Broomhill Action Neighbourhood Group (BANG) | Mr. T. Cooper<br>Mr. P. Seyd | 25/11/74<br>20/11/74 |
| Crookesmoor/Mooroaks Action Group (CMAG) | Mrs. T.C. Baker<br>+ Mr. R.H. Parker | 28/11/74<br>29/11/74 |
| Darnall Action Group (DAG) | Mrs. Unwin<br>Mr. Hamilton | 22/11/74<br>20/11/74 |
| Ecclesall Road Action Group (ERAG) | Mr. G. Garton<br>Mr. Burke | 12/1/75<br>17/1/75 |
| Fir Vale Action Group (FVAG) | Mr. T. Dale<br>Mr. F. Hamley | 2/12/74<br>10/12/74 |
| Heeley Action Group (HAG) | Mr. Gillet<br>Mr. Dunthore | 6/12/74<br>24/2/75 |
| Mosborough Ward Action Group (MWAG) | Mrs. D. Walton<br>Mr. S. Wright | 2/12/74<br>19/11/74 |
| Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group (NENG) | Mrs. P. Rodgers | 27/2/75 |
| Pitsmoor Action Group (PAG) | Mr. R. Crowder<br>Rev. J.J. Vincent | 3/3/75<br>7/3/75 |
| Sharrow Action Group (SAG) | Mr. R. Inchliffe<br>Mrs. H. Webster | 9/12/74<br>12/12/74 |
| Walkley Action Group (WAG) | Mrs. Collett<br>Mr. R. Stansfield | 12/12/74<br>23/11/74 |
| Wincobank Action Group (WBAG) | Mrs. McDermott<br>Mr. A. Robinson | 28/11/74<br>28/11/74 |
| Woodhouse Action Group (WDAG) | Mr. B. Cairns<br>Rev. R. Harrison | 2/12/74<br>4/12/74 |

+ This interview was not completed and is not included in the statistical evidence.

| Name of Group | Name of Interviewee | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Arbourthorne Tenants' Association | Mr. W. Maris<br>Mrs. P. Parker | 19/11/74<br>20/11/74 |
| Birley Moor Tenants' Association | Mr. R. Capps<br>Mrs. B. Barton | 4/1/75<br>4/1/75 |
| Broomhall Tenants' Association | Mrs. D. Askham<br>Mr. K. Reid | 1/12/74<br>12/12/74 |
| Foxhill Tenants' Association | Mrs. R. Tingle | 15/2/75 |
| Gleadless Valley Tenants' Association | Mr. K. Randall<br>Mr. J. Bellamy | 16/12/74<br>2/12/74 |
| Greenhill/Bradway Tenants' Association | Mrs. Clarke<br>Mr. K. Smith | 10/12/74<br>25/2/75 |
| Kelvin Tenants' Association | Mr. W.C. Woods<br>Mr. E. Bordon | 15/11/74<br>3/1/75 |
| Lansdowne Tenants' Association | Mr. N. Barrat<br>Mr. L. Burgin | 16/1/75<br>4/2/75 |
| Littledale and Bowden Tenants' Association | Mr. S. Brown<br>Mr. K. Jones | 11/2/75<br>11/2/75 |
| Manor and District Tenants' Association | Mr. P. Coe<br>Mr. M. Brown | 3/2/75<br>5/2/75 |
| Norfolk Park Tenants' Association | Mrs. J. Hubbard<br>Mr. E. Colley | 2/12/74<br>9/12/74 |
| Parkhill Tenants' Association | Mr. N. Parkin<br>Mr. J. Smith | 7/1/75<br>11/1/75 |
| Parsons Cross Tenants' Association | Mr. E. Moore<br>Mr. J. Stringer | 13/12/74<br>13/12/74 |
| Scowerdens Farm Tenants' Association | Mrs. D. Jackson<br>Mr. E. Bailey | 12/12/74<br>6/12/74 |
| Shiregreen Tenants' Association | Mr. K. Hattersley<br>Mr. R. Jones | 11/1/75<br>15/1/75 |
| Southey Green Tenants' Association | Mr. E.A. Allsopp | 2/2/75 |
| Wybourn Tenants' Association | Mr. J. Ogden<br>Mrs. S. Jones | 18/11/74<br>17/11/74 |

# APPENDIX B

## THE INTERVIEW SHEET.

It can be seen that the survey, which appears overleaf, is arranged in such a fashion that the replies can, where possible, be coded. After conversion to punch-cards a simple computer programme was devised to print out the totals and percentages. This technique proved to be quick and reliable and provided clear, accurate data. Correlations were not devised as it was felt that the benefits of this quite complex statistical technique would not repay the necessary investment of time. The basic data combined with the verbatim comments of the interviewees gave a very adequate foundation for the research.

ADDENDUM TO APPENDIX B.

The decision to interview the chairmen and secretaries of each group was taken in order to provide corroberation of information both about the general style and characteristics of the group and the factual data. Two respondants also provided a broader cross-section of "activist" profiles than would otherwise have been available. However, the use of a simple computer programme to count and tabulate some of the data introduces the possibility of difficulty. This is because in the form of a computer print-out it is not possible to identify discrepancies of factual information supplied by the two respondants from each group. A check of the information supplied in the tables used in the text (by manual re-examination of the questionnaire sheets) showed that a high proportion of the information supplied by respondants from the same group corresponded. When they occurred, differences were due either to small factual discrepancies which by chance were coded into different catagories or represented legitimate differences of view, or attitude. For example, respondants without access to records of attendace at public meetings had to rely on memory; a difference of perhaps only 20 or less in their estimates could have resulted in the scores being marked in different codes. It is important to know whether differences of attitude, when they existed, which was not often, between a group's chairman and secretary are significant. There were in fact no cases that could be traced by a manual examination of the survey forms where views totally diverged. The discrepancies occur, therefore, in the emphasis or weighting a respondant chose to give. The feeling of the author is that these differences of shading do not alter the basic patterns which the tables attempt to describe. There are, on the contrary, positive advantages to being able to verify factual data and involve a wider spectrum of group representatives in the survey.

# SURVEY OF SHEFFIELD ACTION GROUPS AND TENANTS'ASSOCIATIONS.

Name of Interviewee .....

Organization .....

Position in Organization .....

Date .....

## SECTION A. ORGANIZATION.

q1. How long ago was the G/A set up?

| | |
|---|---|
| In 1974 | |
| Jan'73-Dec'74 | |
| " '72- " '73 | |
| " '71- " '72 | |
| " '70- " '71 | |
| " '69- " '70 | |
| " '68- " '69 | |
| " '67- " '68 | |
| Before Jan '67 | |

q2. Could you tell me why the G/A was set up? (Code all that apply. Probe"Which was the most important?")Record details.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tenants Hall | |
| Welfare | |
| Rents | |
| Repairs | |
| Clearance | |
| Planning Prop. | |
| Social | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q3. What are the activities and issues which the G/A is now involved with?
(Code all that apply. Prompt"Which are the most impotant at present?")Record details.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tenants' Hall | |
| Welfare | |
| Rents | |
| Repairs | |
| Clearance | |
| Planning Prop. | |
| Social | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q4. Has the G/A been involved in anything else other than those you have mentioned?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....
.....

q5. Is there a formal membership scheme by which people join the G/A?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q6 If"No"atq5.
How then do you identify where your support comes from?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....

q7 If"Yes"at q5.
How do you recruit your membership?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....

q8. Do the members pay a subscription?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q9. In a full year how much should each member have contributed?

- 5P ☐
- 10P ☐
- 20P ☐
- 25P ☐
- 50P ☐
- Over50P ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

Exact amount .....

qI0. How often is the subscription collected?

- Weekly ☐
- Fortnightly ☐
- Monthly ☐
- Quarterly ☐
- Annually ☐
- Other ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

qII. Do you have any other source of finance?
Record details. Probe"What are these?"
.....
.....
.....

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

qI2. What is the G/A's current membership?

- 0-10 ☐
- 201-300 ☐
- 11-25 ☐
- 301-400 ☐
- 26-50 ☐
- 401-500 ☐
- 51-100 ☐
- 500-600 ☐
- 100-200 ☐
- Over " ☐

Exact number .....

qI3. What is the largest number of members you have had at any one time?

- 0-10 ☐
- 201-300 ☐
- 11-25 ☐
- 301-400 ☐
- 26-50 ☐
- 401-500 ☐
- 51-100 ☐
- 501-600 ☐
- 10L-200 ☐
- Over " ☐

Exact number .....

qI4. When was that?
Record date.
.....

- DK ☐
- NA ☐

SECTION B. MEETINGS.

Now could we look at the meetings that your G/A holds.

qI5. Does the G/A hold public meetings,I mean meetings which non-members can attend?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

qI6. Does the G/A hold membership only meetings?

Yes ☐
No ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐

qI7. How many public meetings have you held in the last twelve months?

0 ☐
1 ☐
2 ☐
3 ☐
4 ☐
5 ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐
6 ☐
7 ☐
8 ☐
9 ☐
10 ☐
Over 10 ☐

qI8. Were these held at regular intervals?
(If "No"Pompt"At what interval?")

Yes ☐
No ☐
Other ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐

q19. What was the main business of the last public meeting?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....

q20. How many people were at this meeting?

0-10 ☐
11-25 ☐
26-50 ☐
51-100 ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐
101-200 ☐
201-300 ☐
301-400 ☐
Over400 ☐

q2I. Was this the largest meeting?

Yes ☐
No ☐
Other ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐

If"No"at ask q22-23.
q22. Which was the largest public meeting in the last twelve months?
(Probe."What was the main business?")Record details.
.....
.....
.....

q23. How many people were at this meeting?

0-10 ☐
11-25 ☐
26-50 ☐
51-100 ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐
101-200 ☐
201-300 ☐
301-400 ☐
Over400 ☐

If"Yes"atqI6,ask q24-30
q24. How many membership only meetings have you held in the last twelve months?

0 ☐
1 ☐
2 ☐
3 ☐
4 ☐
5 ☐
DK ☐
NA ☐
6 ☐
7 ☐
8 ☐
9 ☐
10 ☐
Over10 ☐

q25. Are these held at regular intervals?
(If "No"prompt"At what interval")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q26. What was the most recent membership only meeting about?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....

q27. How many people were at this meeting?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-10 | | 201-300 | |
| 11-25 | | 301-400 | |
| 26-50 | | 401-500 | |
| 51-100 | | 501-600 | |
| 101-200 | | Over600 | |
| DK | | Exact No.... | |
| NA | | | |

q28. Was this the largest membership only meeting in the last twelve months?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"No"at q28
q29. Which was the largest meeting?
(Probe."What was the main business?")
.....
.....

q30. How many people were at this meeting?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-10 | | 201-300 | |
| 11-25 | | 301-400 | |
| 26-50 | | 401-500 | |
| 51-100 | | 501-600 | |
| 101-200 | | Over600 | |
| DK | | Exact no.... | |
| NA | | | |

q31. How do you normally publicize your public meetings?
(Code all that apply. Prompt"Which is the most important method?")
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Press | |
| Notice Board | |
| Newsheet | |
| Knocking-up | |
| TV/Radio | |
| Leaflet | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"Newsheet"not mentioned at q31
q32. Does your G/A have a newsheet?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q33. How many editions have you had in the last twelve months?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | | 7 | |
| 1 | | 8 | |
| 2 | | 9 | |
| 3 | | 10 | |
| 4 | | 11 | |
| 5 | | 12 | |
| 6 | | Over12 | |
| DK | | | |
| NA | | | |

q34. At what interval is it brought out?

| | |
|---|---|
| Fortnightly | |
| Monthly | |
| Bi-monthly | |
| Quarterly | |
| Half year | |
| Annually | |
| Irregular | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q34. How many copies of the last edition were brought out?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-50 | | 301-400 | |
| 51-100 | | 401-500 | |
| 101-200 | | 501-600 | |
| 201-300 | | 601-700 | |
| DK | | Over700 | |
| NA | | ExactNo..... | |

q35. Who does it go to?
(Probe "I mean to members only,the whole district or what?")
.....
.....
.....

q36. Has your C/A got its own facilities for printing/duplicating?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | ✓ |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q37. One way in which some organizations find out information about their area is to do survey work. Has your C/A undertaken any survay s in the area?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"Yes"
q38. what was the purpose of the survey(s)?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....
.....

q39. Who was resposible for organizing the survey(s)?

| | |
|---|---|
| Cttee | |
| Sub-cttee | |
| Students | |
| Members | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

SECTION D. COMMITTEES.

If we could now look at the committee itself.
q40. How many people are there on the main committee?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-5 | | 16-20 | |
| 6-10 | | 21-25 | |
| 11-15 | | Over25 | |

q41. Is the committee elected?
(Probe for"Yes"or"No","How does this work?")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q42. Are any of the members co-opted,I mean invited to join by the committee?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"Yes"
q43. Is there any particular reason why he/she/they was/were co-opted?
(Code all that apply and details)
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Clergy | |
| C.W. | |
| Student | |
| Cllr | |
| Officer | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q44. How are the Chairman and Secretary elected?
(Code reply. Probe method if not elected.)
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| AGM | |
| Cttee | |
| Pub-mtting | |
| Memb-mtting | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q45. How often does the committee meet?

| | |
|---|---|
| Weekly | |
| Fortnightly | |
| Monthly | |
| Bi-monthly | |
| Quarterly | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q46. Has your G/A got an Executive Committee,I mean a small part of the main committee to conduct business in between the full committee meetings?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"Yes".
q47. Who serves on this committee,Imean what position do they hold in the organization?
Record reply.
.....
.....
.....

q48. Has your G/A got any sub-committees?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"No"go to q54.
q49. What is/are the sub-committees responsible for?
(Code and record
.....
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Social | |
| Finance | |
| Planning | |
| Welfare | |
| Survey | |
| Newsheet | |
| Publicity | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q50. How many people serve on the sub-committee(s), I mean the total number?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-5 | | 21-30 | |
| 6-10 | | 31-40 | |
| 11-15 | | 41-50 | |
| 16-20 | | Over50 | |

Exact No.....

q51. Do the sub-committees meet on a regular basis?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....

q52. Are the members of the sub-committee(s) drawn from the main committee or from the membership or a mixture of these?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....

q53. Is/are the sub-committee)s) elected?
(Probe for"Yes"or"No","How does this work?")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q54. We have looked at the number of people involved in the committee work but to what extent are the rest of the members involved in the activities of the G/A?
Running prompt.

| | |
|---|---|
| All | |
| Over $\frac{3}{4}$ | |
| Over $\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{3}{4}$ | |
| Over $\frac{1}{4}$-$\frac{1}{2}$ | |
| Over10%-$\frac{1}{4}$ | |
| 10%or less | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

SECTION E. BOUNDARIES OTHER GROUPS etc.

If we could now spend some time talking about some other aspects of the G/A. First of all about other groups in the area.

q55. Are there any other organizations in the boundaries of your area who overlap with the aims of your G/A?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q56. Are there any organizations in your area who support the aims of the G/A?
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q57. Is there any opposition to your G/A from other organizations within your boundary?
(Code and record details. Prompt"Why opposition?")
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q58. Is there any opposition to your G/A from any other organization in the Sheffield area?
(Code and record details. Prompt"Why opposition?")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q59. Does your G/A have any links with other voluntary associations or groups in the Sheffield area?
(Code and record details. Prompt,formal or informal links)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q60. Does your G/A have links with any national organizations?
(Code and record details.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q61. For what reasons were the particular geographicall boundaries of your G/A chosen?
(Code all that apply and record details)

| | |
|---|---|
| Arbitrary | |
| Ward | |
| Estate | |
| Planning study | |
| Clearance | |
| Natural area | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q62. Are there any disadvantages caused by this choice of boundary?
(Probe if"Yes" what are they?)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q63. Does your G/A organize itself into smaller units which are part of your area?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"No"go to q67. If"Yes"ask q64-66

q64. What type of unit(s) is/are it/they?
(Probe. Separate cttees? Subscriptons? Purpose?)

If a Street Group,explain if necessary,ask
q65. Do they hold public meetings?
(Probe for details,how many,how often)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q66. How many people serve on the committees,I mean the total number?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-10 | | 41-50 | |
| 11-20 | | 51-60 | |
| 21-30 | | 61-70 | |
| 31-40 | | 71-80 | |
| DK | | Over80 | |
| NA | | | |

q67. How representative do you think your G/A is of the area,I mean do you reflect all shades of opinion within the boundary?
(Running Prompt)

| | |
|---|---|
| V.reprst | |
| Reprst | |
| Neither reprst nor unreprst | |
| Unreprst | |
| V.unreprst | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

SECTION F. COUNCILLORS.

q68. Are any of the elected councillors for this area members of the G/A?
(Prompt.If"Yes","How many?")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If"Yes"ask q69-70

q69. Do any of these councillors hold a position in the organization?
(Prompt. If"Yes","What is it?")

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q70. Do these councillors live in the area?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | | |
| No | | | |
| DK | | | |
| NA | | | |

q71. Do any other councillors live in this area?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q72. Do any of these councillors,who happen to live in the area belong to the G/A?
Record details.
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q73. How well do you think the elected councillors for this area understand the problems and issues of the area?
Running prompt.

| | |
|---|---|
| Well infrmd | |
| Infrmd | |
| Neither infrmd nor badly infrmd | |
| Badly infrmd | |
| V.badly infrmd | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q74. What is the attitude of the councillors(for this area)to the G/A?
Running prompt.

| | |
|---|---|
| V.sympth | |
| Sympth | |
| Neither sympth nor unsympth | |
| Hostile | |
| V.hostile | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

## SECTION G. AN ISSUE:

I should now like to look at one recent issue of local concern which has involved you in dealings with the local authorities.(not the Strucure Plan)

q75. Which issue would you like to chose?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....

q76. How did you first of all raise the issue?
(Code all that apply and record details.)
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Letter to cllr. | |
| Phone cllr | |
| Visit cllr | |
| Letter to Dept. | |
| Phone Dept | |
| Visit Dept | |
| Press | |
| Public meeting | |
| Contact MP | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q77. What did you then decide to do?
(Code and record details)
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Nothing | |
| Public meeting | |
| Rent strike | |
| Contact MP | |
| Contact Dept. | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q78. Was anything achieved as a result of your work?
(Probe impact on policy)
Record verbatim .....
.....
.....
.....

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q79. How successful do you consider this outcome to be?

| | |
|---|---|
| V.successful | |
| Successful | |
| Neither sucesfl Nor unsucesfl | |
| Unsuccessful | |
| V.unsuccessful | |

If"No" at q78
q80. Why do you think nothing was achieved?
Record verbatim.....
.....
.....

q81. In the course of your involvement in this issue did your G/A seek the support of any other groups or organizations?
(If"Yes",probe which organization and why?)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q82. At what stage did you feel it was necessary to contact this/these other organization(s)?
Record details.
.....
.....
.....

I'd now like to ask a few more details about the contacts you had with the councillors, the officials and your MP, if any.

q83. Were the councilllors invited by the G/A to help in this issue?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If "Yes" at q83
q84. How active were they in trying to resolve the situation?
(Prompt. Did they attend committee meetings? At a public meeting? What effect did they have on the outcome?)
Record details.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

q85. What contact did you have with the council officials?
(Prompt. Officer at meeting/committee, seminar, visits to Depts.)
Record details .....
.....
.....
.....

q86. Did you have any problems in getting in touch with people in the various council Departments who could deal with your problem?
(Code and record details)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

.....
.....
.....
.....

q87. Was the MP invited to help you?
(Code and if "Yes" probe MP's role and activity)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

Prompt. Thank you very much for answering those questions about your G/A. Now I wonder if you wouldn't mind answering a few questions about yourself.

SECTION H. PERSONAL DETAILS.

q88. How long have you been a member of the G/A?

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 1year | |
| 2 years | |
| 3 years | |
| 4years | |
| 5years | |
| 6years | |
| 7years | |
| 8years | |
| Over 8 years | |

q89. How long have you held your present position in the G/A?

- Less than 1 year ☐
- 2 years ☐
- 3 years ☐
- 4years ☐
- 5 years ☐
- 6 years ☐
- 7 years ☐
- 8 years ☐
- Over 8 years. ☐

q90. Why did you decide to join the G/A?
Record verbatim.
.....
.....
.....

NOTE SEX

- M ☐
- F ☐

q91. How long have you lived at this address?

- Les than 2 years ☐
- 2-5 years ☐
- 6-10 years ☐
- 11-20 years ☐
- Over 20 years ☐
- Other ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q92. How long have you lived in Sheffield?

- Less than 2 years ☐
- 2-5 years ☐
- 6-10 years ☐
- 11-20 years ☐
- Over 20 years ☐
- Other ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q93. Were you born in Sheffield?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q94. How many places have you lived in, in Sheffield?

- One ☐
- Two ☐
- Three ☐
- Four ☐
- Five+ ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q95. Have you ever lived outside Yorkshire?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

If "Yes" at q95
q96. For how long?

- Les than two years ☐
- 2-5 years ☐
- 6-10 years ☐
- 11-20 years ☐
- Over 20 years ☐
- DK ☐
- NA ☐

q97. How many of your relatives live in Sheffield?

| | |
|---|---|
| All | |
| More than half | |
| Quarter-half | |
| Less than quarter | |
| None | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q98. How many of your friends live in Sheffield?

| | |
|---|---|
| All | |
| More than half | |
| Quarter-half | |
| Less than quarter. | |
| None | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

q99. Are you married, single, widowed, divorced or separated?

| | |
|---|---|
| Married | |
| Single | |
| Widowed/div/ separated | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

qI00. How many people, including yourself, live in your
a) household?
b) How many of these are under school age?(Have not yet started education.)
c) How many are attending school or other place of full-time education?
d) How many, including yourself are inpaid employment?

| | a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| One | | | | |
| Two | | | | |
| Three | | | | |
| Four | | | | |
| Five | | | | |
| Six | | | | |
| Seven | | | | |
| Eight | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| Other | | | | |
| DK | | | | |
| NA | | | | |

qI0I. Position of informant in household?

| | |
|---|---|
| HOH | |
| Housewife | |
| Other adult | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

qI02. Employment situation.

usually work over 30 hrs a week
usually work less than 30 hrs a week
housewife not doing paid employment
never been in paid employment
retired(or permanently not working)
full-time student
unemployed for six months or longer
Other
DK
NA

qI03.

i) Job description: present or last paid occupation of informant and that of head of household if appropriate.

| Informant or informant's husband/father | Informant's HOH |
|---|---|
| ..... | ..... |
| ..... | ..... |
| ..... | ..... |
| ..... | ..... |

ii) Industry:

a) Is/was this a nationalised industry/public body

b) Are/were you/is/was he self-employed?

c) Are/were you/is/was he either directly or indirectly in control or responsible for other people's work?

| | a In | a H | b In | b H | c In | c H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | | | | | |
| No | | | | | | |
| DK | | | | | | |
| NA | | | | | | |

If "Yes"at c) ask:

d) How many?

| | |
|---|---|
| Less than 25 | |
| 25+ | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

If no longer in paid employment ask:

e) In what year did you/he leave your/his last employment?

| | |
|---|---|
| 1974 | |
| 11973 | |
| 1969-72 | |
| 1965-68 | |
| Before 1965 | |
| Other | |
| DK | |
| NA | |

Educational data.

qI04.

a) Type of full-time school last attended

| | |
|---|---|
| | Elementary/Secondary modern/other non-grammar type of state school |
| | Central/Intermediate higher grade/Technical school or college(up to 18 years) |
| | Comprehensive/bi-lateral state grammar /county/ high/senior secondary/ Academy(non-fee paying) |
| | Public(fee-paying)/ private grammar |
| | Commercial school or college(up to 18) |
| | Other(specify) |
| | DK |
| | NA |

b) Age left school

| | |
|---|---|
| | Enter age.... |
| | Other |
| | DK |
| | NA |

c) Further education.

| Full/T | Part/T | |
|---|---|---|
| | | None |
| | | Correspondence course/ evening classes |
| | | Polytechnic/Tech/ Teacher training |
| | | University |
| | | Other |
| | | DK |
| | | NA |

If had further full-time education, ask:
d) At what age did it finish?

- Still at collg/univ.
- Enter age
- Other
- DK
- NA

e) Highest qualification obtained:
(Code only one)

- No qualification
- Full industrial apprenticeship
- GCE 'O' level/matric/Gen. school cert/Ordinary Nat. Cert/City and Guilds
- GCE 'A' level/Higher school cert/Interm/Higher Nat Cert/Dip
- Teacher's Cert/Membership of professional institute/Full or intermediate prof qual.
- Univ Degree/full medic training.
- Other
- DK
- NA

Home data.
q105. Nature of present accomodation?

- Own property (inc mortgage)
- Rented (private)
- Rented (Council)
- Rent free
- Other
- NA
- DK

q106. Would you mind telling me how old you are

Exact age.....

- Under 18
- 18-19
- 20-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Other
- No answer
- DK
- NA

q107. Do you have the use of a car or any other motor vehicle?

- Yes
- No
- Other
- DK
- NA

qI08. Now I 'd like to ask you a few questions about your leisure activities. I'm going to read out some types of clubs and organizations that people might belong to and I'd like you to tell me if you blong to any of them at present.

Show card(list of clubs and groups) and read out one at a time.

For each"Yes" ask;

Are you a committee member or official of that?

| List of organizations and groups. | Member Y | Member N | | Official Y | Official N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Organizations connected with work. | | | | | |
| Trade union | | | | | |
| Professional Association | | | | | |
| Club to help your workmates or colleagues (Benev.Soc,Sick Club) | | | | | |
| Business Group or club (Rotary or Chamber of Commerce) | | | | | |
| Social or sports club at work | | | | | |
| Anything else connected with work. | | | | | |
| B. Public Bodies or Committees | | | | | |
| (A public or statutory committee or board of governors i.e. national savings,school governors.) | | | | | |
| C. Organizations connected with politics | | | | | |
| Apolitical party or association. | | | | | |
| D. Organizations connected with education and training. | | | | | |
| An organization for further education (WEA,Evening Institute) | | | | | |
| Military Training Group (Territorials,Cadets) | | | | | |
| Youth training organization (Scouts,Guides,Boys Brigade) | | | | | |
| Nursing or First Aid (St.John's Ambulance,Red Cross | | | | | |
| Anything else giving education or training. | | | | | |
| E. Church or Religious Groups | | | | | |
| A Church club or group(missionary society,church council) | | | | | |
| Asocial club connected with the church | | | | | |
| Any other organization connected with religion. | | | | | |
| F. Organizations connected with welfare | | | | | |
| Charitable organization(spastics soc.) | | | | | |
| Voluntary welfare group(WVS,National Council for Social Services) | | | | | |
| Any other welfare group | | | | | |
| G. Civic or Community Groups | | | | | |
| Ratepayers Association | | | | | |
| Parent/teacher Association | | | | | |
| Residents'Club or community centre | | | | | |
| Any other civic group | | | | | |
| H. Any other group connected with leisure activities | | | | | |
| A sports team or club(darts,rifle etc) | | | | | |
| A club for games(bingo,billiards) | | | | | |
| A dance club | | | | | |

| | Y | N | | Y | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A club for hobbies or or pets (gardening, stamps, cats) | | | | | |
| A music, drama, jazz or art club | | | | | |
| A motoring association, car scooter or cycling club) | | | | | |
| Anything else concerned with leisure activities. | | | | | |
| I. Any other social club | | | | | |
| A fraternal or ex-servicemen's club (Freemasons, British legion) | | | | | |
| A womens social club (Townswomens' Guild, WI) | | | | | |
| A working men's club | | | | | |
| A youth club | | | | | |
| A club for old people | | | | | |
| Any other social club | | | | | |
| K. Anything else not covered here. | | | | | |
| No clubs or groups at all | | | | | |

## APPENDIX C

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

The socio-economic groups referred to at several points in the text, notably in Chapter 8, are the standard categories outlined in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, "Classification of Occupations 1970". They are as follows:-

(1) Employers and managers in central and local government, industry, commerce, etc. - large establishments.

(2) Employers and managers in industry, commerce, etc. - small establishments.

(3) Professional workers - self-employed.

(4) Professional workers - employees.

(5) Intermediate non-manual workers.

(6) Junior non-manual workers.

(7) Personal service workers.

(8) Foremen and supervisors - manual.

(9) Skilled manual workers.

(10) Semi-skilled manual workers.

(11) Unskilled manual workers.

(12) Own account workers (other than professional).

(13) Farmers - employers and managers.

(14) Farmers - own account.

(15) Agricultural workers.

(16) Members of armed forces.

(17) Occupation inadequately described.

# APPENDIX D

## STATISTICAL AND MAPPING METHODS.

### Census Atlas Maps.

The maps of the 1971 Census data which appear in the text are taken from the Census Atlas produced by the Department of Geography, Sheffield University. These maps plot the values for each enumeration district (E.D.) within the percentage range adopted for the particular subject of the map. An E.D. contains, in an urban area, approximately 150 households and is the smallest unit for which Census data is available. For these maps the data was taken from magnetic computer tape and converted into cartographic form by using a computer-controlled laser graphic plotter capable of plotting dots of 5/1000ths of an inch diameter. The film from the laser graphic plotter can be used directly with black and white printing to give a grey scale of up to 16 tones. With 10 tones only required for the purpose of these maps it was decided to use two tones of primary colour to create a better visual impression.

Because population density varies consideration must be given to these densities in interpreting the maps. The E.Ds are not of equal size and shape. For the purpose of identifying particular areas (in this case the areas covered by the action groups) it was necessary to return to the 6 inches to the mile Ordnance Survey maps which mark out and number the individual E.Ds. Usually the boundaries of the action groups fitted accurately to a network of E.Ds but sometimes a boundary passed through an E.D. thus introducing a small margin of error. These groups of E.Ds, representing the action group areas, were then plotted on the Census Maps by using grid reference points. Once this painstaking process had been undertaken a master copy could readily be transferred to each Map. It has only been possible to include a

selection of the 35 maps which appear in the Atlas due to cost. The selection, however, shows the validity of this method in identifying and analysing certain social indices for very small geographical units.

Enumeration District Data.

The information which appears in Table 10.2 and in the text of Chapter 10 is based on the individual values for each E.D. for the particular index referred to. This data was extracted from the magnetic computer tapes of the 1971 Census by a simple programme and a subsequent 'print-out'. The print-out identifies the name and number of each E.D. in South Yorkshire together with the value for the E.D. and it is a simple task to manually total the values of the E.Ds in the action group areas and arrive at an average for the area as a whole.

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