A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION - R A SIBEON

Ph.d thesis 1987
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>SOCIOLOGY AS RESOURCE FOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL WORK</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>PERENNIAL AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK ISSUES</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>THE STRUCTURE AND FORMS OF SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>PROFESSIONALISATION, ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SERVICE-DELIVERY ISSUES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Earlier work by Leonard (1966) and Heraud (1970) in formulating a holistic, comprehensive sociology of social work has been largely overtaken by developments both in sociology and in social work. Current sociological analyses of social work exhibit two distinctive features. First, relative detachment from major recent theoretical and empirical developments in mainstream sociology: second, a tendency to focus not upon the profession as a whole but upon specific, delineated aspects e.g. the relation of theory to practice, professionalisation, social work education, professional socialisation, moral-political dimensions of social work, organisational and service-delivery issues, and the relation of social work to the welfare state. This research is addressed to the task of constructing a sociology of social work which draws explicitly upon recent developments in sociology, and which is concerned with the social work profession as a whole including the various components referred to above. These components are shown to collectively comprise the following three perennial and contemporary social work concerns which are empirically inter-related: the relationship of theory to practice, the politics of social work, and professional-organisational aspects including service-delivery issues. Particular though not exclusive attention is accorded to the relative 'centrality' of social work education: the research demonstrates social work education both influences and reflects wider developments throughout the profession and is a key empirical 'site of entry' for achieving a holistic sociological understanding of the social work profession. Much of the material necessarily is concerned with substantive issues in social work per se, but a vital part of the research is critical analysis of controversies surrounding paradigmatically diverse resources available within modern sociology for constructing a theoretically as well as empirically informed sociology of social work.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL WORK (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION)

The research objective is development of a contemporary sociology of social work in Britain with special reference to social work education. In this field two significant post-war texts are Leonard's (1) *Sociology of Social Work* published in 1966 and Heraud's (2) *Sociology and Social Work* published in 1970. The work of both these writers may be regarded as constituting a sociology of social work in the terms defined later; that is, they first, explicitly employed sociological perspectives and social theory in constructing their analyses of social work, and secondly, their topic was the social work

profession as a whole rather than a single component such as training and recruitment or organisational structure.

Following Leonard and Heraud no equivalent recent published work exists. Heraud's intention was to stimulate further theoretical and empirical research in this sub-field of sociological enquiry; there is, he said 'no reason why a sociology of social work should not develop in Britain' (3). That this development did not materialise has implications for the research objective. Leonard and Heraud refer to the nineteen sixties', since when major internal developments have occurred within sociology (4) as well as within the social work profession (5). Therefore construction of a contemporary sociology of social work has to engage in identification and analysis of patterns of change within both sociology and social work in the period since Leonard and Heraud developed their analyses. The task is not one of updating concordant materials. Employing sociology as a resource for investigating the social work profession is complicated by internal paradigmatic (6) conflicts which exist within both fields. The segmented character of social work and absence of an internal professional consensus for specifying its nature, purposes and methods, is examined in historical perspective in chapter three. Complex

3 Heraud, B., (1970) op. cit p.12
6 The term 'paradigm' is used here in a loose sense to refer to major sociological perspectives such as marxism, phenomenology, and structuralism.
internal paradigmatic shifts and theoretical conflicts of perspective within sociology are analysed in chapter two. The sociological content of chapter two is of importance to the research objective. In so far as sociology is not an unproblematic consensually defined resource for analysing social work a reflexive sociology of social work must also partly be a sociology of sociology (7); this gains added significance in light of the prevailing tendency for accounts of social work, including those which may have a broadly 'sociological' flavour, to be relatively distant from an awareness of major theoretical and empirical developments in recent British sociology. Viewed against this background construction of a modern sociology of social work is a large enterprise. The research reported here is not intended to be an exhaustive, definitive (8) sociology of social work. The research objective is deliberately not directed towards a finished 'construction'.

7 This refers to a necessarily condensed, selective version of a 'sociology of sociology', undertaken for the specific purpose of contributing to theoretical reflexivity in sociology of social work. In general sociological theory the expression, as used, for example, by Friedrichs, has a wider connotation and encompasses a range of materials extending beyond that required for the purpose just referred to: see Friedrichs, R., A Sociology of Sociology, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1970.

8 Use of the word 'definitive' is also avoided on other grounds. For reasons noted in Runciman's conception that social science knowledge is 'probabilistic', sociology possesses a 'necessary and irremediable tentativeness': see Runciman, V., Social Science and Political Theory, London, Cambridge University Press 1971 p.168. Reference in the text to the construction of a sociology of social work is predicated on the understanding that alternative sociological constructions of social work are possible: theoretical descriptions of these alternative constructions are referred to in the first two chapters.
of a sociology of social work, but rather, is formulated in terms of contributing to the development of a contemporary sociology of social work. The chapters which follow are intended to demonstrate that this objective is attained in three dimensions. First, in mapping out relevant problems and issues, in sociology and in social work, and generating an integrated conceptual framework to provide a general ('holistic') theoretical basis for constructing a modern sociology of social work. Second, in relating the conceptual framework to analysis of specific 'components' of the social work profession and also to analysis of patterns of interrelation between these components. In the analyses of specific social work topics it has also been necessary to employ middle-range\(^9\) conceptual schemes; in each instance, these are consistent with the integrated theoretical framework referred to above. Thirdly, the research identifies directions for the future development of a sociology of social work, drawing attention to areas where further theoretical and empirical investigation is warranted.

The research objective requires at the outset to be clarified with regard to its relation to sociology as discipline and social work

9 A classic sociological formulation of the utility of middle-range conceptualization is Merton's statement that middle-range perspectives are on the one hand more closely connected to theoretical concerns than theoretically-uninformed 'fact finding' exercises ('abstracted empiricism'); and on the other are more empirically relevant than oracular theorizing ('grand theory') of an abstract, speculative kind: See Merton, R., Social Theory and Social Structure, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1968 (enlarged edition) pp.39-72.
as profession (10). Development of a sociology of social work is essentially an exercise in intellectual understanding, the primary purpose being to analyse social work sociologically as an organised social activity in society. Research of this kind is not directed towards the immediate goal of providing sociological knowledge of a kind intended to be practically 'useful' to social work practitioners in the performance of their professional tasks. In contrast, sociology in or for social work may be defined as an attempt to furnish 'relevant' sociological knowledge in the form of theoretical insights and empirical data intended for practical application by social workers. An analytic distinction between sociology 'of' and 'for' social work is not unimportant, for reasons which will become apparent in chapter three; in reality, however, the distinction often becomes blurred. In the social sciences, as in the physical sciences, 'pure' research far removed from practical concerns may turn out to have unanticipated applied connotations. Also, many substantive areas of social work enquiry are intrinsically difficult to assign to one or the other of the two categories just referred to. An example is sociological analysis of social work organisational structures; this topic is integral to a sociology of social work but it can also be argued analysis in this area is capable of yielding a range of insights with practical value for practitioners and social work managements. Leonard's text (earlier) is titled 'Sociology in Social Work' whilst Heraud preferred the rubric 'Sociology and Social Work'; both these writers alternated across a

10 The term profession is used loosely here, without in this chapter being concerned with sociological or social work definitions of profession (see chapter three). The contemporary significance of social work's own long-standing debate of whether social work is or should be a profession is, however, a recurring theme in most of the chapters.
boundary between sociology 'of' and 'for' social work, at times being concerned to provide a sociological analysis of the history, structure and working practices of the social work profession whilst also in places providing sociological knowledge of a kind obviously intended by them to have practical applications. It may be argued a sociology of social work which succeeds in clarifying social work issues and contributing to an understanding of them is of itself a practical movement towards a sociology 'in' or 'for' social work. This view, however, raises problems which it is only possible to briefly touch upon in this chapter. A part of the controversial history of the relation between sociology and social work centres upon the question of whether the sociologist should be confined to providing data for the achievement of social work professionally defined goals, or also be involved in analysis of the nature of the goals themselves. The former orientation is described by Gouldner as an 'engineering' approach, the latter as a 'clinical' approach where professional practitioner formulations of welfare values and goals are defined as legitimate topics of sociological enquiry. Against the engineering model, Bottomore inserts a claim for 'sociology as social criticism' and Rex argues sociology should contribute towards 'demystification of the modern world'. Sociological acceptance of an uncritical 'servicing' role based upon adoption of professional definitions of the functions of welfare services implies a highly restrictive response to McClung

Lee’s postulated 'sociology for whom?'\(^{(14)}\) and as will be shown later in the chapter and in chapter two evokes a history of dispute about the nature and role of sociology\(^{(15)}\) and its relation to the politics of welfare\(^{(16)}\).

**Sociology of Social Work**

As noted earlier, work undertaken by Leonard (1966) and Heraud (1970) in formulating a holistic, comprehensive sociology of social work has been largely overtaken by developments both in sociology and in social work. In the period following Leonard’s and Heraud’s texts a number of sociological analyses of social work have been produced; however none of these constitute a contemporary *sociology of social work* in so far as they possess two distinctive features which were noted in the opening paragraph. Current sociological accounts of social work exhibit, first, relative detachment from major recent developments in mainstream sociology, particularly theoretical developments; and second, a tendency to focus not upon the profession as a whole but upon specific delineated 'components'\(^{(17)}\) considered in relative isolation from their interaction with other components of the profession. These include the relation of theory to practice; social work education and professional socialisation; moral-political dimensions of social work; professionalisation processes; organisational and service-delivery

17 The term 'component' is used for convenience as a shorthand generic reference to the various 'parts' or 'elements' of the profession.
issues; and the relation of social work to the welfare state. The research reported in the following chapters is addressed to the task of developing a sociology of social work which draws explicitly upon recent developments in social theory and theoretical sociology but also within particular sub-fields including the sociology of professions and sociology of science; and which is concerned with analysis of the social work profession as a whole including the various components listed above and patterns of interrelation between them. In chapter three these are grouped under general headings to indicate three empirically interrelated social work concerns which are shown to be highly problematic for the profession and to have an historical, perennial dimension as well as having contemporary significance. These are, first, theory-practice (the relationship of theory to practice); second, the politics of social work (conflict between opposed political welfare values, sometimes expressed as tension between radical social work and professional casework theories and practices); and thirdly, professional and organisational structures and service-delivery issues.

The previous paragraph indicates two features in recent sociological accounts of social work are, despite these accounts having an ostensible sociological content as distinct from (say) a psychological, philosophical or 'social administration' approach to social work, a relative detachment from general sociology and

18 These are discussed in chapters three and five.
social theory; and a tendency to focus upon specific, discrete components of the social work profession without exploring sociologically how these shape, and are shaped by, the other elements which collectively form the profession. There is, however, some variation amongst the following writers in the degree to which they exhibit these endemic characteristics of recent sociological writing on social work. Hardiker's sociological work on the structure and forms of knowledge in social work is seminal within its field largely because empirical data assembled from her research into cognitions and practices employed by social workers are blended with systematic conceptual typologizing of the data. Despite her endorsement of Philp's macro-structuralist theory of social work as an expression of a structurally 'given' function, the bulk of Hardiker's conceptual analyses lie at the level of middle-range empirical theorizing. Her work is the most conceptually developed empirical resource available in the area of sociology of social work knowledge, and as such is an important underpinning for some of the analyses developed in chapter two.


21 Hardiker, P., 'Heart or Head' (1981) op.cit. p.87 and p.102


23 See n.9
and also chapter four on the structure and forms of knowledge in social work. Hardiker's writing, however, is relatively detached from some of the major paradigmatic issues of contemporary sociological and social theory; a number of these issues, as will be shown in chapters two and four, have a direct bearing upon her field of enquiry as also does recent material in the sociology of professions and sociology of knowledge. Of significance to an earlier point, attention may also be drawn to the fact that Hardiker's primary focus is 'theory-practice' in organisational contexts. It can be argued the significance of her work for a sociology of social work knowledge derives from success in conceptual avoidance of 'crude' untheorised empiricism and from the topic specificity (theory-practice) and therefore topic penetration which characterises her work. However, the theoretical and empirical significance of issues arising from the relation of 'theory-practice' to other components of social work is acknowledged by Hardiker but not sociologically analysed in detail: these other components include social work training and professional socialisation, the relation of welfare politics to social work professionalisation, organic and mechanistic organisational structures and the relation of these to 'theory-practice' and to service-delivery issues.

These observations have a particular form of grounding. They do not serve as criticism of Hardiker nor of the other writers referred to below, none of whom intended their work to be a holistic sociology of social work in the terms defined earlier. Advancement of knowledge in sociology of social work is dependent upon continuation of detailed sociological investigations of particular social work topics, as well as work at the level of a more global sociological synthesis which aims both to
formulate its own procedures and hypotheses and to integrate material produced by other, more topic-centred studies; viewed in these terms the work of the writers mentioned here are resources for the construction of a sociology of social work. Patterns of influence between global synthesis and detailed sociological topic-centred studies may be regarded as dialectical; in the future it seems possible an accumulation of theoretical and empirical studies of specific social work topics will increasingly be shaped by and in turn modify the global perspectives developed by a modern sociology of social work.

Topic specificity and relative distance from recent sociological theory are characteristics of a number of major texts on social work organisations. This is evident in Smith's Social Work and the Sociology of Organisations published in 1979. As indicated by his title, Smith's text is focussed mainly upon a single component of the social work profession i.e. the structure of social work organisations. Also, as in the other writers on social work organisation referred to below, it is clear that Smith though he draws upon material from organisational sociology is concerned only tangently with major theoretical and empirical concerns in modern sociology and the implications of these for a sociology of social work. Similar comments apply to other significant social work organisational

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24 Integration as defined here indicates a role for bringing together materials from a diversity of sociological and non-sociological studies of social work topics; part of the role of a sociology of social work is to identify not only consensus but also disagreement as between conclusions derived from these studies.

25 This arises partly for the reason implicit in the preceding footnote.

studies, some of which are referred to in the organisational analyses developed in chapter five; these include studies by SSORU/BIOSS\(^{27}\) Warham\(^{28}\) Billis et al.\(^{29}\) Parsloe\(^{30}\) Stevenson\(^{31}\) Satyamurti\(^{32}\) Billis\(^{33}\) Brenton\(^{34}\) and Johnson\(^{35}\).

Timms and Timms\(^{36}\) in *Perspectives in Social Work* published in 1977 focus upon theory-practice issues and social work values; though not a sociology of social work in the terms defined earlier their work is sociologically grounded. Two texts published in 1975 and 1980 by Bailey\(^{37}\) are not concerned specifically with the social work profession but provide a useful general overview of social science theories in the 'seventies and the relation of these to a number of professions including law, psychiatry, planning, and social work. An

29 Billis, D., (et al) *Organizing Social Services Departments: Further Studies by the Brunel Social Services Unit*, London, Heineman 1980
approach closely similar to Bailey is Heraud's Sociology In The Professions published in 1979. Heraud's Training For Uncertainty: A Sociological Approach To Social Work Education published in 1981 is primarily a study of social work education rather than the profession as a whole. His study is of major importance within its field. The empirical component which forms the basis for 'Training For Uncertainty' is rather dated, drawing upon a case-study of students experiences of professional training in the late 'sixties(40). This, though, does not remove the value of the data; a number of issues raised in Heraud's data are relevant to present day circumstances, a point taken up in chapters three and five. His perspective, however, is largely restricted to a micro-interactional study of students experiences, with relatively little analysis of historical and contemporary macro-institutional factors which may have an impact upon students everyday experiences in a particular local setting; also, in this particular study Heraud appears to be less concerned with theoretical analysis than empirical description(41).

In the wider field of social policy and welfare studies extending beyond social work there are a number of well known recent sociological enquiries into the nature of state welfare provision. However Townsend's Sociology and Social Policy, despite the appearance

38 Heraud, B., Sociology In The Professions, London, Open Books 1979
40 Ibid p.5
41 These observations on Herauds' 'Training for Uncertainty' are made in Coull, B., (review) Issues in Social Work Education Vol.1, No.2 (Winter 1981) pp.147-149
42 Townsend, P., Sociology and Social Policy, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1976
of the word 'sociology' in the title is far closer to the discipline of social administration than to sociology; also, as indicated in his title, Townsend is not primarily concerned with social work per se and he examines general issues of social policy in the fields of fiscal policy, income maintenance, housing, health, education and social services. Pinker (43) in *The Idea Of Welfare* is less concerned than Townsend to provide a detailed description of services: his analysis is directed towards a review of general 'ideas' (philosophies) of welfare in relation to the institutional framework of social welfare in capitalist and socialist societies. Room's (44) *The Sociology of Welfare* is more sociological than either Townsend or Pinker's treatment of welfare issues, though like them his coverage of social work is highly abridged. Also, the style of Room's sociology of welfare is largely restricted to a macro-institutional level of political analysis, an approach also adopted in George and Wilding's (45) *Ideology and Social Welfare* and in theoretical analyses of welfare by Pinker (46) Jones et al. (47) Mishra (48).

Taylor-Gooby and Dale (49) Loney et al (50) George and Wilding (51) Forder et al (52) and Taylor-Gooby (53). Bulmer et al (54) in their text Social Science and Social Policy published in 1986 provide a useful survey of issues in policy-making processes, some of which are relevant to the analysis in chapter five of ways in which the 'decentralisation' movement of the 1980's has been socially constructed within the social work profession.

The welfare and social work literature referred to above reveals substantial dissociation between social work analysis and contemporary sociology, in particular general sociological theory. As Pinker notes, the dissociation is not a recent development.

"Between the early 'fifties and the late 1970's, there were significant changes in the relationships between social work... and sociology... By the late 1960's - although there were some important exceptions - the subject fields of sociology... and social work had virtually drawn apart and become separate entities" (55).

According to Pinker, schism between sociology and social work was attenuated in the 'seventies by the emergence of radical social work writing that was highly critical of professional social work. Though radical social work texts for the most part did not employ general

theoretical sociological constructs they were widely informed by 'critical' political and social theories, principally deviancy theory, varieties of marxism, and feminist theory in the forms that these existed in the seventies; the best known amongst these are Pearson (56) Jones (57) Bailey and Brake (58) Corrigan and Leonard (59) Pritchard and Taylor (60) Statham (61) Parry et al (62) Gough (63) London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group (64) and Brake and Bailey (65). Radical social work theory as well as 'professionalist' accounts of social work are topics-for-investigation which fall within the field of enquiry to which a sociology of social work is addressed (as in investigation of the tension between traditional and radical values in social work). As such, the radical social work writings just referred to do not constitute a sociology of social work in the terms defined earlier. Much of this writing, in fact, shares with some versions of professional social work a critical rejection of sociology. Davies's professional

criticism is that sociology is intrinsically imbued with a radicalism\(^{(66)}\) that is highly subvertive of professional social work\(^{(67)}\). Conversely, 'mainstream' sociology is from some radical social work perspectives a form of ideological mystification\(^{(68)}\) of the workings of the capitalist welfare state, serving as one of a number of 'bourgeois academic disciplines ... which effectively limit ... debate and ... contribute to a continuing intellectual legitimization of existing social arrangements'\(^{(69)}\). Radical texts, then, are highly relevant to a sociology of social work but they do not constitute it. A related consideration is radical social and political social work theories in the 'seventies, in those instances where these drew upon general sociological constructs, were restricted to sociological materials which have since undergone considerable revision\(^{(70)}\) as also has social work, particularly with regard to the 'decentralisation' issue which figured increasingly strongly in social work debates following the publication of The Barday Report\(^{(71)}\) in 1982.

Earlier, it was suggested development of a sociology of social work requires not only construction of a closer homology between sociology, social theory, and social work analysis, but also closer sociological

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66 Unless stated otherwise in the text, as in the case of references in chapter five to radicalism of the 'New Right', use of the term radical in all the chapters follows conventional usage and refers to radicalism of the left.


68 Leonard, P., 'Introduction' in Gough, I., (1979) op.cit. p.vii

69 Ibid

70 This is discussed in chapter two

attention to the various 'components' which form the social work profession and exploration of interrelations between these components. The concept of inter-relationship here is conjectural and empirical; that is, the concept is not premised on functionalist or structuralist conceptions of 'necessary' or 'given' interdependencies between the different elements which comprise the social work profession or between social work and the wider institutional framework of society\(^{(72)}\). Interdependencies, in the research perspective, are not conceptualised as epiphenomenal reflections of a 'deep logic' of social structure. Rather, they are regarded as empirically contingent variables which arise from and are subsequently shaped by definite and specifiable conditions which produced them\(^{(73)}\), though some interdependencies may become institutionalised and persist for long periods. Patterns of interdependencies between social work components are in some instances recognised or intentionally constructed by professional leaders of the occupation. An instance of this is professional debate of 'specialisation versus genericism'. Specialism implies acquisition of specialist expertise in working with particular client groups (eg. work with delinquents, or the elderly, or in the field of mental illness) and the use of distinct specialist methods of working (such as casework, or groupwork, or community work in local neighbourhood centres). This contrasts with the more professionally unifying 'generic' (or generalist) concept which was part of the new unified professional charter for British social work heralded in the Seebohm


73 Hindess, B., (1986) *op.cit* p.114
Knowledge, practice, and professionalisation processes are empirically interwoven components. Pre-professional segmentation in British social work and historical absence of a common, unifying professional identity are discussed in chapter three. Professional unity is defined by some modern leaders of the occupation as a key to professionalisation, as in Bartlett's condemnation of 'divisive' versions of the specialisation theme. Her objection is that in '... their practice, teaching, and writing, social workers have been influenced by ideas that are divisive rather than integrative' (75). Part of Bartlett's argument is that the knowledge base of social work, and styles of practice, should perform a unifying, integrative function for the profession: in her view '... fragmentation of knowledge will continue to occur until recognition of the essential elements in social work is strong enough to hold the profession together' (76). Bartlett's prescription is weakened by failure to secure common definition of the 'essential elements'; the social work unitary or integrated perspective (sometimes described as social work 'systems theory') developed by Pincus and Minahan (77) and Goldstein (78) may in some respects serve the cause of professional unification, but Leonard, writing from an anti-professional standpoint turns this on its head and argues social

74 Seebohm Report Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services, HMSO 1968
76 Bartlett, H., (1970) op.cit p.71
work systems theory is also compatible with marxist welfare values (79). This suggests connections between social work components are frequently cast in highly ambiguous form, a further highly significant instance of this being the relation between the politics of welfare and decentralisation of service-delivery. With the exception of radical humanist welfare theory (80) and 'personalist' feminist conceptions of social work (81) a commonplace radical construction of the relation of politics to method during the 'seventies was that individualist casework techniques were an expression of conservative professional psychotherapeutic (82) ideologies which failed to tackle structural sources of individual oppression; community work, in contrast, despite Mayo's (83) cautionary note against 'reactionary' application of community development models, was generally held by social work radicals to be a progressive method in promoting radical collectivist strategies for social change (84). For reasons discussed in chapter five a number of factors, including those identified in Offe's (85) analysis of the legitimation crisis of the modern welfare state and in Levitas's (86) account of the radical right in welfare politics, produced a shift

80 Ibid
81 Statham, D., (1978) *op.cit*
in this debate during the 'eighties. Welfare academics and professionals became increasingly sensitised to a paradoxical relation between two key components of social work: the relationship between the politics of welfare and social work practice, though tension in this relationship is not a new phenomenon (87), focussed upon a perception that 'community social work' (or neighbourhood 'patch' methods of social work) and decentralisation of services was compatible with left-radical welfare constructions and with the welfare politics of the 'new right' (88). Interpenetrations and overlap between social work components (in the illustrations just provided, interrelations between the production of 'integrated' knowledge, 'unitary' practices and the goal of professional unification, and between the politics of welfare, decentralisation of services and community work practices) are in some instances empirically recognisable as the intended outcomes of specific goals and actions taken by individual or collective social work actors (89); in others they may be unintended consequences arising from the pursuit of particular objectives (90), and in some cases they take on the appearance of 'timeless' (perennial (91)) configurations which re-appear in different

88 Stevenson, O., (1981) op.cit p.66
89 The Idea that it is not reificationist to postulate collective social actors as having causal powers is clarified in Hindess, B., (1986) op.cit.
90 The explanatory significance of the concept of unanticipated consequences is discussed in chapter two
social work places at different times\(^{(92)}\). One of the most empirically significant characteristics of the interrelatedness of social work components is that they appear in varying degrees to configure around a fulcrum point; identification of this professional 'pivot' was noted earlier when the research objective was formulated as the development of a sociology of social work with special reference to social work education.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL WORK

There is strong evidence for a view that social work education has special significance by virtue of the degree to which it shapes and is shaped by other elements of the social work profession. The literature reviewed below provides a large measure of support for a hypothesis that social work education lies at a crucial point of intersection between the various social work components referred to earlier in the chapter. It was remarked earlier that a dominant characteristic of the social work profession is its highly segmented\(^{(93)}\) form; this is reflected in tensions between (and sometimes, within) its various 'constituencies' which are comprised of academics, professionals, and social work employers. Absence of a consensual definition of 'the social work task'\(^{(94)}\) is reflected in the classificatory framework developed below.

92 This statement is qualified by the conceptualization of 'space-time' issues discussed in the final section of this chapter, and in chapter two.
to show an array of highly diverse constructions of the role of social work education. These constructions include the notion of social work education as a 'professional centre' (a relatively pervasive construction which is, however, differently responded to in the various constituencies below); the academic-professional model of liberal education; technical-professionalist rejection of the liberal-education model on the grounds it propagates radical criticisms of professionalism; development in the 'seventies of radical criticism that social work education services professional self-interests and is a form of professional socialisation promoting conceptual and ideological closure; and employers' constructions of social work education as divorced from practice. Below, each of these constructions is initially examined separately, though for reasons adduced earlier they are not regarded as unconnected. Review of each of these constructions of social work education is followed by an analysis of inter-constituency conflict surrounding policy proposals in the 'eighties for the reform of social work education.

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AS 'PROFESSIONAL CENTRE'

Seed's historical survey of the development of social work in Britain documents the influence of social work educators in defining

95 This taxonomy is based upon evidence that relationships between constituencies is an important empirical variable, but as noted in the text it is not suggested that no variation of perspectives and strategies occurs within constituencies. Also, the text shows opposed constituencies (those of academic-professionalism and of radical social work) may inhabit the same institutional arena (social work education) whilst also endorsing the 'viability' of that arena.

professional social work. As discussed in chapters three and five the 'golden era' of British social work, in terms of movement towards professional status and expansion of professional casework services, is largely a phenomenon of the early 'seventies. Prior to this, however, social work educators were prime movers in the post-Beveridge era in making progress towards the goal of professionalism as a structural form for the occupation. In the immediate post-war period, Seed notes '... among those who conceptualised the role of social work ... (and its) ... relationship between state and community were social work educators' (97). In the 'fifties and 'sixties '... a major objective of social work ... was unification of social work as a profession' (italic added) (98) and avoidance of 'fragmentation of the profession' (99) which had been a historical tendency arising from structures which allowed 'separate specialisms to develop in settings associated with particular bureaucratic interests' (100). Professionalisation of local authority social work during this period involved attempts to erode an administrative 'local government' perspective in order to pave the way for the development of a professional social work ethos, and the development of professional casework in local authorities during the 'sixties was largely '... a story of interaction of bureaucratic competition with professionalisation, and the progress of social work educators in influencing the whole ethos of certain social work organisations' (101).

In describing this period Seed refers to

97 Ibid p.53
98 Ibid p.77
99 Ibid
100 Ibid
101 Ibid p.70
... a new challenge for social work as a movement, namely, to change the ethos of social services departments as a whole ... (many) ... local government officers ... were not professionally trained ... Social work as a movement, led by social work educators, tried to change all this. The independently financed National Institute for Social Work Training was in a strong position to play a key role ... An important part was also played by the Council for Training in Social Work ... an independent body, whose central function was to approve Certificate in Social Work Courses set up in 1962 by statute ...

The post-war professionalising influence of social work educators noted by Seed appears to have declined; policy review of training regulations in the 'eighties and current proposals for future training patterns have been associated with a relative shift of influence away from academic and professional constituencies and an increasingly strengthened 'defining' role for social work employers. The employers, in sharp contrast to the early 'seventies when a sense of strong professional optimism accompanied proposals to implant the expanding new professionalism of Seebohm into bureaucratic organisational structures, have become a major force in the de-professionalising tendencies of the 'eighties.

The general theme of training as a professional 'pivot' in the interaction between social work education and wider aspects of the profession is noted by Jones

'An historically informed analysis of social work education can provide us with an exceptionally fruitful standpoint from which to examine the character of social work and its development in this country ... social work education is no mere appendage of the social work profession and in many ways it could be considered as one of its centres ...'

102 Ibid p.76
104 Seebohm Report (1968) op.cit
105 Carter, D., 'Another Blind Leap Into The Dark' Community Care 20 June 1985 pp.27-29
Bailey suggests key problematics in social work education centre upon the relation of theory to practice and problems in defining social work knowledge and skills, a definition which is vital if a reliable yardstick is to be available as a basis for evaluating students' level of performance and assessing their level of competence prior to certification as qualified professional practitioners. Bailey argues these problematics are socially constructed and closely related to

'... deep seated interests concerning academic study, subject specialism, social services structures and professional associations. Course and curricula development is a political process. We should recognize the competing constituencies engaged in that development' (italics added) (107).

Some parallels are drawn in Marchant et al who describe social work education in Australia as having to respond to competing interests and perspectives variously exerted by the academic policies of higher education institutions within which social work education is located; by professional associations; trade unions; social work employers; accreditation bodies (the equivalent of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work which sets general training regulations in Britain); and by local social work agencies who supply practice placements for students concurrent with their academic studies (108).

Throughout the 'seventies social work education became more closely associated with the higher education sector, particularly universities and polytechnics where a major expansion in the number and size of professional training schools took place (109). Dingwall makes the point

109 Pinker, E., (1983) op.cit. pp.151-152
that for marginal or semi-professional occupations such as nursing or social work, entry to the 'prestigious' university sector as an education base is necessary for the realisation of professionalising aspirations. Implicit in Dingwall is a view that sociological studies in occupations other than social work are relevant to an understanding of the location of social work education within the wider profession. A similar view may be inferred from Atkinson's analysis of professional education as a socially constructed concept in the organisation, transmission, and reproduction of professional knowledge; a key concern of Atkinson is to direct attention to the importance of examining 'the relationship between education, practice and the organisation of occupational groups' (italics added).

**ACADEMIC-PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: THE LIBERAL EDUCATION MODEL**

Casson in a report published in 1982 '... highlights one of the problems seen in current courses. This problem can be summarised by the question: are social work courses involved in some kind of liberal education or are they concerned with training for practice?' This implies a dichotomy between 'education' or 'training'. Stevenson in a paper published in 1971 had endorsed a broadly based model of professional education in opposition to a 'narrow' technical skills


training model (114). In Stevenson's view a grounding in social science theories is essential in order to avoid 'tendencies to dogmatism ... (which)... have been apparent in some social work education' (115) and to avoid 'a premature consensus, a false integration' (116). A decade later Stevenson critically re-addressed 'anti-intellectual attitudes' (117) amongst social workers who '... in stressing the uniqueness of the individual and his problems, have been resistant to the process of generalisation which is indispensable to theoretical development' (118).

It is not only social workers that are said to reject theory; their employers and senior management are also criticised by Stevenson

'It seems that, in British social services departments, there has been a kind of collusion between workers and employers to produce an 'anti-intellectual' stance. Fears of elitism, of authoritarianism, a lack of commitment to the intellectual component of social work activity have conspired with agency norms and values which, in general, do not ascribe high status to educational attainment ...' (119)

Professional task complexity underlines academic-professional arguments in favour of a model of professional liberal education. A report (120) submitted in 1981 by the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education to the Barclay Committee of Enquiry (121) on the roles and tasks of social workers, argued professional social work tasks are

115 Stevenson, O., (1971) op.cit p.23
116 Ibid
117 Stevenson, O., (1981) op.cit pp.21-22
118 Ibid p.22
119 Ibid pp.22-23
120 Butrym, Z., Stevenson, O., and Harris, R., 'The Role and Tasks of Social Workers' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.1, No.1 (Summer) 1981 pp.3-26
121 Barclay Working Party Report (1982) op.cit
highly complex, requiring 'considerable intellectual ... skills' (italic added)\(^{(122)}\) and social work tasks could not 'be done by any other professional, let alone a volunteer'\(^{(123)}\). It was further argued professional social work practice rests upon two levels of knowledge, that 'which derives from the behavioural and social sciences, and that which derives from social work theory and research'\(^{(124)}\). A problem noted in the report is that 'in the past decade, some social workers, perhaps concerned to avoid being considered 'elitist', have neglected this essential intellectual component of their work ...'\(^{(125)}\). The report also made brief reference to a stereotypical image of the social worker as a 'wild radical'\(^{(126)}\). This point, though it cannot be fully examined here is relevant to the material examined in chapter three. An implication that contemporary expressions of anti-intellectualism are largely a legacy of social worker radicalism during the 'seventies (and egalitarian anti-elitist values of client democracy associated with this movement) has to be treated with caution; tension between theory and practice and related conflicts surrounding the politics of welfare span not a decade but a century of social work history and are described by Lee\(^{(127)}\) as perennial complications which have always existed in the relation of formal theoretical knowledge to social work practice.

Timms's\(^{(128)}\) espousal of the superiority of a liberal education model

\(^{(122)}\) Butrym, Z., (1981) *et al* *op.cit* p.8
\(^{(123)}\) *Ibid*
\(^{(124)}\) *Ibid* p.20
\(^{(125)}\) *Ibid* p.21
\(^{(126)}\) *Ibid* p.14
\(^{(127)}\) Lee, P., (1982) *op.cit*
as opposed to a practical technical-training conception of social work rests upon his view that social workers fail to grasp the complex moral-political calculus of human welfare. Though closely attuned to welfare practice-issues his criticism is of social work failure to intellectually analyse complex philosophical and ethical issues. The 'current status of value-talk in social work' (129) is said to be conceptually deficient. The 'treatment of values in social work has been insufficiently imaginative and sharp' (130) and largely uninformed by an appreciation of the intellectual history of ethical debates and their relevance for social work practice.

'... our value-talk will improve if we adopt a longer historical viewpoint than that supplied by contemporary politics; in the beginning was T H Green, not Seebohm' (131)

Timms's advocacy that social work education should include social philosophy and formal intellectual study of welfare ethical issues is consistent with the position taken by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work working party report 'Values in Social Work' published in 1976 (132). Further endorsements of 'philosophy in social work' are provided by Plant (133) Timms and Watson (134) Ragg

129 Ibid p.3
130 Ibid p.5
Social work education as an institutional base for engaging in moral reflection as part of a broad, liberal education is further highlighted in Clark and Asquith's philosophy of preparation for practice

'... social work training ... should include the opportunity to gain some competence ... in reflecting critically upon the moral and political issues involved. We are not suggesting that social workers should become philosophers; rather, that in forming an understanding of practice issues, benefit would be gained from philosophical reasoning' (140)

In the ways described above, the academic-professional constituency defines the liberal education model as a means of developing theoretical knowledge which, first, avoids premature theoretical or philosophical closure of consciousness or 'crude' technicalist over-preoccupation with practical skills, and secondly, is held to be necessary in order to equip professional social work to address the task complexity of modern welfare professionalism.

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION : RADICAL POLITICAL SUBVERSION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND THEORETICAL 'DISTANCE FROM PRACTICE''

This construction of the role of social work education focuses upon outcomes which are viewed as having a largely negative effect upon professional social work. Sometimes explicitly, at other times

implicity, it is a construction based largely upon rejection of the broad educationalist assumptions inherent in the liberal-education model. The professional and professionalizing response to the liberal-education model is in one important respect a divided response. Earlier, it was noted the academic-professional school represented by, for example, Stevenson, argues strongly for the liberal education model as a vehicle for 'avoiding dogmatism', 'anti-intellectualism', and for avoiding 'premature integration' of conflicting social theories. From the standpoint of this perspective social work education is viewed as a necessary intellectual foundation for tackling the task-complexity of modern professional social work and for intellectually addressing the 'hidden' moral-political ambiguities of welfare (Timms, earlier). A quite different professional response to the liberal education model is that of technical-professionalism exemplified in Davies(141) who argues professional development and professional social work education should emulate 'subjects like law ... (and) ... accountancy'(142). Of the 'philosophical' and social science disciplines, sociology in particular is said to be personally debilitating for students because it prompts them to critically examine their future professional roles and the interventive tasks they will be asked by employers to undertake. Davies warns of the dangers of exposing students to 'critical perspectives' (143) and states

'... this approach ... sees social work education as an intention of liberal education with the aim of producing critical, questioning, even sceptical graduates ... (and) ... I no longer consider it to be appropriate ... Social work courses are training students for a specific role usually in the public sector. Students

141 Davies, M., 'What We Have To Learn About Social Work Education' Community Care 15 January 1981 pp.18-20
142 Ibid p.20
143 Ibid p.19
who apply for the courses presume that the role is viable, those who fund students on courses have a right to anticipate the end product' (144)

In another paper, Davies equates sociology with 'marxist theory and critical perspectives' (145). He concludes it is sociology that is primarily responsible for sowing '... irreversible seeds of self-doubt ... in students' (146) and this is one reason for advocating '... the removal of sociology from the curriculum' (147). Various other social science disciplines, though not portrayed by Davies as being as acutely politically subversive as sociology, are argued by him to also be largely irrelevant to professional practice. In The Essential Social Worker : A Guide To Positive Practice published in 1981 Davies (148) indicates the following named disciplines in addition to sociology should be regarded as having only marginal relevance for social work practice: psychoanalysis, psychology and learning theory, politics, and social administration (149). His analysis of social science disciplines as being dysfunctional for professional social work is restated in a short paper (150) written in conjunction with the publication in 1985 of the second edition (151) of The Essential Social Worker : A Guide To Positive Practice.

144 Ibid
145 Davies, M., 'On Having Second Thoughts' Community Care
   26 February 1981 p.16
146 See Davies, M., (1981) op.cit in n.141 (p.19)
147 Ibid
149 This listing and the details of its source is contained in Sibeon, R., 'Theory - Practice Symbolizations' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.2, No.2 (Winter) 1982 p.132
150 Davies, M., 'What Is The Essence of Social Work?' Community Care
   19 September 1985 pp.19-20
Worker. Davies' paper prompted criticism by Statham(152). Her criticism is that Davies seeks to impose a singular 'monist' paradigmatic definition of social work, when other definitions are possible; she writes 'propounding a view of social work and how to do it as if there was one way will not contribute to effective and skilled practice' (italic added)(153). In Stathams' view, Davies fails to address the problem of how to cope with 'the effects of a profound restructuring of the welfare state and massive economic and social changes' (154) and his monist construction of social work is reflected in his attempt 'to reduce these issues to a crude attack on Marxism' (155). These political issues will be returned to in the later discussion of radical critiques which 'reverse' Davies' criticisms and portray social work education not as a radical subversion of professionalism but as a politically conservative form of professional self-protective ideological closure.

Davies's condemnation of the liberal education model of professional education echoes concerns expressed by others, concerns which were particularly strongly felt in the 'seventies in face of the resurgence (156) of radical social work. The Gould Report (157) of 1977 had been critical of 'marxist penetration' of the higher education sector and the

152 Statham, D., 'Open Letter to Martin Davies' Community Care 12 December 1985 p.9
153 Ibid
154 Ibid
155 Ibid
156 Factors underlining the resurgence of radical social work in the 'seventies are discussed in Hearn, J., 'Radical Social Work - Contradictions, Limitations and Political Possibilities' Critical Social Policy Vol.2, No.1 (Summer) 1982 pp.19-34
effects of this upon professional courses for teachers and for social workers. Though Davies, and Gould, appear to equate structural marxism with sociology, it was sociology of a quite different type that Munday had in mind when he wrote 'the ideas of writers like Matza, Becker, Cicourel are intellectually fascinating and persuasive but quite ominous for the social worker' (158) (italic added). Wilson also evidenced the same concern as Davies. Exposing professional social work students to critical social science disciplines has a debilitating influence and 'the dangers of undermining the professional commitments of novices in the field parallel those of putting a viper in the cradle of an infant' (159).

Wilson and Munday (above) expressed their concern in the early 'seventies, almost a decade before Davies's rejection of the liberal education model. The national professional training validating body, the Central Council for Education and Training In Social Work (CCETSW) was part of the professionalising movement in the early 'seventies and sought to establish an academic knowledge base (as opposed to the amateurish intuition implicit in a vocationalist conception of social work) which would aid the development of professional social work. In the 'seventies, particularly during the early part of the decade, the CCETSW strongly endorsed the role of sociology in professional education and did so with a degree of unequivocation contrasting sharply with its policies in the 'eighties which signified a shift of emphasis away from philosophical and social science disciplines and towards practical

skills training of the kind advocated by the employer constituency. This relative change of emphasis within the space of a decade is a quite well marked departure from CCETSW's construction of social work education during the professionalizing era of the early 'seventies, when development of a social science knowledge base was given special emphasis. In a report The Teaching of Sociology In Social Work Courses (160) published in 1972 the CCETSW indicated sociology, and social science theory generally, had a vital, positive role in the professional education of social workers (161). The report's recognition that 'certain sociological perspectives ... have had a 'radicalizing' effect' (162) did not prevent, and indeed sustained, a conclusion that 'we consider it of critical importance that social workers should be made aware of the contrasting conceptions of society in which the 'stuff' of sociology and their own work is based' (italic added) (163). The CCETSW, however, in its statutory role as the national professional social work training accreditation body, is pulled in different directions. It operates within an environment which requires it to formulate its general policies in terms which acknowledge the existence of competing social work constituencies and is in Bailey's view 'in the unenviable position of trying to establish professional objectives within a context of intellectual and ideological debate and organisational confusion and contradiction' (italic added) (164). Criticism that the liberal education model nurtures (intentionally or otherwise) an image of 'the

160 CCETSW The Teaching Of Sociology In Social Work Courses (Discussion Document No.5), London, Central Council for Education and Training In Social Work, 1972
161 Ibid p.11
162 Ibid p.12
163 Ibid p.14
164 Bailey, R., (1982) op.cit p.13
wild radical' (earlier) are conflated with a criticism that social work education, as well as being 'too radical' is also 'too theoretical' and 'removed from practice'. As discussed later, criticism from social work employers that professional education does not teach practical skills became a highly significant shaping factor in the development of CCETSW's training policies in the 'eighties. Criticisms of this kind, however, were already becoming visible in the 'seventies. In 1975 the CCETSW introduced a 'second tier' sub-professional qualification (the Certificate in Social Service) designed not to replace but to run parallel with the 'full' professional qualification (the Certificate of Qualification In Social Work). The Certificate in Social Service (CSS) was intended as a less academic, more practically based qualification than the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and the arrangements for the CSS were such that social work agencies and employers would have, relative to academics in the higher education sector which provided the CQSW courses, a much greater influence upon methods of training, curriculum content, and the assessment of students. Jones, a radical member of the academic social work constituency wrote in 1979 that the Certificate in Social Service is

'... no more than a glorified form of in-service training where the student remains an employee of the local authority and attends the local college on a day release basis. The course of study is jointly designed by the college and the local authority and excludes teaching in the potentially contaminating behavioural sciences. It is more narrowly focussed and more pragmatic than courses leading to the CQSW ... (and) ... is itself one of the more self-evident responses to the current tensions and the signs are that this is just the opening shot in a campaign to completely restructure the profession and its educational system' (165)

165 Jones, C., (1979) op.cit p.88
Two years after the introduction of the CSS qualification the CCETSW in 1977 published a consultative document (166) on 'expectations of the teaching in social work courses', here referred to for convenience as 'C.D.3' (Consultative Document No.3). The document was written in a personal capacity by Wright, Assistant Director of the CCETSW and though issued by CCETSW for consultative purposes rather than as an official statement of policy it may reasonably be inferred from remarks in the preface written by Young (167) the Director of CCETSW that the document mirrored concerns felt within the CCETSW about the theoretical and also radical nature of some social work courses. There is here a general processual issue of importance which relates both to the contents of 'C.D.3' and the context in which it was produced. Following discussion in chapter two of recent sociological conceptualisations by Hindess, Callon, Latour and others on power, influence, deployment of tactics and strategic decision-making amongst collective social actors, the significance of 'C.D.3' (and of other processes in the formulation of policies affecting social work and social work education) will be re-appraised through an analysis that draws upon a greater range of sociological materials than is possible in this introductory chapter. For the present, part of the groundwork for later analysis is laid here through a brief highlighting of policy strategies which may, depending upon the particular empirical circumstances and conditions within which policies are formulated, rest upon the concept of appealing to a variety of conflicting constituencies. Where policy-entrepreneurs (a role vested in the CCETSW

167 Ibid pp.1-3
and manifest in the production of 'C.D.3') are surrounded by other, powerful social actors, some of whom may previously have initiated pressures upon the 'entrepreneur' for change, perhaps in the face of resistance on the part of other actors who have other interests within the 'actor network', the policy-entrepreneur may consider it to be useful or necessary to appeal to a variety of constituencies, at least during the early stages of policy-formulation when creation of a climate of favourable conditions in the 'actor network' may be a prime consideration. It is also worth noting the possibility that at later stages (such as when a situation of impasse persists, or alternatively when the general outline of a future course has been set through consensus, persuasion, coercion or compromise) it may become advantageous for the policy-entrepreneur to move to other strategies, such as self-removal from the central arena leaving the 'negotiation' of remaining conflicts as a task delegated to the competing parties themselves.

It was suggested earlier that grounds exist for inferring 'C.D.3' reflected concerns felt within the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work about the direction being taken by professional education in CQSW courses in the academic sector. It would appear that Wright, in 'C.D.3', attempts to steer a strong course towards the employers constituency (practical training) and towards the technical-professionalist constituency represented by Davies's critical rejection of social science disciplines and of the liberal education model (earlier) whilst also seeking to avoid a complete break with the academic-professional constituency (this being one of the constituencies, together with that of academic radicalism, represented in the liberal-education model discussed earlier). Policy entrepreneurs may, as indicated above, find it necessary to
adjust to the conflicting demands of competing constituencies and the appearance of impartiality may be crucial where the entrepreneur through choice or force of circumstance is moving towards the construction of policies which favour some but not all constituencies. In appealing to a variety of constituencies, the interests represented by the professionalising lobby and its requirement for professional integration ('unity') are endorsed by Wright; he suggests '... social workers ... hold shared ... professional ... values' (168) (italic added) and '... being a member of a profession implies shared values ...' (169) (italic added). The term 'professionalizing lobby' is somewhat imprecise, however, and encompasses more than one professionalist construction of the role of social work education. The school of liberal academic-professionals, amongst whom are included Stevenson and the perspectives held by the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education (earlier) are like Wright highly committed to professional development of the occupation, but unlike Wright regard the liberal-education model and the climate of moral-political debate engendered by this model as a necessary vehicle for grappling with the task complexity of professional social work in the modern welfare state; this is reflected, for example, in Stevenson (earlier) who explicitly rejected 'premature theoretical integration' and 'anti-intellectualism'. In 'C.D.3' Wright's technical-professionalist rejection of the liberal-education model is seemingly far removed from the goals of academic-professionals who regard social science and moral-political discourse as a vital concomitant of modern professionalism; his position in some

168 Ibid p.4
169 Ibid p.10
sections of the document corresponds far more closely to those elements of the professionalising lobby associated with Davies's technical-professionalist perspective which is founded upon rejection of moral-political discourse and favours marginalisation or removal of the professionally 'contaminating' social science disciplines (Davies, earlier). Recognition of the interests and perspectives contained within the technical-professionalist constituency is made evident in Wright's statement that 'the purpose of CQSW courses is to produce practitioners with ... a ... system of shared professional values' (170) (italics added) and in his declaration that

'Social work education is not ... an end in itself. There is some indication at present that the differences of viewpoint and purpose are currently immobilizing - for example it is not uncommon to hear people who might be expected to know better, because they teach and practice it, to say, 'social work? - what is it?'. It is the writers view that this has become a trendy negative stance and it is about time it stopped' (italics added) (171).

Davies 'earlier' criticised a range of social science disciplines but argued it is sociology in particular that is responsible for sowing 'seeds of irreversible doubt in students'. Analogously, Wright in 'C.D.3' also locates sociology as one of the professionally 'immobilizing' factors connoted in his statement above; he comments 'In the not very distant past sociology had to disentangle itself from being confused with social work - the reverse process may now be necessary' (172) (italic added). However to go as far as canvassing a proposition that sociology (no matter how 'immobilizing') should (as Davies argues) be removed from the professional social work curriculum is to be seen to be canvassing a proposition for one constituency at the 'cost' of disadvantaging

170 Ibid
171 Ibid p.6
172 Ibid p.7
another constituency. It would appear 'C.D.3' (and by implication the CCETSW) in moving towards the technical-professionalist motif also attempts to move simultaneously in an opposite direction so as to avoid wholesale alienation from, and rejection by, the academic-professional constituency who are professionally influential advocates of the liberal-education model. Unlike Davies, Wright in 'C.D.3' states he is not arguing for a removal from the curriculum, or a marginalisation of, the various disciplines 'like psychology, social policy ... sociology, philosophy, political processes and ... related ... disciplines' (173).

Appealing to conflicting constituencies produces ambiguities and contradictions. In 'C.D.3' it is, for instance, not made clear why sociology should appear in the above list of professionally 'approved' disciplines which are listed at the end of the report; earlier Wright had suggested it may be necessary for social work to 'disentangle' itself from sociology. Also, some of the academic disciplines listed (sociology, social policy, politics, and philosophy) are precisely those which Wright in an earlier section of 'C.D.3' had implicated in the critical professionally 'immobilizing' questions posed by those who 'should know better' than to ask 'social work - what is it?'. To remove or marginalise social science disciplines as a knowledge base for the profession is not congruent with the interests and perspectives of the professionalising constituency in general (as represented by, for example, the British Association of Social Workers) nor of academic-professional advocates of the liberal education model. Equally, to include and endorse social science disciplines within the professional curriculum runs counter to the perspectives of technical-professionalists who, as in Davies, Munday, and Wilson (earlier) reject the academic content of the liberal education model and reject the

173 Ibid p.25
politicising effect upon social work students of 'non-professional' academic social science lecturers. The contradictory location of 'C.D.3' in an actor network of powerful, mutually opposed social actors is revealed in the Report's conclusions: following the list of 'approved' social science disciplines deemed necessary to the provision of an academic knowledge base for the development of professional social work it is stated these disciplines are, however, taught by social science academics who as individuals are prone to 'use their clients (their subject or their students) to sanction their own values ... professional development and ambitions' (174) (italics added). In 'C.D.3' the diagnosis ('theoretical radicalism') of Munday, Wilson, Davies and other members of the technical-professional constituency is endorsed but without also endorsing the 'solution' of 'de-academicisation' proffered by technical-professionalists. Academic disciplines in the form strongly argued for within the professionalising movement (eg. the British Association of Social Workers) and, in particular, within the academic-professional constituency associated with the liberal education model, are acknowledged in 'C.D.3' to be indispensable to future professional development founded upon intellectual professional knowledge rather than amateur vocationalist intuition. To remove these 'immobilizing' disciplines from the professional curriculum would be an extreme, professionally self-negating 'solution' (175). As noted above the compromise solution adopted in 'C.D.3' appears to be based upon appeal simultaneously to both the academic-professional and technical-professionalist constituencies by re-defining the problems of social

174 Ibid
175 Sibeon, R., (1982) op.cit
work education as arising not in disciplines but in people. That is, problems arise by virtue of the radical anti-professional values of those individuals who teach academic social science disciplines and who have influenced professional teachers who 'should know better' (C.D.3' earlier).

Another constituency addressed in 'C.D.3', and whose interests and perspectives are appealed to and endorsed, is that of social work employers. This constituency, though significantly different to the ones discussed above in that it is not part of the professionalising movement and as will be shown later is in major respects anti-professionalist, nevertheless shares with the technical-professionalist constituency a highly critical view of social work education's 'failure' to teach the practical skills necessary for the performance of agency tasks. Jordon (176), a Deputy Director of Social Services for a large local authority depicts the social work trainee as a 'piggy in the middle' (177) located uncomfortably between the political, philosophical theoreticism of social work education, and agency requirements for practical skills. Jordon writes 'Employing agencies have expressed the greatest concern about the present system and for some years have voiced dissatisfaction with the newly qualified worker who, in many ways, they see as having been disabled by their college experiences' (178) (italics added). The strength of this dissatisfaction, and its shaping influence upon the emergence of a highly controversial new training policy in the 'eighties is examined later in the chapter. In

177 Ibid p.130
178 Ibid p.129
'C.D.3' Wright despite earlier in the document having acknowledged demands from the professionalising lobby for 'shared professional values' and from academic-professionals for a liberal education model based upon social science disciplines, also gives expression to the quite different perspectives of the employers constituency; he states '... social work courses ... are giving an increasing emphasis to broad generalist education in the social sciences and about social work at the expense of skills based learning' (179) (italics added) and suggests 'the whole weight of a higher educational institution will tend to support models other than that of practitioner' (180). Acknowledgement by 'C.D.3' of the interests and perspectives of the employers constituency is further amplified in the statement '... the growth in claims to professional status has made employers increasingly suspicious that these are more associated with occupational ambition for advancement than with ... skills ... (and) ... social work has to face up to this scepticism and examine its implications. Its claim to professional status has grown up in a period when ... (the) ... growth ... of larger scale public organisation of professional services questions the extent to which individuals can justify the degree of autonomy which was once common to the older professions' (181) (italics added).

This and the previously examined instances of 'appeal to a variety of constituencies' does not appear to be a case of the Central Council (CCETSW) or 'C.D.3' engaging in an intellectual treatise concerned to provide an 'objective' academic analysis and portrayal of opposing constituency perspectives. As indicated earlier, the construction of social work and social work education by constituencies is a political process and the role of CCETSW and of 'C.D.3' is part of this process; this is implicit in 'C.D.3' which in a brief aside given no further discussion in the document, notes that 'Some indeed would argue ... the

179 Wright, R., (1979) op. cit. p.10
180 Ibid p.25
181 Ibid p.10
universities are inappropriate places for professional education ... To some extent the Council has to walk a tightrope when intervening, asserting and prescribing where necessary, compromising to preclude deadlock in sensitive areas,' (182).

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AS PROFESSIONAL SOCIALISATION AND IDEOLOGICAL CLOSURE

The constituency of radical social work is in some respects the converse of the previous ones. The constituency of academic-professionalism, because infused by liberal educationalist values of the kind endorsed by Stevenson, Timms and the ATSWE (earlier), intentionally does not arbitrarily reject (nor endorse) radical social work. However the liberal education model, far from being a radicalising force or a critical negation of professional social work in the sense suggested by technical-professionalists such as Davies and in 'C.D.3', is defined by radicals as a vehicle for the reproduction of conservative values enshrined in social work professionalism. From a radical standpoint the liberal education model hypothetically has a potentiality for nurturing radical values but in the way it actually operates this potentiality is rarely actualized. The main postulates of radical social work are, first, that the function of professional social work and social work education in the form that these are conventionally ('professionally') defined is the reproduction of capitalism, though because the welfare state has relative autonomy from the forces of capitalist economy there are possibilities for exploiting contradictions in capitalist society and for under-

182 Ibid p.9
184 Ibid p.4
taking progressive (radical) social work practice under capitalism\(^{185}\).

Some radical social work theories emphasise material existence, structural conditions, and collective action;\(^{186}\) others, as in feminism\(^{187}\) and radical humanism\(^{188}\) are more personalist and 'consciousness-oriented' in their conception of linkages between individuals and social structure. Second, arising from the first postulate, traditional ('professional') social work is said to employ conservative individualistic casework methods involving a psychological reduction of macro-structural problems to the level of the individual psyche. Instead of being seen as victims of oppression arising from structural inequalities of class\(^{189}\) gender\(^{190}\) and race\(^{191}\) in capitalist society, clients are professionally portrayed as having 'personal' emotional problems which render them as suitable candidates for professional psychotherapeutic intervention\(^{192}\). Third, the process of reproduction of conservative theories and practices may sometimes arise through co-ercion, as in 'enforced compliance' exerted in social work agencies characterized by 'authoritarian line management' structures\(^{193}\). A more potent reproductive technique is to nurture

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185 Corrigan, P., and Leonard, P., (1978) op.cit
186 Bolger, S., et.al (1981) op.cit
188 Leonard, P., (1975) op.cit
189 Gough, I., (1979) op.cit
190 Statham, D., (1978) op.cit
192 North, M., (1972) op.cit
'willing conformity' through the processes of professional socialisation and conceptual, ideological 'closure' of consciousness (194) in social work education (195). A rare example of the application of radical structuralist theory to the study of social work consciousness is Philp's (196) attempt to identify a structurally 'fixed' social work discourse not open to conscious reflection or to the possibility of change through active human agency. Fourth, means for securing conceptual and professional closure involve the appropriation of concepts from 'bourgeois' social science disciplines; these concepts are inserted into social work culture to sustain conservatising professional 'maxims' (197), and by providing an academic knowledge base which serves to portray social work as an intellectually complex profession rather than a welfare vocation, social movement, or occupation, academic social science functions to provide spurious academic legitimacy to professionalising aspirations (198). The goal of cognitive closure in professional socialisation is easier to accomplish if the subjects to whom it is applied (students) have already been carefully identified as suitable candidates for closure; professional social work education therefore places a

194 Pearson, G., (1975) op. cit, chapter five.
195 Jones, C., (1979) op. cit
196 Philp, M., (1979) op. cit
197 Deacon, R., and Bartley, M., 'Becoming a Social Worker' in Jones, H., (ed) 1975 op. cit p.70
198 Armstrong, P., Servicing The Professions - Spurious Legitimacy In The Development of Vocational Training Lancaster, Discussion Paper Conference of British Sociological Association University of Lancaster, 1980 (April)
premium upon the importance of student selection \(^{(199)}\). Fifth, though professional social workers 'function' as agents of capitalism, this is not necessarily the only or prime factor at an individual motivational level. Professional social workers are said to pursue self-interests; professional structures confer professional rewards, particularly the rewards of remuneration, power and status \(^{(200)}\). Finally, some radicals emphasise the workings of the professional system are not infallible and routine breakdowns can occur. Radical candidates may sometimes slip through the professional selection procedure \(^{(201)}\). And non-radical candidates once having been selected and having commenced their professional education may become radicalised by their experiences; either through experiential radicalism \(^{(202)}\) when in their agency practical training placements they experience at first hand the impact of poverty and other forms of structural inequality upon their clients, or through an intellectual route to academic radicalism in social work education as an institutional arena containing representatives of the radical social work constituency. In this last respect it is the radicalising potentiality - if not the actuality - of social work education and the liberal education ethos which causes some radicals \(^{(203)}\) to view academic institutions as a preferable location when compared with 'technical training' or agency-based 'apprenticeship' schemes of training controlled by social work employers and senior agency administrators \(^{(204)}\).

199 Hearn, J., (1982) \textit{op.cit}

200 \textit{Ibid}


202 \textit{Ibid} p.86


204 Wilson, M., and Lee, P., (1982) \textit{op.cit}
These issues of politics are significant to an understanding of social work and are returned to in different contexts in most of the later chapters. Radical social work theories and practices are examined in chapter three, in a section on 'the politics of social work'; chapter four re-examines radical politics as a relevant topic for a sociology of social work knowledge, and chapter five traces the relation of radical and non-radical values to organisational structures and service-delivery issues.

INTER-CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS: ACADEMICS, PROFESSIONALS, AND EMPLOYEES

Analysis of inter-constituency relationships in contemporary social work is a way of gaining an understanding of key structural aspects of the social work profession and of interrelations between the various component parts that form the profession. Through an examination of the role of social work education in these inter-relationships, with special reference to the construction of a controversial new training policy in the 'eighties, it is possible to demonstrate the relative centrality of social work education within the social work profession; and in doing so provide an empirical case study illustration of the relevance of contemporary anti-reductionist middle-range sociological conceptualisations (particularly the concept of relationships between collective social actors) of the kind outlined in the final section of the chapter and examined more fully in chapter two.

Earlier, it was noted the CCETSW in 1975 introduced a 'second-tier' qualification, the Certificate in Social Service (205). The CSS was  

intended for employees in 'social services' occupations: these include social work assistants, social services officers responsible for providing 'basic home services' (206), care assistants in residential and day care establishments, welfare rights workers, home help organisers and various other social services employees who are not professional social workers. The CSS was planned as a 'new form of training' (207) which was less academic and more practically oriented than the CQSW qualification. The CQSW programme was continued as the 'first tier' qualification for professional social workers. A significant difference between the two forms of qualification is that the CQSW is typically based on the generic (generalist) principle and controlled largely by academic institutions (subject to the accreditation and regulatory functions of the CCETSW), whilst the CSS is more 'task-specific' (specialist) and relative to the CQSW is far more influenced by employers. Though both the CSS and CQSW programmes required a degree of collaboration between academics and employers, the CSS was largely associated with the employers sector, the CQSW with the higher education sector. As shown earlier in the chapter, there is a tension between the perspectives of the professionalising constituency and the constituency of employers whose rejection of the liberal-education model, together with employer emphasis upon practical task performance rather than 'esoteric' professional knowledge, is regarded by professionals as a damaging process of administrative de-skilling, task routinisation and employer de-professionalisation of social work. Lee (208) in a critical analysis argued the introduction of the CSS in 1975 operated in the interests of

206 Billis, D., et.al (1980) op.cit. p.89
207 CCETSW Paper 9.1 (1975) op.cit.
professionals at the expense of non-professional 'social services' employees. The social work professional association, the British Association of Social Workers in a report *The Social Work Task* (209) published in 1977 sought to construct a clear dividing line between a professional social work function ('the creative application of skills derived from values to help meet individual needs through interpersonal relationships', italic added) and a social services function ('involving the performance of prescribed tasks', italic added) (210). In Lee's analysis professionally qualified social workers holding the CQSW had their power and status enhanced by the introduction of the CSS which symbolized the division between 'professional social work' and 'social services work' and reinforced the subordinate position of the latter in a vertical task-stratification model in social services departments. Central to Lee's analysis is his view that professional social work, in response to the threat of bureaucratic employer de-skilling ('de-professionalisation') sought to 'invade' the hierarchy in two directions simultaneously i.e. 'upwards' and also 'downwards'. He argues professional social work functions and skills were broadened and re-defined far beyond the traditional boundaries of professional social work skills (interpersonal skills in working with clients) to include the new 'professional' social work skills of administration, planning and managerial control functions in the role of 'bureau-professionals' responsible for managing, controlling, and co-ordinating those 'social services' occupations whose members comprise the numerical majority of the employees of social services departments. Lee's analysis has implications for other organisational and service-delivery issues, discussed in chapter five. For the moment, attention is drawn to the

209 BASW (1977) op.cit.
210 Quoted in Lee, P., (1982) op.cit. p.28
impact of the introduction of the CSS upon later events which in the 'eighties produced a widespread perception that a crisis had arisen in the relations between the major constituencies of British social work.

In the 'eighties, a number of events combined to propel social work education into a scenario of intense conflict and competition between powerful social work constituencies. As already noted, many of the effects of the 'CQSW' professional liberal-education model had been forcibly rejected by the technical-professionalist lobby on the grounds of its radical contaminatory effects (Davies, and 'C.D.3' earlier). The liberal-education model was also under attack from the employers constituency on the grounds it was, in addition to having a politicising effect upon students and newly qualified practitioners, a hopelessly over-theoretical and professionally esoteric experience for students and ill-equipped them to perform practical agency tasks. In addition to the above factors, the personnel planning policies that were emerging in social services departments following the introduction of the CSS in 1975 were leading to a blurring of the clearly drawn dividing line that the British Association of Social Workers had sought to establish between professional social work functions and social services functions. This threatened the viability of the newly created distinction between 'CSS work' ('social services functions') and 'CQSW work' ('professional social work'). The second-tier social services qualification (the CSS) when it was introduced in 1975 had initially seemed to have an effect of buttressing the dominant role of professional social work in a vertical task-stratification model within the social services departments; as events transpired, the CSS began to have an opposite effect, an effect largely unanticipated by professionals. The existence of the new qualification paradoxically showed signs of posing a major threat for professional social work. The
Managerial practices of employers were a crucial factor in that newly qualified CSS-holders were being promoted by employers to roles which in the 'seventies had been widely regarded as appropriate only for 'CQSW work' ('professional social work'). The CSS programme once established and operative, was very quickly perceived by employers to offer an attractive, viable alternative to long-standing problems of theoreticism in social work education, and the existence of the CSS entered into the structure of policy opportunities available to employers in their attempts to define social work and training in a particular way. It became evident that employers preferred the CSS programme of 'task-specific' practical training under an administrative arrangement which ensured employers had, relative to the academic-professional CQSW programmes in universities and polytechnics, far greater influence upon curriculum content: as Carter observed, it was clear that 'CSS training has ... been accepted by many employers as the preferred preparation for ... work, even for those ... (employees) ... who would hitherto have gained places on CQSW courses' (211). It was perhaps inevitable that pressures for change should emanate not only from employers but also from the ranks of 'social services' employees: many of the newly qualified CSS holders in the social services departments argued their promotion to 'CQSW' posts meant they were now performing 'social work' tasks and that the previously defined boundaries between 'social services' functions and 'professional social work' had therefore become irrelevant. These were factors in the CSS lobby.

211 Carter, D., (1985) op. cit. p.27
mounting a campaign (212) both for equal pay and conditions and for the same career promotion prospects enjoyed by professionally qualified social workers and for abolition of the two-tier CSS (social services) and CQSW (professional social work) system in favour of a completely new form of unified training leading to a single qualification.

The conjunction of circumstances described above is amplified in more theoretical terms in chapter two. The remainder of the present analysis will examine the relevance of these circumstances for the various social work constituencies described earlier. The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) by virtue of its role as the national accreditation training body was an important arena for the articulation of the opposed interests of the various parties involved. The CCETSW in 'C.D.3' in 1977 had reflected and articulated conflicting perspectives and did so, in the ways described earlier, through the mechanism of attempting to appeal to a variety of constituencies and through avoidance of connotations that it had been 'compromised' by over-identification with (or alternatively, subjected to pressure from) any of the competing constituencies. Later, the CCETSW formulated policies which indicated visible movement towards the perspectives of the employers. In 1982 the CCETSW invited (213) 'comments' from the various constituencies on whether a new training system was required, and in particular, whether the two-tier division between the CSS (social services work) and CQSW (professional social


213 Comments were invited in CCETSW Circular Letter (Ref. EDU/0055) 18.1.82
work) introduced by the CCETSW in 1975 was any longer 'tenable'.

Following this consultative exercise the CCETSW issued three major reports which set out proposals for a new system of training. These are referred to here under their title abbreviations; they were CCETSW Paper 20.1 published in 1983, CCETSW paper 20.3 published in 1985 and CCETSW Paper 20.6 which was issued in 1986. The details of these reports and variation between them need not be discussed here. The central finding in each report was the distinction between 'social services work' and 'professional social work' was no longer tenable in the light of the new conditions of practice and role-definition in the social services departments and that the two-tier CSS/CQSW system should therefore be abolished in favour of a new system of unified training leading to a single qualification. The last of these reports CCETSW Paper 20.6 stated a single award (the Qualifying Diploma in Social Work) would form the basis of a new training system to be introduced in 1989/90. The period of training would be lengthened to three years, as compared with a norm of two years for most existing CQSW 'non-graduate' courses. These proposals generated

214 Ibid. p.5
218 CCETSW Paper 20.6 (1986) op.cit p.6
intense debate throughout the social work profession and provoked sharply divided responses. Below, the response of each of the three major constituencies involved in social work education is examined in turn. As will become clearer later, consideration of these responses will also serve to illustrate core problematics in the social work profession which are analyzed in theoretical and also historical terms in chapter three. In some respects, the 'crisis' of social work and social work education in the 'eighties as examined below may be regarded as a contemporary re-statement of social works historical attempts to 'define itself' and is therefore a focal area of enquiry in the sociology of social work.

THE ACADEMIC-PROFESSIONAL CONSTITUENCY (LIBERAL EDUCATION MODEL)

This constituency welcomed the CCETSW proposal to lengthen training to three years, on the grounds that longer duration of education recognised the complex knowledge and skills required for the performance of professional social work tasks in modern society (220). In most other respects the academic-professional response was strongly hostile. During the debates which preceded the appearance of the first of these reports, Shaw and Walton (221) had warned that employers were seeking 'pre-packaged workers' who would be compliant technicians in implementing agency rules. Following the publication of the first of the reports CCETSW Paper 20.1 Howe in a remark reminiscent of Seed's description (earlier) of local authority social work in the 'fifties

220 For example, see ATSWE 'ATSWE Written Response to Paper 20.3'
ATSWE Newsletter No 44 July 1985 Leicester, Association of Teachers in Social Work Education, 1985 p.4
221 Shaw, I., and Walton, R., 'What Use Social Work Training?'
Community Care 18 January 1979 pp.18-19
observed that '... the social workers preferred by many managers seem to be more in the mould of the old, untrained Welfare Officer than a newly pressed holder of a CQSW'. Bailey's response to Paper 20.1 was that the proposal for dissolving the distinction between the CSS and CQSW was highly defective, for two reasons. First, 'professional social work' possesses a high level of task complexity (including the performance of statutory work in child care and mental health fields) whereas 'social services work' does not. For this reason, he argued, it is essential to ensure a level of education appropriate to the complexity of task performance in each of these two separate fields of service. Second, the 'needs of the profession' are in Bailey's view entirely legitimate, and should be recognised as such; he points out that teachers receive a higher level and duration of academic training than social workers and argues denial of adequate professional education opportunities for social workers will diminish the credibility of the social work profession. Bailey concluded the distinction between professional social work and social services work should be preserved and the CSS/CQSW distinction therefore retained, but that upward hierarchical mobility was legitimate and opportunities should be provided to allow suitable CSS-holders to undertake further training and proceed to the CQSW qualification which would allow them to undertake 'professional social work'. Within the academic-professional constituency

Ibid p.59
Ibid
Ibid p.60
Carter's (227) response to CCETSW Paper 20.3 was also highly critical. He suggested the liberal-education model inherent in professional CQSW programmes had succeeded in providing opportunities for 'vision-broadening analysis of problems of practice' (228). He argued the proposal for unified training is 'vague' and 'ambiguous', and employer domination within the new system would lead to 'a mere socialising into existing structures' (229). Carter also expressed concern that the proposal for a 'modular' pattern of training would be highly damaging. The concept of modular training packages and a variety of routes to qualification implies instead of being attached to the same academic institution for the duration of their training students may attend a range of institutions and build up an accumulation of 'credits' towards the award of their qualification. Carter argued the proposed inclusion of training modules in social work education would frustrate the development of a common professional identity and reduce the value of a professional qualification in social work.

"... modules taken here and there in a wide variety of educational institutions ... (will frustrate) ... a professional identity ... and produce an idiosyncratic qualification unrecognized in relation to the national and international system of academic awards, lacking in universal credibility ..." (230)

Carter's reference to modular training has significance for issues examined in theoretical terms in chapters two and three, particularly issues concerning personalist experiential constructions of social work knowledge and its spatial and temporal dissemination across social work 'sites'.

228 Ibid p.27
229 Ibid
230 Ibid p.28
In examining the response of the academic-professional constituency to CCETSV's proposals for the reform of social work education it is necessary to observe response within this constituency has been internally divided in at least one respect. This concerns issues of strategies and tactics in the relationships between collective social actors (here 'constituencies'). Hindess's recent sociological construction of shifting, complex 'conditions of action' in the relations between collective social actors postulates goals, purposes and outcomes typically are relatively 'fluid' and indeterminate. A 'prefigurative' marxist interpretation of the events under discussion here would regard them as the local 'playing out' of a grand script where the outcomes are relatively (but not totally) predictable, rather than discursively and variably formulated. From the standpoint of the 'new' middle-range sociology represented by Hindess and some other contemporary writers the events described here may be conceptualised as a series of strategic responses to a shifting configuration of circumstances some of which, as in the particular turn of events which followed the introduction of the 'CSS' in 1975 are empirically contingent (things could have 'happened differently'). When a processual conceptualisation of these events is applied to an analysis of the responses of the academic-professional ('liberal education') constituency to CCETSV's proposals it may be noted that one response to policy proposals perceived to be a 'threat' to ones constituency is to formulate a position of opposition, stick to it, and 'resist to the end'. Another is to initially formulate and


232 Ibid
express resistance but later find that compromise is appropriate for whatever reasons. These reasons may include a constituency change of mind in the light of new information or persuasive argument; or opinion within a constituency may turn out to be internally divided, lukewarm, not endorsed wholeheartedly by rank and file members; or, if endorsed, given lower priority than other constituency matters; or it may be that constituency leaders 'see the writing on the wall' and determine that if a new policy is inevitable they will 'go along with it' and perhaps even be seen to endorse it in principle whilst tactically ensuring second-order negotiations at lower levels of policy detail are entered into in a way which brings as least damage as possible to (and as many advantages as it is possible to secure for) the constituency and its members. The first type of response is evident in Pinker's protracted and vigorous rejection of the CCETSW proposals. His response to Paper 20.1 was highly critical and in another paper he suggested 'the balloon has reached bursting point'; the publication of Paper 20.3 in 1985 and Paper 20.6 in 1986 exacerbated matters to the point where Pinker advocated active sabotage of the proposals. In 1986 he wrote it was within the collective power of the various parties involved 'to stop this initiative in its tracks ... it is surprising that CCETSW has been allowed to get as far as it has done' (italics added). An example


234 Ibid

235 Pinker, R., 'The Balloon Has Reached Bursting Point' Community Care 9 August 1984 pp. 18-19

236 Pinker, R., 'Time To Stop CCETSW In Its Tracks' Community Care 18 September 1986 p. 21
of a strategic response of the second type referred to above may be inferred from an analysis of the position taken by the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education (ATSWE). The ATSWE, as shown in the theoretical content of papers which appear in the social work journal *Issues in Social Work Education* associated with the ATSWE, is a strong advocate of the liberal education model as a vehicle for professional development. ATSWE initially responded critically to the CCETSW policy proposals. In 1984 the ATSWE stated a new single (unified) qualification merging 'professional social work' and 'social service functions' could not shoulder the 'incompatible burdens' that would be placed upon it (237). A year later in 1985 the ATSWE appeared to have shifted its position and stated it was willing to lend a measure of support to the new training policy; though expressing reservations about the new proposals, the ATSWE was by this time stating that it was 'broadly in favour' of them (238). Twelve months later, in June 1986, the ATSWE in a report prepared by a joint working party of the ATSWE, Joint University Council (Social Work Education Committee), and The Standing Conference of Heads of CQSW Courses, set out the response of the working party to the CCETSW proposals. Their report *Towards A Future Educational Strategy in Social Work* (239) appeared to accept

237 Editorial Comment *Issues In Social Work Education* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Summer) 1984 p.2

238 ATSWE 'ATSWE Written Response to Paper 20.3' ATSWE Newsletter No.44 (July) 1985, Leicester, Association of Teachers in Social Work Education 1985 p.4

the inevitability of a new training system based upon a single qualification, and indeed, 'recommended' (240) that the CCETSW principle of a unified qualification be accepted. However, the report also recorded a number of significant caveats of a kind which seem designed to ensure that during the process of implementation of the training policy and the detailed inter-constituency negotiations necessary for implementation on the time-scale proposed by CCETSW the interests and perspectives of the academic-professional constituency would be safeguarded and recouped as far as possible. For example, the working party stated there should be clear recognition by the various constituencies involved of a dividing line between the ranks of the qualified and the unqualified, in that 'the term 'social worker' should be restricted to those who are qualified' (241) under the new training arrangements. In the area of curriculum content it was considered vital that social work education should continue to incorporate academic 'research interests' (242) and 'the theories ... of the relevant disciplines' (243). Administrative arrangements proposed by CCETSW for detailed negotiation and implementation of the new training arrangements were also reviewed by the working party. One feature of the new system proposed by CCETSW was that detailed shaping of curriculum content and methods of student assessment in social work courses would to a large extent be delegated downwards by CCETSW and be 'negotiated' in newly created regional training panels which would contain local representatives of each of the three major social work constituencies (ie. academics, professional bodies, and employers). The

240 Ibid p.4, para.3
241 Ibid p.4, para.2
242 Ibid p.4, para.6
243 Ibid p.5, para.12
joint working party report produced by ATSWE and the other academic-professional bodies referred to earlier responded to this proposal by drawing attention to the importance of having panels with an independent chair; the report stated the 'panels need ... to... (have)... independent chairing ...' (244) (italic added). Though acknowledging the importance of 'discussion and collaboration' (245) between constituencies the report also noted 'some educators have had the feeling that this collaboration has tended to be one sided, in that agencies have wanted to be involved with colleges, but they have not wanted colleges to be involved in agency practice or policy' (246). The joint ATSWE report refers to educator's involvement not only in agency policy but also academic involvement in deciding which employees are suitable for training under the new arrangements (247); some of the report's recommendations are less in the nature of defensive caveats than a proactive assertion to the employers of 'what the new partnership must logically entail'. In organisational sociology Burns's (248) definition of cliques refers to inward-looking groups which are defensive and reactive to a sense of failure or of being threatened and which attempt to stabilize their situation through an effort to preserve the old order; cabals are 'successful' outward-looking groups who seek further success or, if threatened, to maximize advantages in transitional situations not by 'withdrawal ... or rejection ... but ... (by means of) ... attempts to restructure situations and values in the interests of its members' (249).

244 Ibid p.6, para.28
245 Ibid p.45, para.4.2
246 Ibid p.45, para.4.3
247 Ibid p.47, para.4.11(3)
249 Ibid p.480
The ATSWE in the ways described above appears to have responded to the CCETSW policy proposals through a strategy which combined 'clique' and 'cabal' techniques, with gradual movement towards the latter. The social construction of social work and social work education is, as these examples suggest, a variable process: in the illustration provided here, Pinker's response to the CCETSW proposals for reform of social work education is to resist these 'to the end', whilst the ATSWE began with rejection of the basic principle (unified training and merging of professional social work and social services work) contained in the new policy, then shifted towards a reserved endorsement of willingness to support this principle and be involved in its implementation on the time-scale sought by the CCETSW provided certain conditions were satisfied during the process of inter-constituency negotiations for implementing the general principle. In this way, constituency interests 'lost' in the face of policies which seem inevitable are at least partially restituted and safeguarded. The illustration also shows strategies and social action between but also within constituencies may be variable: collective actors' assessments of their situation and their actions 'could have happened otherwise' and are not determined by the actors' structural or historical location within the wider social system.

THE PROFESSIONALISING CONSTITUENCY

The British Association of Social Workers responded to the CCETSW proposals in a fashion broadly similar to that of the 'liberal-education' academic-professionalists referred to above. Apart from welcoming the suggestion for a lengthening of training to three years, the professionalising constituency was strongly hostile to the new proposals. Whilst recognising that it might be difficult to prevent the
implementation of CCETSW's new policies, strong professional criticism was voiced against the notion of collapsing the distinction between the CSS (social services work) and the CQSW (professional social work). Professional criticisms were in most respects predictable. Shortly after the Central Council (CCETSW) had introduced the CSS qualification in 1975 the British Association of Social Workers in their report The Social Work Task (250) published in 1977 had stated

'[... the distinction between social work and ... social services work is primarily one of kind ... and not of degree. We are in broad agreement with the decision of CCETSW to develop a form of training for social service workers (CSS) which is distinct from social work training (CQSW) ... the multitude of fairly menial tasks which have to be undertaken in the context of a social services department cannot be claimed to be integral to professional activity, ... and for one qualification to cover all these functions is... too broad (251) (italics added)]

When it became clear the CCETSW was proposing to reverse its policy decision on training made in the 'seventies and was contemplating abolition of the two-tier CSS/CQSW system of training, the professional perception of the CCETSW and its training policies shifted markedly and became highly condemnatory. In the British Association of Social Workers' response in 1984 to Paper 20.1 the chair of the BASW stated the CCETSW policy proposal 'is either unaware, or unconcerned, about its impact on social work's existing status in higher education establishments. It also has the arrogance to call for a target date to phase out CQSW and CSS on the basis of a back-of-the-envelope sketch of how training might be organised in future' (252). Of relevance to earlier observations regarding formulation of policy objectives and responses with reference to

250 BASW (1977) op.cit.
251 Ibid p.18
252 Bamford, T., Chair of BASW quoted in Murry, N., 'Two Into One Wont Go - Or Will It?' Community Care 10 May 1984, p.21
interests and perspectives contained within a variety of constituencies, it may be noted the first part of the statement just referred to contains a professional constituency allusion to the damaging impact of the new proposals upon the academic constituency. Though a degree of variation of perspective exists within the professional constituency, concerning, for example, debate of whether a generalist or else specialist orientation is the appropriate model for future professional development of social work, the general pattern of response within this constituency is reflected in Bamford's paper written in 1984. Bamford, a former chairperson of the British Association of Social Workers writes 'because it is difficult to reach agreement on the distinctive features of social work compared with social services work does not necessarily mean that no such distinction exists' (italics added). He further comments 'I do not believe that all those in caring roles in social welfare are of broadly similar

253 For example, Bamford's argument is for a generalist concept based upon the notion of 'transferability' of knowledge and skills 'between settings and client groups' : see Bamford, T., 'Social Work Is Not an Intellectual Activity' Community Care 17 May 1984 p.13. However, Pinker's model of professional development rests upon his advocacy of 'specialism' : see Pinker, R., (1984) in n.233. Pinker, nevertheless, does not rule out 'generalism' completely and argues for a fusion of both concepts in social work education. He recommends the first-year of CQSW courses be generalist, with the second or later years of the course devoted primarily to acquisition of 'specialist' knowledge and skills : see Pinker, R., (1984) in n.235. One of Pinker's concerns is that generalism may shift social work towards the 'de-professionalizing' effects of community social work (see Barclay Working Party Report (1982) op.cit

254 Bamford, T., (1984) op.cit

255 Ibid p.12
ability, nor that all have the capacity to undertake ... (the same) ... training.' (256) (italics added).

THE CONSTITUENCY OF EMPLOYERS

The enthusiastic response of this constituency to the CCETSW proposals for unified training stands in sharp contrast to that of the two previous constituencies. Though voicing reservations about funding arrangements for the new training system and a number of reservations about details of timing and implementation there was a general consensus amongst employers and senior social services managements that the proposals put forward by the CCETSW bore a close resemblance to what employers had been pressing for. Harbert, a Director of Social Services for a large local authority declared Paper 20.1 was 'the most important document to be produced on the social services since Seebohm' (257) (italic added) and Hartnoll, also a Director of Social Services, stated 'training should be based on what social workers should be required to do. Present training does not always achieve this' (258). The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) endorsed 'a single award system ... (and)... supports increased emphasis on a vocational approach to social work training, which would be best developed through a skills based approach' (259) (italics added). The employers had reservations regarding the CCETSW suggestion for lengthening training to three years; though 'the educators along with BASW regarded a third year as vital to prepare social workers for jobs

256 Ibid p.13
257 Harbert, W., reported in Murray, N., (1984) op.cit p.21
258 Hartnoll, M., reported in Murray, N., Ibid
259 'News' Item Community Care 11 July 1985 p.6
involving growing theoretical complexity' (260). The employers doubted that a good enough case had been made for 'the extra funding that a third year would require and called on ... the ... two year courses ... (being made) ... more relevant first' (italic added) (261). On questions of general principle, however, the ADSS welcomed the concept of 'blurring' professional social work and social service roles and supported abolition of the separate CSS and CQSW courses in favour of a new unified training system which would be more practically based than the existing CQSV courses; the ADSS also welcomed the opportunity for increased employer control of training, and stated 'in the past, academic influence on CCETSW has been too pronounced and there has not been the right partnership worked out' (262) (italic added).

Within the employers constituency, probably the most vigorous critic of academic-professional social work education, and also of the professionalising lobby represented in the British Association of Social Workers, has been Harbert the Director of Social Services who welcomed Paper 20.1 as the 'most significant document on the social services since Seebohm' (earlier). The conflict between constituencies amplified through CCETSW's policies in the 'eighties for the reform of social work education is sometimes expressed in mooted form in the various reports and documents referred to earlier. On occasion, tension between constituencies is more vigorously expressed. From the professionalising academic social work constituency, Pinker (earlier) had written in 1984 'the balloon has reached bursting point' and in 1986 following the

260 Maclachlan, R., 'That Was The Year That Was' Community Care 1 January 1987 p.21
261 Ibid
262 Association of Directors of Social Services 'Editorial Comment' Social Services Insight 22 February - 1 March 1986 p.2
publication of Paper 20.6 which indicated a firm decision had been taken to implement the new proposals with effect from 1989/90, Pinkers response was that 'it is time to stop CCETSEW in its tracks' (earlier). Writing in 1985 Harbert in his representation of the employers constituency stated it was essential to have a new unified training system 'which will provide all occupational groups in the personal social services with the same level of training and career prospects' (italics added) (263). He suggested professional social workers resistance to reform was based upon a fear of 'loss of status' (264) and 'arguments have concentrated, not on clients and their needs, but on the extent to which different forms of training might, or might not, confer a higher status upon social work' (265) (italics added). These concerns, he suggests, are 'a sure sign that social work has lost its way. The client has become of secondary importance to professional power and prestige' (266) (italic added). Levied against a profession predicated upon an ethos of service to clients Harbert's indictment is severe; it may be noted the indictment also conflicts with professional charges, discussed in chapter five, that it is managerial bureaucracy and employer policies that stand in the way of 'sound professional practice' in servicing the needs of clients.

Analysis of constituency constructions of the role of social work education within the social work profession, and review of how these constructions shaped the responses of three major constituencies to CCETSEW's policies in the 'eighties for the reform of social work education, may be regarded as an indication of the 'pivotal' location of

263 Harbert, W., 'Crisis In Social Work' Community Care 21 March 1985, p.15
264 Ibid
265 Ibid
266 Ibid
social work education within the social work profession and as an indication of the significance of social work education for a sociology of social work. As Jones had remarked (earlier) 'social work education is no mere appendage of the profession and in many ways it could be considered as one of its centres'. However the theoretical analysis undertaken in the following chapter indicates Jones next remark should be viewed with caution.

'in pursuit of the objectives of socialising students into the mores and methods of social work, social work courses have exercised important regulatory and unifying functions within the profession, and are regarded by social work leaders themselves as one of the crucial places where the social work perspective is established and sustained. The emergence of generic courses in the mid-1950's, at a time of considerable administrative fragmentation within social work is but one of the more obvious indices of this role of social work education as an integrating institution' (267).

A problem here concerns the use of the expressions 'unifying functions', 'the social work perspective', and social work education as an 'integrating institution'. Jones is indeed correct to imply that social work education may serve the causes of professionalisation and professional unity; for example, Seed's historical analysis (earlier) broadly supports Jones's interpretation of the professionally integrative role of social work education in the mid-fifties and later. To speak of 'the social work perspective' and social work education as an 'integrating institution' is, however, inappropriate for other periods in the historical development of British social work. In a later text, Jones (268) clearly recognizes the existence of competing political conceptions of social work and from a (radical) analytic perspective examines these in historical perspective. Of concern here is an observation that social work is multi-paradigmatic. Radical social work and tension between radicals and the professionalising movement in the

267 Jones, C., (1979) op.cit p.72-73
268 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit
'seventies is a prime example of intense competition amongst opposed 'definers' of the role of social work; so also, though in key respects qualitatively different to the 'professional versus radical' debate of the 'seventies, is the earlier analysis of inter-constituency conflicts of interests and perspectives in the 'eighties. While it is possible to argue from a radical structural perspective - as in Jones (269) and other radical writers discussed in chapter three - that social work education has a single function (professional integration) which is structurally 'given' as a 'necessary' reflection (or 'effect') of the systemic needs of capitalism there are, however, a number of problems in explanations of this kind; these problems, examined in detail in chapter two, are primarily theoretical but they have important implications when employed for constructing empirical explanations of social events. From a radical structural perspective events in social work education have a relatively epiphenomenal significance; the patchwork of values, tensions, conflicts which may be found to exist in social work and social work education are explained in terms of their ultimately being a surface-reflection of struggles whose 'real' or 'deep' structural source is the 'interests of capitalism'. From other theoretical standpoints explanations of the type just referred to are held to be defunct, as in Hindess's statement

'... if politics is reducible to the representation of interests given by some underlying social reality, then the representations themselves - the practices of parties, unions, state agencies, and the like - are clearly of secondary importance. Rather than consider the social distribution of interests as given to politics from elsewhere we should consider instead the conditions in which political concerns and interests are formed and the ways in which their invocation may play a role in political life' (270)

269 Ibid
270 Hindess, B., (1986) *op.cit.* p.113
Hindess's argument is that it is erroneous to assume the existence of 'objective' (structurally given) interests of which the respective social actors are subjectively unaware. This is not to say that individuals or groups do not have interests: only that if interests exist they are not the subjectively unperceived ('objective') manifestations of an overarching structured totality of which the respective social actors are merely the local and unknowing representatives. Individual human actors or collective social actors may well possess (a sense of having) interests which they have discursively formulated for themselves in particular times and places under specific (but shifting and complex) conditions which are sometimes largely under their control, at other times under the control of others, or there may be occasions when none of the parties have ultimate dominance of the complex 'conditions of action' surrounding social events. Hindess's contention is that concrete social practices and political activities as between collective social actors (here, associations and groups within the major social work constituencies) have major consequences for the formulation and distribution of political interests. Closer theoretical examination of structural theories of interests and their relevance for a sociology of social work is returned to briefly at the end of the present chapter and developed in detail in chapter two.

Whichever theoretical construction is placed upon the earlier analysis of inter-constituency struggles, in particular theoretical constructions regarding the question of whether social work and social work education has a structurally 'given' historical function ('integration') to perform, there is in the material examined above a large body of supporting evidence for Jones's contention that social

271 Ibid pp.114-115
work education lies at 'the centre' of the social work profession. There is, too, ample evidence for a view that the major social work constituencies have interests, concerns and perspectives which, irrespective of theoretical disagreements concerning interpretation of the hypothetic sources of these interests, are articulated and expressed ('routed') by these constituencies through social work education. It was shown earlier social work education is an arena through which competitive constituencies struggle against each other in an attempt to sustain their definitions of the nature of social work and its role within society. Tensions within social work education may therefore be conceptualised as articulations of tensions in the wider profession: these tensions, as Henkel has noted, are between 'employer influence and educational autonomy, intellectual ability and practice competence, generalist and specialist, education and training, practice and management, elitism and equality, social work and social services'.

Analysis of inter-constituency tensions devolved in and through social work education in the 'eighties serves to illuminate the empirical basis for construction of the research objective stated at the beginning of the chapter; this was formulated as the development of a contemporary sociology of social work with special reference to social work education. The material examined here serves also to provide a point of reference for the detailed analyses of specific social work topics in the following chapters. Each of the issues examined in the present chapter is closely related to three contemporary and also perennial core problematics in the social work profession. These, in the form that they are analysed in chapter three, were briefly mentioned earlier when it was noted they are inter-related. They are, first, the

272 Henkel, M., 'Cutting The Gordian Knot?' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.4, No.1 (Summer) 1984 p.17
problematic of 'theory-practice'; second, 'the politics of social work';
and third, professional and organisational structures and the relation
of these to service-delivery issues.

RESEARCH CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
LOCAL 'SITES'

In the material examined earlier reference was made to major
social work constituencies (academic, professional and employer
constituencies) and to collective social actors (the CCETSW, BASW, ADSS
etc.) located within these constituencies. Part of chapter two contains
detailed analysis of the concept 'site', which is significant in recent
middle-range sociological theory: provisional specification of the use
of this concept is necessary here before proceeding in the final section
of the chapter to an outline description of the theoretical research
framework.

Sites (or 'settings') are locations in space-time. Events and
actor ideas and practices in a particular social work location (setting)
may be shaped by external phenomenon which exist outside the
immediate, directly experienced setting. However in some empirical
instances the flow of social work history does not replicate itself in
the experience of (say) individual social work students or
practitioners. Some experiences, or at least, some aspects of personal
experiences, may be relatively unique and idiosyncratic at the level of
a particular setting or at the level of personal biography. The
empirical occurrence of idiosyncracy (particularity) has theoretical
implications; how idiosyncracy is 'explained' and conceptualised (or
even whether the researcher considers it worth-while to report
setting-specific data from which few if any empirical generalisations
or general historical statements can be constructed) is a general theoretical issue for sociology of social work. Idiosyncracy implies a degree of insulation from structure and history; psychological reductionism and, in sociology, micro-reductionist theories (eg. 'grounded theory' and ethnomethodology discussed in chapter two) rest on a postulate that personal meanings and experiences are setting-specific. Though not individualist, symbolic interactionism also rests largely upon a theoretical framework based upon methodological situationalism. Individual and situational specificity is also one element in Leonard's (273) marxist psychology, referred to in chapter two.
The relation of micro-social phenomena to macro-structures is briefly addressed in the final section of the present chapter, which outlines theoretical aspects of the conceptual framework developed for a sociology of social work. Chapter two examines the notion of 'sites' in closer detail based upon a definition that sites are particular places, physical locations where events take place at particular times; in this sense 'social work education' is not a site because it refers to many sites in different places and different times. This notion is mirrored in a formulation by Lave (274) whose use of the word 'setting' is analogous to the concept of site as physical location. In her analysis of the practices of shoppers, Lave defines supermarkets (plural) as an arena i.e. a general type or category of institutional settings. A setting (a supermarket) is a singular, actually experienced place, as distinct from an arena (supermarkets) which is an institutional category ('a type of place'). Shoppers can walk into a setting and directly

274 Lave, J., 'The Values of Quantification' in Law, J., (ed) (1986) op.cit pp.88-111
experience it; they cannot do this in respect of the arena, because the arena consists of many places scattered through time and space. The observer or researcher who studies only the arena (social work education) as an institutional category runs the danger of failing to check for the empirical existence of situational specificity within a setting (a particular social work course). It is not the arena but the local setting that is 'negotiated' directly by individuals (though this is not, in sociology, viewed as an individualist, solipsistic negotiation but is an intersubjective, interactional process with others). Leonard (earlier) from a marxist perspective emphasised the point being made here, but it does, of course, arise in non-marxist sociology also. An observers' theory that there exist wholly de-contextualized 'macro-structured' ways of thinking, knowing, and practising ignores empirical findings, as in Lave's study, that there is substantial situational specificity of cognitive and practical activity.\(^{275}\) Equally, not all aspects of cognitions, motives, and practices are grounded within or wholly emergent from the local setting; consciousness and practices and their 'negotiation' in local sites are not uninfluenced by the arena (types of sites). The arena is outside of, yet encompasses, the setting and although 'political economy is not immediately addressable'\(^{276}\) in settings, the arena and individual actors are 'dialectically connected through the setting'.\(^{277}\) In this formulation 'The separation of concepts of arena and setting makes it possible to conceive of persons acting-in-settings without denying the existence of macrosocial structures ...',\(^{278}\) and

275 Ibid p.99
276 Ibid
277 Ibid
278 Ibid
without 'denying' the relation of settings to arenas, and the relation of both settings and arenas to wider cultural and structural features of society (or of a profession). At a theoretical level, the postulation of linkages between arenas and sites avoids situationalist micro-reductionism and avoids structuralist macro-reductionism. In the research perspective, avoidance of macro-reductionism does not mean phenomena 'external' to a site are ignored, only that these are not explained in structuralist terms. With regard to the social work profession it is not necessary to conceptualise events in other times and places as external epiphenomenal reflections of a 'deep' or 'unconscious' structural logic which penetrates local social work sites in mysterious ways. The nature and existence of patterns of interconnection of the kind referred to here are regarded as empirically discoverable, not theoretically predetermined. Empirical identification of courses of events that arise within and between sites and arenas is in most fields of enquiry a complex research exercise: but this arises from empirical complexity in the research task, not from the operation of 'unconscious' structures. In principle, relationships between sites and arenas (Lave, above) are empirically discoverable, though this requires a large number of empirical case studies together with, as indicated earlier, a globalizing, comparative and historical perspective to 'integrate' data produced in local sites which, axiomatically, are widely scattered across social space and also have a temporal dimension (279). Relationships between sites or between collective social actors, as in the earlier analysis of inter-constituency tensions in the social work profession, may enter into local sites and shape ideas and practices, including expressions of conflict and the 'taking of

279 This is discussed in chapter two.
sides' that may occur in sites. But there is no invariable or structurally 'given' domination of sites by large-scale institutional 'arenas'. This is suggested by the earlier analysis of competing social work constituencies. If cognitions and practices within a very large number of local sites shift markedly towards endorsement of the view of any single social work constituency, and if this way of thinking and practising is transmitted between sites across space and time, it is possible that this is a significant factor leading to change of the institutional arena itself. Callon and Latour suggest because there is 'no overall architect' to guide events, micro-actors pursuing goals and deploying tactics may swell in size to become macro-actors, which may mean that other, existing macro-actors will become reduced in size. Collective social actors and constituencies may 'expand or contract' and because events are not objective structural or historical necessities their shifting, empirically contingent character means the processes of expansion and contraction are endemically 'reversible'. As depicted earlier, each of the major competing social work constituencies were troubled that the perspectives of their constituency opponents were entering into a large number of sites and shaping ideas and practices which were variously said to consist of anti-professional radical subversion, professional ideological closure, theoreticism 'divorced

281 Ibid p.295
282 Ibid pp.284-296
283 Ibid p.298
284 Ibid
from practice', pursuit of professional status etc. This indicates the relationships between sites and between sites and arenas has social as well as sociological significance: social work actors themselves construct 'links' between micro-social and 'macro'-social phenomena and define these interrelations as crucial to their actions and goals.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Earlier description of the research objective and conceptual framework stated a sociology of social work is constructed through assembly of historical and contemporary sociological and social work materials. In the earlier review of existing sociological writing on social work the point was made that a sociology of social work seeks to draw explicitly upon contemporary sociology and social theory as a resource for engaging in analysis of the social work profession; and seeks to conceptualise the social work profession as a whole, rather than restrict the focus of analysis to investigation of a single, discrete 'component' of the profession studied in isolation from other components. Having established the holistic frame of reference for developing a sociology of social work, evidence was inspected showing social work education is a pivotal component within the social work profession and analysis of inter-constituency tensions in the struggles between competitive social actors who each attempt to define 'social work' in their particular way, revealed these tensions are to a significant extent 'routed' through social work education.

An element within the research perspective is the notion that components of the profession are interrelated and may in some instances have a mutual, dialectical 'shaping' influence one upon the

285 See n.17.
other; as stated earlier, in the research perspective the occurrence, nature, and outcomes of these interrelations are viewed not as theoretically pre-known but as empirically contingent and discoverable variables which, though some of these are associated with social work core problematics which have a perennial dimension, are variously constructed by individual and collective social work actors in different times and places. Despite the existence of variation, some constructions and practices become institutionalised. To the extent that core social work problematics appear (at their most general level of representation) to have a historical, perennial persistence as well as spatial persistence across a large number of local sites, these are viewed not as isolated, exclusively situationalist mental productions of actors in local sites (as in 'grounded theory' methodology) nor as a reflection of cultural logic or structural imperatives (as in structuralist theory). The construction and historical reproduction of even the most amaranthine of social works' 'problematics' arise not from any iron laws of historical or structural necessitity but from an empirically shifting (and complex) set of events, contingencies, processes and outcomes in which individual human actors, collective social actors, institutional 'arenas', and local 'sites' are interpenetrative. Grounding for this research perspective is theoretically sustained through the appraisal of sociological theory in chapter two. Consistent with the theoretical research perspective is the previously noted observation that intentions and practices of individual and collective social actors may remain relatively constant for long historical periods. However, within each historical period these intentions and practices, though perhaps powerfully shaped by previous actors, are consciously constructed by current actors in an attempt to realise their formulations of perspectives and goals, within
which self-ascribed interests may play a part. This is not to say that 'consciously' formulated motives and goals may not in the phenomenology of everyday life sometimes be formulated on the basis of tacit, unreflective knowledge where domain, background assumptions are taken for granted by social work actors, but it is to say that the tacitness of the knowledge upon which some decisions are formulated does not mean that actors have no goals nor that the actors knowledge (tacit or otherwise) or the intentional goal is a representation of 'objective' structurally-given interests, 'necessities', values etc. of which the actor is subjectively unaware. Sometimes the actors knowledge, decisions and practices will be in the interests of, or serve the goals of, other actors; but the interests and goals of these other actors share with those of the first actor the characteristic that they were formulated under particular conditions that are not objective historical expressions of unconscious structural needs. The research perspective does not presume, however, that either individual or collective actors are unconstrained by the contexts within which they operate nor that actors 'know everything'. A large array of factors of which the actor

286 Reference to self-ascribed, consciously formulated interests as a factor in actors' decision-making and goals is not to deny altruism may not also be a factor in social work actions. However in the case of inter-constituency struggles in social work, each of these constituencies claims to be 'altruistic' in the sense of 'helping people' (clients) in the most effective way possible. In the example just given, a task for the empirical researcher is to examine the respective constituency constructions of 'interests' and 'altruism' and to examine the conditions in which these constructions are formulated and the outcomes of these formulations and of actions based upon them. A useful review of the concept 'altruism' in welfare services is Bulmer, M., Neighbours – The Work Of Philip Abrams Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986 pp.103-117.
has little or no knowledge may operate behind the actors back: these include knowledge of the impact of decisions and policies upon other actors and upon large sections of the population, knowledge of the conditions of action which shaped the decisions of other actors, and knowledge of conditions of action which impinge on the actors own situation and on the probability (or otherwise) that the intended outcomes of actions will occur, and be sustained.

For developing a sociology of social work the theoretical sociological framework constructed at the beginning of the research has been revised. The remainder of this chapter, first, briefly summarises core theoretical features in the original theoretical framework, and second, identifies revisions which extend and also modify the original framework though which do not involve abandonment of the initial 'core perspectives'. Some of these revisions have been touched upon in earlier references to the concept of sites, relationships between collective social actors, and problems in structural theories of 'given' interests as an explanation of social actions; in what follows the revisions are commented upon briefly, leaving fuller specification of them for chapter two where they are examined alongside an analysis of contemporary sociology as a resource for sociology of social work.

The original theoretical framework described in Sibeon (287) was intended as an outline of a set of interrelated conceptualisations for developing a sociology of social work. These centred upon the notions of 'duality of structure', 'human agency versus structure', and the relation of social work phenomenologies to institutionalised professional meanings and structures. The

approach was to a large extent grounded in Bergerian sociology, in particular 'social constructionist' formulations developed in Berger and Luckmann. This was developed as a provisional theoretical outline leaving the task of its application to the detailed study of particular social work topics for a later stage in the research. In the period following specification of this theoretical framework in 1981 the availability of new sociological 'middle-range' conceptualisations indicated major revision of the original was appropriate. The original framework postulated a dialectical relation between micro-social and macro-social dimensions of the social work world. Though the concept of micro-macro dialectics ('dualism') was formulated to avoid the reductionisms of methodological individualism, situationalism and methodological collectivism, there were at the time the research perspective was formulated no fully developed systematised theoretical-empirical constructs available for conceptualising phenomenon and processes which lay 'between' personal phenomenologies and macro-structural phenomenon. Hindess's criticism is that sociology and social theory of the 'seventies had been 'plagued' by, on the one hand, the epistemological idealism of methodological individualism, and on the other, materialist presuppositions inherent in methodological collectivism (as in structuralist theory). Hindess is not wholly accurate in his depiction of the main features of sociological theory in the 'seventies (he does not address methodological situationalism - symbolic interactionism in particular - as a significant paradigmatic form). However this does not obviate the

289 Hindess, B., (1986) op.cit. p.113
290 Ibid pp.113-115
conceptual and empirical potential of anti-reductionist conceptualisations developed by him in the 'eighties (these are examined in chapter two). Though far removed from 'crude empiricism' (291) Hindess's argument in part is for development of empirical conceptualisations to replace the 'grand' theoretical schemes of the 'seventies. Bergerian sociology addressed the problem of 'duality' and was designed to avoid precisely the two pitfalls of micro-reductionism and macro-reductionism criticised by Hindess; but Bergerian sociology together with other versions of duality theorisation is restricted conceptually and empirically by failure to precisely specify 'bridging' structures and processes through which 'micro-macro' dialectics are articulated in the real empirical world of social events. Berger and Luckmann's work on dialectical processes in the relation of 'micro to macro' is intentionally abstract; they write 'On the level of theoretical analysis attempted here we cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the different empirical relationships between the contents of socialisation and social structure' (292) (italics added). Other than an earlier structural-functionalist tradition of middle-range theory developed by Merton and others (293) there was in the 'seventies no substantive body of systematically developed, anti-reductionist middle-range theory available within sociology (294). Except for

291 Hindess, B., 'Power, Interests And The Outcomes of Struggles' Sociology Vol.16, No.4 (November) 1982 pp.498-511. Hindess is explicit that he is not making an 'a-theoretical plea for empiricism' (p.510)
292 Berger, P., and Luckman, T., (1972) op.cit p.183
293 See n.9
294 To some extent, this remains this case: the point made here is that significant movement towards systematic 'anti-reductionist' middle-range theoretical and empirical conceptualizations occurred in sociology after the early 'eighties.
duality of structure theorists such as Berger and Giddens, whose work, however, remained at the level of abstract theory just referred to, social theory exhibited the previously noted tendency towards reductionism. This centred upon attempts to account for 'the macro' in terms of micro-social phenomena (i.e. microsociological reductionism) or else, as in those versions of macro-reductionism exemplified in structuralist theory, to account for 'the micro' in terms of macro-social phenomena.

Viewed against the background just described it is apparent in the 'eighties a number of significant breaks with earlier social theory provide an opportunity to incorporate new sociological materials into the development of a contemporary sociology of social work. The most significant of these for revising the research perspective are anti-reductionist conceptualisations of the 'conditions of action' surrounding social practices and events, and clarification of the point that theoretical and empirical recognition of the causal powers of collective social actors is not reificationist; theoretical and empirical work on the means, resources, and strategies developed by social actors in 'actor networks', an example of an actor-network being the various associations and membership groups described in the earlier analysis of social work 'inter-constituency' relationships; formulations as in Latour (295) of performative as opposed to ostensive definitions of culture which also serve to provide a grounding for re-inspection of older sociological concepts in the sociology of knowledge, language and meanings; recent conceptualisations of the theoretical significance of physical locations ('sites') within space-time configurations;

theoretical extensions of the debate of 'human agency versus structure', including renewed sociological interest in the social contexts of decision-making and goal-formulation, and in the concept of unanticipated consequences; and contemporary theoretical and empirical work on transmission and translations of materials across a range of sites and as within networks of relationships between collective social actors. These recent developments in sociology are examined in chapter two.

Developments in social work have also served to produce some theoretical revisions. In some cases these, unlike the sociological precepts listed above, are not in the nature of substantial extension of the theoretical framework itself, but rather, an extension of the range of material covered. For example, a number of social work texts, notably Harris et al. (296) published in 1985 showed that earlier social work debate (297) of 'process versus content' was in the 'eighties being re-inserted into modern social work through attempts to construct a knowledge base by means of a fusion of experientialism and intellectual reasoning. This suggested a possibility that exploration of the sociology of 'oral' and 'written' cultures might serve to illuminate some of the issues involved (see chapter two). A further case is the continued social work interest in 'personalist' radical humanism. Though interest in this particular version of radical social work is not as strongly expressed as in the 'seventies, and has largely been recast in the less theoretical terms of democratisation and decentralisation of organisational

systems and service-delivery patterns, attempts continue to be made in the mid-'eighties to theorise the person-society connection in radical humanist terms. Leonard's work published in 1984 is close to radical humanism, though his marxist materialist theory of the individual is 'harder' than most writers in this tradition; in Fay, Statham and Webb a 'softer' radical phenomenology is visible. These authors directly or indirectly address epistemological issues; any attempt to make these issues fully explicit is necessarily a large project, but because the 'question of epistemology' continues to be raised in recent social work writing as an issue for both radical 'personalist' practice and professional social work it was decided to include material on this topic (see chapter four).

298 Leonard, P., (1984) op.cit
299 This is examined in chapter four in the analysis of radical epistemology.
300 Fay, B., Social Theory and Political Practice London, Allen and Unwin 1977
301 Statham, D., (1978) op.cit
Conceptual developments in the 'new' middle-range sociology of the 'eighties' and to a lesser extent recent developments in social work have in the ways outlined above produced a shift in the sociological theoretical framework originally constructed for developing a sociology of social work. This explains why the original theoretical framework receives less attention in the following chapters than the revisions referred to above (though discussion of Bergerian sociology from which the original framework was derived is included in chapter two). As stated earlier, many of the core perspectives in the original framework are retained. Revisions and re-working of the framework are additional to, not 'instead of' the duality-of-structure precepts contained in the original. That is, new middle-range conceptual and empirical materials developed in sociology during the 'eighties are incorporated as a resource for 'in-filling' an explanatory deficit present in highly abstract theories of duality. To say a general, abstract theory has an empirical or conceptual deficit need not mean it is wholly defunct. The addition of middle-range materials may 'act back' upon the general theory to modify (perhaps extensively) some of its theoretical precepts. Until such time, however, as the general theoretical precepts are shown to be

304 This is not intended to suggest these developments assemble into a unified 'paradigm', though they share common elements: these include a perspective of culture and social action as performative rather than ostensive, a view of social action and its outcomes as empirically contingent and variable, and a rejection of methodological frameworks and theories premised on exclusive commitment to individualist, situationalist, or structuralist conceptualizations.

305 A broadly similar framework is also outlined in Reed, M., Redirections In Organizational Analysis, London, Tavistock 1985 pp.140-147
inherently unproductive for (or refuted by) empirical investigations, a dialectical interchange is possible between the production of social 'facts' and any theoretically sensitising usefulness as may be contained within the general theory. In this respect, though not in most others, the revised theoretical research framework differs from the position taken recently by Hindess who argues duality of structure theorisation should be abandoned for the reason that its effect is to 'merely compound the problems of reductionism by introducing distinct and incompatible principles of reduction' (306). One aspect of this is discussed in chapter two where it is suggested that though synthesis of opposed theories is not feasible where the theories remain in their original antithetical form, it is possible as in Leonard's (307) marxist psychology, and also in Bergerian sociology which 'combines' Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Mead, to re-define concepts as they are 'moved' from one paradigm (or theory) to another. This notion that concepts can be re-appropriated (re-contextualized) is made explicit is Leonard (308) and an interesting social work theoretical statement of the point is Timms's demonstration that the 'same' word-concept 'means' different things when it is moved from the paradigm of the 'diagnostic' school of social work to the 'functionalist' school (309).

Constructing a theoretical synthesis is not an impossible project provided the 'synthesis', if it combines mutually antithetical concepts, does not contradict itself through failure to re-define the cluster of imported conceptualisations so as to make them mutually compatible.

This statement is not nullified by two complicating factors. First,

306 Hindess, B., (1982) op.cit p.499
308 Ibid p.105
309 Timms, N., (1983) op.cit p.79
there is a tension between objectivist and subjectivist theories of human knowledge, including theoretical knowledge, and secondly, paradigms are multi dimensional (in terms of substantive world view, field of study, methodology, epistemology) and inspection of two or more paradigms may reveal they are antithetical in one of these dimensions but congruent in another. These theoretical issues are discussed in chapter two and re-examined in social work terms in chapter four. A related point is that Hindess's rejection of the idea of engaging in theory-building surrounding the debate of human agency and structure is based partly on his premise that to construct a theoretical edifice of the 'either-or' variety (agency or structure) is reductionist and that to combine the two is merely to 'compound' the initial problem of reductionism. A reason for rejecting Hindess' view of this is made explicit in Betts (310) who notes that to engage in theory-building in the form of a conception 'agency and structure' is, first, not theoretical reductionism nor a 'compounding' of reductionism, and second, is a conceptual grounding for empirical work to discover, in the study of any concrete set of circumstances and actions, which parts agency and structure respectively play in human affairs, (311) and in particular, in decision-making, goal formulation and the outcomes of actions. Hindess's work is shown in chapter two to be a major resource for remedying explanatory deficits in dualistic ('micro-macro') theorisation and therefore a resource for developing a contemporary sociology of social work; on the view taken in the research perspective, though not in Hindess, employment of this resource need not be at the cost of abandoning conceptual and empirical insights which

311 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit p.42
accrue from theory-building around the concepts of 'agency and structure'.

In the ways referred to above, the original theoretical framework for developing a sociology of social work has been extensively revised and extended whilst leaving intact many of its core perspectives; in Bergerian sociology a number of major theoretical sensitising ideas, including the concepts of typificatory schemes, intersubjectivity, dialectical relationships between 'sites' and 'arenas' (Lave, earlier), habituation and institutionalisation of meanings through time and social space, retain their heuristic usefulness. However as indicated in the reference earlier to Leonard and Timms on re-contextualization of concepts it is to be expected that when new materials are added to initial core perspectives these perspectives themselves may take on a new light. An illustration of this emerges from Berger and Luckmann (312) who in their sociology of knowledge employ the concepts of externalisation, objectivation, and internalisation as three dialectically interrelated 'moments' in the relationship between micro-social and macro-social phenomena (313). Berger and Luckmann's treatment of these concepts is general, schematic and highly abstract. Their construction of these interrelated concepts, though abstract, should not be abandoned, for the reason that their construction provides a useful theoretically sensitising, and heuristic, general orientation for the study of the history and dissemination of an idea or practice (314). What Berger and Luckmann do not provide is a conceptual-empirical framework to guide empirical investigation of concrete social actions and conditions within which the empirical operation of their

312 Berger, P., and Luckman, T., (1972) op.cit.
313 Ibid pp.78-79
314 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit p.62
formulation may be seen to be present. Callon and Latour's empirical case-study is described in chapter two. Their focus of enquiry is the 'emergent' pattern of relationships between two powerful collective social actors and the empirical processes and strategies ('consignment' of ideas and practices) through which one temporarily gained ascendancy over the other. Callon and Latour's empirical investigation, and the conceptualisations developed by them as part of their empirical study serve to indicate that Berger and Luckmann's abstract formulation of 'three moments in a dialectical process' is a theoretically informative and sensitising heurism. Though the analogy with Bergerian sociology is not perfect, what Callon and Latour describe may be conceptualised as a sequence of ideas and practices which in the relationships between collective social actors shift from externalisation to objectivation to internalisation (316). Equally, Callon and Latour's data are an empirical resource for critical re-inspection of Berger and Luckmann's abstract theoretical construction; in the light of Callon and Latour's study it is clear from their data on empirical processes in the reversibility of externalisations that Berger and Luckmann should have given greater recognition to empirical processes which suggest 'there is no necessary connection between the three stages, and, in particular... there is no necessary connection between externalization and

316 This analogy rests upon an interpretation that these 'three moments' are sequential in the sense noted in Sibeon, R., (1981) op.cit. p.53 and in Betts, K., (1986) pp.62-63
317 This is a question of degree and emphasis. Berger and Luckmann were not wholly unaware of the point made here: see, for example, Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1972) op.cit. pp.139-143 and pp.183-184. Their theoretical awareness of this point did not, however, lead them to consider empirical implications.
objectification. Many innovations are externalized (expressed or acted upon) and perish. They do not become objectified\(^{(318)}\). In Bett's analysis, Berger and Luckmann's formulation of 'three moments' is a conceptual resource for examining both the creation and dissemination of ideas and practices\(^{(319)}\). This suggests in sociology of social work abstract theoretical constructions of 'duality' can be included in the negotiation between (theoretical) concepts and (empirical) evidence. Their inclusion, however, is only one element in a much wider range of theoretical concerns that require critical appraisal in constructing theoretical foundations for a contemporary sociology of social work; this is the task in the next chapter which begins with critique of existing social theories and, from this, construction of an integrated theoretical framework for sociological analysis of the social work profession, including identification of future theoretical and empirical work outside the scope of the present research.

318 Betts, K., (1986) *op.cit.* p.63
319 *Ibid* pp.62-63
CHAPTER TWO

SOCIOLOGY AS RESOURCE FOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL WORK

The purpose of this chapter is to critically evaluate and illustrate in social work terms the varieties of sociological and social theory available to a sociology of social work and from this to amplify and extend the integrated theoretical research perspective outlined at the end of the first chapter. Not only recent theoretical sociology but also some established sociological theories developed in the 'seventies have received very little attention in sociological analysis of the social work profession; this applies to, for example, ethnomethodology and sociological duality-of-structure theorisation, to structuralist linguistics and also Althusserian structuralist marxism.

The bulk of the theoretical material in this chapter is conceptualised in terms of tensions between micro-social and macro-social theories; in sociology this is variously expressed in the form of oppositions between epistemological idealism and materialism or between non-determinist 'versus' determinist theories of human action as in the debate of 'human agency versus structure'. These theoretical
concerns were dominant in large areas of sociological theory during the 'seventies and as will be noted shortly are core concerns in social work also. The seeming intractability of these theoretical oppositions has not led contemporary sociology to turn away from them, although it will be shown later that some recent developments in empirical middle range sociology tend either to not address these theoretical issues directly or, in at least one case, to define them as redundant in empirical sociology. This point was noted in chapter one where it was suggested theoretical constructions of 'agency-structure' should be retained rather than abandoned and complemented by less theoretically abstract middle range empirical 'bridging' concepts. As previously indicated, recent sociological theory—though more empirically oriented than in the 'seventies—continues to address theoretical tensions between micro-social and macro-social theories. Knorr-Cetina argues the 'widening gap between micro- and macro-social theories and methodologies' (1) should be bridged through integrated theories and methods to replace the earlier terms in which 'the micro-macro problem has traditionally been couched' (2). Thomason suggests both idealist (constructionist) theory and realist (materialist) theory contain theoretical deficiencies and argues against dogmatic one-sided commitment to either of these approaches (3). Outhwaite remarks the relationship between constructionist and structuralist theories is 'perhaps the most

2 Knorr-Cetina, K., (1981) op.cit p.16
3 Thomason, B.C., Making Sense of Reification : Alfred Schutz and Constructionist Theory London and Basingstoke, Macmillan 1982
important opposition within contemporary social theory.\textsuperscript{(4)} Vuthnow et.al in adopting the term 'Bergerian sociology\textsuperscript{(5)} indicate a renewal of interest in earlier sociological attempts to construct a dialectical synthesis of micro-social and macro-social concerns. Giddens in his \textit{The Constitution Of Society}\textsuperscript{(6)} published in 1984 provides a further elaboration of the concepts of structuration and duality of structure initially developed in his earlier writing\textsuperscript{(7)}. Hindess although he departs from the above writers in his rejection of the notion of building theoretical integrationist bridges around the concepts of duality and of 'agency-structure' nevertheless is sharply critical of the twin reductionisms of methodological individualism and methodological collectivism\textsuperscript{(8)}.

Issues of duality and agency-structure also figure prominently in social work, at three levels. First, a number of formal social work theories of the client-world are constructed around the concept of individual-society 'connections'. Liberal-conservative professional versions of this social work construction are exemplified in Hollis's psycho-social casework model of social work which conceptually 'links'

\begin{enumerate}
\item Outhwaite, W., (Review) \textit{Network No.25} London, British Sociological Association, (January) 1983 p.17
\end{enumerate}
the client to the wider society(9). Radical 'psycho-social' theories of the client world are contained in radical humanist and also feminist theories which conceptualise the social work client as part of a series of linkages between the personal and the social-political; radical theories of this type are founded upon a range of related concepts which include development of emancipatory critical consciousness (conscientisation) and dialogical casework and groupwork relationships and discourses between radical social work practitioners and client groups. These social work concepts are developed in Leonard (10) Alfero (11) Friere (12) Fay (13) Statham (14) and Webb (15). Second, the concepts of micro-social and macro-social phenomena are conceived of as micro and macro systems in an influential formal theory of social work


intervention, the 'unitary' interventive model developed by Goldstein (16) Pincus and Minahan (17) Specht and Vickery (18) and in Mullen and Dumpson's conceptualisation of social work practice at micro, mezzo (middle-range) and macro levels of intervention (19). Third, the relationship of micro-social to macro-social phenomena, particularly in the form of the debate of whether individual (client) behaviour is socially determined (20) is a routine practical (but also 'theoretical') issue regularly confronted by social workers in their everyday practice in negotiating a 'justice' model or 'welfare' model outcome for clients involved in criminal behaviour. As Hardiker has shown, practice is not a straightforward application of theory (21): nevertheless, the schematic form of the issue referred to here may be said to centre upon the notion that successful social worker demonstration that the offender's behaviour was structurally determined may lead the court to concur with a welfare (therapy or 'treatment') disposal, whereas a non-determinist voluntaristic interpretation of the offender's actions as rational free-willed behaviour implies self-responsibility and a justice model disposal (punishment). This issue is discussed in the context of

16 Goldstein, H., Social Work Practice: A Unitary Approach Columbia, University of South Carolina Press 1973
20 Or, as noted later the text, psychologically determined by inner emotional states of which the unaided client has no knowledge or means of control.
probation officer practices by Hardiker and Webb\(^{(22)}\) and in Whittington and Holland's example of child abuse where the guilty parent may, in one account, be portrayed as engaging in behaviour which is socially determined (response to extreme stress in adverse environmental conditions) or psychologically determined (in the form of a personality defect) or else portrayed as a parent exercising conscious human agency in choosing to strike a 'troublesome' child in which case 'the account is voluntaristic, attributing choice and volition'\(^{(23)}\). The problematic of the relation of micro-social to macro-social phenomenon, in particular the debate of 'human agency versus structure' is, then, present in social work at three levels: first, in professional and also radical formal psycho-social theories of the client world, secondly in terms of formal theories of intervention at micro, mezzo and macro system levels, and thirdly, is routinely negotiated in everyday social work practices surrounding the production of 'justice' or 'welfare' outcomes for clients. To the extent that the relation of micro-social to macro-social concerns is highly significant in sociology and also in social work 'the micro-macro problem'\(^{(24)}\) may be said to be integral to a sociology of social work and also to sociology in or for social work.

In the pages which follow there is a critical assessment of micro-social and macro-social theory with social work illustration of issues raised by these theories; this is followed by analysis of problems and opportunities in employing 'duality' theory together with critical


24 Knorr-Cetina, K., (1981) op.cit p.16
evaluation of recent middle-range sociological materials which were briefly referred to in the first chapter. The chapter concludes with detailed construction of an integrated theoretical framework for the development of a contemporary sociology of social work and with illustrations of the frameworks' theoretical and empirical applications.

MICRO-SOCIAL THEORY

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodological formal theoretical self-descriptions contain a sharp break with the micro-social theories discussed later. However some ethnomethodological studies have produced empirical data which - despite a theoretical intention to the contrary - bear a resemblance to data produced through the action frame of reference in 'conventional' micro-situationalist sociology. The significance of this point for sociological study of social work ethnography is returned to shortly. The basic postulate of ethnomethodology parallels Wittgenstein's notion that 'all meaning is in use'. Garfinkel's (25) concepts of indexicality and reflexivity refer respectively to context dependence of meanings and to the interpretive mental 'work' (loosely analogous to Cicourel's (26) concept of 'interpretive procedures') that actors perform in constructing an ordered sense of reality. A theoretical hiatus between ethnomethodology and situationalist micro-sociology arises through ethnomethodological displacement of the main task undertaken by

microsociology; in ethnomethodological terms the main concern of the researcher is not to analyse or describe the observed phenomena in a social situation but instead to investigate the interpretive procedures employed by actors and by the researcher in formulating (a sense of) those phenomena. Grounded-theory methodology, discussed later in the chapter, postulates social (eg. organisational) reality as a relatively precarious, shifting and negotiable social order: but grounded theory unlike ethnomethodology regards actors constructs both as 'discoverable' by the researcher through conventional methodological means and as elements in the reproduction or change of organisational structure. In Bittner's ethnomethodological perspective of organisations the topic of reproduction of structure is replaced by an analysis of the ways in which the researcher's accounting practices are intermixed with actors' accounting practices (27). In Zimmerman and Wieder the ethnomethodological focus of inquiry is defined as the study of how members of society go about the task of seeing, describing and explaining order in the world in which they live (28). In ethnomethodological terms procedural mechanisms in 'accounting' (constructing an ordered sense of reality) are highly episodic and momentary; each account of 'reality' is produced on the occasion of account-giving and is relativistic in the sense that it is revisable later in the light of new interpretations of the first and each subsequent account. In the accounting chain 'definitions of ... the meaning of situations and actions are interpretations formulated on


particular occasions by the participants in the interaction and are subject to reformulation on subsequent occasions'\(^{29}\). The ethnomethodological presupposition is that no reality ontologically precedes an actors 'account' and that such accounts only provide information about the occasion of account-giving and not about any prior reality. This implies an infinite regress of potentially endlessly renewable and re-formulable occasions of accounting. Entry of the sociological researcher into the accounting chain complicates matters by introducing an account which produces a further removal from 'reality' through sociologically-inspired interpretations of what the actor has already interpreted ('accounted-for') in a lay, commonsensical fashion. An implication is that accounts, whether provided by 'conventional' or ethnomethodological researchers, have an arbitrary, unverifiable character and ethnomethodology remains unclear as to what rules of procedure might be employed to assess the relative adequacy of two or more conflicting sociological accounts: the theoretical problem which ethnomethodology sets for itself but appears incapable of resolving is that it is only possible to know that 'accounts of the occasions of account-giving' are not representative of a pre-existing reality if it is possible to compare the 'accounts of ...' against a prior ontological reality\(^{30}\).

It can be argued these formal theoretical problems restrict the potential usefulness of ethnomethodological theory for sociology of social work. However it was observed earlier some empirical ethnomethodological studies appear in practice to be relatively uninfluenced by the theoretical rubric of ethnomethodology in the sense

\(^{29}\) Wilson, T., 'Normative and Interpretive Paradigms In Sociology' in Douglas, J., (ed) (1971) op. cit p.69

of producing data not dissimilar in form, structure and presentation to data produced by microsociological situational methodologies. Some of these studies are capable of illuminating topics addressed by a sociology of social work. This observation applies to much of the data referred to in Cicourel’s study of the 'processing' of juvenile delinquents and to Sudnow’s study, discussed later, of the situated nature of meaning in the plea-bargaining process in the American judicial system. An attestation of the point being made here is Zimmerman’s ethnomethodological study of a public welfare organisation, the 'Lakeside Bureau' in Michigan, which illuminates current British social work debate of the relation of social work education, formal theories of practice, and actual forms of practice in organisational contexts. Zimmerman's methodological footnotes typify the formal theoretical precepts of ethnomethodology; he states his paper is in no sense intended to 'demonstrate the validity' of his findings and despite a detailed description of his methodology (participant observation) he forewarns readers that his data reportage is a mere gloss to the issue of how in fact the data were collected. The investigator cannot provide a principled account of how he selected, among a range of possible observations, those focussed upon here.

34 Ibid p. 248
Leaving aside Zimmerman's theoretical ethnomethodological disclaimer the form of his actual data though not necessarily, of course, its content, is indistinguishable from the form of data produced in empirical micro-situational sociology. Zimmerman describes how newly trained welfare worker recruits embark upon a training course and internalise the 'applicant-oriented' perspective of the welfare educators; this perspective accords priority to dealing with clients perceived problems, with only secondary emphasis accorded to caseload considerations (36). Applicant-oriented perspectives are founded upon social work concepts of providing supportive therapy based upon an 'accepting' and 'non-judgemental' attitude towards clients (37). As the new recruits gain further organisational experience the influence of the educators' perspective diminishes and the workers moved towards a 'caseload-oriented' perspective (38). This perspective gives priority to the practical problem of successfully managing a high caseload in accordance with official agency criteria. These criteria include keeping the size of caseload within manageable proportions, 'closing' cases as soon as possible, rigorously checking client eligibility to prevent inflated client statements of need, and keeping fully up-to-date with documentary casefiles for scrutiny by senior supervisory staff (39). Newly trained caseworkers initially experienced frustration in reconciling these two perspectives but after further organisational experience they gradually acquired grounds for rationalising their involvement in the organisational 'caseload-oriented' approach and began to talk in 'knowing ways' about the disjunction between their initial

36 Ibid p.251
37 Ibid
38 Ibid
39 Ibid
approach and what later experience had 'revealed' about the practical
task and about the nature of clients\(^{(40)}\). For reasons discussed
earlier, it is doubtful whether the theoretical prescriptions of
ethnomethodology are capable of contributing to the advancement of
knowledge in sociological analyses of social work. However, it can be
argued that because Zimmerman's theoretical ethnomethodological
commitment led him to a preoccupation with actors' accounting of their
situation his empirical data, and those provided in some other
ethnomethodological studies which appear to hold the ethnomethodological
theoretical 'problematic' in abeyance, are empirical resources for a
sociology of social work; these data provide a sensitising 'actor
cognitive' framework for inspecting data from other, non-
ethnomethodological case studies as in the following two empirical
illustrations. Bailey's\(^{(41)}\) description of social work with homeless
families refers to hierarchial organisational structure, formal rules
of eligibility, and resource criteria, and the effects of these upon
clients. Some of the issues raised in Bailey parallel those described
by Zimmerman. There is also an affinity between Zimmerman's
applicant-orientation and caseload-orientation and Epstein's
research typology of three social work perspectives described
as 'professional orientation', 'bureaucratic orientation' and
'client-orientation'\(^{(42)}\). However Bailey and Epstein, though they each
provide significant data on organisationally situated social worker
cognitions and mental constructions of their situation do not provide a

\(^{(40)}\) Ibid p.254  
\(^{(41)}\) Bailey, R., 'Social Workers : Pawns, Police, Or Agitators?' in
Brake, N., and Bailey, R., Radical Social Work And Practice London,
Edward Arnold, 1980 pp.215-227  
\(^{(42)}\) Epstein, I., 'Professional Role Orientation And Conflict
close, phenomenologically-sensitive empirical description of 'accounting practices' in the way achieved in Zimmerman's data. Most existing ethnographic analyses of social work make no reference to ethnomethodology; in the terms just outlined, data provided by at least some 'ethnomethodological' researchers may be regarded as a significant cognitive-oriented data resource for a sociology of social work.

MICROSOCIOLOGY

Grounded theory methodology is formulated in the work of Glaser and Strauss (43) who indicate explanatory theory should emerge from the actors' own data rather than be 'generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions' (44). The researcher should avoid 'any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses' (45). Glaser and Strauss observe an implication of their methodology is that the theory produced by the researcher will be familiar to and understandable by the actors; they refer to

'... systematic discovery of the theory from the ... (actors own) ... data ... Then one can be relatively sure that the data will fit and work. And since the categories are discovered by examination of the data, laymen involved in the area of which the theory applies will usually be able to understand it' (46)

Grounded theory embodies an epistemology (theory of the grounds of knowledge) and a methodology but no formulated ontology (theory of the essence of social phenomena) and does not predict substantive theories about the nature of social phenomena. This does not, of course, mean grounded theory methodologists promulgate the previously discussed ethnomethodological chain of re(accounting) occasions which refer to no

43 Glaser, B., and Strauss, A., The Discovery Of Grounded Theory
44 Ibid p.3
45 Ibid pp.33
46 Ibid pp.3-4
ontologically prior order of phenomena. Nor do Glaser and Strauss suggest structural aspects of the immediate social context, such as a hospital, have no consequences for the constructs and forms of awareness developed by, for example, hospital patients (47). However grounded theory is more narrowly situationalist (site-specific) than most other microsociological perspectives: in this respect grounded theory case studies resemble Eckstein's (48) notion of configurative-idiographic studies which Mitchell (49) notes 'do not easily lead to ... general theoretical interpretations' (50). In Becker's interactionist perspective the macro-referents of localized data are more explicit than in grounded theory methodology, as in Becker's (51) observation that the function of a micro-empirical case study is that it 'attempts to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study. At the same time the case study also attempts to develop more general theoretical statements about the regularities in social structure ...' (52).

Of relevance to the theoretical examination later of oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theory and their significance for

50 Ibid p.195
52 Ibid p.233
sociology of social work it should be noted these are not primarily oppositions between individual and society but between situations and society. Microsociology is situational not individualist and lays emphasis upon processes of interaction through which meanings, definitions and practices are negotiated intersubjectively amongst individuals engaged in communicative exchanges in everyday-life situations. Cooley's dictum that 'a separate individual is an abstraction unknown to human experience' (53) is also made explicit in Simmel (54) and Mead (55). Schutzian phenomenology (56) together with the 'micro' component in Bergerian constructionist sociology (57) share with most versions of microsociology a perspective that 'building-in' actors accounts as an element in explanatory social theory is not solipsistic or individualistic. This is evident in the distinction made by Watkins who notes '... social phenomena must be accounted for by the situation, disposition and beliefs of individuals. This I call methodological individualism' (58) (italic added). Knorr-Cetina reinforces the distinction between methodological individualism and methodological situationalism by emphasising that microsociology is intersubjective and interactionist; it is not concerned with individuals as single actors,

54 Simmel, G., On Individuality And Social Forms : Selected Writings Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1971, p.23
57 See n's 224-229
but with interactions and negotiations in social situations and regards social action as arising from the interlocking of intentionalities rather than from their singular existence (59). This point is returned to later when criticisms of duality theory as a resource for sociology of social work are examined. Nor, as in the earlier reference to Becker, is microsociology entirely 'divorced from structure'. This is noted by Williams who observes Goffman's interactionist sociology is devoted to an understanding of the situated nature of behaviour viewed against the background of politically constituted organisational structures and hierarchies (60).

Micro-social theories of cognitions and practices embody a non-determinist situationalist theory of language in which actors' ideas, actions and language-forms are conjointly 'situated'. Structuralist linguistics, discussed later, defines the use of language in local sites as macro-determined: simply stated, oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theories of actors' use of language centre upon 'controversy ... around the question of whether it is more accurate and useful to determine the meaning of what we say independently of the particular context in which it is said' (61). This controversy is endemic in social work debate of theory-practice, as shown in the examination in chapter four of nomothetic and idiographic constructions of social work knowledge, and it also raises the question of how sociology should conceptualise the 'meaning' of language-concepts employed by social workers. A micro-situational perspective of social

60 Williams, S., 'Appraising Goffman' British Journal Of Sociology Vol. XXXVII No. 3 (September) 1986 pp.348-369.
work language is supported by Ryle and Findley's (62) methodological
prescription 'Don't ask for the meaning: ask for the use,' (63) which
requires empirical researchers to

'switch their attention from the trouble-giving words in their
dormancy as language-pieces or dictionary items to their
utilization in the actual saying of things; from their general
premises when on the shelf to their particular performances when at
work' (64)

Empirical documentation of particular language uses in a wide
variety of local social work sites may be one method for distinguishing
between macro-determined and micro-emergent linguistic meanings. This
view is evident in Kellner's observation that because it is empirically
difficult to 'distinguish linguistically determined and
linguistically undetermined cognitive moments' (65) the study of
language should concern itself with 'mechanisms of conversation in
everyday face-to-face encounters' (66). Kellner's interpretation is
not dissimilar to Heller's (67) rejection of the view that speech in
micro-structures is a 'signifier' of linguistic macro-structures (68)
and the views of both these writers are at least partly

62 Ryle, G., and Findley, J., 'Use, Usage And Meaning' in Open
University Language And Learning Course Team Language In Education
63 Ibid p.7
64 Ibid
65 Kellner, H., 'On The Sociolinguistic Perspective Of The
Communicative Situation' in Open University Language And Learning
Course Team (1972) op. cit p.79.
66 Ibid
67 Heller, A., 'The Sociology Of Everyday Life' in Himmelstrand, U.,
ed) The Social Reproduction Of Organization And Culture London,
Sage Publications, 1986 pp.150-163
68 Ibid pp.155-157
congruent with Fisherman's (69) concept of 'situational shifting' (70) where 'a situation is defined by the co-occurrence of two (or more) interlocutors related to each other in a particular way, communicating about a particular topic, in a particular setting' (71).

Non-determinist situationalist theories of language, cognition, and practices have a bearing upon the concept of 'front line autonomy' in social work organisations (chapter three). Structuralism and structuralist linguistics discussed in the next part of the chapter lead to a conclusion that front-line autonomy is non-existent, or at least that the concept has a special meaning i.e. that welfare practitioners are relatively passive, pre-determined agents implementing a 'pre-given' discourse of welfare. In contrast, micro-situational theories of language and practice incline towards an interpretation of welfare actors as relatively autonomous 'creative' agents. The relevance of these theoretical issues for sociological studies of social work and welfare is revealed in the following empirical illustrations which embody a theoretical commitment to micro-situational theories of language and practice. Sudnow (72) researched the situated nature of plea bargaining in the American criminal justice system. Bargaining took place between the prosecuting counsel (the District Attorney) the defence counsel (the Public Defender) and the accused person. In Sudnow's study whether plea-bargaining can produce agreement leading to a guilty plea to a less serious charge partly hinges on negotiation of the concept 'normal crime'; 'normal' burglaries, for example, involve no use of weapons.

70 Ibid p.48
71 Ibid
72 Sudnow, D., (1965) op. cit.
little damage to property, theft of only low-priced items, and an 'amateur' as opposed to 'professional' modus operandi in carrying out the offence (73). Wooton in a commentary on Sudnow's data makes the point that definition of what in any particular instance constitutes an actual example of a 'normal crime' cannot be determined with reference to general conventions, but has to be situationally negotiated on each occasion that the question arises. Wooton refers to 'expressions whose meaning relies on the context in which they are used in such a way that attempts to delineate the meaning of words in some more general way are both misleading and incomplete' (74). Wooton's contention that language, meanings and practices are contextual gains a measure of support in Carlen's (75) detailed investigation of magistrates courts where she examined everyday interactions between police officers, probation officers, magistrates, solicitors, and social workers. The situated, particularistic ebb and flow of meanings and negotiations between judicial and welfare professionals in Carlen's study has a contextuality and situated significance which it would be difficult to infer from a knowledge of formal law, abstract rules, official conventions or from an uncontextual general knowledge of the formal professional and occupational functions and tasks of the participants observed 'in situ' by Carlen. A number of other empirical studies in social policy and social work emphasise the micro-situational nature of language, cognition and practice. This perspective is evident, for example, in

73 Ibid p.260
74 Wooton, A., (1975) op.cit p.19
Smith's (76) empirical investigation of decision-making processes in the Scottish system of social work 'childrens panels' and in Rees's (77) empirical study of face-to-face negotiations of meanings between social workers and their clients. Rees observes that his data suggests:

'Piecing together the content of these clients meetings with their social workers involved discovering the sort of knowledge each took for granted, their expectation of one another ... (the data) ... acted as a reminder that the meaning of social work could never be taken for granted. It varied both between clients and social workers and between different clients' (78) (italic added).

Some versions of microsociology are markedly empirically micro-reductionist, as in Silverman's contention that structural factors have explanatory significance only to the extent these factors have subjective meaning and significance for individual human actors (79). Other versions, as in Goffman, are more explicit in incorporating structural factors into an explanatory framework which analytically 'situates' behaviour and cognitions against the wider structural features of the local setting. A greater range of variation than can be explored here exists as between the different forms of micro-social theory. However a core general feature of micro-social theory is the high level of emphasis accorded to the explanatory significance of actors intersubjectively formulated accounts in micro-settings; this gains methodological expression in the precept that action and meaning

77 Rees, S., Social Work Face To Face London, Edward Arnold, 1978
78 Ibid p.4
has to be understood 'from the inside' through the use of research methods (particularly participant observation) designed to reveal phenomenologically the actors 'axes of life ... (which) ... are crucial lines of interest in the life of the group ... and constitute frames of reference according to which the group categorizes some of its members'.

Criticisms of the theoretical and methodological procedures employed in micro-social theory are neatly encapsulated in Dreitzel's widely quoted observation that 'the construction of realities may be more influenced by power relations, socialisation processes, and class structures than by the creative interpretations of the actors engaged in interaction' (81). This criticism of micro-situationalist theory leaves open the problem of how social theorists should conceptualise 'patterns which appear to exist but remain unconceived in the phenomenology of the participants' (82). From a conventional marxist perspective participant undesignated meanings as well as some participant designated meanings are a form of structurally induced false consciousness; from a structuralist perspective human meanings are refractions of 'deep' structural or cultural 'logic'. In the research perspective outlined in chapter one 'external' extra-situational macro referents are conceptualised in a form which combines Lave's (83) dialectical concept of sites-arenas with an empiricised middle-range reorientation of


82 Lofland, J., (1971) op.cit. p.34

83 See footnotes to Chapter 1, footnote 274.
duality theorisation and of 'agency-structure' concepts. In this theoretical framework it is not, therefore, structuralist theory, which is added to or combined with micro-social theory to form the integrated research perspective. A number of major theoretical problems in structuralist theory were briefly commented upon in the discussion of social work and social work education in the first chapter. In the following analysis of macro-social theory it will be shown structuralism, including Althusserian structuralist marxism, raises issues of significance for social work theory and practice and for a sociology of social work; however it will also be demonstrated structuralism is theoretically problematic to an extent that limits its potential as a theoretical resource in the development of a contemporary sociology of social work.

MACRO-SOCIAL THEORY

The assessment below of structuralist theory and of its relevancies for sociology of social work is undertaken, first, because structuralism more so than other types of theory is far removed from micro-situationalist theory and is a significant expression of oppositions subsumed in the research perspective as between micro-social and macro-social theories; and secondly, for the reason that structuralism has received remarkably little attention in social work writing. Smart notes structuralist theory 'de-centres' the individual and the emergence of structuralism in sociology during the 'seventies signified a movement from 'subject' to 'structure' (84). A similar observation, this time emphasising the self-regulating

84 Smart, B., *Foucault, Marxism and Critique* London, Routledge, 1985 p.16
synchronic nature of structure is made by Scholes who comments 'At the heart of the idea of structuralism is the idea of system: a complete, self-regulating entity that adapts to new conditions by transforming its features whilst retaining its systematic structure' \(^{(85)}\).

Philp's \(^{(86)}\) analysis published in 1979 merits close attention not least because it is a rare example of an application of structuralist theory to social work. With the exception of a reference to Philp by Hardiker (discussed later) his paper and its implications for sociological analysis of social work remains largely unexamined in social work writing. Philp indicates '... beneath the apparent theoretical freedom in social work there is a form, an underlying constitution to everything that is said. The form creates ... a certain kind of knowledge for social work ... and also limits social workers to it' \(^{(87)}\). Philp's structuralism is not in the form of Levi-Strauss's trans-cultural, trans-historical universal structuralism; contemporary social work is the 'time frozen' product of a specific historical, social and economic situation in the nineteenth century \(^{(88)}\). Social work discourse is a 'regime of truth'; analogous to Saussurian structuralist linguistics Philp's analysis suggests the discourse exists independently of, and determines, speech practices and actions in local sites \(^{(89)}\) and whether the discourse is 'accepted' by social workers is an irrelevant question because the discourse defines social work and 'controls the things that its members say' \(^{(90)}\). The function of

85 Scholes, R., *Structuralism In Literature* New Haven, Conn. Yale University Press, 1974 p.10
87 Ibid p.84
88 Ibid p.87
89 Ibid
90 Ibid p.89
the discourse is to re-habilitate deviants and return them to society: therefore the social work task is to demonstrate the clients potential sociability and capacity for self-determination and responsible citizenship (91). This is why, according to Philp, social workers though they may draw upon determinist accounts of the clients deviancy never embrace a totally determinist account, such as structural marxism, because this would be a denial of possibilities for clients self-capacity and self-determination to return with social work help to respectable society. However, the function of social work discourse is not to 'speak-for' or 're-present' all deviants for re-incorporation into society. Social work mediates between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak (92). Social works' 'regime of truth' arose in response to nineteenth century fears amongst the capitalist class of social revolt and mob rule (93) and was inserted into the gap between the 'legitimate' working class and the 'residuum' (those deviants who constitute 'ultimate' as opposed to marginal threats against society) (94). Social work can only re-habilitatively 'speak-for' the subjective re-statusing of marginal deviants. Philp comments 'The social worker cannot speak for the florid psychotic, he can only commit him to the objective scrutiny of the psychiatrist. The social worker cannot defend the mass murderer, his objective status is too high, his act overwhelms his subjectivity' (95). Social workers who attempt to speak for those who are ultimate threats to society 'will not be heard' (96) and it is other professions and institutions that deal with deviants of this kind. Social work operates

91 Ibid p.92
92 Ibid p.94
93 Ibid p.96
94 Ibid pp.96-97
95 Ibid p.97
96 Ibid p.98
and mediates between the legitimate working class and the residuum and therefore deals with 'those who ... are a source of disruption in social life ... (but) ... who do not radically threaten social order' (97). The client re-habilitation function is exclusive to social work and 'is the major factor which differentiates ... (the social worker) ... from the policeman, doctor, or psychiatrist' (98). This professional and institutional division of functions is structurally fixed: if members of other professions engage in re-habilitation this is an aberration and not their centrally assigned task (99). Philp also suggests the discourse of social work transcends social work methods: though he refers mainly to individual casework the discourse also governs collectivist community work methods where the task of the community worker is to re-present a neighbourhood 'in terms of its possibilities for autonomous, self-respecting functioning' (100).

Philp's theory is at one level a cautionary rejoinder against voluntaristic conceptions of social workers as culturally and structurally unconstrained agents offering personal psychotherapeutic relationships and 'uses of self' (101) to clients. However his theoretical framework contains theoretical and empirical limitations which severely restrict its usefulness within a sociology of social work. That his theory is (intentionally) deterministic is reflected in his rejection of radical concepts of professional 'closure'. The converse of closure implies a potentiality for the development of critical consciousness enabling radical social workers to

97 Ibid p.109
98 Ibid p.99
99 Ibid
100 Ibid pp.99-100
transcend and transform social work discourse, a transformation not theoretically possible in Philp's analysis\(^{(102)}\). In contrast, Leonard\(^{(103)}\) from a marxist perspective argues cognitive and practical transformation of social work discourse, though politically difficult to achieve, is possible in theory if social workers renounce 'reifications' and 'mystifications'\(^{(104)}\) and avoid 'a reified view of society'\(^{(105)}\). Philp's conception that '... we can describe social work without reference to it's members ...'\(^{(106)}\) signifies his view of social work values, politics and internal conflicts of interests and perspectives between competing social work constituencies as reflections of a fixed historical discourse of rehabilitation that exists because the discourse serves the 'interests of capitalism'. Armstrong, in contrast, refers to formulations of interests not as systemic requirements of capitalism but as conscious attempts by professionals 'to preserve or enhance their market situation, their status position, and their indispensability'\(^{(107)}\). This is not to say Armstrong's hypothesis is empirically sustained; for this, it would minimally be necessary to demonstrate empirically that professionals discursively formulate the interests imputed to them by Armstrong and formulate their intentions.

102 Philp, M., (op.cit) 1979 p.83
104 Ibid p.258
105 Ibid p.261
106 Philp, M., (op.cit) 1979 p.103
and actions in accord with these interests. But it is to say that alternative explanations (of social work actions) other than those provided by Philp are possible. These remarks ought not obscure the fact that Philp's theory has the merit of historical perspective; in the description of the research theoretical framework in chapter one it was briefly noted that some social work meanings are historically institutionalised. Also, analysis in the first chapter of inter-constituency conflicts referred mainly to the period after 1975: however aspects of these conflicts have historical precedents, a point made in chapter three. Social work meanings, intentionalities and the outcomes of actions are not uninfluenced by empirically extant ideas, practices and events in other times and places i.e. are not wholly micro-situational nor wholly contingently emergent in contemporary 'actor networks' comprised of collective social work actors and social work constituencies. . A theoretical difficulty, however, arises from Philp's contention that empirical events and actions in local situations cannot shape or modify social work discourse: in Philp, specific social work actions, practices, struggles etc. have no explanatory significance other than being a predetermined expression of a time-frozen discourse produced by '... economic, social and political factors in the late nineteenth century ... social work discourse, its theories and practices are not just produced in this situation - it is produced by this situation' (108). An instance of Philp's theoretical macro-reductionist account of empirical phenomena is his analysis of the functions of discourses. Against Philp's interpretation, it can be argued demands for incarceration or punishment-not-therapy for mass murderers, multiple rapists or urban terrorists may reflect popular cultural demands for atonement, deterrence, or protection of society in a sense other than

that connoted by a concept of the objective requirements of capitalism. Additionally, the nature of deviancy and definitions of Philp's concepts of 'ultimate threats against society' and of 'marginal' (rehabilitative) deviancy are socially constructed and variable in time and place, as indicated in the concept of moral panics (109). Street 'muggings' in the 'seventies, and perhaps in the 'eighties child sexual abuse through its social construction in professional social work (110) and the mass media (111) have been variously defined as major social problems and 'ultimate threats' against cherished rights, values, and social institutions - yet social workers typically have a key role in society's 'response' to these social problems (112). Also, notions of perfectibility and capacity for redemption cannot accurately be said to be the prerogative of social work: social movements and self-help groups of various kinds together with some religious traditions embody concepts of enlightenment, redemption and 'return' to established society. A variant of this is where the urban terrorist is later negotiated with as a new political leader. Institutionalised divisions of labour in the allocation of discourses are, then, more empirically complex, shifting and varied than allowed for by Philp. Probation officer social workers deal both with 'petty' and 'serious' criminality. Psychiatrists do not only work with 'psychopaths' and are often regarded


111 Parton, N., 'The Natural History Of Child Abuse' _British Journal Of Social Work_ Vol.9, No.4 (Winter) 1979). Parton refers to the death of a young child (Maria Colwell) and the enquiry which followed this as receiving massive media publicity which established child abuse 'as a major social problem' (Parton, p.442)

112 Parton, N., (1979) op.cit.
as key professional re-habilitative agents in respect of 'marginal deviants' as in the archetypal case of the compulsive gambler or shoplifter; and lawyers defending their clients in court may draw upon precisely those theories ('discourse') used by social workers (client response to environmental stress, personality inadequacy, and capacity to 'turn over a new leaf') so as to avoid or minimize for their clients the severity of a justice model disposal. Though Philp does not closely examine empirical complexity and occupational distribution in the historical-structural allocation of discourses he does not deny these empirical 'complications' exist. These, however, are defined as minor surface-level irregularities which do not affect his theory that the distinctive function of social work discourse (ie. a function not formally shared by other institutions or professions) is re-habilitation of marginal deviants; nor are these empirical variables allowed to affect his conclusion that this single function has a key explanatory significance in reducing all that happens in social work to a 'performance' or 'effect' of this structurally-given historical function.

As noted earlier, Hardiker\(^{(113)}\) refers\(^{(114)}\) to Philp's theory. In doing so she evokes theoretical oppositions between micro-social theory and macro-social theory. In fact, as will be shown below, she attempts to combine micro-social with macro-reductionist theory in the form developed by Philp. Hardiker's empirical work on micro-situated 'usages' of social work cognitions and practices is significant as a conceptual resource in the sociology of social work knowledge. Her data, notably, reveals the existence of a complex diversity of theories

113 Hardiker, P., 'Heart Or Head - The Function And Role Of Knowledge In Social Work' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.1, No.2 (Winter) 1981 pp.85-111
114 For example, Hardiker, P., (1981) op.cit p.102
in social work practice: and shows knowledge and practice is constrained by setting-specific contingencies (e.g. organisational and resource variables) as well as by contingencies operating in the local environment - including other organisations, services and policies - within which the social work organisation is located. At, however, a 'deep' structural level far removed from the local scene, local applications of knowledge and practice are also said by Hardiker to be pre-determined by the historical social work discourse described by Philp (115). In endorsing Philp, Hardiker does so with a degree of empirically grounded caution: she writes '... social work is not totally determined by its structural location, and it is important that the profession exploits the space available' (116) (italic added).

Nevertheless, combining structuralist (macro-reductionist) theories with Hardiker's micro-situational and middle-range (e.g. organisational) empirical data conceptualisations is a theoretical combination that is not easily sustainable. Philp (earlier) had stated local social work activity is determined by its historical macro-structural location: theoretical and practice diversity (this being the exploitable space which Hardiker defines as available for creative, non-determined human agency on the part of social workers) is defined by Philp as a minor surface-level expression of a 'fixed' social work discourse, the subjective 'exploitation' (Hardiker) of this being an irrelevance in Philp's view because 'we can describe social work without reference to its members' (Philp, earlier). It would appear Hardiker turns to Philp's structuralist theory as a macro-referent i.e. as a macro-contextualization of her data on local social work events. This

115 Ibid
116 Ibid p.106
leads Hardiker to two positions. First, she states '... social workers
ideologies have consequences for their actions ...'\(^{117}\) and in order to
encourage appropriate professional interventions and responses to
clients needs Hardiker emphasises human agency-not-structure: she
argues that '... it does matter what conceptual frameworks practitioners
select and use in their direct work with clients'\(^{118}\) (italics added).
Within the constraints imposed by the local setting (eg. organisational,
policy and resource constraints) this suggests conscious 'knowing'
volition and choice\(^{119}\) of theory and method, and amounts to a denial of
Philp's macro-determinist theory of social work discourse and practice.
Hardiker suggests the outcomes produced by consciously selected actions
are variable (different actions have different effects) and these
variations 'matter' because they enter into the social world where they

\(^{117}\) Ibid. p. 100
\(^{118}\) Ibid p. 102
\(^{119}\) Hardiker makes the point social workers often cannot explicitly
describe (to the researcher) the theories that they use (see
is to make these theories explicit and classify them using social
science classificatory terms such as psychodynamic theory, learning
theory etc (Hardiker p. 105). Hardiker is not saying social
workers do not use theory nor does she employ a structuralist
linguistic conception that social workers do not and cannot in
principle 'know' what ideas they hold: social workers draw upon
and use theories which are, however, sometimes tacitly performed
through regular usage and are not described or articulated by them
in the formal language of social science. This interpretation is
evident in Hardiker's references (Hardiker \textit{op.cit} (1981) p.88) to
another text (Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., \textit{Towards Practice
Theory: Skills And Methods In Social Assessments}. London,
Routledge, 1979).
have significant 'real' effects. Second, however, an apparent contradiction arises when Hardiker moves to structure-not-agency and suggests social workers intentionalities - and by implication the outcomes of different intentionalities - in selecting from (say) radical or professional theories and methods (eg. psychotherapeutic casework or political social action strategies) do not matter very much because these are relatively passive predetermined expressions of Philp's structuralist theory of a 'frozen' a priori social work discourse of predetermined 'purposes' and 'outcomes'. Here, Hardiker writes 'I think it matters little whether psychological or sociological language is used when social workers are 'speaking for' clients ... because ... (social workers) ... language is used as a metaphorical rather than an explanatory device to express social work purposes' (120). Hardiker's suggestion that '... different ideologies are not ... mutually exclusive ... and ... (social workers) ... move between and within the various approaches ...' (121) is consistent with an empirically highly significant finding in her earlier research which shows social workers who subscribe to different theoretical and political theories frequently practice in closely similar ways (122). However, that social workers holding different social and political ideologies practice similarly may be a function of the operation of empirical variables (hierarchical controls, actors own perspectives of having certain occupational, organisational or professional 'interests' to sustain, resource availability or lack of access to the means necessary for implementing particular strategies, statutory-given legal functions etc.). Some of these are

120 Hardiker, P., (1981) op.cit. p.102
121 Ibid p.100
122 Hardiker, P., (1977) op.cit
documented by Hardiker herself; they are not, though, variables which 'require' macro-reductionist structuralist explanation. Though Hardiker seeks to avoid both micro-reductionist and macro-reductionist explanatory theory her recourse to structuralism as a macro-referent for avoiding situational reductionism (i.e. for avoiding a reductionist theory that events in local social work scenes are uninfluenced by macro-structural, historically institutionalised phenomena) merely serves to import a theoretical contradiction.

On the one hand structure is explained in terms of human agency: if social workers have conscious choice in selecting from social, psychological, and political theories and practices which have 'real' and differential effects, these consciously selected (structurally undetermined) human actions - where these action-outcomes are aggregated across the sum of the activities of many social workers located in a large number of social work sites - 'enter' into the social world (the aggregate of clients of the social work profession) and in effect 'become' or 'produce' the social (client) world, or at least, 'produce' important outcomes affecting that world.

On the other hand, (professional) human agency is simultaneously explained in terms of structure. Social worker intentionalities in selecting from a range of different political theories and practices (eg. learning theory, psychoanalysis, feminist or radical social work) 'do not matter' because human agency is ostensible not real; local practices and their outcomes are necessary expressions, effects, predeterminations etc. of an historically and structurally 'given' purpose. This suggests the exercise of (social worker) human agency in (say) Davies's(123) anti-radical professional social work.

work, or in Bolger's (124) radical theories and practices directed towards socialist transformation of the capitalist welfare state, have intentionalities and outcomes which 'do not matter'. This is because social worker selection of theories and practices and also the outcomes of all forms of social work activity can be analysed 'without reference to its members' (Philp, earlier). A dialectical (duality of structure) conception of 'agency-structure' shorn of the structuralist theoretical element is not what Philp (or Hardiker) have in mind: the structural(ist) element - social work's 'discourse' - does not depend upon human agency for its reproduction nor can it be acted upon or changed through human agency. It can be argued a duality conception of the relation of micro-situational to extra-situational variables would, as in the research perspective outlined in chapter one, serve theoretically as a macro-referent for Hardiker's 'situated' empirical data. As already noted, however, abstract duality theorisation requires empirical supplementation using 'bridging' middle-range sociological precepts. Empirical deficit in Philp's position may be constrained with empirical specificity in Hardiker's data on the 'situated' production of theories and practices: the relevance of Hardiker's work in the development of a sociology of social work knowledge also stems from the existence of typologized empirical data constructs and classifications already available in her investigations of local social events in a range of social work sites. Micro-social theory employed by Hardiker and in the ethnographic social work studies referred to earlier is necessary for an understanding of events within sites: however a classic weakness of micro-social theory has been its unsuitability for the task of empirically conceptualising relationships between sites.

through space-time. Events in other times and places do have consequences for (and may be shaped by) local events: but it is theoretically possible to demonstrate these external 'materials' (events, ideas, practices and outcomes of actions and policies) and their transmission or translation within and between sites do not require macro-reductionist explanation. However before these issues of theory and empirical method and their relevance for sociology of social work can be explored further it is first necessary to take account of versions of structuralism other than Philp's which have implications for sociological studies of social work: two that are largely absent in social work writing are Althusserian structuralist marxism and Saussurian linguistics.

ALTHUSSE RIAN STRUCTURALIST MARXISM

Althusserian structuralism embodies three main elements. First, a social-determinist materialist theory of human action: a demonstration of striking parallels between Althusser's theory of ideology and Durkheim's theory of religion is outlined in Strawbridge (125). Second, Althusser claims his structuralist marxism transcends the 'crude' economic determinisms of conventional marxism. In Althusser each level of society - economic, political, and ideological - is relatively separate from other levels and their inter-relationships are dialectical rather than linear or causal; in particular, the political and ideological spheres have relative autonomy from the economic sphere. In his writing, however, Althusser comes close to economic determinism

and despite his theoretical intentions has difficulty transcending problems attached to the relative autonomy thesis. Third, related to the two previous postulates, ideology in capitalist society is not false consciousness but a set of material practices. Emphasis upon ideology as material practices has implications for social work and only this aspect of Althusserian structuralism is examined here. In Althusser ideology is a 'true' practical experience arising from practices in the Ideological State Apparatus' (the ISA's) such as the family, the church or the education system: the subject-practitioner is described by Althusser as a person whose 'ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus' from which derive the ideas of that subject. This is exemplified in Althusser's use of Pascal's injunction 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'. This is not akin to Bergerian sociological conceptualisation of 'actors reification'.

126 Althusser's closeness to traditional marxist class-based economic arguments is revealed in his statement that 'no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the Ideological State Apparatus': see Althusser, L., 'Ideology And Ideological State Apparatuses' in Althusser, L., Lenin And Philosophy London, New Left Books, 1971, p.139


128 Althusser (1971) op.cit. p.149

129 Ibid p.158

130 Althusser, L., quoted in Strawbridge, S., (1982) op.cit. p.133
discussed later in the chapter: in Bergerian sociology actors reification (i.e., actors sense of material reality as having a thing-like objective facticity) is 'false' in the sense of being a self-deception (131). In Althusser, it is the converse of actor-reifications that is significant; the actor who believes his or her ideas and practices are 'freely' undertaken is practising a mythical representation of his or her relationship to material reality. Ideology is secreted in roles, practices and rituals in the ISA's and is inscribed into actors consciousness not ideationally or theoretically but practically and performatively. Practice is an immersion in representations which reproduce capitalism; these representations on the one hand have a myth-like aspect, but on the other are opaque but accurate (not 'false') representations of an underlaying reality that has real existence. Whether Althusser succeeds in breaking away from traditional marxist theory of ideology is open to question. His concepts of interpellation and 'hailing' (132) whereby the individual has no 'false' consciousness whilst nevertheless living an imaginary (133) relation to material reality are, at root, concepts which refer to refracted distortions of reality. Abercrombie's observation that '... Althusser is not very precise on this point ... the doctrine remains ... obscure' (134) is taken further in Larrain's demonstration that Althusser's writing reveals reversion to the traditional formula of ideology as false consciousness i.e. as a false representation of the real nature of capitalist society (135). However a literal reading of Althusser's self-

131 Abercrombie, N., Class, Structure And Knowledge Oxford, Blackwell 1980 p.84
132 Althusser, L., (1971) op.cit. p.163
133 Ibid p.155
134 Abercrombie, N., (1980) op.cit. p.125
proclaimed demonstration that ideology is secreted in material reality and in practices and not in 'consciousness' has implications for theories of emancipatory objectives in social work, particularly in radical humanist and feminist theories of social work as a vehicle for the development of client 'critical consciousness'. If ideology is secreted in material reality (as performatively practised) and not in consciousness, the social work project of consciousness-raising is redundant: only transformation of material reality and practices can produce a transformation of consciousness. Conscientisation is only relevant where it is presumed the client has an ideational 'false' consciousness. This is discussed in Leonard's (136) marxist psychology for social workers. Leonard draws a distinction between action-oriented practice and consciousness-oriented practice (137). Action-oriented practice is broadly consistent with Althusser to the extent it accords strong emphasis to transformation of material reality and material practices, not transformation of consciousness. Though altered consciousness may arise through engagement in strategies for social change the main emphasis in this social work mode is organisation and collective action to effect change of the material conditions and practices of existence (138). Consciousness-oriented practice, although cognisant of the need to ultimately develop tactics for securing social change, is initially primarily concerned with changes in consciousness as a necessary 'condition' for action and so primacy is given to self-understanding, critical reflection, and consciousness-raising activities (139). Leonard

137 Ibid pp.209-210
138 Ibid
139 Ibid
suggests practitioner emphasis upon action-or-consciousness should be decided not only theoretically but also pragmatically. If the material needs of clients are 'pressing' (140) emphasis should be placed upon action (141); where 'the degree of mystification' (142) in the clients situation is high emphasis should be accorded to consciousness (143). This form of pragmatism is processually though not politically similar to traditional professional casework premised on a hierarchy of client needs in which social worker response to basic material needs (food, clothing, shelter, financial support etc.) take precedence over casework at the level of consciousness and self-understanding. From the standpoint of Philp's structuralist analysis (earlier) Leonard's inclination towards a consciousness-orientation (144) is an instance of the epistemological idealism said by Philp (145) to be a necessary manifestation of a determinate social work discourse which cannot, however, be altered through Leonard's model of conscious critical reflection. Neither, in Philp, is the Althusserian-derived 'action orientation' sustainable: in Philp, social work discourse is said to be immune from change via consciousness or via actions and practices. A related issue arising from Leonard's work is identified in the analysis of the forms of social work knowledge in chapter four, where part of the chapter examines unresolved epistemological problems in social work theories of emancipatory discourse.

140 Ibid p.211
141 Ibid
142 Ibid
143 Ibid
144 Leonard states 'changes in consciousness are clearly necessary to ... the growth of alternative ... practices'. Ibid p.214
145 Philp, M., (1979) op.cit. p.83
A field of structuralist theory that, like Althusserian structuralism, has received virtually no attention in social work writing nor in sociology of social work is structuralist linguistics. Philp's objectivist theory of social work discourse exhibits some of the features of structuralist linguistics. In the light of the earlier examination of Philp's theory it is necessary here to briefly identify only the main elements of structuralist linguistic theory, particularly those drawn upon in chapter four where 'objective' versus 'subjective' conceptions of knowledge are analysed in relation to the problem of social work paradigmatic classification. Structuralist linguistics shares with structuralist social theory a conception of the priority of wholes (systems) over parts (instances). The work of Levi-Strauss (146) may be regarded as an antithesis of the micro-situationalist theories of language discussed earlier. In Levi-Strauss meanings are objective cognitive systems that can be understood through examination of their inner logic without having to examine their referential aspects or their situated, contextual usage in settings: in this sense language is determinist - cognitive and practical activity are 'instances' that are predetermined by 'wholes'. The classic formulation of structuralist linguistics is elaborated in Saussure (147). Saussure accords primacy to langue (language) over parole (speech). Langue is an objective system with a 'deep logic' of its own, a corpus of knowledge which is historically and

structurally given and hidden from actors' consciousness. Because the relationship of parts to wholes, of speech to language, is absent from consciousness the actors' conscious reflection will not 'reveal' the deep logic of langue which can never be grasped in its totality. In Saussure the meaning of a word (concept, theory, sign or symbol) is not its relation to an object but its relation to other words (i.e. the totality of language) and because language (langue) is an unconscious universal structure which is unknown to human actors the 'deep' (or 'real') meaning of words, cognitions, events etc is a surface expression which cannot be penetrated or decoded in 'speech' (parole). In this objectivist conception of language 'it is not we who think and then use words but our language that thinks for us' (148) and therefore 'speech' in local settings is a predetermined and humanly uncognisable expression of langue. The notion that langue is an autonomous object existing independently of its 'practice' by individuals or groups entails a theoretical 'decentring of the subject' in the form expressed, for example, in Barthes postulate that human actors are unbeknowingly 'inserted into language' (149). Of relevance to sociological analysis of social work knowledge, the methodological implication of structuralist linguistics is that because language has an underlying structure of its own, and because speech (parole) is derived from language (langue) and given meaning by it in ways beyond the conscious grasp of human actors, the study of (social work) knowledge should never begin with the micro-situational study of 'speech instances' (parole) but must begin with the study of social work language as a whole i.e. as an autonomous objective facticity which exists independently of its situational expressions. In the (Saussurian)

terms outlined here social work language (langue) does not depend upon social work speech (parole) for its reproduction and speech cannot 'act upon' or modify social work langue.

In the sociology of social work, structuralist linguistics may be regarded as one form of the structuralist theoretical encounter with both micro-social theory and the 'micro' component in duality theory where it is hypothesised that the imputation of objective, autonomous facticity to institutionalised (social work) meanings is an intersubjective actor-reification. In part of the analysis of social work knowledge in chapter four a theoretical construction is developed from which it is postulated structuralist theory of social work cognitions is theoretically and empirically problematic but a quasi-objectivist perspective of human knowledge and practice - provided this perspective is re-worked in the form outlined in chapter four - is a productive theoretical and empirical element in sociological analyses of social work knowledge. More precisely, the re-working proposed in that chapter leads to a postulate that a relative autonomist theory of human language and cognition is theoretically and empirically productive in developing a sociology of social work knowledge. Criticisms of structuralist linguistics per se are largely deducible from the previous critique of Philp and from the earlier assessment of the relevance of micro-social theory for sociology of social work and so require only brief formal statement here. Structuralist linguistics theoretically asserts an objective autonomous 'determination' of discourse: as noted earlier, this assertion is challenged theoretically and empirically by micro-situationalist sociology as well as by duality theories. Structuralist linguistics rejects both a 'competence' micro-situationalist model of language, and a dialectical or duality model of language where the relationship
of langue to parole is defined as dialectical instead of linear or causal. Pro-Saussurian theories of language as in Cullers' concept of the closed 'circle of culture' (150) connote cultural and ideological closure of possibilities for discursively re-defining the social world. From the standpoint of a situated view of language and meaning Glaser and Strauss (earlier) describe a social setting such as a hospital as a negotiated order where meanings are interactively formulated, and where the methodological production of social theory is 'grounded' in the interactive setting. This and related microsociological theoretical perspectives were illustrated earlier with reference to empirical social work and welfare studies of 'situated' constructions of meanings. In contrast, Foucault (151) describes 'clinical discourse' as an objective trans-situational phenomenon. Foucault describes pre-modern conceptions of the sick person as possessing metaphysical, pathological essences and where the physician involves the family of the sick person in the diagnosis and treatment of these essences; developments in anatomical science produced movement to modern scientistic clinical discourse focussing not on 'essences' but technical diagnosis of physical symptoms and based in clinics and hospitals where familial involvement in diagnosis and treatment are largely redundant. As an empirical, historical description Foucault's account is not unconvincing. However the theoretical constitution of his account is determinist. Though Foucault's intention is to transcend structuralism his conception of discourse has a greater degree of 'fixedness' than the writings of most other post-structuralists: in post-structuralism there is no hidden underlying structured form, only a surface level

151 Foucault, M., The Birth Of The Clinic London, Tavistock, 1972
which is existentially chaotic and 'meaningless' \(^{(152)}\). In Foucault's archaeology of knowledge discursive practice is said to be 'a body of anyonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period ...' \(^{(153)}\) (italics added). Foucault's 'clinical discourse' shares an at least general theoretical affinity with Philp's objective 'social work' discourse discussed earlier and the grounds previously adduced for critique of Philp are relevant grounds for critique of Foucault.

MACRO-SOCIAL THEORY: ASSESSMENT AND ALTERNATIVE MIDDLE-RANGE CONSTRUCTS

Theoretical and empirical insights provided by micro-social theory as discussed earlier in the chapter are necessary to the development of a sociology of social work. But a sociology of social work drawing exclusively upon micro-social theory is limited in scope theoretically and empirically. Social work actors in local sites do not always have knowledge of the impact of 'external' phenomena upon their cognitions and actions nor upon the outcome of their actions. Duality theory in the 'seventies conceptualised these external phenomena in vague, sometimes rhetorical terms of 'social structure' or 'culture' without concrete empirical specification or operationalisation of these terms. More recent middle-range sociological constructs allow for conceptualisation of external

152 Post-Structuralism moves far beyond the familiar notion of a plurality of meanings to a 'deconstructionist' philosophical position which posits no cultural 'meaning' (or alternatively any meaning) is possible: see Derrida, J., *Writing And Difference*. London, Routledge, 1978.

153 Foucault, M., (1972) *op.cit.* p.117
extra-situational phenomena as being empirical events, policies, practices and outcomes in other times and places, and also as historically institutionalised and trans-situationally transmitted social work objectives and meanings which (though these may be heavily translated or even transformed within and between sites) affect a wide range of local sites and may in turn be shaped by local ('site') events. Constructs of this kind, particularly those referring to conditions of action in actors' formulation of goals and to actors knowledge of outcomes of actions, may be said to apply not only to individual social work actors but also to collective social work actors, as in the analysis in the first chapter of inter-constituency tensions and relationships between the collective social work actors involved in those constituencies. Tension between micro-social and macro-social theories is said by Outhwaite (earlier) to be the 'most important opposition in contemporary social theory'. In the first chapter it was noted this opposition is capable of being re-formulated in a way that would have been difficult to achieve using the sociological theories available in the 'seventies. Recent middle-range sociological constructs have significant implications for a modern sociology of social work. These constructs in the way that they are interpreted in the research perspective shift attention from the question of whether micro-social and macro-social (extra-situational) variables are interrelated to the question of how these interrelationships might be theoretically and empirically conceptualised; with this in mind, the last part of the present chapter is mainly concerned with transmission of (eg. social work) 'materials' across space and time and with the relationships that may exist between collective social actors and between sites. Structuralist theory in its various forms has influenced and continues to shape intellectual
understandings of these issues (154). Earlier it was suggested structuralism is the most highly salient version of existing macro-social theory relevant to the construction of a contemporary sociology of social work, primarily because structuralism vividly highlights oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theory. The implications of structuralism in its application to the study of specific social work topics continue to be significant: in later chapters it is shown structuralism has implications, for example, when it is deployed in analyses of front-line autonomy in welfare organisations and in terms of conceptual procedure for classifying the forms of knowledge employed in social work. However as a resource for the future development of sociology of social work structuralism appears to have major theoretical and empirical limitations. Some of these limitations have already been touched upon at various points in the first and present chapter. These are accorded a more explicit treatment below in a form which also indicates possible conceptual alternatives to structuralism i.e. which address extra-situational 'macro'-social variables until recently regarded as the preserve of macro-social theories and which micro-situationalist theory has tended to analytically ignore, or at least, has failed to conceptualise in explicit anti-reductionist terms. As argued earlier in discussing Hardiker's reference to Philp, attempts to provide macro-referents for 'micro' situational data are necessary to avoid micro-reductionism; but if the macro-referents are provided through a macro-reductionist framework this merely imports reductionism of another type.

The most significant feature of structuralism is that it is macro-reductionist in its emphasis upon a 'deep' (or 'primary') underlying level of structure which determines the 'surface' (or 'secondary') level

154 Hindess, B., (1986) op.cit p.113
of meanings, actions, and events. Critical rejection of Althusserian structuralism is evident in Thompson's comment that Althusser's theory of economic, political and ideological levels is '... an academic fiction ... these 'instances' and 'levels' are in fact human activities, institutions, and ideas'. In an account of post-marxist sociology Pierson refers to 'simplistic' marxist macro-reduction of struggles surrounding race, gender, generation, and social movements (in such areas as anti-militarism or environmental ecology) to an expression of class struggles. Though structural and structuralist marxism recognises contradictions and ambiguities in capitalist society these ambiguities are in marxism determined 'in the last instance' by the mode of production and the 'interests of capitalism'. Outside the area of general social theory structuralist theoretical precepts have been employed in a number of applied fields some of which have a bearing on different aspects of the social work profession. In the sociology of organisations Marglin analyses organisation variables - particularly systems of rules, division of labour and hierarchial structure - as a form of class domination and Burrell and Morgan consider organisational theory itself as a 'superstructural manifestation of the workings of the economic base of capitalist

155 Craib, I., Modern Social Theory: From Parsons To Habermas
Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1984 p.119
156 Thompson, E.P., The Poverty Of Theory And Other Essays
157 Pierson, C., 'New Theories Of State And Civil Society: Recent Developments In Post-Marxist Analysis Of The State' Sociology Vol.18, No.4 (November) 1984
158 Ibid pp.567-568
societies.' Bolger et al. in an analysis of social work organisations suggest capitalism and hierarchical structure in social services departments are synonymous. In the social policy field Cockburn suggests schooling, family counselling and income-support services function to maintain the relations of capitalist production.


161 Bolger, S., et al (1981) op.cit. Bolger et al state 'The Seebohm departments ... have increased their hierarchy and their authoritarian nature ... this form has been directly lifted from the private enterprise arena' (p.65). Apart from the theoretical arguments discussed in the text, theories that capitalism and hierarchial organizational structures are synonymous do not always address implications arising from the existence of bureaucracy and hierarchy in state socialist societies: a useful description of this is Vale, M., (ed) Poland: The State Of The Republic - Reports By The Experience And Future Discussion Group (Dip) Warsaw London, Pluto Press 1981. An attempt to address this issue is in Salaman, G., Work Organizations: Resistance And Control London and New York, Longman 1979. The argument developed in Salaman is early development in the USSR and other socialist societies relied on organizational forms and techniques imported from western capitalist societies and 'over time, of course, these work practices became established within the USSR' (p.76). The USSR is a 'transitional' rather than fully-developed socialist society (p.37) and absence of non-hierarchial socialist organizations is implied by Salaman to be an aberrant, temporary phenomenon in state socialist societies (pp.34-38). However Salaman's account of the apparent persistence of centralized bureaucracy in socialist economies is unconvincing for reasons implicit in Bradley and Wilkie's account: see Bradley, D., and Wilkie, R., 'Radical Organization Theory: A Critical Comment' British Journal Of Sociology Vol.XXI, No.4 (December) 1980 pp.574-579.

and community development projects in the form of neighbourhood centres and 'local participation' projects are a means of surveillance of the working class. In the sociology of education Sharp (163) analyses face-to-face classroom interaction as functioning for the reproduction of labour in a 'docile' form to meet the economic, political and ideological requirements of the capitalist system. In the sociology of medicine Bury, though primarily concerned with constructionist and structural theory rather than structuralism per se is highly critical of radical macro-social theory which 'too readily conveys the impression that care and welfare are mere facades ... in its preoccupation with medicines' supposed role in social surveillance and control it frequently exaggerates the processes at work' (164).


164 Bury, M., 'Social Constructionism And The Development Of Medical Sociology' Sociology Of Health And Illness Vol. 8, No. 2 (June) 1986 pp. 165-166. However Bury's identification of social constructionist sociology both as negative ideological critique of medicine and as a 'hotch potch of contradictory intellectual snippets' is weakly argued. On the one hand he isolates constructionism for criticism as a relatively distinct, homogeneous paradigm. On the other, he suggests constructionism is characterized by contradictory intellectual disarray: the degree of intellectual disarray glimpsed by Bury is bound to exist if constructionism, on Bury's account of it, is said to include figures as diverse as Berger and Luckmann (p. 139) Foucault (p. 139) Kuhn (p. 154) Barnes (p. 145) with 'polemicists like Illich' (p. 144) Marcuse (p. 144) and Habermas (p. 144). In some respects Bury's criticisms of the role of 'constructionist' sociology in the sociology of medicine are parallel to those of Davies (in chapter one) who identifies 'marxist sociology' as a contamination of professional social work knowledge: see Davies, M., 'On Having Second Thoughts' Community Care 26 February, 1981 p. 16.
At a theoretical level, structuralism embodies a personificationist reification of society, which Dahrendorf rejects on the grounds that 'Society is patently not a person, and any personification of it obscures its nature and weakens what is said about it.' (165). Harre (166) suggests no macro-social variables can be empirically proven to exist above the level of middle-range collectivities such as families, committees or organisations. Harre's empirically radical micro-reduction (or more accurately, middle-range reduction) of macro-social variables has to be viewed with caution: the postulatory empirical existence of historically institutionalised meaning systems or practice conventions and their transmission or translation within and across sites, though not unaddressed by Harre, require closer and more explicit analytic attention than accorded in his work. His conception of supra-individuals as collective social actors is, however, relevant to critique of structuralism and - as discussed later - to sociological analysis of (social work) collective actors conceptualised in non-structuralist terms. Harre's concern is to demonstrate that only 'structured collectivities' may be properly regarded as supra-individuals with causal powers. A structured or 'relational' collectivity exhibits 'real' relationships amongst its members, engendered by legal or conventional demands (as in committees or organisations) or by the social realization


167 Ibid. p.140
of biological links (as in families): included here also is the idea of 'representative action'\(^{(168)}\) taken 'on behalf of' members of a collectivity. In contrast, non-relational taxonomic collectivities\(^{(169)}\) such as 'society', 'the state', 'class' or 'women' have none of the features of structured collectivities i.e. there are no empirically 'real' relationships (interactions) between the members of the collectivity. Also, the members are not homogeneous\(^{(170)}\) and though on some but not all issues they may share particular beliefs this is not in the sense of an individual teaching or persuading another to accept a belief\(^{(171)}\). In Harre's formulation, structured collectivities (supra-individuals or collective social actors) with causal powers do not, therefore, exist in any empirically demonstrable sense above the level of middle-range collectivities\(^{(172)}\). To impute the existence of entities with causal powers above the level of middle-range collectivities (collective social actors) is in Harre's account a rhetorical personification of something which in an empirical sense cannot be proven to 'exist'. An implication of anti-reductionist empirical conceptualisations as in Harre, Hindess and other contemporary writers is that social reform and social work emancipatory strategies are ill-conceived if these are directed against rhetorical (taxonomic) classifications such as 'society', 'the social system', 'capitalism' 'classes' or (as in struggles against gender inequality) against 'men'.

\(^{168}\) Ibid p.141  
\(^{169}\) Ibid p.140  
\(^{170}\) Ibid p.148  
\(^{171}\) Ibid p.141  
\(^{172}\) Harre's formulation is that for an entity to be definable as a supra-individual it has to satisfy three criteria. First, it must be continuous in time. Second, it must occupy a distinctive and continuous region of space or a distinctive and continuous path through space. Third, it must have causal powers. (Ibid).
Taxonomic collectivities do not have causal powers and therefore cannot 'cause' (cannot be causally responsible for) any existing state of affairs (including those that might be adjudged 'bad' or described as social problems) and for the same reason are not entities that can take remedial actions to alter any existing state of affairs. In the terms discussed here, reformist strategies have to be directed against the ideas, activities and policies of specific, identifiable supra-individuals (eg. organisations in the public and private sector, central government departments and 'committees' such as the cabinet or locally constituted committees of representatives as in the system of local government). Social work theories premised upon possibilities for de-mystification of 'the social system' via consciousness-raising are, from the standpoint of contemporary anti-reductionist sociological theory, based upon a redundant personification of 'producers' of inequality (the state, the 'social totality' etc) that do not exist as entities embodying structurally given 'interests' or as entities with causal powers. This is not to say inequalities of power, life-chances and material resources do not exist, nor that all supra-individuals (collective social actors) whose power may wax or wane and is potentially reversible, have at any single point in time equal power or capacity to shape social events; these empirical variables, however, are in contemporary middle-range sociological theory regarded as topics-to-be-investigated which do not affect a theoretical premise that production of the various forms of inequalities is not vested in taxonomic collectivities against whom reformist strategies are therefore redundant.

173 See Hindess, B., (1986) op.cit. n.8, pp.124-125
174 Ibid
It was noted earlier recent critique of structuralist concepts of interests, power and causal responsibility for outcomes is sometimes accompanied by construction of alternative formulations of these concepts. Hindess, cited earlier in the present and previous chapter is perhaps the most influential writer in the development of a 'new' sociology of the middle range. Though Hindess's recent work in most of its aspects is defined as a highly productive theoretical (and empirical) resource for development of a modern sociology of social work, the research perspective departs from Hindess's position in two areas. The first, noted in the first chapter, concerns his rejection of the notion of theory-building around the concepts of 'agency-structure'; the second concerns his criticism of the concept of unanticipated consequences as an explanatory tool in social theory. These are discussed later in the chapter. Hindess appears to have partly shifted from concerns developed in his earlier writing; much of his work in the 'seventies consisted of abstract theoretical analysis and critique of varieties of marxism\(^{(175)}\). A central feature of his writing in the 'eighties is critique\(^{(176)}\) of reductionisms inherent in methodological individualism and methodological collectivism, a form of critique which is combined with construction of anti-reductionist middle range sociological precepts\(^{(177)}\). Other significant recent contributors in the development of 'new' middle-range sociology (particularly Callon and Latour discussed later in the chapter) construct empirical


\(^{(176)}\) See n.8 and n.127

conceptualisations without systematic critique of the existing problems in social theory that their conceptualisations are intended to transcend: in this respect Hindess's work is distinctive (178). Hindess's writing is too wide ranging to discuss in full here; also, some aspects of his work relevant to a sociology of social work are explicit in the earlier references. In at least one respect a degree of affinity exists as between Harre (earlier) and Hindess. Hindess's rejection of personificationist concepts of structure and of 'objective' structurally-given interests is built upon his conception of social actors as individual human actors and as collective social actors (179). An individual or a collective social actor is 'a locus of decision and action where the action is in some sense a consequence of the actors decisions' (180) and one of the implications of this is that 'In so far as 'societal' decisions can be identified they are formulated by specific actors (governments and state agencies) or they are not formulated at all' (181). Hindess is critical of theoretical attempts to explain action in terms of objective interests derived from an actors structural location or membership of a taxonomic collectivity and where the (individual or collective) actor is subjectively unaware of having these imputed interests (182). If actors are said to have 'real' (objective) structurally 'given' interests of which they are unaware it is not clear how the social researcher should distinguish these from other interests eg. those specified by the actor

178 An earlier account of Hindess's combination of critique with re-formulation of social theory is Hindess, B., 'Power, Interests and the Outcomes Of Struggles' Sociology Vol.16, No.4 (November) 1982 pp.498-511
179 Hindess, B., (1986) in n.8
180 Ibid p.115
181 Ibid p.116
concerned and by various other actors, or by the same actor in different circumstances (183): there also arises '... the further problem of the conditions in which actors may reasonably be judged incapable of recognizing their own interests, so that others may be justified in acting on their behalf' (184). Interests may in some concrete instances have important empirical explanatory significance, but the formulation and therefore existence of interests arises through actions, decisions and interactions in the specific situations that social actors are involved in: interests 'that provide no actor with reasons for action can have no social consequences. They are effective in so far as they provide reasons for actors decisions' (185). Interests are the product of actors assessments and framing of objectives in particular situations, and neither the situation, the form of assessment employed, nor the framing of objectives are structurally given; interests therefore 'do not appear arbitrarily, out of nowhere, they are not structurally determined and they cannot be regarded as fixed or given properties of actors' (186). Hindess's theoretical construction of actor-assessments and actors framing of objectives in particular situations was referred to in chapter one where the analysis of social work inter-constituency relationships suggested conflicting interests and perspectives developed by opposed collective social work actors are 'routed' by them through social work education. In that analysis the intentionalities and actions of collective social work actors were described as interactions within an actor-network: and defined as discursively formulated interactions, intentionalities and interests. These

183 Ibid p.116
184 Ibid pp.116-117
185 Ibid p.118
186 Ibid p.120
interactions were conceptualised in terms consistent with Hindess's conception of actors' assessments and formulation of interests, and with his conception of the conditions of action surrounding social events. The events described in chapter one were empirically contingent, not the predetermined playing out of an unconscious historical script in which the actors' perspectives and actions are 'necessary effects' of a social totality. Actors formulate their own interests, perspectives, and actions. These are not 'given' from 'elsewhere', and this also applies to the (shifting and contingent) conditions of action within which actors operate (i.e. make assessments, grasp opportunities, formulate perspectives and strategies etc.). An instance of this was the introduction of the second-tier social services qualification (the CSS) in 1975 which created an opportunity for the employers constituency to evolve a new division of labour in the promotion of social service workers to roles previously defined as professional social work: this in turn lent weight to the construction of an employers perspective that a distinction between social services work and professional social work had become redundant and this perspective was later reinforced by demands from an expanding nucleus of newly promoted CSS-qualified employees for equal pay, training and status vis-a-vis professional social workers. The CSS qualification was more closely influenced by employers and more 'practical' than the 'academic' professional social work qualification (the CQSW) provided in higher education institutions. The latter were increasingly defined by employers as continuing to prepare students for a form of 'professional social work' and division of labour that, after the introduction of the CSS which contributed to a blurring of professional social work and social services roles, did not 'fit' the new conditions and perspectives emerging in social services departments. In these circumstances, new training policies emerged in a
form favourable to the employers constituency. Conversely, the emergent conditions of action within the actor network were from the standpoint of the other constituencies involved (the academic and the professional constituencies) experienced not as facilitating but as constraining phenomena. A special version of this was the role of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work who, because cast in the role of 'policy entrepreneur' within an actor network of conflicting perspectives, developed policies through the strategic mechanism of appealing to a variety of constituencies. Some of the interests and perspectives articulated within the actor network in the period described (1975-1986) have a 'larger' historical and spatial dimension extending beyond the space-time bounded events described in chapter one; this point is developed in more empirical terms in the following chapter. However these space-time bounded events in the actor network could have 'happened otherwise' i.e. could have had different outcomes. They were not 'necessary' manifestations of the structural location of the collective social actors within an overarching 'social totality', and in particular were not 'necessary effects' of objective structurally-given interests. In the terms just outlined, Hindess's theory of interests - when compared with existing sociological and also 'critical' political theoretical accounts of the 'functions' of social work - offers a framework for re-examination of the ways that 'interest-theory' is deployed in existing analyses of social work. Leonard suggests the proper function of critical analysis is 'unmasking the hypocrisy of much current discussion in ... social work ... and of revealing its underlying function, the justification of the present
structure of class, gender and ethnic relations' (187) (italic added). In Leonard's analysis, social work functions are described in terms of an underlaying set of objective structurally-given interests. Though Hindess does not 'remove' the concept of interests from social analysis the opposition between his and Leonard's position is evident. Hindess's postulate is that to deny the idea of 'objective' interests as an explanatory link between (individual or collective) social actors' structural locations and their actions is 'not to say there are no connections between the interests that actors recognise and act upon and their location in sets of social relations. It is merely to say that those interests should not be seen as given by ... actors locations' (188). Opposition between these theoretical positions is explicit in Hindess's view of social reform, though this is not a topic to which Hindess gives much attention. When the concept of social actor is 'extended to aggregates that have no identifiable means of formulating decisions, let alone acting on them .... (such as) ... classes, racial or gender categories' (189) possibilities for political analysis of the conditions and processes involved in social inequalities and for formulating social reform policies are obscured (190).

The research perspective for developing a sociology of social work and, therefore, for interpretation of the pattern of inter-constituency relationships examined in the first chapter does not accord with the whole of Hindess's theoretical position. As noted earlier, Hindess's critique of oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theory is

188 Hindess, B., (1986) p.125 in n.177
189 Hindess, B., (1986) p.124 in n.8
190 Ibid p.125
accompanied by a rejection (191) of the idea of theory-building around the concepts 'agency-structure'. Hindess does not, clearly, suggest human agency in the form of decision-making put into practical effect by social actors is not in some situations a significant empirical variable; nor that on other occasions 'structural' conditions (in the form of constraints situated in the complex conditions of actions surrounding social events) may be a more significant factor influencing outcomes. Rather, his objection is that theory-building around the concept of 'agency-structure' compounds theoretical reductionism and should be replaced by empirically operable conceptualisations as a framework for concrete empirical investigation of patterns of influence, goal-formulation, actors modes of assessments and the outcomes of actions in specific situations. That duality theory in the 'seventies addressed 'the micro- macro problem' and issues of agency-structure at a high level of unempirical theoretical abstraction was noted in the first chapter, and is a point returned to later. Some of these theoretical debates may have an appearance of being interminable or 'sterile' but despite Hindess's reference to these as 'recurrent disputes' (192) they are not inherently empirically unproductive. In evaluating oppositions between structuralism and micro-social theory it is possible, as in the

191 This point is made in Betts, K., 'The Conditions Of Action, Power And The Problem Of Interests' Sociological Review Vol. 34, No. 1 (February) 1986 p. 42. Betts refers to Hindess as 'opposing the attempt to combine agency and fate in theory building' (p. 42) and whilst she concurs with Hindess that to explain behaviour exclusively in terms of agency or structure is reductionist she rejects the idea that combining the concepts is a compounding of reductionism (p. 42). Her position is that both agency and 'structure' may be operative in particular situations, this being a matter for empirical investigation (p. 43).

192 Hindess, B., (1986) p. 113 in n. 8
research perspective for developing a sociology of social work, to reconceptualise and empiricise rather than abandon theoretical constructions of 'agency-structure'. This may be demonstrated through a further re-statement of the analysis in chapter one of social work inter-constituency relationships in an actor-network. For this purpose Betts's (193) work is a suitable illustration of possibilities for incorporating conceptual constructions of the concept agency-structure into empirical analysis of social events in the social work profession. Betts's recent rejection of conventional constructions of the concept 'interests' is broadly in line with that of some other contemporary sociological writers. She indicates the concept of interests is not warranted (i.e. has no explanatory value in social theory or for empirical explanation of social events) if the actor was not subjectively aware of having goals and interests and acted to attain them, or if the policies, cognitions, practices in question were not intentionally planned by someone, somewhere (i.e. second or third party social actors) in pursuit of their interests (194). If there was no intentional planning involved it is a teleological fallacy - that is, explanation of a 'cause' in terms of its 'effects' - to begin with an outcome, policy, practice etc. and 'work backwards' to impute the outcome or practice as a 'realization' of someone's interests (other social actors, dominant power groups etc.). However though it is not theoretically possible to explain causes in terms of effects unless these effects are the result of conscious human agency and intentional planning, there may well be situations of fortuitous co-incidence between an observed outcome and the interests of another party, in which case the other party may

193 Betts, K., (1986) op. cit
194 Ibid. pp.50-51
wish to retain the outcome: this empirical occurrence does not require teleological explanation because the interest did not 'produce' or 'cause' the outcome. A complication, however, in theoretical analysis of agency-structure, interests, and causal responsibility for outcomes arises from the concept of unintended consequences. This is implicit in the analysis of the social work actor-network in chapter one. From the standpoint of the professional constituency the introduction of the CSS qualification in 1975 contributed in later years to 'de-professionalising' outcomes which were hardly intended nor (at least on the evidence examined in the first chapter) foreseen by the professional constituency in the mid-seventies'. Introduction of the CSS was initially perceived by the professional constituency as symbolising and reinforcing a hierarchical division of labour between social services workers ('CSS work') and professional social workers ('CQSW work') and two years after its introduction the British Association of Social Workers declared its strong support for the CCETSW in introducing the two-tier training system. In the ways documented in the first chapter the CSS, however, had the converse effect of setting in train, or at least, of powerfully influencing a course of events culminating in policies designed to formally symbolise and reinforce the de facto blurring of social services roles and professional social work roles in social services departments in the period following the introduction of the CSS as a 'practical' employer influenced form of training. Once this (professionally unanticipated and unwanted) outcome became visible the professional constituency reacted strongly. By 1984, nine years after the introduction of the CSS the British Association of Social

195 Ibid
Workers had switched to a policy of attacking the CCETSW for its response to 'the new circumstances' in social services departments, a response characterized by the British Association of Social Workers as a 'back-of-the-envelope' policy which failed to recognize that social services work is not 'professional social work'. In supporting and facilitating the introduction of the CSS in the 'seventies it is highly unlikely that the British Association of Social Workers had discursive foreknowledge of the professionally-damaging outcomes that later arose from the introduction of the CSS qualification: these outcomes, as will be commented upon below, did not just 'happen' - they arose largely through the (proactive) actions and decisions of other 'non-professional' constituencies within the actor network (particularly the employers constituency and the CCETSW in its role as a policy entrepreneur within the actor network) who grasped new policy opportunities as these became available in the shifting configuration of events after 1975. Other instances of the operation of unanticipated consequences exist in social work: one of these is radical social science critique and 'negation' of professional social work in the 'seventies, an anti-professional critique amplified through social works' movement towards academic social science in the universities as part of the movement to establish a formal

197 Bamford, T., Chair of BASW quoted in Murray, N., 'Two Into One Won't Go - Or Will It?' *Community Care* 10 May 1984 p.21
academic professional knowledge base for social work (199). Hindess (200)
in his middle-range sociology does not employ the concept of
unanticipated consequences and implies it has very little
explanatory usefulness in social theory: he does not say
unanticipated consequences do not occur but, nevertheless, regards the
concept as 'one of the more banal commonplace of the academic social
sciences' (201). In Giddens's theory of duality, the concept of

199 This effect and responses to it is discussed in Sibeon, R.,
'Theory-Practice Symbolizations: A Critical Review Of The
Hardiker/Davies Debate' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.2
(Winter) 1982 pp.119-147

200 Hindess, B., (review) Sociological review Vol.34, No.2 (May) 1986
pp.440-442

201 Ibid p.441. Hindess also asks 'why make a fuss about a few
unintended consequences?' (p.441) and associates use of the concept
with methodological individualism (p.440-441). In the research
perspective the concept, first, is not associated with
methodological individualism. Unintended outcomes may arise from
the actions of collective social actors: the consequences of
unintended outcomes for the social actor, for other social actors
or for a wider configuration of social conditions within which the
outcome can be shown to have effects, is a matter for empirical
assessment in each instance. Some unintended outcomes may have
highly significant effects, others may have empirically
insignificant effects. Second, the concept is not associated with
methodological collectivism. Unintended outcomes do not serve
'hidden' structural needs or objectively 'given' interests i.e
unintended consequences are not latent functions 'performed for
structure' (see n.202). Third, unintended outcomes perceived by
powerful social actors (including those who initiated the action
that produced the outcome as well as second or third party actors)
to be in accord with their interests are more likely to be retained
and disseminated than outcomes perceived by powerful social actors
to be against their interests. Fourth, retained unanticipated
outcomes may enter into the conditions of action as constraining or
facilitating factors affecting the actions of existing and future
social actors.
unintended consequences is said to have explanatory significance as a 'complicating' factor in the dialectics of human agency and structure though Giddens does not proceed to employ the concept in the ways described below. Betts' conceptual framework is constructed around the concept agency-structure and here 'the idea of the unintended consequence is a key concept'. The current context within which social work actors operate is in part a product of the intended and unintended outcomes of the actions of previous historical actors. This conceptualisation of 'structure' as 'context' means that duality theory cannot accurately be criticised as incorporating a form of methodological individualism or epistemological idealism restricted to the idea that it is the (aggregated) outcomes of intentional actions taken by individuals that 'make society'; as noted earlier in the chapter the 'micro' component in duality theory is situationalist not individualist, and the point made here as a further 'removal' from epistemological idealism is that 'structure' as current context may be partly the product of the unintended outcomes of actions taken by previous social actors or by the current actors at an earlier time. This last point is evident in the empirical illustration above regarding the analysis of outcomes in the social work actor-network.

202 Giddens, A., (1982) op. cit p.10. Here Giddens also makes the point noted in the previous footnote i.e. unanticipated consequences do not serve 'hidden' structural needs of the kind posited in structuralist theory or, for example, in Merton's classic reference to the Hopi rain dance as having the latent function of structural integration. The idea of functional pre-requisites as a way of explaining unanticipated consequences of actions is rejected by Giddens because '... social systems have no needs and to suppose that they do is to apply an illegitimate teleology to them' (p.10).

203 Betts, K., (1980) op. cit p.44

204 Ibid
described in the first chapter. Unintended outcomes may arise from the actors (eg. professionalising actors) lack of discursive foreknowledge of the conditions of action within which the outcomes of action operate: following the actors assessment and formulation of goals, the actions and policies arising from the action may be influenced by a shift in a range of other unpredictable factors, including the responses and actions of other social actors (eg. social work employers). To the extent that outcomes (existing conditions) may be partly unintended and unforeseen consequences of previous actions it is teleological to explain unintended outcomes in the current situation as the realisation or effect of someone's interests. But once a situation exists it is not teleological to hypothesise, as in the analysis of the social work actor-network referred to above, that the array of current social actors operating in the situation (which as just noted includes the intended and unintended outcomes of previous social actions) may each seek to retain and preserve those existing 'outcomes' and fortuitous aspects of the situation that appear to be closest to their purposes and discursively-formulated interests. In this sense an explanatory 'step' in the reproduction of structure 'qualifies' the agency-structure formulation in the form that it is conventionally handled in duality theory, through the introduction of the concept of unintended outcomes. Those materials (ideas, practices etc) that individual or collective social work actors 'reproduce' - or alternatively transform - are in part historically institutionalised and persistent through time, in part contingently (and sometimes unexpectedly) produced materials that actors exploit and 'make the best of' in their current space-time situation. The continuity and persistence (or change) of social work situations is largely a function of power, not in the sense of power as a 'fixed capacity' derived from actors' structural locations in a social
totality ('society') but in the sense of variable, shifting differential conditions in the means of action, means for making assessments, access to resources and skill in deploying strategies etc. that are available to competitive social work actors in particular situations at particular times: in this sense '... struggles over divergent objectives really are struggles, not the playing out of some pre-ordained script.'(205) . It was suggested above existing social work ideas, policies and practices perceived by the most powerful actors in the situation to be in accordance with their interests, perspectives and goals are more likely to be 'retained' than other ideas and practices i.e. are more likely to be objectified, institutionalised and disseminated (206) within an actor-network and transmitted across a wide range of other social work sites. In existing situations powerful social work actors may sometimes find themselves in a genuinely 'creative', entrepreneurial role in constructing 'new' ideas or policies, but often the existing situation will be more in the nature of a social scenario in which 'the more powerful actors are selecting innovations from the range that confront them, not creating them' (207) (italic added). In the social work actor-network referred to above the policy entrepreneur (the Central Council for Education And Training In Social Work) was not, in fact, wholly entrepreneurial. In part, it was selecting innovations from the range that confronted it. The CCETSW interpreted its formal role as mediator and as a rational technical policy-making instrument whose role would be impaired if it spoke only for one constituency definition of social work when

205 Hindess, B., (1982) op.cit. p.506
206 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit. pp.62-63
207 Ibid p.63
alternative definitions by other powerful and credible professional constituencies also existed. In the early stages of moving towards alignment with the interests and perspectives of the employers' constituency the CCETSW attempted to retain the role of non-aligned technical policy instrument and 'appealed' to the perspectives contained in a variety of constituencies: this produced ambiguities and contradictions as in, for example, the document (Consultative Document No.3) examined in the first chapter. This is not to say the CCETSW had no influence in shaping events, only that it operated within a scenario which gradually limited the range of policy options open to it. Events following the introduction of the CSS qualification in 1975 had (partly as a result of activities by the employers constituency and the growing CSS lobby) contributed to political closure of policy options by the time that CCETSW announced its policy decision in 1986. It would, for instance, have been politically unrealistic for the CCETSW to propose a return to the pre-1975 situation and to simply 'abolish' the CSS social services qualification whilst retaining a professional social work qualification (the CQSW). This option was largely foreclosed by the recruitment, staff promotion and division of labour policies and perspectives deployed by employers after 1975, and by demands for a 'new' more 'flexible' (208) definition of the social work task articulated by an expanding corps of newly trained CSS-

208 The CCETSW stated it had 'collected persuasive evidence that ... employers are developing an expanded view of social work' which required a unified system of training: see CCETSW Paper 20.6 Three Years And Different Routes: Councils Expectations And Intentions For Social Work Training, London, Central Council For Education And Training In Social Work, 1986 p.4.
qualified social services workers and CSS-trainers (209). The 'new conditions' strengthened the hand of employers, and of newly appointed CSS-staff and their trainers, but 'weakened' the academic and professional constituencies within a shifting 'power scenario' which the CCETSV influenced but also had to be responsive to. In some situations, then, powerful social actors are 'selecting innovations from the range that confronts them, not creating them' (Betts, above). Included here is the notion that powerful social actors are not only selecting from the range of existing opportunities that confronts them, but may also be better placed than other actors to exercise a veto (210) to extinguish or 'damp down' other 'threatening' elements that exist within the range of opportunities in the situation. In the empirical illustration referred to here it has already been noted actors' 'power' and capacities (eg. in 'selecting' or 'extinguishing' opportunities) are not 'fixed-capacity' attributes determined by the actors structural location in a social totality; these capacities are variable and 'move' from one social actor to another in a complex, contingent and shifting configuration of events, actions and outcomes. The role of 'interests' in processes of actor assessments, goal formulation, decision-making and actions is such that 'objective' structural interests are not only not structurally 'given' or 'necessary' determinants of action; they are also not 'given' determinants of action within those collectivities who discursively formulate a set of relatively shared interests and perspectives. In the social work actor-network under discussion here, responses by the


210 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit p.57
academic-professional constituency to the 'threat' posed by the perspectives of the CCETSW and by the employers constituency were not always based upon a shared assessment of the means and strategies available or most appropriate in responding to the threat. Within the academic-professional constituency it was shown in chapter one that Pinker and Carter advocated continued overt political resistance and lobbying against the new proposals, whereas the response to CCETSW's proposals on the part of the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education moved from one of opposition to a strategy of endorsement in principle but with defensive proactive 'resistance' being continued at the level of detailed inter-constituency 'negotiations' that would be necessary to the successful implementation of the new policy (particularly implementation on the abridged time scale requested by the CCETSW). This suggests the concept of 'professional discourse' does not necessarily mean that 'professional interests' will be assessed, formulated or acted upon in every instance (211) nor does it mean intra-constituency dispute might not exist with regard to perceptions of what 'professional interests' consist of and how best to achieve them within particular social situations.

Though it may be premature to speak of a unified emergent middle-range sociological paradigm there are, as indicated above, implications for sociology of social work arising from sociological theories of the middle range developed in the early and mid 'eighties. It has also been noted these conceptualisations have implications for social reform and for a sociology in or for social work. In the perspectives described above forms of inequality are not 'objective' or necessary 'effects' of social structure or of structurally-given 'interests'; also, social

211 Hindess, B., (1986) p.126 in n.177
action, the conditions of action, actors' assessments and goal formulation and the outcomes of actions are complex, variable and not always based on information 'known' to or predictable by social work actors. Though further work outside the scope of the present research is required to assess the detailed implications of these perspectives for social policy and social work practices and interventions at micro, mezzo and macro levels, some of these implications were noted earlier in references to Harre, Hindess and Leonard and are also implicit in Betts's brief reference to social reform: she refers to social reformers 'who do not wish to impose solutions but rather to try to help people make sense of their circumstances and to realise their own goals. For, in fact, what they are doing is trying to push back the unacknowledged conditions of actions and draw a wider scope of social life into a widening circle of discursive understanding and human agency' (212).

In this formulation that which is unacknowledged is not 'false consciousness' in the sense of distorted awareness of structurally-given objective determinants of interests, cognitions, actions and policies, but lack of awareness of conditions of action which are complex, variable, shifting and of a highly diverse and empirically contingent kind. Though the present research is not concerned with sociology in social work it is necessary in sociology of social work to regard social work theories-of-practice as a relevant topic. To speak of revealing the 'unacknowledged' condition of action surrounding social events, ideas, practices etc does not mean the social worker nor the client operate in a moral vacuum nor within the terms of an a-political theoryless practice: in interactions between social workers and clients the question of whose goals should be adopted is important and, in part, rests upon unresolved issues of social work epistemology. The notion that critical consciousness developed in social worker-client

212 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit p.49
interactions does not determine the nature and direction of change. It is implicit in Statham's reference to Miliband and to the idea that 'There is ... no way of knowing today what patterns of relationships will emerge in a liberated society' (213). These issues in the relationship of epistemology to social work action are significant in social work itself and in sociology of social work and are examined in closer detail in chapter four.

It has also been shown in the present chapter that theoretical problems in structuralist theory limit its theoretical and empirical usefulness for a sociology of social work: and that middle-range sociological conceptualisations address issues that previously had remained largely within the domain of macro-social theory. Middle-range sociology is neither a form of epistemological idealism or methodological individualism, nor is it restricted to methodological situationalist perspectives (such as ethnomethodology, grounded theory or symbolic interactionism) which have in the past focussed attention upon the important question of 'what happens' within sites but without according equal attention to the systematic development of conceptual frameworks for investigating relationships across and between sites and relationships between collective social actors. Later in the final part of the chapter there is a closer examination of possibilities for employing sociological theories in the investigation of relationships between social work sites and the transmission of materials (i.e. ideas, policies and practices) across a range of sites through time and social space. First, however, it is necessary to sustain analytically an underlaying theoretical observation made at the end of the first chapter and briefly noted at various points in the analyses.

213 Statham, D., (1978) op.cit. p.53
developed in the present chapter: this concerns the notion that a sociology of social work should retain heuristically sensitising theoretical insights contained in earlier versions of duality theory whilst also critically modifying duality theory's high level of theoretical abstraction through the use of middle-range sociological 'bridging' concepts of the kind described above and returned to in the final section of the chapter.

THEORY OF THE DUALITY OF STRUCTURE

Giddens's concepts of duality of structure and structuration are formulated in an attempt to combine materialist and subjective theories of human action: he suggests

'symbolic interactionists have concerned themselves with the production of a society ... but not with its reproduction. The theory of structuration treats the reproduction of systems of interaction in terms of the duality of structure, whereby the structural generation of interaction is also the medium of its reproduction (215).

In the sense just referred to, structure is both the medium of generating interaction and at the same time the reproduced outcome of it (216) and neither the subject (human actor) nor object (social institutions) have primacy because each is constituted in and through recurrent practices (217). Explication of this relation between human action and social institutions 'comprises the core of an account of how it is that structuration (production and reproduction across time and space) of social practices takes place' (218). Giddens's theory in essence

214 Giddens, A., (1977) op.cit
215 Ibid p.123
216 Ibid p.14
217 Giddens, A., (1982) op.cit p.8
218 Ibid
is an attempt to combine two forms of theory in an integrated theoretical framework: he attempts to avoid, on the one hand, subjectivist idealist notions that the social world is an unconstrained creation of actors, and on the other, a materialist-determinist notion which accords no explanatory significance to actors values, cognitions, purposes, and practices. The concept of structuration refers to a process through which structures are reproduced (or changed) via actors practices within a pre-existing structural context comprised of 'rules' (social conventions and knowledge of the context of their application) and 'resources' ('capabilities of making things happen') which may have either an enabling or a constraining significance for current actors and where the process of structuration is 'complicated' by the operation of unintended consequences which may arise from actors' intentional goals and planned actions.

Bergerian sociology has a general theoretical affinity with Giddens's theory of the duality-of-structure. A dialectical conceptualisation of linkages between micro-social and macro social variables is outlined in Berger (Berger, Berger and Kellner)

219 Giddens, A., (1976) op.cit pp.120-121
221 Ibid
222 Giddens, A., (1976) op.cit p.161
223 Giddens, A., (1982) op.cit p.10
Berger (226) Berger and Berger (227) Berger and Kellner (228). The most systematically developed version of Berger's perspective of 'duality' is in Berger and Luckmann The Social Construction Of Reality (229) although it is in another text The Homeless Mind that the most succinct statement of his theory is provided in an observation that

'The micro-world and what goes on in it only makes full sense if it is understood against the background of the macro-world that envelopes it; conversely the macro-world has little reality... unless it is repeatedly represented in the face-to-face encounters of the micro-world' (230).

Berger describes historically institutionalised meaning systems as having a coercive, constraining influence upon individuals in micro-social life, though three 'escape routes' from social determination are open to social actors; these are described by Berger in his

In most social, historical circumstances the actor is conditioned by historically institutionalised structures and systems of cultural meanings; although the social world is humanly constructed (rather than its form being an 'objective' structural necessity) it is reified through actors own reifications of structure i.e. once the social world has been produced it is perceived and experienced by the human actor as 'reality sui generis'. Construction of the social world occurs through a process of externalization ('outpourings' of human meanings, intentionalities and practices); once produced, however, the social order is objectified and internalised into consciousness as a massively 'real' and 'objective' facticity. In Berger's theory language plays a key role in the processes of objectification and socialisation because 'language is capable of becoming the repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations' (234). Consciousness of radical cultural or

231 Berger, P., (1966) op.cit p.152. Here Berger notes transformation of social structures is in principle possible if radical ideas and (de-legitimating) discourses develop and become widespread.

232 Ibid. This definition of detachment from social structure refers to possibilities for the individual to withdraw from mainstream cultural definitions in favour of counter-cultural or spiritual activities.

233 Ibid p.154. The concept manipulation refers not to transformation of or detachment (retreat) from social structure but to continued involvement whilst also preserving the non-determined authenticity of 'self'. Berger's concept of manipulation is analogous to Goffman's dramaturgical notion of role-distancing where the individual appears to be performing culturally prescribed role-scripts but in reality is 'cynical' i.e. has no inner psychological commitment to the role performance.

234 Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op.cit p.51
practice alternatives is diminished through the process of habitualisation (235) whereby 'socially-approved knowledge' is internalised into consciousness in the form of 'recipe knowledge' and pragmatic 'typificatory' mental cognitions (236). It is when individual human actors in interaction with others engage in a 'reciprocal typification of habitualised actions' (237) (italic added) that the institutionalisation of meanings and practices occurs (238) and in this way meanings become highly crystallized as objective systems and in the 'normal' course of events are experienced as unalterable, natural, and self-evident. Berger's theory of the effects of institutionalised culture and language upon actors ideas and practices draws upon a variety of theoretical and philosophical sources and is broadly congruent with Holzer's concept of 'the natural attitude of everyday life' (239), Sapir's notion of 'language habits' (240), Whorf's idea of 'speech communities' (241) and in particular, Schutz's concepts of typification and socially approved knowledge (242). It may be observed Berger's concept of institutionalised continuity is also present, though in a different form, in contemporary middle-range sociology.

235 Ibid p.71
236 Ibid p.58
237 Ibid p.72
238 Ibid
239 Holzer, B., Reality Construction In Society New York, Schenkman, 1968 p.1
240 Sapir, E., Culture, Language And Personality Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1966 pp.68-69
Contemporary middle-range sociological conceptual frameworks are based upon a view of social life as relatively indeterminate, processual and variable: but in supplanting the fixed, rigid determinations postulated in structuralism contemporary sociology does not substitute chaos for unvarying order i.e. does not rest upon a view of social life as totally indeterminate. Callon and Latour (243) accord emphasis to the shifting, empirically contingent nature of social events but in arguing against the notion of a rigid, predictable system they also note that neither 'is ... (there) ... chaos' (244). Layder (245) in a critical account of Elias's 'figurational sociology' (246) refers to Elias's conception of social life as processual, highly unpredictable and in a constant state of flux and indeterminacy: his objection is that Elias appears to be suggesting there are no relatively enduring structures, only 'figurations in constant flux with neither beginning or end' (247).

Layder's objection is sustainable to the extent that Elias does not treat stability/flux as empirical variables which in each instance remain to be investigated: a related criticism is Layder's observation that Elias constructs an 'either-or' theoretical dichotomy which Layder suggests is 'an illicit dichotomy between complete statis and complete flux' (248) (italics added) and from which Elias theoretically selects the latter. Hindess's position is not congruent with that of duality.

244 Ibid p.282
247 Layder, D., (1986) op.cit p.379
248 Ibid p.378
theorists: as already noted, he rejects duality theory on the grounds it allegedly involves a compounding of reductionism. This point will be returned to later. Like Berger, however, Hindess refers to the historical continuity of some ideas and practices: though Hindess's account of historical continuities is not theorised in Bergerian terms their existence is noted in Hindess's remark that

"... there are no essential structures ... provided by ... a self-sustaining totality ... (but) ... there are ... (some) ... relatively pervasive or enduring social conditions ... sustained not by some necessity inherent in capitalism ... but because they are situated in complex networks of intersecting practices and conditions" (249).

Hindess is consistent to his general theoretical framework in rejecting the idea of a 'given' hierarchy-of-sites with those at 'higher levels' having a structurally determined controlling influence upon other sites (250); but subject to this proviso he refers to the empirical existence of generalized systems of meaning which are pervasive in that they extend to a wide range of sites (251). An element of affinity between Berger's sociology and contemporary sociological middle-range theories extends not only to institutionalised stability and social continuity but also to social change. Contemporary middle-range sociology emphasises system unpredictability and does so with a relatively high degree of empirical precision (as in Hindess's conceptual framework and in Callon and Latour's case study referred to later). In Berger, processes of social change are described at an unempirical level of theoretical abstraction and are also couched in terms of duality concepts employed in modified, more empiricised form by some contemporary writers such as Betts (252) but not by others, for example

249 Hindess, B., (1986) p.123 in n.8
250 Ibid p.122
251 Ibid p.121
252 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit pp.62-63
Hindess. The non-determinist component in Berger's theory of social change is associated with his view that 'The institutional world requires legitimation, that is, ways by which it can be 'explained' and 'justified'" (253). To prevent the emergence of deviant interpretations amongst current or future actors 'the institutional order develops a corresponding canopy of legitimations ... (which are) ... learned by the new generation during the same processes that socialises them into the institutional order' (254). Berger is critical of structuralist or quasi-structuralist theories: in his theory the objective facticity of structure is an actors reification and for this reason the use of concepts like 'functional integration' of 'systems' are regarded by Berger as defective when used without reference to human meanings. An illustration of this point is the use made in marxist social work theory of the notion that 'contradictions' are structural i.e. that they exist within structures: this is evident in Bolger et. al. who state '... for ... marxists, the concept of contradiction within social structures is essential ... the structure is in constant tension ...' (255) (italic added). This may be contrasted with Bergers insistence that 'Functional integration, if one wants to use this term at all, means the integration of the institutional order by way of various legitimatory processes. In other words, the integration lies not in the institutions but in their legitimation' (256) (original italic). In Berger's terms, the converse of the instance of 'legitimation' just referred to is that any crisis ('contradiction') of structural arrangements is not a matter of

253 Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op. cit. p. 79
254 Ibid
255 Bolger, S., et.al (1981) op. cit. p.3
256 Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op. cit. p.224
'contradictions' amongst the structures themselves, but rather, a crisis of legitimation of those structures by social actors. This suggests the concept of a 'legitimation crisis' is in the true sense of the word a crisis of legitimation, not a situation of structural contradiction or systemic ('objective') institutional crisis: a crisis of legitimation is produced through human intentionalities, cognitions and through the intended (and unintended) outcomes of actions. In the first chapter analysis of social work inter-constituency struggles the 'crisis' of social work and social work education in the 'eighties is partly interpreted in the terms just referred to. However analysis of inter-constituency struggles to define and legitimate social work in particular ways cannot rely exclusively upon 'Bergerian' interpretations, for reasons noted in the concluding remarks at the end of the first chapter when reference was made to abstract theoretical formulation of these issues by Berger. The empirical possibility of de-legitimating discourses and practices developing amongst human actors is given theoretical recognition in Berger's concepts of de-reification (257) and de-objectivation (258). However he does not specify nor empirically illustrate the specific conditions of action under which 'de-legitimations' are most or least likely to occur and be successfully imposed within particular sites, within actor-networks, and in particular configurations of circumstances in the (sometimes shifting and variable) relationships between social actors amongst whom are included collective social actors with causal powers. Berger notes modern cultural pluralism implies 'a shared core universe taken for granted as such, and different partial universes co-existing in a state of mutual
accommodation' (259) (italic added) and pluralism 'encourages both scepticism and innovation and is thus inherently subversive of the taken-for-granted reality of the traditional status quo' (260). It is evident statements of this kind - and other highly generalised statements regarding the construction, objectivation, legitimation (or de-legitimation) and transmission of ideas and practices - have no identifiable empirically operable referents. As suggested earlier, the abstractness of duality theory in the form developed by Berger does not mean duality theory has no theoretically sensitising function. For reasons outlined at the end of the first chapter - and in Betts's (261) contention that Bergerian sociology is a theoretical resource for developing more precise empirical frameworks in examining both the creation and dissemination of ideas and practices - it can be argued sociological insights in Berger's theory of micro-macro 'duality' and in particular the concept of 'agency-structure' should be retained provided these are related to more precise middle-range conceptualisations. However two previously mentioned theoretical issues remain to be evaluated in the light of the discussion above of 'duality' theory; these have already been briefly acknowledged earlier in the present chapter and also in the first chapter. They are, first, the question of whether concepts from opposed theoretical schemes are capable of being combined in the form of an 'integrated' theory of the duality of structure; and secondly, the issue of whether a sociology (of social work) which attempts to integrate micro-social theory and macro-social theory merely compounds the problem of reductionism. Berger with Luckmann in The Social Construction Of

259 Ibid p.142
260 Ibid p.143
Reams states his theory of agency-structure and of the relation of macro-social to micro-social variables draws explicitly upon a number of concepts contained in the writings of Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Mead (262). A brief reference to this in the first chapter noted Berger's apparent theoretical eclecticism is controversial. Wuthnow et al conclude 'Berger demonstrates a genuine eclecticism and a propensity for synthesis of the finest kind' (263). An opposite view is expressed in Hamilton's verdict that 'the Berger-Luckmann approach ... is ... derivative ... its theoretically integrationist method is one of the main reasons for its limitations as a theory' (264). Hamilton's construction of the nature of social theory leads him to suggest Berger attempts an impossible task; this is because 'it is in principle not possible to effect a theoretical integration of viewpoints which logically exclude each other ... each theory is exclusive ... (and this) ... positively prevents integration' (265). Here it is necessary to refer to a point briefly commented upon in the reference to 'integrationist' theory in the first chapter (266). That is, the meaning of a concept may be re-defined when incorporated into or combined with concepts from other theoretical or paradigmatic sources. It is worth noting a related process of re-contextualization also occurs at the level of whole disciplines, rather than only at the level of theories or paradigms. In the sociology of education Bernbaum (267) suggests the meaning of sociology in professional training courses for teachers has

262 Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op.cit pp.28-29
265 Ibid p.150
266 See Chapter 1, p.90
267 Bernbaum, G., Knowledge And Ideology In The Sociology Of Education London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1977
developed special characteristics as it has been incorporated into
colleges of education ... it ... has been transformed and transmitted in
a unique form ... (related) ... to ideological qualities ... (in) ... the training of teachers'(268). Similar observations imputing a 'transformation' of the meaning and role of sociology in social work professional education are Armstrong's reference to the role of sociology in providing a form of 'spurious' professional legitimacy (269) and Jones's (270) reference to professional 'looting' (271) of social science concepts: a converse criticism discussed in the first chapter is Davies's (272) contention that when sociology is 'sited' within professional social work discourse its proper function is transformed aberrantly into a polemical attack against that discourse. At the level of theories and paradigms, recontextualization of meaning is evident in Berger and Luckmann's statement of their method of theoretical integration. Re-definition of concepts drawn from a variety of theories means Berger and Luckmann 'are not and cannot be faithful to the original intentions of these several streams of social theory themselves'(273). Berger and Luckmann also acknowledge that re-contextualizing the ideas of other theorists involves 'integrating their thought into a theoretical

268 Ibid p.32
271 Ibid p.89
272 Davies, M., 'What We Have To Learn About Social Work Education' Community Care. 15 January 1981 pp.18-20
273 Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op.cit. p.29
formation that some of them might have found quite alien. (274). Within a marxist social work framework Leonard (275) employs the same theoretical procedure as Berger and Luckmann: a social work marxist materialist theory of the individual is 'not obliged necessarily to reject ... the... findings of ... (conventional) ... psychology, but we must contextualize these findings' (276) (original italic). Leonard does not advocate attempts to construct a straightforward synthesis between Marx and Freud (277) or between Marx and symbolic interactionism (278) because 'Attempts at synthesis are ... open to the objection that Marxist and Non-Marxist philosophical foundations are incompatible ... the argument against synthesis is ... a convincing one' (279). Leonard, however, notes integration in the form of revised combinations of concepts drawn from antithetical theoretical sources is possible: marxism 'should ... be open to possible contributions from outside Marxism' (280) provided there is an attempt to 'revise these concepts' (281) as 'a prerequisite to using transformed versions of ... (non-marxist) ... concepts' (282) (italic added). A further social work illustration of this point is Timms's (283) observation that concept-location has implications for inter-paradigmatic comparisons and classifications where 'the usage of a common set of terms does not guarantee that the same use is being made of the terms.'
He refers to a professional committee appointed to identify areas of agreement between 'Functionalist' and 'Diagnostic' schools of social work: there were jointly held concepts within both schools but these were found 'to have quite different connotations when viewed within the context of the underlying premises of each group'.

Statham identifies processual affinity in concepts employed respectively in consciousness-raising activities and professional social work, but emphasizes these concepts are given different political contextualizations in each of these two approaches and also comments a larger instance of word-concept contextuality is joint endorsement from politically opposed standpoints of concepts such as 'freedom' and 'justice'. Though a wholly subjectivist, contextual theory of knowledge is not advocated in the research perspective, further analysis of this in social work terms is left for chapter four; however, in terms of the issues referred to above it may be argued construction of 'integrated' theories in the sociology of social work is, in principle, a theoretically sustainable procedure.

Reference to Hindess's middle-range conceptual framework in the earlier analysis of relationships between collective social work actors pointed to the value of his theoretical framework as a resource in the future development of a sociology of social work. However the research perspective contains a point of departure from Hindess, noted in the earlier theoretical analysis of the concept of unintended consequences and its empirical application in the first chapter case study of the

284 Ibid p.79
285 Kasius, C., quoted in Timms, W., (1983) op.cit p.79
286 Statham, D., (1978) op.cit
287 Ibid pp.15-17
288 Ibid p.93
activities of collective social work actors. A second departure concerns Hindess's objection to 'integration' in the form of theories of the duality-of-structure, a point briefly commented upon earlier (289).

A subsidiary aspect of this requires initial comment. Hindess in his recent writing does not analyse the significance of micro-situationalist perspectives for social theory generally or for his middle-range conceptual framework. The framework developed by Hindess is intended to replace the 'either-or' macro-reductionist and micro-reductionist tendencies in existing social theories. He suggests modern social theory has been flawed through its attachment either to theoretical humanism or to structural theories where 'the first insists that social life is to be understood in terms of the constituent actions of human individuals. The second analyses social life in terms of the functions of wholes (totalities) in which necessary effects are seen as produced by the actions of structure' (290) (italic added). A problem arising from Hindess's reference to 'human individuals' is that this version of micro-reductionism ('individuals make society') has never been dominant in social theory. As noted earlier in the chapter, microsociology is premised upon methodological situationalism where meanings and practices are intersubjectively 'negotiated' with others (eg. in organisational or community settings) and where it is the interlocking and socially situated formulation of human intentionalities and practices - not their singular, individual existence - that has significance in the production of social actions and their outcomes. In rejecting the twin reductionisms of methodological individualism (291) and methodological

289 See Chapter 1, p.90
290 Hindess, B., (1986) p.13 in n.8
291 Ibid p.117
collectivism\(^{(292)}\) Hindess acknowledges these were 'not the only forms of analysis on offer'\(^{(293)}\) but does not proceed to an assessment of methodological situationalism. Critique based upon juxtaposition of methodological individualism and methodological collectivism carries an implication that the only or at least main feature of existing social theory has been the creation of a false dichotomy between micro-reductionist individualism 'versus' structural macro-reductionist theory. Layder\(^{(294)}\) criticises Elias's\(^{(295)}\) critique of social theory for reasons broadly related to those referred to here. Elias, in arguing for replacement of conventional micro-social and macro-social theories by 'figurational sociology' appears to base his critique of existing social theory upon a characterisation of it as constructed around the two polarities of 'atomistic' individual psychology on the one hand and 'the holism of functionalism' on the other\(^{(296)}\). For reasons already discussed in the first and present chapter, the research perspective for developing a sociology of social work is predicated on the view that micro-situationalist methodology is necessary for analysing the 'situated' (eg. organisational) handling of ideas and practices within social work sites. In the terms used here this includes not only conventional micro-social theories in the form of grounded theory and symbolic interactionist perspectives but also data from ostensibly 'ethnomethodological' studies of accounting practices as in the welfare case studies (in particular Zimmerman) referred to earlier in the chapter. It was also suggested earlier that

293 Hindess, B., (1986) p.113 in n.8
294 Layder, D., (1986) op.cit
295 Elias, N., (1978) op.cit
296 Layder, D., (1986) op.cit pp.372-373
a limitation imposed by micro-situationalist methodology has been that it has generally not become involved in (nor is theoretically equipped for) the construction of theoretical frameworks for conceptualisation of inter-site relationships and transmissions or translations of ideas and practices across and between spatially and temporally dispersed sites. On the view taken here micro-social situationalist perspectives and methodologies are, first, not a form of individualist epistemological idealism (297), and secondly are necessary methodologies in a sociology of social work (and in social theory generally) provided they are supplemented through multi-methodological perspectives which combine ethnographic case study data with data obtained through other methods (inspection of historical documentary accounts and records, and of statistical, survey data covering large sections of the relevant 'populations' or sites under investigation). These methodological issues in combining methods of investigation for analysing data within and across sites through space and time are described more precisely later in the chapter. Hindess, as already noted, refers to methodological individualism and methodological collectivism but does not analyse the role of

297 Reasons for this view that micro-situational theory is not based upon epistemological idealism or methodological individualism are contained in the analysis of social theory earlier in the chapter. Summarily stated these are, first, micro-social theory is interactional not individualist; second, when micro-social theory is combined with middle-range conceptual frameworks it becomes clearer (without recourse to structuralist theory) that situationalism entails no assumption that actors' intentionalities are always successfully 'imposed' to become 'structure' (relevant concepts here are the idea of unintended consequences, and complex conditions of action surrounding actors' assessments, differentials of power and of access to means and strategies available for securing actors' goals).
methodological situationalism: however in the terms just described its role may be said to be significant both within existing, established social theory and also within emergent middle-range conceptual frameworks in recent sociology.

Hindess's main ground for objecting to duality theory rests upon his view that this compounds existing problems of reductionism. For the reason noted by Craib (298) it is not necessary to disagree with Hindess's view that to 'explain' structure in terms of human agency is (micro) reductionist, or that to attempt to explain human agency in terms of structure is also (macro) reductionist. However in a reference to both marxist and non-marxist theories of the duality of structure Hindess refers to '... those forms of marxism which attempt to combine 'subjective' and 'objective' conditions ... or Giddens' argument in New Rules ... These combinations merely compound the problems of reductionism by introducing distinct and incompatible principles of reduction' (299). Hindess therefore rejects 'not only reduction to human creativity or the action of structures but also any fudging of the issues by some combination of the two' (300) (italics added). A number of problems arise from Hindess's formulation. First, as already noted, the 'human creativity' part of the equation is situationalist not individualist and situationalism for those reasons referred to earlier may be said to be a viable perspective for analysing 'situated' events within local sites. Second, introduction of the concept of unintended consequences avoids epistemologically idealist

298 Craib notes 'The different approaches ... come into conflict with each other when they try to account for something to which they are not suited, when they move into each others' territory' : see Craib, I., (1984) op. cit. p.220-221
299 Hindess, B., (1982) op. cit. p.499
300 Ibid
reductionist notions that intersubjectively formulated human agency is always successfully 'imposed' to become 'structure'. Micro-situationalist reduction is further avoided when (intra-site) situationalism is supplemented by Hindess's own conceptualisations of the conditions of action surrounding actors' assessments, actions, and outcomes of action, and when supplemented by investigations of the transmissions of 'materials' (ideas and practices) within and across sites (this is outlined later in the final section of the chapter).

Third, related to the two previous points, it can be argued to engage in theory-building around the central issue raised by duality theory (ie. the concept of 'agency-structure') is not a 'compounding' of two incompatible forms of reductionism. Exclusive one-sided commitment to theories of human agency or structure is reductionist, but a theoretical conception of human agency and structure is not a 'fudging of the issue' in the sense indicated by Hindess and may be employed as a theoretically sensitising resource for developing more precise empirical conceptual frameworks for investigation of intentionalities, actions, and outcomes of actions in the social situations that these occur. This is implicit in the earlier reference to Betts's retention of the concept agency-structure: she comments 'I cannot agree with ... (Hindess) ... when he argues that attempts to combine the two concepts compound ... reductionism' (302). In questioning Hindess's opposition to the idea of attempting to 'combine ... (the concepts) ... in theory building' (303) Betts observes agency and also 'structure' (as current context) play some part in human affairs (304) though assessment of

301 Betts, K., (1986) op.cit.
302 Ibid p.42
303 Ibid
304 Ibid p.43
what part each play in specific social situations is always complex. Often, the two concepts are empirically intertwined, as in the earlier references to the social work actor network described in the first chapter where the causal powers of the collective social actors in influencing outcomes was in some cases facilitated, in others constrained by other factors which were themselves not static. The concept 'human agency' refers to 'agency' exercised on the part of intersubjectively 'linked' individual actors in micro-social situations and to the causal powers of supra-individuals (collective social actors) in influencing or controlling other collective social actors. In some instances, agency may consist of capacity to innovate and create new ideas or practices. In other instances described earlier it may consist of capacity not to innovate but to 'retain' existing favourable unintended outcomes of previous actions taken by the actor concerned or by other actors, and capacity to select from (or 'extinguish') the range of opportunities (i.e. existing ideas and practices) that exist in a situation which may itself change in ways that show 'agency' is variable rather than a fixed attribute or capacity of actors. For these reasons it may be concluded grounds exist to support a view that combining the concepts of agency and structure in theory building is analytically useful and does not involve a compounding of the problem of reductionism.

EMPIRICAL MIDDLE RANGE SOCIOLOGY IN THE WORK OF CALLON AND LATOUR

Further illustration of middle-range conceptualisations of 'agency-structure' in empirically contingent relationships between collective social actors, and assessment of implications for sociological investigations of inter-situational relationships within the social work profession, is possible through consideration of two empirical case
studies discussed below. In the research perspective these case studies by Callon and Latour are regarded as key illustrations, first, of the limitations inherent in macro-structuralist theories of social events; and secondly, as illustrations of middle-range conceptualisations that may be employed to supplement but not replace micro-situationalist (intra-site) theoretical perspectives and methodologies in the sociology of social work. It will also be observed elements of theoretical continuity exist as between theoretical insights developed in duality theory and recent empirical middle-range sociologies. That an interpretive affinity exists between Callon and Latour and the earlier analysis of inter-constituency relationships amongst collective social work actors should also be evident in the account below without having to recapitulate the earlier analysis. Callon and Latour's work - in combination with related but not identical formulations in Hindess, Harre, Betts and other contemporary writers examined earlier - offers a conceptual framework for future empirical investigations of the construction and implementation of policies and programmes in the social work profession, and also in the wider field of public policy studies.

Callon and Latour's\(^\text{305}\) study of strategies employed by two competitive collective social actors (Electricity of France and Renault) is critical of a notion that actors have a 'fixed' or structurally predeterminded 'size'\(^\text{306}\). Actors contingently grow or reduce in size and influence by means of specific transactions and 'translations' and according to the extent that they can successfully enlist ('enrol') the greatest number of durable materials (ideas and discourses, practices, techniques, written contracts, laws and conventions etc)\(^\text{307}\). Growing actors attempt to consign an ever-increasing number of issues to the


\(^{306}\) Ibid p.280

\(^{307}\) Ibid p.284
category of having been settled, established, and dealt with, so that re-inspection or re-negotiation of issues that have been 'consigned' is no longer regarded as necessary: once issues have been consigned and made durable the social actor may address a wider range of issues and audiences and proceed to negotiate and consign other related issues and thereby produce relatively long-lived asymmetries in size between the growing actor and other social actors (308). Though Callon and Latour do not make the analogy (309) themselves there is an affinity between their relatively precise empirical middle-range conceptualisations and the more theoretically speculative, abstract concepts developed in Berger and Luckmann (earlier) in their theoretical concepts of externalization, objectivation, institutionalisation and legitimization of cultural materials in the dissemination of ideas, policies and practices. In Callon- and Latour's study, however, asymmetries in size were reversed and the 'growing' actor (Electricity of France) later diminished in size. In the early 'seventies Electricity of France (EDF) developed a prototype electrically-driven vehicle and through the deployment of a

308 Ibid p.286
309 In drawing this analogy between concepts in Berger and Luckmann and in Callon and Latour a point made earlier in the text is relevant: the meaning of a concept may be paradigmatically-specific or specific in some other contextual sense eg. in terms of the value-dispositions of particular groups who make use of concepts for theoretical or practical purposes. This, however, does not mean all concepts deployed by different theorists are always context-dependent in the sense of their being used in incommensurable ways: the question of comparability is one of degree and has to be assessed in each instance. In the present case, there appears to be an affinity between Callon and Latour's concepts of enlistment and consignment of cultural materials and Berger and Luckmann's concepts of objectivation, institutionalization and legitimation of materials.
range of 'enrolment' strategies appealing to social, economic and environmental considerations. EDF influenced public opinion and a range of social and political institutions; definitions shifted away from the 'Renault' case that petrol-driven vehicles had advantages, and EDF to a large degree succeeded in symbolising petrol-driven vehicles in a way which associated them with city congestion, atmospheric and noise pollution, resistance to consumer preferences, and failure to enter the modern era of the new 'all electric' technology in the transportation field. In this phase of EDF's activities, ideas and discourses and also other social actors were 'consigned'. Advantages were shown to be possible for those service-industries who displayed sufficient foresight in 'gearing up' in advance for the supply of components for the future all-electric technology. Renault itself, who had invested heavily in the future of petrol-driven vehicles, reviewed its policies in an accommodative, self-preserving shift and became interested in the possibility of a new Renault strategy based upon the lucrative possibility of manufacturing chassis components for the new EDF electrical vehicle. The question of whether EDF's strategies and predictions for the future were simply something dreamt up by engineers, or a reality was settled in favour of the latter definition. A 'line of reasoning was being unfolded ... a chain of sequence ... (which defined) ... the margin for manoeuvre ... by the other actors, their positions, desires, knowledge and abilities, what they will want and be able to do is channelled. The electric vehicle 'is thus 'real' ... (and) ... Renault goes along with what EDF

311 Ibid p.289
312 Ibid
313 Ibid
wants, just like the rest of France, moving towards an all-electric future' (314). If, as argued here, these events bear a resemblance to Berger and Luckmann's theoretical construction of processes of externalization, institutionalisation, objectivation and transmission of ideas and practices, what happened next in the course of events described by Callon and Latour was the beginnings of a process of 'de-consignment' (Berger and Luckmann's 'de-objectivation', earlier). Renault became sensitised to perceived dangers in becoming an economic appendage of EDF, and began to 'fight back'. Renault suggested consumer-preferences had been exaggerated by EDF and pointed out that, despite rises in oil and petrol prices, demand for petrol-driven vehicles was in fact increasing. A chink had appeared in the idea-influencing armoury of EDF; as Callon and Latour put it 'the word was out' (315) and a sceptical mood developed, encouraged by Renault, that perhaps other aspects of EDF's successful 'consigning' of issues could be critically re-opened for fresh interpretation. Renault went 'back to the drawing board', re-examined many previous studies and began to reveal a series of technical shortcomings in the EDF electrochemical assumptions about battery power. Renault succeeded in arguing that electric-driven vehicles would be suitable only for certain types of vehicles (lorries of a particular kind) and that even this development lay far in the distant future. After the confrontation, the future of Renault seemed assured and EDF had to 'retire from the field ... withdraw its troops' (316) tarnished with the reputation of having backed the wrong technical revolution. In this empirical study, EDF as a social actor 'failed' because of failure.

314 Ibid
315 Ibid p.290
316 Ibid p.291
to define the social world irreversibly: an analogous process in the earlier analysis of social work inter-constituency struggles was the failure of the professional(izing) constituency in the 'eighties to lock social work training and the division of labour in the social services departments into the CSS-CQSY binary system that had been constructed with professional involvement and assistance in 1975. Power when defined as capacity to shape events is in part a function of success in irreversibly enrolling and 'consigning' a large number of related ideas, techniques and policies (317). In Callon and Latour struggle and flux in the relationships between collective social actors is not over-arched by any functional 'needs' of the social system or by the structural location of the actors within the larger social system. Social actors have no structurally 'given' size or given capacity to shape social and political life: their 'size' waxes and wanes and the processes through which this occurs are relatively indeterminate, shifting, precarious and sometimes, as in the EDF/Renault illustration, reversible. If lasting asymmetries of size and power occur, this is contingently produced not a necessary 'effect' of the social totality. Callon and Latour's empirical model leads to a perspective that decisions and programmes in public policy fields - transport, health, social welfare, housing and education - are the outcomes of specific efforts by particular social actors to 'translate' others and 'consign' materials through the deployment of strategies in particular situations. Of relevance to an earlier theoretical observation it may also be noted Callon and Latour did not employ a micro-situationalist (eg symbolic interactionist) ethnographic methodology: in part, this may be said to be a strength of their middle range inter-situational conceptual

317 Ibid p.293
framework in analysing patterns of relationships between collective social actors. Their methodology, however, because not micro-situationalist, does not refer to the (intra) situational handling and 'negotiation' of ideas within the sites to which they refer. Knowledge of patterns of intentionality and meanings discursively formulated in committees, work groups and working parties may in some situations be highly relevant to an understanding of the relationships that develop 'in public' between organisations as collective social actors. The same may be said of the analysis in chapter one of relationships between collective social work actors each of whom 'worked out' their positions partly in public and in published papers and reports, but partly (it may be assumed) through conversational and written contextualizations specific to interactions within sites which - without the use of micro-situationalist methodologies - are not readily visible from outside those sites. The point being made here is that micro-situational sociology is not a sufficient resource in sociology of social work, but should be supplemented - not replaced - by middle range sociological methods of investigation. Relatedly, it is also argued here that micro-situationalist perspectives should not be 'supplemented' by macro-reductionist perspectives associated with structuralism.

In a second empirical study published in 1986 Callon (318) further develops his 'sociology of translation' and conceptualisation of relationships amongst collective social actors in an 'actor network' (319). His study examines attempts by a team of marine biological researchers to regulate the activities of scallops fishermen in Brittany's St. Brieuc Bay. The details of Callon's study

319 Law, J., in Law, J., (ed) (1986) op. cit. p.15
need not be examined here: in the light of the earlier description of the EDF/Renault study, extrapolation from the St. Brieuc study of general theoretical concepts relevant to sociological studies of social work collective actors is possible without describing the empirical content of these concepts. Nor are the general issues raised by the study affected by the fact that the attempts to control the scallops fishing industry were not successful, though this outcome serves to highlight Callon and Latour's earlier conclusion in the EDF/Renault study which showed translation strategies have variable outcomes, some of which are reversible. Callon's empirical data identified four stages in the marine biological researchers' attempts to impose themselves and their definitions upon the situation of other actors in an actor-network. These stages of actor 'translation' may be summarised as follows. First, problematization: this refers to 'the (marine) researchers' efforts to become indispensable to other actors by defining the nature and the problems of the latter and then suggesting that these would be resolved if the actors negotiated the 'obligatory passage point' of the researchers programme of investigation' (320). Second, interessement: this concept is employed by Callon to describe a series of processes by which the researchers 'sought to lock the other actors into the roles that had been prepared for them by the researchers programme' (321). Stated another way, the aspiring actor attempted to remove discretion, to 'place' the other actors in a defined position by coming between them and their alternatives (322). Third, enrolment: this stage in the actor-translation process consisted of a set of strategies.

320 Callon, M., (1986) op. cit p.196
321 Ibid
322 Law, J., in Law, J., (ed) (1986) op. cit p.16
in which the marine biological researchers 'sought to define and interrelate the various roles that they had allocated to others' (323) (italic added). This entails defining the roles to be played by the other actors and defines the relationships which should exist amongst themselves in the scheme devised by the principal actor i.e. the marine biologists attempted to generate a network (the 'actor-network') of passive agents (324). Fourth, mobilization: here, Callon refers to 'a set of methods used by the (marine) researchers to ensure that supposed spokesmen for various relevant collectivities were properly able to represent those collectivities and not betrayed by the latter' (325). In particular, the principal or aspiring actor (the marine biologists team) made efforts to turn itself into the 'spokes man' for the actor-network and to act on its behalf (326). The EDF/Renault and St. Brieuc research studies are two explicitly conceptualised examples of empirical investigation informed by the perspectives of contemporary middle-range sociological theory. Callon's remark that 'translation is a process, never a completed accomplishment ...' (327) has application also in the analysis of relationships between the collective social work actors described in the first chapter and earlier in the present chapter: in a few years time the shape of these relationships may have shifted, with ramifications extending across a wide range of sites in social work education and in those organisations where social workers practice.

323 Callon, M., (1986) op.cit p.196
324 Law, J., in Law, J., (ed) (1986) op.cit p.16
325 Callon, M., (1986) op.cit p.196
326 Law, J., in Law, J., (ed) op.cit p.16
327 Callon, M., (1986) op.cit p.196
The perspectives referred to above are not the only ones appropriate to the construction of a sociology of social work. Perspectives which lie 'below' the inter-situational level of the middle-range are also necessary: grounds were adduced earlier for the view that micro-situational ethnographic data describing the situated cognitive and practical activities of social workers within local sites is a necessary empirical component in sociological analysis of the social work profession. It was argued, also, that middle-range sociology, not structuralism, is an appropriate 'macro' referent to these 'situated' data. At another and 'larger' level of analysis, however, it would impose an unnecessarily restricted focus of enquiry if contemporary middle range sociology were to lose sight of 'older' concerns, particularly those which imply need for a longer term historical perspective than that which appears to be emerging in the 'new' empirical sociology of the middle range. Though contemporary sociological theorists of the middle-range do not suggest historically institutionalised continuities of ideas, policies and practices are empirically insignificant, far greater emphasis is placed upon investigation of flux, variability, innovation and the relatively indeterminate, processual character of inter-situational transactions viewed within a relatively compressed period of time. Earlier, in the analysis of inter-constituency relationships between collective social work actors in the period 1975-86 it was implied some of the issues and controversies implicated in those relationships have a long history; this was referred to in the first chapter (328) and is returned to in chapter three. In chapter three it will be shown social work problematics articulated by social work constituencies in the 'seventies and 'eighties have a perennial dimension. These problematics devolve

328 See Chapter 1, p.8
around three core themes: these, in the form briefly stated earlier, are the relation of theory to practice, the politics of welfare, and the relation of professional and organisational structures to service-delivery issues. How these issues are constructed and responded to varies in time and place, but these contextual variations do not mean that no historical continuities exist in respect of the ways these issues have been defined in different times and places. Historical perspective not only need not 'conflict' with recent middle-range empirical conceptualisations but is also partly dependent upon them: methodological reconstruction of the history of social events is less likely to incline towards macro-reductionist interpretations if the reconstruction is informed by awareness of the explanatory potential of, in particular, the concepts of 'sites', collective social actors, and of transmissions of materials. Implicit in the last point is the notion that historical perspective need not signify reversion to structuralism and the concepts of static determinations and 'objective' necessities or 'effects' of structure: to say that some configurations of social work theory, politics and practice have a perennial dimension is to say these are variously articulated in many places over a relatively long period of time, but this does not mean these articulations are the expression of an historically 'frozen' structural discourse of the kind suggested by Philp (earlier). Historical reconstruction from the standpoint of a contemporary sociology of social work involves theoretical integration based on the idea of combining micro-ethnographic and middle-range 'documentary' (329) data with reconstructions of historical (documentary) materials. In referring to the topic of historical reconstruction the

329 For example, Callon's empirical study of an actor network relies mainly upon documentary data sources: see Callon, M., (1986) \textit{op.cit} p.227 (f.n.17)
present research is concerned only to map out conceptual possibilities in the form outlined in the next section of the chapter (though conceptual and empirical issues arising from this are returned to in later chapters). The remainder of the chapter extends theoretical and empirical issues examined in the first and present chapters in order to identify conceptual propositions suited to the task of investigating transmissions of materials within and across social work sites scattered through space and time. In what follows the temporal dimension is defined in a way which acknowledges the existence of indeterminacy and empirically contingent events and actions that may exist in the relationships between social actors at particular moments in time; but which also is concerned with transmissions of materials across larger time-spans than subsumed in some contemporary middle-range perspectives which, as in Callon and Latour, tend to focus mainly on particular events and short-term relationships amongst social actors.

SPACE-TIME TRANSMISSIONS AND TRANSLATIONS OF SOCIAL WORK MATERIALS

Structural-functionalist and structuralist theories of interrelations between social institutions do not address the ethnography of interactional transformations of 'materials' (values, ideas, practices) that may occur in local sites: where structuralist theory attends closely to ethnographic data, as in process-structuralism (330) these data are interpreted macro-reductively. Most versions of microsociology with the exception of radically empirical micro-

330 An example from the sociology of education is Sharp's structuralist-influenced interpretation of 'classroom data': see f.n.163
reductionist theories (331) are not wholly subjectivist nor committed to a view that cognitions and practices are wholly situationally emergent, and are therefore appropriate methodologies for investigating the emergence of new definitions and practices that may arise in some particular sites and for investigation of situated contextual 'usages' of those materials that travel between and enter into sites. However micro-social theory (methodological situationalism) is generally not involved in producing empirical data designed explicitly to 'address the interrelation between situated social events ... (and) ... the linkage between the happenings of diverse micro-situations' (332) (italic added). Conventional micro-social theory is perspectively and methodologically equipped to investigate actors handling and constructions of materials within sites but not the passage of materials across or between contemporaneously existing sites. Callon and Latour's EDF/Renault case study, though not informative in terms of events within sites, was shown earlier to be empirically productive in addressing inter-site 'movement' of materials. Callon and Latour's study indicated collective social actors grow in size according to the extent they successfully enlist, transform and consign other social actors and the greatest number of durable materials (ie. the greatest number of ideas, definitions, techniques, policies and practices). In the EDF/Renault study an inference was drawn by the researchers that successfully institutionalised (consigned) materials 'travel' far across a range of sites and become 'what everybody is saying' (333). A spatial limitation of this study has just been noted i.e. the issue of what happens within sites. A temporal

331 See f.n.79
limitation in Callon and Latour in the EDP/Renault study and Callon in the St. Brieuc study is that these studies investigated the travel of materials across contemporaneous sites over a relatively short period of time. In contrast Berger and Luckmann, discussed earlier, describe processes of externalization, objectification, institutionalisation, legitimation, and transmission of ideas and practices over long historical periods: however unlike Callon and Latour, Berger and Luckmann employ abstract theoretical descriptions of dialecticality in the construction of reality and little by way of empirically operable frameworks and concepts for investigating actual processes in the travel of materials across sites.

Whether and if so how, where and when social work material is 'altered' and given a new form as it travels spatially and temporally, is a partly theoretical, partly empirical issue. In theory, it is possible some social work material (or aspects of material) rather than routinely transmitted in unchanged form until suddenly and dramatically 'stopped' and de-legitimated in a situation of 'legitimation crisis' is routinely and continuously transformed at each 'stage' of passage through space and time in the social work profession: this would imply to speak of 'it' or 'the' material is a misnomer, because that which is continuously transformed is never for long the same object. The concept of transmission of material implies relatively stable, ordered material circulating around a system or, as defined here, across a range of sites through time and space within the social work profession. Duality theory is closer to the concept of transmission than Callon and Latour's sociology. Giddens (earlier) in his theory of duality refers to micro-reproduction of macro-structures and Berger (earlier) imputes a dialectical interaction between micro-social life and a background social world of relatively stable, determinate routinized
objectivations, typifications, habitualised knowledge and practices transmitted in institutionalised relatively unchanged form across long periods of time. Berger's sociology is compatible with a view that social work has an identifiable 'long-standing' professional culture (an assembly of ideas and practices) perhaps also with 'sub-cultural' components in the form of paradigmatic dissidents or protagonists: these professional configurations in the normal course of events travel in relatively stable form to sites where they are actor-reproduced and further transmitted to other sites. This may be contrasted with Callon and Latour's work which embodies not a sociology of transmission, but a sociology of translation\(^{(334)}\). In another recent text Latour's formal statement of a sociology of translation is highly critical of diffusion models of culture and his arguments for a performative as opposed to ostensive definition\(^{(336)}\) appear to have significance for sociology of social work and for sociological studies of the 'passage' of materials in other professions. Latour characterises social life as matrices of (individual and collective) social actors with interests, values, objectives and perspectives of their own and who each work upon and 'transform' the material that they become involved with so that the nature of the material changes more or less continuously with each successive actor-transformation: like Callon, Latour relates this process to a non-structuralist conception of power and competition amongst social actors who have variable values, interests and objectives\(^{(337)}\) and who seek to impose their particular definition.

334 Callon, M., (1986) op.cit p.196
336 Ibid p.269
337 Ibid pp.272-274
upon material ('consign' it) then propel it to other targeted sites. In Latour's model 'the spread in space and time of anything ... is in the hands of people ... faithful transmission ... is a rarity ... and if it occurs it requires explanation' (338) (italics added). Translation is not a singular 'once and for all' occurrence but a series of continuous translations at each actor 'link' in chains of social actors. In this model material 'changes as it moves from hand to hand and ... transmission ... becomes a single and unusual case among many, more likely, others' (339) (italics added). This suggests social and cultural phenomenon in society or within an institutional segment of society such as a profession are not reproduced (or changed) in any stable, ordered way: ideas and practices are relatively indeterminate, continuously shifting entities. Theoretical tension between Latour's translation (performative) model and Berger's dialectical version of a 'transmission' model, is evident. In Berger's theory the social world consists of institutionalised, routinized ideas and practices. Latour, like Berger, rejects structuralist conceptions of material as autonomous and accords to social actors a key role in social and cultural reproduction. But in Latour that which is being 'reproduced' by actors is a shifting, continuously transformed entity inscribed into further situations where it is further routinely transformed. In Berger, material is relatively stable and routinized and transmitted in this form for long periods until something unusual happens and it is checked, stopped and 'de-legitimated'. This is not to say transmission theorists posit a completely stable ordered social reality nor (because some actors may for a time consign materials even if the material is later subject to

338 Ibid p.267
339 Ibid p.268
reversibility through the 'translation' work of other actors) do translation theorists construct a completely processual, indeterminate social world of continuously transformed materials: nevertheless, each approach gives much greater emphasis to one or the other of these ontological polarities.

Theoretical awareness of these models and their opposed ontological assumptions is a form of theoretical sensitisation in sociology of social work, but in an empirical not theoretical arbitrationist sense. Whether some social work materials are 'transmitted' and others 'translated' is an empirical question. Earlier, it was postulated transmissions or translations of materials (ideas, practices, and formulation of objectives) may occur within sites as well as between or across sites through space-time. Empirical investigation of social work 'transmissions' and 'translations' of ideas and practices is in principle possible through a methodological framework which operates at three levels. First, inspection of micro-situational data (including existing data which may have been collated for other research purposes) from ethnographic studies located within a range of contemporaneously existing social work sites; second, comparison of these data with other (middle-range) data on contemporary 'transmissions' - or - 'translations' across and between sites and between collective social actors, as in Callon and Latour's empirical case-studies; and thirdly, comparison of both these sets of data with historically reconstructed data employing historical documentary sources. An illustration of this methodological rubric is the social work problematic of 'theory-practice' as a social phenomenon (or 'material') and the question of whether it is reproduced (transmitted) or transformed (translated) through space and time. This problematic centres upon tension between abstract formal social science theories and welfare philosophy,
and everyday practical tasks in social work agencies. In chapter three reference is made to historically documented accounts of the existence of this problematic and its 'construction' in the first social work training courses established at the turn of the century. These historical accounts may be compared with modern ethnographic accounts of ('within site') situated constructions and handling of this problematic in social work organisations (340) and in professional training courses (341), and further compared with middle-range accounts of constructions ('between sites') of this problematic in the relationships between collective social work actors, as in the first chapter analysis of inter-constituency struggles to successfully 'consign' this problematic material ('theory-practice') in particular ways then propel the (defined) material to other sites across the social work profession.

An integrated multi-methodological framework, because it is spatially and temporally 'multi-layered', facilitates understanding of whether (and if so how, and under what conditions) the phenomena under investigation - in this illustration, material surrounding the problematic of theory-practice - manifests itself at different 'levels' within and between sites, and also within different historical periods.

The empirical importance of transformational concepts (used in this

340 For example, Hardiker, P., (1977) op. cit and Hardiker, P., and Webb, D., (1979) op. cit

instance to also include transmissions and continuities in materials) is well recognized in micro-social theories such as grounded-theory, symbolic interactionism and (distinctively so) in ethnomethodology; but these concepts have not until recently been theoretically and empirically inserted into analysis at 'higher' levels of social process, particularly spatial relationships across sites and between collective social actors (and also temporal relationships between sites viewed in time-perspective). The methodological framework described here explicitly 'requires' micro-situationalist data in order to investigate transmissions and translations of material within sites whilst also recognizing that the major problem with one-off 'classics' of ethnography is that they 'often come to stand for the relationships that they portray, across time and space. Rather, what we need is not one Tally's Corner, but ten such studies on different corners throughout the cities of the nation. We need not one Street Corner Society but a dozen' (342). This methodological perspective in the empirical study of transmissions and translations of social work materials requires co-ordination of 'specific empirical studies in different locations ... a co-ordinated series of ethnographies' (343) in order to discover, amongst other things, whether social work actors in local sites 're-invent the wheel each time' when they negotiate the material of theory-practice or when, for example, they negotiate the 'agency-structure' debate in securing 'welfare' disposals for clients involved in criminal behaviour. In this way it should be possible to construct data typologies that are empirically and investigatively

343 Ibid
'open' to possible occurrences of 'translative' operations in the handling of material both within and across sites and to 'transmissions', continuities and affinities in the handling of material within and across a range of local social work sites. This methodological procedure has a role also in hypothesis building, as indicated in the following example. Extrapolation from Hardiker's (344) data suggests situational social work and welfare political ideologies and theories may exhibit higher levels of 'translatability', diversity, situational specificity and variability than practices. Practices may exhibit - relative to the diversity of social work theories and political ideologies held by individual social workers - a higher level of uniformity and consistency in a large number of spatially and temporally dispersed social work locations. In this sense, Hardiker's data is an empirically suggestive hypothesis that in analysis of some social work materials a translation model is appropriate, for other social work materials a transmission model may provide a closer approximation to empirical patterns in the social work profession. To avoid situationally-reductive explanations of how transmission/translation of the material (e.g. the problematic of 'theory-practice') occurs at another 'level' of social process (i.e. at the middle-range level) within the social work profession it is also necessary in the way suggested earlier to move beyond 'co-ordinated ethnographies' to middle-range investigation. Middle-range investigation is based primarily though not exclusively on inspection of documentary data sources which provide information on transmissions and translations of material 'between' present day collective social work actors who seek to enlist, consign, and propel the material

344 See n.21, 22 and 113
('theory-practice') in a particular way (i.e. in accordance with their definition of the material) across a large range of social work sites. In the way indicated earlier it is also possible - in the integrated framework described here - to supplement these two sets of data on intra-situational and inter-situational transmissions/translations through comparison of both sets of data with historically reconstructed data pertaining to the history of the material (here 'theory-practice') under investigation. The methodological framework is therefore sensitized by theoretical models of transmission and translation but remains empirically open to the possibility that some materials or aspects of materials may be transmitted and others translated in the space-time dimensions of the social work profession. Combining ethnographic with contemporary and historical documentary data at micro, middle-range and historical 'levels' of analysis is given particular conceptual and methodological emphasis from the standpoint of modern transformational sociology, but is also a methodological theme present in more established 'conventional' perspectives: these include Geertz's (345) notion of 'dialectical tacking' between micro-social and macro-social variables, Reed's (346) methodological framework for linking ethnographic data to his conception of 'structural analysis' and 'historical reconstruction',

345 Geertz, C., quoted in Reed, C., Redirections In Organizational Analysis London, Tavistock, 1985 p.145
and Smith's (347) emphasis upon the relation of 'micro'- to 'macro' concerns in the study of welfare systems. Transformational issues are returned to in the later chapters where additional dimensions of these issues are raised. For example, it seems likely social work material is more prone to individual and situational translation than the material deployed in 'technical' scientific professions or in the legal profession; but whether this is an inevitable consequence of social work's normative (as opposed to 'scientific') knowledge mandate (348), an intentional professional deployment of cognitive indeterminacy as a 'barrier' against bureaucratic routinisation (349) and de-professionalisation, or a consequence of other factors, are issues for further analysis.

For reasons examined earlier in the chapter these methodological procedures should not be divorced from theoretical issues which include theoretical postulates contained in duality theory, the concept of 'agency-structure', actors capacities to innovate as well as capacity to select from the range of pre-existing opportunities in social situations, and the concept of unintended outcomes. Transformational sociology as the study of transmissions and translations of materials


through space and time within and across sites does not wholly define a sociology of social work, much of which is concerned with detailed analysis of specific social work topics: in the following chapters these include: social work professionalisation, bureaucracy, social work education, service-delivery patterns, and conceptual frameworks for analysing the structure and forms of knowledge in social work. However, transformational concepts allied to the multi-methodological framework outlined above are a significant element within the general "integrative" theoretical framework for future development in sociology of social work. These concepts embody the more general anti-reductionist concept of social action contained in the research perspective. This is expressed in Duster's observation that

"All social action can be conceived as local in the sense that it must occur in settings bounded by local time and local space and the local constitutive expectancies of social exchange. It may ramify and serve as a future point of reference for many other local scenes, both temporally and spatially .... But the question of whether...(a particular)...local scene has some future historic import is a problematic matter for empirical assessment." (350)

The assessment referred to by Duster is empirically problematic for the reason, noted in Hindess (351) earlier, that there is no structurally 'given' hierarchy of sites and noted also in Callon and Latour's (352) empirical demonstration that social actors grow or wane in size and in their capacity to consign materials and propel them across sites to a widening audience.

In the topic area of transmissions and in the light of Duster's observation above there is a distinctive characteristic of the social work profession that remains to be examined. This concerns the question of whether oral as opposed to written transmissions have distinctive cognitive, social or political consequences arising directly

350 Duster, T., (1981) op.cit. p.114
351 See n.250
from differences in the media (ie. oral or written) employed in professional transmission of social work materials. In the concluding section of the chapter this is examined in general theoretical terms and with reference to oral and written 'transmission' of materials through space-time in the social work profession.

ORAL AND WRITTEN CULTURAL TRANSMISSIONS

Social work's 'oral tradition' is related to the pervasive tensions between theory-and-practice examined in the next chapter. In social work writing this is sometimes described as the 'heart versus head' debate, as in Smith's (353) observation '... whereas 'head work' stresses the importance of being able to generalise, theorize, abstract ... 'heart work' stresses the idiosyncratic nature of each situation ... (and) ... the importance of personal experience', (354). The 'heart or head' issue and the importance attached to face-to-face oral dialogue are related to the social work debate of 'process versus content' in social work education where process is conceptualised as a 'group-dynamic' process based upon experientialism: in this learning mode learners are encouraged to fuse their emotional aspects of self with intellectual learning and to share verbally with others their emotional responses to concepts and theoretical ideas. Although as described in the first chapter the social work curriculum compared with earlier forms of training became considerably more intellectualised in the 'seventies, a strong and continuing social work interest in learning as an affective experience

354 Ibid p.26
is reflected in a recent text on this topic by Harris et al. (355). Personalised, experiential learning fusing affective and cognitive components of learners' attitudes and ideas is also noted in Timms and Timms's observation that social workers 'distinguish between intellectual or theoretical 'knowing' and real or emotional 'knowing' and give primacy to the latter' (356). Greenwell and Howard (357) endorse the role of 'process' learning in social work education and Jones (358) argues for '... a return to psychoanalytic concepts ... which social work has allowed to lapse into unfashionable obscurity' (359). In Jones's view experiential modes of training will enable students and practitioners to 'grapple more successfully with their inner experiences of their clients' (360). Paley (361) records the view it is not necessarily the case in social work that the only things worth knowing are those capable of being written down on paper. Stevenson (362) is not associated with social works' 'oral tradition' and in giving more emphasis to

359 Ibid p.151
360 Ibid
362 Stevenson, O., Specialization In Social Services Teams London, Allen and Unwin, 1981
intellectual 'content' than to learning 'processes' she advocates construction of a formal academic professional knowledge base drawing upon social science disciplines. Stevenson notes the volume of social work literature has increased in recent years but in the 'fifties and 'sixties social work 'educators were struggling ... without a solid body of British literature to assist them' (363). Carew's (364) empirical study suggests social work practitioners rarely draw upon formal theoretical texts. In reporting this data Carew is critical of formal theory and suggests experientially acquired 'practice wisdom' (365) is of greater importance than formal written theoretical knowledge: practice wisdom consists of 'tried and trusted procedures that are passed from practitioner to practitioner and are reinforced by ... case conferences, and ... through informal discussion' (366) (italic added). Though Carew in describing 'practice wisdom' does not infer that he is describing an 'oral' rather than 'written' culture it seems clear it is largely the existence of the former that he is referring to, though by another name. However the volume of written social work materials has increased substantially in recent years, partly as a consequence of the professionalising movement which gained strong momentum in the 'seventies and was a factor in the expansion of social work education in the higher education sector. Modern social work cannot accurately be characterised as a wholly 'oral culture'. A more

363 Ibid p.34
365 Ibid p.362
366 Ibid p.361
accurate description would refer to the co-existence of an oral and literate tradition, in which the former has a degree of prominence that is given special emphasis within the social work profession: the notion of highly personalised affective-linked face-to-face 'sharing' (367) in mutual constructions of ideas and emotional feelings in the 'process' orientation in social work education, and of idiographic personal constructions of empathetic insights and 'practice wisdoms' (Carew, above) in client relationships, is in social work a more highly developed normative commitment (368) to an oral culture than in most other (369) professions. In the remainder of the chapter general theoretical issues in sociological (and anthropological) analyses of oral and written cultures are reviewed, followed by assessment of their relevance to an understanding of oral transmissions of materials within the social work profession.

367 Prominence given to the concept of sharing is noted in Barbour's empirical study of a group of social work students: she notes "learning is achieved through the 'sharing' of knowledge and experiences and especially through the 'sharing of feelings". See Barbour, R., (1985) op.cit. p.504


369 This is a question of degree. Scientific, medical, legal and other professions such as architecture or accountancy are closer approximations to a written professional culture comprised of formal abstract knowledge. Social work, psychotherapy, and other personal counselling professions are closer to the 'oral tradition' described in the text. However, to the extent written and oral traditions are related to a distinction between 'scientific' and 'normative' professions it should be noted this distinction is not entirely clear cut: see Halliday, T., (1985) op.cit.
Collins (370) associates oral culture with localism and consensus within small-scale social networks in pre-modern societies: scepticism and critical reflection upon moral-political issues beyond the immediacy of local situations are defined by Collins as consequences of an increase in the size of social networks and range of personal contacts (371) and of the emergence of written communications (372) which disseminate a plurality of meanings. In pre-literate societies 'relationships are more personal, consisting of master and disciples' (373) and cosmopolitanism is limited by illiteracy (374) in a social situation where 'there is no written communication to compete with personal relationships' (375). Collins also suggests conversational constructions of knowledge in oral cultures are particularistic: he comments 'The greater the diversity of communications one is involved in, the more ... (one) ... develops abstract, relativistic ideas ... Conversely, the less the variety of communications, the more one thinks in terms of particular persons and things, short-term contingencies ...' (376). Goody and Watt (377) in their anthropological theory of the consequences of literacy suggest oral transmissions can be visualized as 'a long chain of interlocking conversations between members of the group' (378) in which knowledge, values, beliefs

371 Ibid. p.513
372 Ibid. p.171
373 Ibid. p.513
374 Ibid. p.176
375 Ibid. p.171
376 Ibid. pp.75-76
378 Ibid. p.313
and practices communicated between individuals in face-to-face conversational exchanges are 'stored only in human memory' (379). The meaning of each word-concept in an oral society is ratified by actors in personally experienced situations so that the meaning is always given a particularistic denotation, i.e. a denotation that is particular to time, place and setting (380). Because meanings are ratified conversationally in a way that is personal and related to pragmatic concerns in the setting, meanings are more readily internalised into consciousness than in literate societies (381). Goody and Watt's conceptualisation of pragmatism in everyday life is not dissimilar to Berger and Luckmann's notion of 'pragmatic competence' (382). However Goody and Watt also emphasise on-going verbal transformations and 'translations'; conversational ratifications occur in interlocking chains of actors through time, and culture is adjusted and pragmatically modified on each occasion so that it is not the 'same' cultural material that is passed from generation to generation. In Goody and Watt's concept of 'the impermanency of oral converse' (383) speakers and bearers of words in personal conversational exchanges pragmatically 'adjust' their dialogue to each others' ideas, concerns, perspectives etc and to the particularities of the immediate setting, and the content of culture is therefore 'modified' in each setting through the course of time. Cultural elements perceived to no longer have contemporary cultural

379 Ibid
380 Ibid
381 Ibid
382 Berger and Luckmann suggest 'Since everyday life is dominated by the pragmative motive, recipe knowledge, that is, knowledge limited to pragmatic competence in routine performances, occupies a prominent place in the social stock of knowledge': see Berger, P., and Luckmann, T., (1967) op. cit. p.56
383 Goody, J., and Watt, I., (1979) op. cit. p.352
relevance are either transformed or else forgotten and because no written records exist social groups 'do not recognize any contradiction between what they say now and what they said fifty years ago ...' \(^{(384)}\). Inserted between Goody and Watt's models of pre-literate and modern literate culture is an 'intermediate', protoliterate form; this requires brief definition here as it is relevant to their thesis. In protoliterate ancient civilisations there was no 'democratic alphabet' \(^{(385)}\). Hieroglyphic scripts cannot encompass the range of meanings possible in modern writing but nevertheless are technically complex, involving mastery of many hundreds of symbols. This required an elite strata of scribes as 'keepers of the records' and protoliterate writing was a conservatising force because written transmissions had few competent readers, and also for the reason that the contents of writing reflected the interests, perspectives and 'defining capacities' of small literate elite groups \(^{(386)}\). Compared to oral and protoliterate cultures modern alphabetic writing systems are capable of expressing a greater and more complex range of cultural meanings and unlike theocratic proliterate scripts are also 'democratic' in the sense of being widely available to members of different social strata. In Goody and Watt's account of cultural, administrative and political innovations they cite anthropological data in support of their thesis that democratic alphabetic scripts 'free' meanings from their pragmatic denotations and from the particularities of person, place and time. Cosmopolitanism, radical scepticism and dissidence are the products of widely available written transmissions. When written records exist, earlier cultural and political ideas and practices become

384 Ibid p.319
385 Ibid p.326
386 Ibid pp.320-326
available to current actors for their 'inspection' of the past: from this emerge abstract, relativistic constructs and radical new 'syntheses' of ideas become possible\(^{387}\). In oral cultures only pragmatically-useful ideas and practices are retained: other cultural items are forgotten through a collective cultural amnesia that is not possible in written cultures where 'inconvenient', contradictory or unresolved historical issues are available in documentary form to a range of politically and socially heterogeneous readers. The likelihood of sceptical, radical 'new syntheses' developing is reinforced by the fact that writing is a medium which makes meanings available for much more prolonged and intense scrutiny than is possible orally\(^{388}\). Goody and Watt also observe scepticism and deviant interpretations may occasionally arise in oral cultures but take on a personal, non-cumulative form: in written cultures deviant interpretations are themselves written down and disseminated and this has the effect of reinforcing a cultural climate of critical questioning and innovation\(^{389}\).

Goody and Watt's thesis is one version of a 'consequences of literacy' theory which predicts oral and written traditions have respectively different and identifiable cognitive and socio-political consequences for the social domains in which these two modes of transmission occur. Their analysis includes modern society where cultural, familial, class and community aspects of social life are reproduced through the co-existence of oral and written traditions\(^{390}\) and where 'writing is clearly an addition, not an alternative, to oral

387 Ibid p.333
388 Ibid p.346
389 Ibid pp.336-337
390 Ibid pp.339-351
transmission' (391). In the modern era the political potency of written culture is recognised by elites who ban radical texts: there are 'book-burners ... (in) ... all periods' (392) and 'oral converse is ... much more ... conservative in its ideological tendency' (393). The 'consequences of literacy' thesis is potentially a perspective for constructing hypotheses in sociological analyses of an 'oral tradition' which as noted earlier is deeply rooted within social work culture where it co-exists alongside a more recent 'literate' tradition. However the consequences of literacy thesis contains major theoretical and empirical limitations and requires considerable re-formulation if it is to have application in the sociology of social work. Before examining its limitations, it may be noted issues raised by the theory are relevant to the study of particular social work topics. A part of chapter three (394) examines the politics of social work where reference is made to Deacon and Bartley's (395) criticism that 'process' teaching in social work, based upon experiential affective-based conversational constructions of knowledge, is a strategy used by professional teachers to sustain politically conservative welfare ideologies through a psychological reduction of the intellectual content of students' radical ideas which are pushed aside in favour of group analysis of inner psychological feelings and emotions. In examining this criticism it will be shown no adequate evidence exists to support a hypothesis that the oral tradition in social work is inherently

391 IbID p.353
392 IbID p.339
393 IbID p.342
394 See Chapter 3, pp.257-258
'conservative', or the written social work tradition inherently radicalising. In chapter four, analysis (396) of the structure and forms of social work knowledge will include reference to Law's (397) recent work in sociology of science suggesting written as opposed to oral transmissions of knowledge are a more highly effective medium for transmitting paradigmatic definitions across sites within an academic scientific community: in examining this aspect of the dissemination of social work materials it will be shown that although social work does not have a 'scientific' knowledge mandate the transmission of some social work materials at times of 'crisis' or else in special professional circumstances (an example being the social construction of child abuse as a major problem confronting the profession) is strongly shaped by its written dissemination across the profession. Issues arising from the 'oral tradition' in social work are also shown in chapter four (398) to be relevant to analysis of oppositions between objectivist and subjectivist classifications of the contents of social work knowledge and to the previous outline of this theoretical opposition (structuralist linguistics 'versus' situationalist theories of human language and meaning) earlier in the present chapter. Though capable of illuminating analyses of particular social work topics in the ways just described and in some other areas of social work that will be discussed shortly, the 'consequences of literacy' thesis rests upon an empirically problematic assumption that oral and written traditions each have a distinctive, universal cognitive consequence. Oral dialogue is said to produce cultural pragmatism, particularism and conservatism;

396 See Chapter 4, pp.421-426


398 Chapter 4, pp.360-376
written transmissions are said to produce scepticism and radical innovation. In comparing pre-literate with industrial societies literacy is only one amongst a range of factors (a more complex division of labour, processes of social and cultural differentiation, urbanization etc) which have consequences for human consciousness and for social and political actions (399). It is doubtful whether specific cognitive or socio-political consequences are distinctive to either oral or written transmissions. A more useful conceptualisation is to regard the consequences of oral and written transmissions as empirical variables that can be discovered only through empirical study of practices, actions and outcomes of action: re-formulation of the 'consequences of literacy' thesis along these lines in consistent with Street's (400) rejection of the notion that oral or written media have distinctive, universal cognitive outcomes specific to each media. That movement from illiteracy to literacy may sometimes engender cultural and political scepticism is recognized in some adult education projects and in radical social work theories of client conscientisation, particularly Freire's (401) concept of education as a form of liberation. In radical social work, however, oral converse is defined as a vital process in the development of critical consciousness. Oral converse can be appropriated and contextualized in different ways within a professional

399 See, for example, Merton's account of 'local' and 'cosmopolitan' influences examined in a long tradition of sociological enquiry in the writings of Toennies, Simmel, Cooley, Weber and Durkheim: Merton, R.K., Social Theory And Social Structure London, Collier-Macmillan, 1968 pp.441-474

400 Street, B.V., Literacy In Theory And Practice Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984

401 See f.n.12
community. In social work there is a political contextual difference between radical conscientisation via personal dialogue, and the professional psychological and psychodynamically based experiential approach to 'process' advocated by, for example, the contributors to Harris's\(^{402}\) text: contextual variation of this kind was noted earlier with reference to Statham's\(^{403}\) comparison of radical consciousness-raising and professional social work both of which are committed to a concept of 'emancipation' via oral converse. Contextual factors also surround the production and deployment of meaning by the writers and readers of written social work texts: it is not the media per se (writing) but its content and contextuality which influences any professionally legitimatory or de-legitimatory ('radical') outcomes that may arise from social work texts\(^{404}\). As indicated earlier, the consequences of literacy thesis has an indirect utility by virtue of its capacity to direct attention to analysis of oral and written transmissions, a field of enquiry that - because of the strength of an 'oral tradition' in social work - may justify closer attention in sociology of social work than can be given in the present research. In future work, a comparative approach may be indicated. In an account of professional psychotherapy in America, Vance\(^{405}\) suggests texts are insignificant in the sense that 'theories', skills and techniques are transmitted almost entirely through oral transmission.

\(^{402}\) Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985) \textit{op.cit}

\(^{403}\) See f.n.287

\(^{404}\) This is not to say quasi-objectivist classifications of written social work theories are redundant: this point is discussed in Chapter 4, pp.360-376

between practitioners (406) and he suggests (presumably because the greatest frequency of personal contacts is likely to occur within particular regions) that this accounts for the 'regionalism that exists in theory and practice' (407). Recent work in sociology of science by Barnes (408) suggests systems of 'communications' are highly significant empirical variables (409); his perspective is that situational analysis is important in the study of inter-site disseminations of professional knowledge. Akin to an observation made earlier in the present chapter in discussing Zimmerman's data Barnes suggests 'one does not ... have to share the asceticism of ethnomethodologists to recognise the value of their actual studies ...' (410). Law's (411) recent incorporation of transformational concepts in the sociology of science suggests face-to-face oral 'translation' of local actors and oral 'consignment' of materials in local sites 'are not ... especially suited to long distance or large-scale attempts at social control' (412) within an academic or professional community. In the first chapter analysis of relationships between collective social work actors, the actors concerned were shown (at least on the basis of non-ethnographic documentary data sources referred to in the analysis) to deploy written papers, working party reports, articles in social work journals etc as a media for consigning ('defining') materials and transmitting these across sites: the analysis, however, was of intense

406 Ibid pp.115-116
407 Ibid p.117
409 Ibid pp.40-41
411 Law, J., (1986) op.cit
412 Ibid p.12
inter-constituency rivalry focussed upon the emergence of a new policy development perceived by some constituencies to be a major threat to them. That is, the analysis referred to a situation closer to a professional 'legitimation crisis' than to routine maintenance in less troubled times. It is possible professional actors' selection and deployment of written or non-written transformational concepts is partly influenced by a distinction made by them between 'crisis management' and 'routine maintenance' (eg. in Vance's description, earlier, of American psychotherapy he was not referring to perceptions of threat by one or more constituencies within the profession, but to actors routine reliance upon what in Vance's description is an almost wholly oral practitioner culture). A further issue concerns the possibility that a culture of experientialism (but not its contents) is itself partly transmitted in written form: in this form it is possible to disseminate a written theory of (the desirability of) 'process' and 'oral' modes of knowledge-production without specifying what cognitive contents arise out of this mode. Indeed, in the social work 'process versus content' debate relative unspecificity about content is a requirement of the process-oral rubric - to specify contents as having formal nomothetic, generalisable theoretical properties would make the project of 'process' partly redundant and in effect would be a movement towards the 'content' component in the process-versus-content debate. There is in any case a technical hermeneutic difficulty in communicating in writing the contents of privatized 'episodic' experiential learning developed in the oral tradition: this concerns the problem of how to depict the contents of experiential learning in writing, in a way that will make sense to a reader in
another time and place. Reading (413) in a contribution to the text by Harris et al. on process learning in social work education describes emotional factors in learning and relates how as a social work teacher in a group tutorial he held hands with a student to demonstrate 'how much can be communicated through touch ... It was a powerful moment for both of us' (414). Parsloe (415) in a review of Harris et al. comments on the problem of how 'to catch and make explicit the understandings achieved in experiential learning' (416): for those 'who did not take part in the action ... if something written is achieved, it is difficult to read' (417). Social work's 'oral tradition' and its relation to knowledge transmission through time and space in the social work community is also significant to a topic that will arise at various points in the following chapters: this is the question of professionalisation and the issue of whether social work has an identifiable formal theoretical knowledge base. This issue is raised by Haines who in a comment on 'process' perspectives in social work education notes 'An individualised approach can ... be carried ... to the point where there is virtually no written syllabus at all' (418); and by Harris in his comment 'unless the knowledge and experience of people ... in different parts of the country can be classified ... it will be difficult for social work ... to avoid reinventing the wheel each time ...' (419).

413 Reading, P., 'Introduction' in Harris, R.J., (et.al) (eds) (1985) op.cit pp.35-36
414 Ibid p.35
416 Ibid p.159
417 Ibid
418 Haines, J., 'Alternative Frameworks For Organizing The Social Work Syllabus' in Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985) op.cit p.127
419 Harris, R.J. in Harris, R.J. et.al (eds) (1985) op.cit p.145.
CHAPTER THREE

PERENNIAL AND CONTEMPORARY
SOCIAL WORK ISSUES

This chapter examines perennial\(^{1}\) and contemporary social work problematics identified in the first chapter as being, first, the relationship of theory to practice; second, the politics of welfare; and third, professional and organisational structures and the relation of these to service-delivery issues. Conflict, ambiguity and uncertainties surrounding these three social work problematics have an historical dimension. A highly significant though not the only shaping factor in their early historical construction was the Charity Organisation Society which in the late nineteenth century articulated theoretical, political and professional-organisational policies which

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1 The notion that problems and uncertainties in modern social work are a contemporary reactivation of perennial social work issues is outlined in Lee, P., 'Some Contemporary and Perennial Problems of Relating Theory to Practice In Social Work' in Bailey, R., and Lee, P., (eds) Theory And Practice In Social Work Oxford, Blackwell, 1982 pp.15-45
in one form or another have been disseminated through time and space in the social work profession. Many of the tensions exhibited in modern social work, including those identified in the first chapter analysis of inter-constituency conflicts between collective social work actors in the 1980's, may be regarded as contemporary 're-workings' of problematics which have been transmitted through time and disseminated across a large number of social work sites within and between which they are experienced and responded to by individual and collective social work actors. This is not to say 'timeless' social work materials have no social or historical specificity. Variation exists from one social work epoch to another in the manner in which these materials (ideas, policies and practices) are socially constructed and responded to: these constructions embody the normative and structural characteristics of the social work profession (and of society and the welfare state) prevailing within each epoch. This means, for example, that expressions of tension between 'casework' and 'social reform' at the turn of the century in the Charity Organisation Society are not wholly synonymous with modern forms of tension between 'professional' and 'radical' social work in the 1970's; neither is the professional-versus-radical debate of the 1970's straightforwardly reproduced in conflict between professional social work and 'community social work' in the 1980's. The politics of present day social work are articulated against a background of 'legitimation crisis' in the modern welfare state(2). At the time of the Charity Organisation Society there was no systematically developed welfare state, or not, at least, in the terms by which this is conventionally defined in the modern era. The structural characteristics of social work, and the

wider socio-political and economic institutional context of social work are, then, temporally specific variables which affect social work's construction of and responses to the three 'perennial' complications identified at the beginning of the chapter. In terms of the transformational concepts outlined in chapter two social work materials in the three topic areas examined in this chapter are partly 'transmitted', partly 'translated' within and across sites through space and time in the social work profession. That there is an element of historically transmitted continuity in respect of these social work materials is evident in the various sections of the chapter. The chapter is divided into three sections, examining in turn these three central 'defining' features of contemporary as well as historical social work debate. Later chapters re-examine some of this material more closely from other theoretical (and empirical) vantage points some of which have already been developed in the first two chapters.

Chapter four will include further analysis of the problematic of 'theory-practice' from the broader standpoint of a sociology of social work knowledge: in chapter five some of the issues raised in the second and third sections of the present chapter are analytically re-evaluated through analysis of social work politics, professionalism, and organisational structure considered against the background of the legitimation crisis of the modern welfare state, the growth of social work interest in 'organic' concepts of organisational structure, and a highly significant (and controversial) movement in the 1980's towards community social work and decentralised systems of service-delivery.

A concern addressed in the previous chapter was closer attachment of sociology of social work to contemporary sociological and social theory: an underlying theme implicit in the present and later chapters' is that construction of a modern sociology of social work
requires not only the use of contemporary social theory but also critical inspection of material drawn from a range of applied, empirical sub-fields of the main discipline.

PROBLEMATICS IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THEORY TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Philanthropy and charity are much older terms than social work

"The term 'social work' was first used in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century in connection with the activities of people who had a sense of ... disciplined and principled ... remedies to ... distress ..." (3) (italics added)

Construction of an occupation ('social work') that would give voice to these 'disciplined and principled' remedies gained significant impetus through the activities of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) which vigorously promulgated the notion that social work should be founded not upon principles of charity and philanthropy but upon 'professional' applications of theory to 'practice'. This was not so much the replacement of philanthropy as its transformation; one of the objectives of the COS's founding members was "to transform philanthropy from an unskilled 'duty' of the rich to an expert and professional activity undertaken only by those who were prepared by social theory and trained in the appropriate methods" (4). Embryonic professionalism allied to 'use of theory' is expressed in a paper by Loch (5) the Society's secretary who in 1906 wrote

5 Loch, C.S., Introduction To Annual Charities Register And Digest. 15 edn., London, Longman, 1906
'Doctors have to be educated methodically, registered and certified. Charity is the work of the social physician. It is to the interests of the community that it should not be entrusted to novices or to dilettanti, or to quacks' (6)

The first British programme of social work education was established in 1903 in the COS's School of Sociology. Urwick (7) the newly appointed Director of the School in 1904 wrote that 'the impulse to do good, may if untrained, lead straight to evil doing ... the good heart unschooled by the good head will probably fall into dangerous paths ... training is an essential for social service ...' (8). Urwick and the COS leadership did not advocate an 'in-service' training model; although practical welfare experience was part of the COS programme of social work education it was proposed a significant part of this programme be located within the higher education sector, initially within the University of London. This new association between academic theory and welfare practice contained 'theory-practice' tensions not dissimilar to those noted in modern social work, as in Stevenson's criticisms of 'anti-intellectualism' (9) in social services departments. Some years before the School of Sociology was created Loch had already described this phenomenon of 'anti-intellectualism' in a paper presented in 1877 to the COS Council; he reported that a critic of the Society had said to him

'It is all very well for you to read and study. But you know the members of your Committees don't. They plod along with their cases: but you are quite wrong if you think they are troubling

6 Loch, C.S., (1906) op. cit p.xix, quoted in Jones, C., (1983) op. cit p.81
8 Urwick, E.J., (1904) op. cit p.180, quoted in Jones, C., (1983) op. cit p.83
9 Stevenson, O., Specialisation In Social Services Teams, London, Allen and Unwin, 1981 pp.22-23
themselves about general causes, principles, or any other questions' (10).

Loch recorded that he 'made no reply' (11) to his critic. The COS leadership also had internal critics to contend with. Prior to the formal inauguration of the School of Sociology in 1903 concern had been expressed regarding students' and COS workers' lack of receptivity to the theoretical components contained in the local training curricula provided by the COS. Bosanquet's statement to the COS in 1900 reported there was 'prejudice against theory' and the COS trainees were criticised by Bosanquet for holding attitudes expressed in the form 'There is too much real work to be done; I have no time for your books and theories' (12) (italic added). Tension between 'academia' and practice became more pronounced when the COS programme of social work education was inaugurated in 1903 at the London School of Sociology. From the beginning the university had doubts about accommodating social work training; though university academicians' perception of the theoretical component of social work training was broadly favourable 'they were uneasy about the practical side' (13). In 1912 the university suggested the social work training course should be taken over fully by the Charity Organisation Society (14). This was not

11 Ibid p.70
14 Ibid p.6
primarily because the university saw no relevant connections between theory and welfare practice, but rather, a university perception that social work trainees regarded theory as an irrelevancy. As early as the first year of the new training programme the university reported scepticism surrounding trainee perceptions of the value of philosophy and social theory to welfare practice: in 1903 the University Executive Committee of Social Work Education stated theoretical and philosophical welfare theories tended to 'rouse but little interest ... and their real meaning is not understood, while the student is tempted to regard them only as ... bookwork ...' (15). The university's report noted students primary concern seemed not to be theory but 'practical issues and needs' (16). As noted earlier, patterns of inter-constituency conflicts in the 1980's examined in the first chapter are in part a contemporary re-activation of problematic social work materials ('theory-practice') which at their most general level of representation - divorced, that is, from details of empirical, historical specificity - have a timeless dimension in their transmission through time and space in the social work profession. This is illustrated in the earlier reference to Bosanquet's complaint in 1900 that COS trainees evinced an attitude of wanting to get on with 'the real work to be done' reflected in a trainee's protestation 'I have no time for your books and theories'. More than eighty years later Satyanurti (17) referred to a social work student in the Department of Sociology at North East London Polytechnic who spoke of...
wanting to help clients and who asked 'so how can reading help?' (italic added). According to Satyamurti social work students in the 1980's reject theory 'from the contributory disciplines' (19) but also reject theory of a kind that is 'directly related to social work intervention' (20). Like Bosanquet, Satyamurti expresses professional frustration arising from her observation that 'The students do not ... feel that they will get anything that is important to them from a book' (21). This is not simply a naive practicalism on the part of social work novitiates, or something that they will 'grow out of' as they become more professionally mature. As noted earlier, social work employers in the 'eighties are increasingly critical of what they regard as professional (and occasionally 'radical') theoreticism in social work education. Nor, as will be shown in chapter four, is there an academic or professional nor social work researcher consensus regarding the question of whether professional social workers do 'use' formal theory in their practice: neither is there conceptual or practical agreement surrounding the complex question of what it means to 'integrate theory with practice'. As will be noted later, whether social workers should draw upon formal theory is also in dispute.

One element in the relationship of theory to social work practice concerns the nature of social work's formal theoretical knowledge base (i.e. social science disciplines). Knowledge and therefore actions and practices derived from social science constructs are not based upon absolute epistemological 'certainty' or total 'predictability' in respect of the outcomes of practices built upon a foundation of social

18 Ibid p.36
19 Ibid
20 Ibid
21 Ibid
science knowledge. The 'probabilistic' rather than absolutist epistemological status of social science knowledge is noted in Runciman (22) and by a number of social work writers including Butrym et al. (23) Halsey (24) and Sheppard (25). A further element in the relationship of formal paradigmatic social science knowledge to social work is the mediation of this knowledge through precepts of affective-based learning and 'emotional insight' in the form noted in the account of the 'process-versus-content' debate (26) at the end of the second chapter. Usages of the concept of emotional insight in psychotherapeutic casework and training are controversial and have been criticised by, for example, North (27) and Bandura (28): that a 'process' orientation based upon a combination of cognitive and emotional insight may be highly problematic as a method of relating theory to practice is suggested in Yelloly's remark that 'not only ... is the concept of insight extremely ill-defined, but the process by which it is thought to mediate change is equally inexplicit' (29). Whatever the merits or

22 See Chapter 1, f.n.8
26 Harris, R.J., in Harris, R.J., et al (eds) Educating Social Workers University of Leicester, Association Of Teachers In Social Work Education, 1985 p.145
otherwise of a 'process' approach in professional training and practice, the approach has two significant consequences for the social construction and dissemination of social work's knowledge base. First, as briefly noted at the end of the second chapter, construction of knowledge through oral converse in local social work sites raises the question of whether the contents of personalised cognitive-affective understandings achieved in experiential learning (30) can be written down and transmitted to other social work sites in a form that is meaningful to others who in Parsloe's words 'did not take part in the action' (31). Second, to the extent that social work knowledge is experientially constructed in social work education through face-to-face 'negotiations' of personal experiences, emotions, and cognitions, this implies not only that the contents of social work knowledge are relatively diverse and site-specific but also that concepts of theory-practice integration (i.e. conceptualisations of what it 'means' to integrate theory with practice) are to some degree localised and hermeneutically 'held' in each of the local settings within which concepts of 'theory-practice' are intersubjectively constructed.

Ambiguity in the relationship of theory to practice is not wholly, nor even primarily, centred upon the relationship of social science to social work or upon issues arising from 'affective' based intersubjective constructions of social work knowledge. So far as the latter issue is concerned it cannot be said to be a 'cause' of social work's long-standing struggles to construct relationships between theory and practice. Bosanquet, referred to earlier, was critical of anti-intellectual 'practicality' amongst C.O.S. trainees at the turn of the century; however at that time psychotherapeutic 'emotional insight'

30 Parsloe, P., (review) Issues In Social Work Education Vol.5, No.2 (Winter) p.159
31 Ibid
concepts of student learning were relatively undeveloped and it was not until the 1930's and immediate post-war period that psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic theories had any significant impact upon social casework theory and training\(^{32}\). The COS programme at the School of Sociology placed sociological studies at the forefront of the curriculum, particularly Spencer's evolutionary sociology which was congruent with the COS's political perspective of welfare\(^{33}\). Clearly, criticisms of overly-abstract theory 'divorced from practice' pre-date professional psychotherapeutic casework and pre-date the experiential learning approach; as suggested earlier, the theory-practice problematic has a timeless dimension but the precise form and 'contents' of this problematic are contextually and historically variable.

In modern social work ambiguity surrounding conceptualisations of 'theory-practice' are partly a consequence of opposed perspectives concerning the question of what the knowledge base of social work 'does' or 'should' consist of. Morris\(^{34}\) in her bibliography for social workers suggests novelistic insight and dramatic portrayal of human relationships by playwrights are a method for social workers to acquire 'sensitivity and insights which enrichen ... contacts with others ...

and ... deepen ... understanding' (35). Valk (36) in arguing for the use of fiction and poetry as a means for social workers to gain empathetic understanding of their clients notes there are 'elements of ... experience ... (that) ... cannot be communicated through the social and behavioural sciences' (37). For reasons similar to those developed in Morris, and in Valk, Irvine (38) indicates 'creative literature' has a significant role in social work education because academic disciplines such as sociology and psychology 'inevitably over-simplify' (39) and while 'the behavioural sciences provide ... knowledge about human beings, social workers also need to have a more intimate knowledge of them' (40). Knowledge and experience of a very different kind was advocated in the 'New Careers' movement during the 'sixties and 'seventies. Recruiting 'new careerist' welfare workers directly from the ranks of disadvantaged or oppressed groups including black persons, unemployed persons, discharged prisoners and other categories of 'non-expert' was viewed as a method of bringing directly experienced 'street knowledge' into social work. Some writers regarded the movement as a 'radical' way of challenging the dominance of welfare professionals, a theme discussed in Priestly's (41) account of new careerism as 'power

37 Ibid p.17
38 Irvine, E., (Foreward) in Morris, C., (1975) op.cit pp.5-6
39 Ibid p.5
40 Ibid
sharing in social work' (42) and in White's (43) contention that recruitment of the long-term unemployed to new careerist welfare work would 'if recruited to do work of a meaningful nature ... through their work, be largely abolishing their own poverty, both material and emotional' (44). Analysis of research data on social workers' perspectives, attitudes, and 'uses of theory' is examined in chapter four, and to some extent in chapter five where these issues are considered with special reference to organisational and service-delivery issues. However it may be briefly noted here a number of studies suggest 'practice' in some cases rests almost exclusively upon use of practical commonsense and 'life experience': this is indicated, for example, in a study of education social workers reported in 1985 by Pratt and Grimshaw (45). Carew's (46) study of social workers in local authority social services' departments suggests social workers employ 'practice wisdoms' acquired through practical occupational experience: in Carew's data analysis, examined more closely in chapter four, he concludes there is very little evidence that social workers use formal social

42 Ibid p.122
44 Ibid p.10
science knowledge in their practice\(^{(47)}\). In contrast, Hardiker\(^{(48)}\) suggests practitioners do employ social science concepts, but these concepts are, first, personally mediated and situationally 're-worked' in practice situations, and secondly, are employed in tacit, habitualised ways that only become fully apparent when practitioner phenomenologies are analysed by the researcher in terms of classificatory terms derived from social science\(^{(49)}\). There is, then, disagreement amongst researchers regarding the empirical question of whether - and if so, 'how' - practitioners employ social science or formal social work theory in their practice. The issue of whether practitioners should employ formal theoretical knowledge in their practice is also in dispute within the social work community. Of the researchers mentioned above Carew is convinced social science knowledge has no useful role in social work\(^{(50)}\); Hardiker is no less unequivocal in her opposite conclusion that social science is essential to effective social work practice\(^{(51)}\); and Pratt and Grimshaw remain relatively non-committal\(^{(52)}\). These oppositions have wider currency in social work. Bartlett\(^{(53)}\), Stevenson\(^{(54)}\) and Timms\(^{(55)}\) are powerful

\(^{47}\) Ibid pp.361-362  
\(^{48}\) Hardiker, P., 'Heart or Head - The Function and Role of Knowledge In Social Work' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.1, No.2 (Winter) 1981 pp.85-111  
\(^{49}\) Ibid pp.101, 104, and 105  
\(^{50}\) Carew, R., (1979) op.cit pp.362-363  
\(^{51}\) Hardiker, P., (1981) op.cit p.104  
\(^{52}\) Pratt, J., and Grimshaw, R., (1985) op.cit pp.127-130  
\(^{54}\) Stevenson, O., (1981) op.cit  
\(^{55}\) Timms, N., (1983) op.cit
advocates of the use of formal social science theory and philosophy in social work. Davies (56) is equally adamant that social science has no role in social work, except for 'a negative one' (57) (italic added): he suggests the essential ingredients for good social work practice are 'practice know-how' (58) acquired through practical work experience and training, knowledge of the law relevant to social work (59) and of 'welfare rights' (60) and knowledge of the local community (61). A further dimension in social work debate of the relationship of social science theory to social work practice is represented in Kahan (62) Traux and Carkhuff (63) and Garfield and Bergin (64) who argue it not the use of theory but personal attributes, values and attitudes of the counsellor that leads to effective casework with clients.

Earlier it was suggested both the 'timeless' (perennial) and contemporary (contextually and historically specific) dimensions of the theory-practice problematic in social work are partly related to dissension regarding the question of what the knowledge base of social work does or should consist of. In their empirical study of social

57 Ibid p.220
58 Ibid p.223
59 Ibid p.225
60 Ibid p.227
61 Ibid pp.239-242
work education Brandon and Davies (65) examine procedures and criteria employed for assessing students practice competence. They conclude it is 'extremely rare for a second year CQSW student to be failed in fieldwork, no matter what problems are identified by his tutor during the session' (66). A reason for this in the assessment of students ability to employ theory in fieldwork is that those involved in assessment are generally unclear as to what kind of theory is relevant to social work practice (67) and Brandon and Davies find 'clear indications of ... continuing absence of agreement on what constitutes social work theory and what behaviours comprise professional social work ...' (68) (italics added). An implication in Brandon and Davies's study is that theory-practice problems in social work are partly related to failure to define what relevant theory or knowledge does or should consist of. Though Brandon and Davies do not conclude sociology may have a positive role in contributing to an understanding of the concept of 'relevance' in 'theory-practice' Armstrong (69) suggests sociological problematisation of the concept 'relevance' is a way of addressing not only the problematic of theory-practice but also wider aspects of the social work profession that relate to problems in indentifying the relationship of theory to practice. Armstrong's understanding of problematisation as an analytic mode relates closely to issues of theory-practice

66 Ibid p.344
67 Ibid p.321
68 Ibid p.345
69 Armstrong, P., (1980) op.cit
...when the issue of 'relevance' is raised this provides an opportunity to open up a range of different perspectives and their underlaying assumptions... what does 'relevant' mean? What knowledge is 'relevant' to social work and why? Why is other knowledge not considered 'relevant'? What purpose does 'relevant' knowledge serve? In other words, 'relevance' can be treated as problematic as a way of understanding the nature of social work or any other profession (70) (italics added)

Issues of 'theory-practice' are fused with other no less complex dimensions of social work. Theoretical underpinning for this notion was provided in the first chapter where it was argued sociology of social work rests upon conceptualisation of the interrelatedness of the various 'component' parts that comprise the social work profession, and was further amplified in the second chapter where it was postulated interactions between these components are contingently and empirically produced, and are not a surface-reflection of 'objective' structural needs or deep cultural 'logic' embedded in society or in social work. An empirically highly salient instance of interaction between the component parts of the social work profession is the relationship between 'theory-practice' and the politics of social work. This was noted in outline in the first chapter description of 'professional' and 'radical' constructions of social work education. In the following section of the chapter emphasis is accorded to the notion that problems in relating theory to practice have a social, political context which affects the social construction of these problems. Problems in 'connecting' theory to practice are partly 'technical' and technique-centred, partly conceptual in the sense of requiring clarification of underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions in the ways that these issues are variously constructed by professionals and others; how these issues are socially and professionally constructed within social work is also partly a reflection of personal and professional politics

70 Ibid p.17
which shape competing definitions of the nature, purposes and methods of social work.

**THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL WORK**

Modern social work exhibits numerous paradigmatic classifications which describe competing political social work constituencies. Heraud (71) refers to tension between 'therapeutic', 'reformist' and 'radical' ideologies. George and Wilding identify 'the anti-collectivists', the 'reluctant collectivists', the 'Fabian Socialists', and 'the Marxists' (72). Halmos argued for 'equilibration' between the 'personalist' and the 'political' paradigms of social work (73). North suggests most versions of contemporary professional social work are embodiments of 'the therapeutic ideology' (74). Philp (75), discussed in chapter two, suggests social work has an ultimately 'monist' paradigm in the reproduction of the 'interests of capitalism' though, unlike North, he does not suggest this is a deliberate professionally constructed 'paradigmatic' attempt at professional aggrandizement. Pritchard and Taylor construct four social work paradigms - the 'moral-ethical', 'psycho-pathological', 'psycho-social', and 'radical-political' (76).

74 North, M., (1972) *op.cit* p.17
A two-dimensional superimposition of nominalist/voluntarist and realist/determinist epistemologies upon two polar substantive 'world views': (radical/non-radical) produces four social work paradigms in Whittington and Bellaby's (77) framework: these are 'Radical Social Work', 'Marxist Social Work', 'Traditional Social Work', and 'Interactionist Social Work' (78). Hardiker's (79) paradigmatic typology is more empirically complex than those referred to above, though for reasons examined in chapter two (80) with regard to her employment of Philp's structural theory of social work's 'discourse' she gives less emphasis to the substantive contents of 'political' paradigms than the above writers, and also suggests social workers select pragmatically from paradigms and use different paradigms according to particularities in the particular 'case' they are dealing with. Hardiker identifies three 'key' ideologies: 'judicial' (punishment for an offence), 'community development' (change systems rather than people), and 'welfare' (help for the client), the last of these ideologies ('welfare') being variously and situationally implemented by social workers through four differing perspectives (psychodynamic, life cycle/developmental, social learning, and the 'unitary' perspective) (81).

The political paradigmatic constructions of social work referred to above are modern attempts to analytically classify long-standing

78 Ibid pp. 30-40
79 For example, in Hardiker, P., 'Heart or Head: The Function And Role Of Knowledge In Social Work' Issues In Social Work Education Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter) 1981 pp. 85-111
80 See Chapter two, pp. 116-129
81 Hardiker, P., (1981) op. cit pp. 89-99
dissensions in the politics of welfare and of social work. As in the case of the 'theory-practice' problematic examined in the preceding part of the chapter, the role of the Charity Organisation Society was a significant empirical precursor of modern political debates and controversies in the social work profession. Conflict between the COS 'casework' ideology and the politics of late nineteenth century 'socialist reformers' was not the first expression of tension in the politics of welfare: well before the rise to influence of the COS as a major institutional form for the embryonic occupation of 'social work' the philosophy of welfare represented in 'The Society for The Reformation Of Mannars' (82) contrasted sharply with social movements concerned to address structural, political issues centred upon factory working conditions, unemployment, low wages and poverty, housing, sanitation and public health, and extension of the franchise (83). In effect the COS gave renewed articulation to already existing opposed political philosophies of welfare. A number of documented accounts including those by Woodroffe (84) Young and Ashton (85) and Stedman Jones (86) show tension between the 'caseworkers' and social 'reformists' existed within the COS itself rather than only in the relationship between the COS and external critics of the

82 Seed, P., (1973) op.cit p.5
casework ideology developed by the COS leadership. The COS leadership employed a 'personal inadequacy' theory of welfare in which casework method was deployed, as Bosanquet put it, to remedy 'defect in citizen character' (87). The COS philosophy of minimal state intervention, and COS prescriptions for professional 'scientific' knowledge-based casework premised upon a concept that casework was a method for responding to personal inadequacy and defective moral character of the poor, was given theoretical underpinning in the type of sociology (Spencer's evolutionary theories and 'social Darwinism') included in the curriculum at the COS School of Sociology (88). Octavia Hill (89) suggested reform of housing policy would not 'resolve' the problem of bad housing because '... the tenants habits and lives are what they are. Transplant them tomorrow to healthy and commodious houses and they would pollute and destroy them' (90). The Society's journal in 1881 noted

"There can be no doubt that the poverty of the working classes of England is due, not to their circumstances ... but to their improvident habits and thriftlessness. If they are ever to be more prosperous it must be through self-denial, temperance and forethought". (91)

The secretary to the society, Loch, suggested almsgiving leads to 'self-indulgence, well aware that there is charity in the background'

88 Convenient references to this point are noted in Heraud, B., (1970) op.cit. p.4; and Leonard, P., Sociology In Social Work London, Routledge, 1966 pp.4-7
89 Hill, O., Homes Of The London Poor, London, Macmillan, 1884
90 Ibid p.10
91 Charity Organization Review Vol.10, 1881, p.50 quoted in Jones, C., (1983) op.cit p.76
and Bosanquet in 1914 referred to 'tens of thousands ... (who) ... march forth every morning not to work or to seek work - but to beg: not to contribute by their industry, but to prey upon those who do' (93).

The COS political philosophy of welfare was opposed by various groups associated with the settlement movement and with tenants associations, and in particular, by the 'social reformists' influenced by the writings of Edwin Chadwick, Charles Booth and the Fabians (94) who argued for structural reform through a more interventionist role on the part of the state (95). Stedman Jones (96) and others document sharp antagonisms between the social reformists and the COS advocacy of casework. A COS report published in 1892 stated 'We do not share Mr. Booths' natural affection for his table of causes. His mastery over figures is only exceeded by the mastery of figures over his own imagination' (97). This was not a conflict between the COS's politics and social theory (or sociology) per se; as noted earlier, Loch the society's secretary argued the social worker should be a professional 'social physician' who draws upon social science theory and scientifically established 'data'. Spencer's sociology was

95 Townsend, M., The Case Against The C.O.S. Fabian Tract No.158, London, 1911
96 Stedman Jones, G., (1971) op.cit
97 COS Report (1892) quoted in Leonard, P., (1966) op.cit p.6
incorporated into the COS training curriculum because it was suited to
the COS philosophy of welfare. It was not theory per se but the
(political) type of theory advocated by social reformers that was
objected to by the COS leadership: as noted previously, problems in the
relation of theory to practice in social work are in part a function of
politics, not simply a technical question of finding the right
techniques or conceptual frameworks for 'implementing theory'. It was,
then, not primarily technique but politics that the COS had in mind in
rejecting Charles Booth's 'table of causes': or that Gertrude
Himmelfarb invoked in defending the COS model of professional casework
against nineteenth century social reformers who were 'over-zealous and
unable to resist the dramatic instances of poverty, squalor and
improvidence represented by the most submerged sections of the
population' (98).

As noted earlier in the chapter, the theory employed in the COS
'professional' casework model predated psychotherapeutic and
psychoanalytic theories. These were not systematically incorporated
into British casework theory until after the second world war, though
as Hearn (99) has noted the process of '... importing ... psychoanalytic
approaches into professional casework ... was begun in the interwar
years with the burgeoning of psychiatric social work ...' (100). Jones
(101) from a radical perspective argues political continuity between the

98 Himmelfarb, G., quoted in Pearson, G., The Deviant Imagination
Psychiatry, Social Work And Social Change. London and Basingstoke,
Macmillan, 1975 p.158

99 Hearn, J., 'Radical Social Work - Contradictions, Limitations And
Political Possibilities' Critical Social Policy. Vol.2, No.1
(Summer) 1982 pp.19-34

100 Ibid p.22

101 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit
COS 'personal inadequacy' casework model is preserved in disguised form in modern professional casework theories which employ psychotherapeutic language that is more culturally acceptable in the modern era: his interpretation is that the 'harsh' language used by the COS in the late nineteenth century in describing the 'undeserving poor' as having defective 'moral character' has been modified, 'civilized' (102) whilst still retaining the political perspectives of the COS caseworkers rather than the perspectives of the 'social reformists' referred to earlier. The movement described in the first chapter with regard to attempts in the 1940's and 1950's to 'professionalise' social work in the local authority sector was premised mainly upon commitment to a casework model. In the 1950's and early 1960's the political cultural climate within and outside social work coincided. Employment was relatively high and this together with the post-war 'Beveridge' expansion of the welfare state implied the 'grinding poverty' of the 'thirties had been eliminated and any remaining problems of welfare would require not major structural interventions but a residue of psychological counselling services directed towards individuals: in his The Future Of Socialism published in 1956 Crosland (103) stated future governments will

'increasingly need to focus attention ... on individual persons and families, not on the economic causes of distress, but on social and psychological causes ... not ... cash payments, nor even ... material provision ... but ... individual therapy, casework and ... treatment ...' (104).

The strong influence of psychodynamic concepts in post-war professional casework theory is noted in Mayer and Timms's (105) study published in

102 Ibid p.90
104 Ibid pp.155-56
the late 1960's. Sainsburysuggests 'uncertainty about the purpose of social work' in the 'eighties stems from a series of challenges to professional social work since the mid-'sixties. The challenge referred to by Sainsbury

'was jointly associated with challenge to the psychotherapeutic tradition and with the rediscovery of poverty; the recognition that basic social provisions had not achieved what many had hoped for - the ending of poverty and a gradual movement towards social equality' (108)

Part of the critique of modern professional social work came from an expanding body of radical social work literature which increased substantially in volume following the appearance of the first major radical social work text of the 'seventies, Bailey and Brake's Radical Social Work published in 1975. Though radical critique of professional social work in the 'seventies took a number of forms a significant feature of radical social work, including earlier expressions of radicalism in the marxist 'Case Con' movement in the early 'seventies, was failure to 'resolve' the problems of theory-practice discussed earlier in the first section of the chapter. The journal Case Con was launched in 1970 and Morris in a review in 1975 is not unsympathetic towards the political welfare perspectives of the movements founders, though in describing the movements' earlier

107 Ibid p.3
108 Ibid
111 Morris, P., 'Case Con: The Maturing Five Year Old' Community Care 26 November 1975, pp.18-19
political pronouncements he states 'The rhetoric of revolution is no less futile than the rhetoric of psycho-therapy' (112) and he poses the question 'having satisfied oneself that one's clients are actually part of the working class movement ... what would support for this struggle actually look like?' (113). In some instances prescriptions for radical practice appear to replicate already well-established forms of provision. Jones (114) indicates 'imaginative' (115) radical schemes include 'adventure playgrounds, advice centres, drop-in clubs, estate coffee bars, community facilities, summer holiday play schemes and play buses' (116). Services of this kind are provided by a variety of established voluntary and statutory welfare agencies including local authority social services departments (though the number of professionally qualified social workers attached to these schemes is probably small in comparison with the numbers of social workers engaged in casework or work with families) and it is not clear why Jones defines them as 'radical' forms of provision. Simpkin (117) in a review of Bolger's (118) Towards Socialist Welfare Work takes issue with Bolger's claim to have demonstrated possibilities for developing 'marxist thought and politics which directly informs day-to-day welfare work' (119). Simpkin comments '... few of the tactics proposed in Towards Socialist Welfare Work differ greatly from those proposed by

112 Ibid p.19
113 Ibid
115 Ibid p.72
116 Ibid
119 Ibid p.19
liberal professionals'\textsuperscript{(120)}. A broadly similar point is made by Donnison\textsuperscript{(121)} who suggests marxist welfare theory is utopian and fails to 'formulate concrete priorities, and policies ...'\textsuperscript{(122)}. Deacon\textsuperscript{(123)} though he argues for the future development of socialist welfare services based upon concepts of 'user-involvement' and participation in the planning and provision of services argues that

'Socialists who know their marxist philosophy have always been keen to point out that there can be no blueprint for the socialist society - no a-priori resolution of issues that can then be simply acted upon ... The problem of letting the question rest there is ... to leave socialists with no positive alternative conception of the Welfare State ... and ... leaves the way open for ... dismissing the marxist critique as unpractical ...'\textsuperscript{(124)}.

A dominant theme in radical critique of professional social work in the 'seventies rested upon the concepts of professional 'closure' of consciousness in social work education and professional socialisation of new entrants to the profession. Virt\textsuperscript{(125)}, though not concerned specifically with social work, argues the concept of closure is

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{120} Simpkin, M., (1982) \textit{op. cit} p.94
\item\textsuperscript{121} Donnison, D., \textit{Social Policy And Administration Revisited} London, Allen and Unwin, 1975
\item\textsuperscript{122} Ibid p.35
\item\textsuperscript{123} Deacon, B., 'Social Administration, Social Policy and Socialism' \textit{Critical Social Policy} Vol.1, No.1 (Summer) 1981 pp.43-66
\item\textsuperscript{124} Ibid p.46
\item\textsuperscript{125} Wirt, F., 'Professionalism And Political Conflict: A Developmental Model' \textit{Journal Of Public Policy} Vol.1, Part 1 (February) 1981 pp.61-93
\end{itemize}
relevant to analysis of processes of professional \textit{adaptation} in the face of challenge or threat against a professional community.

'Closure thus refers both to the reduction of conflict and to the adaptation of the challenged professionals ... Adaptation may involve new rules of practice, new standards of training, new norms of quality, or new forms of organisation. But in time, adaptation is most clear when it appears in the training of novitiates during their socialisation' (126)

Some writers concerned with the concept of professional closure pay special attention to processes of \textit{recruitment and selection of new entrants to the profession}. Concern with recruitment is premised on the notion that selectors as 'gatekeepers' to the profession will select only those candidates who display 'appropriate' values and attitudes and who are unlikely to radically challenge the normative and political ethos of the profession. Disagreement exists concerning the question of whether professional 'closure' occurs at the point of selection in 'screening out' unsuitable candidates; or whether closure is primarily a function of socialisation in professional training schools after candidates have been selected. Pearson (127) Coates and Silburn (128) and Sinfield (129) argue for the second interpretation in which the 'consciousness-shaping' power of professional socialisation during training is defined as the major mechanism for securing professional closure. An opposite view, which holds that professional closure occurs at the point of recruitment rather than afterwards through a process of professional socialisation during training is

126 Ibid p.84
127 Pearson, G., (1975) \textit{op.cit.} Chapter 5
taken by Patel (130) and Jones (131). Heraud's (132) view that social work education is not a major factor in professional closure 'is suggested by studies which show that the socialisation process in social work occurs not so much during formal training and education, but before and after this period' (133). Heraud cites (134) data by Landsberg (135) suggesting because most candidates already have some prior experience of social work they 'are already partially socialised' (136); and data by Hayes and Varley (137) suggesting the greatest rate of change in values occurs after qualification and during work experience (138). Bloom (139) refers to 'traditional social work values' (140) and suggests 'there is little need to convince people who have selected themselves for ... training ... to learn to accept these values; they already hold them' (141). Despite absence of reliable

131 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit pp.86-89
133 Ibid p.66
134 Ibid
136 Heraud, B., (1981) op.cit p.66
138 Heraud, B., (1981) op.cit p.66
140 Ibid p.143
141 Ibid, quoted in Timms, N., (1983) op.cit p.25
empirical data and the existence of conflicting interpretations of the role of recruitment in professional closure there is some evidence that professional leaders of the occupation themselves define careful selection of candidates as a necessary and vital process \(^{142}\), though there is no evidence that selection interviews typically take the form of an in-depth psychodynamic analysis of candidates emotions and politics as described in Berengarten and Kerrigan \(^{143}\). There is in


\(^{143}\) Berengarten, S., and Kerrigan, I., *Interviewing And Personality Assessment: Selection Of Social Work Students* New York, Council On Social Work Education, 1968. Berengarten and Kerrigan's paper is worthy of mention as a relatively rare version of an application of psychodynamic concepts in the selection of social work students. Berengarten and Kerrigan describe selection interviews as an occasion for 'dynamic assessment of the applicants personality' (p.xvi) designed to 'motivate the interviewee to try to understand himself and ... his problems and his feelings about them' (p.1). Interviewee 'slips of the tongue' may have strong diagnostic significance (p.9). Interviewees who dwell upon environmental issues like income or housing are suspect because 'a student who tends to dwell on the external aspects of a problem ... may ... be revealing a rigid set against the concept of unconscious determinants in human behaviour' (p.13) or revealing 'defensive intellectualism' (p.16) which masks inner emotions (p.16). The skilled interviewer should be on guard, however, against candidates who concur 'too easily' with the interviewer (p.46). It is always the interviewer who must have interpretive supremacy (p.43) and a dominant objective in interviewing social work candidates for training is to test candidates ability to 'relate to a person in authority' (p.94) and to superiors as 'the symbol of professional authority' (p.77).
any case a structural reason for doubting whether it is possible on an occupationally-wide scale to successfully employ psychological probes to eliminate politically unsuitable candidates. This is because cognitive indeterminacy in the forms noted in the previous section of the chapter is closely related to the question of whether selective recruitment promotes political consensus or 'closure' within the profession. Whether social work recruitment does or can perform the function imputed by theorists of professional closure is open to question, for reasons that may be illustrated through consideration of Waddington's study of recruitment to the role of Assistant Prison Governor. Waddington's study is relevant to an understanding of recruitment processes in occupations or professions whose knowledge base and occupational role is ambiguous and where there is a low level of public awareness of the nature of the occupational role. It is possible cognitive and occupational indeterminacy in social work is a highly significant factor in the selection process. In describing the role of assistant prison governor Waddington refers to the occupations' obscurity which means the lay public but also candidates for entry to the occupation have no more than 'the most meagre information about the profession'. Occupations which have high public visibility in terms of widespread shared public knowledge of what the occupational role consists of may (irrespective of whether the public knowledge is regarded by existing occupational members as accurate knowledge) attract candidates of a broadly similar 'type' in terms of

145 Ibid p.206
146 Ibid
personal attributes, values, and attitudes. Conversely, an occupation with a high level of occupational role ambiguity and indeterminacy and with a low level of public knowledge or public consensus in perceptions of what the occupational role 'actually' consists of, may be expected to attract a heterogeneous range of candidates (147). In such occupations it is true that selectors may in principle attempt to homogenize actual entry (and subsequent membership composition) by employing standardized criteria - such as life experience, qualifications, values, and attitudes towards the occupation - so as to select particular individuals from the heterogeneous range of candidates and in this way 'match' particular candidates to 'occupational requirements'. A problem, however, is that if an occupational role is ambiguous and indeterminate, with no internal occupationally wide consensus in definitions of the nature of the role and of the cognitive knowledge base, values, attitudes, personal attributes and skills required for its performance, there is likely to be heterogeneity amongst the selectors themselves and high variability in the criteria employed by different selectors (148). Empirical social work data not considered by Waddington are broadly congruent with his

147 Ibid p.205
148 Ibid
general thesis, as in the data reported in Ellis (149) Jones (150) and Edwards (151). In Waddington's analysis of occupations characterized by cognitive indeterminacy and role ambiguity 'Selectors, like applicants, will be structurally denied sufficient or unambiguous information upon which to erect selection criteria. Under these conditions, not all selectors may use the same criteria ...' (152). Therefore an occupation 'that is obscure both to potential applicants and selectors, will be affected by some measure of indeterminacy, reflected in the heterogeneity of those recruited into it' (153). Indeterminacy and


150 Jones, N., 'Selection Of Students For Social Work Training' Social Work Vol. 27, No. 3 (July) 1970 pp. 16-20. Jones's study of the use of written applications and interviews in the selection of social work students indicates diversity and also ambiguity in the criteria used for selection. From his data Jones concludes a broader inter-professional involvement in selection will provide a wider and more secure 'professional image' (p. 19) and argues social work selection boards should include other professionals such as 'general practitioners, personnel managers, psychologists, and accountants' (p. 20).

151 Edwards, M.E., 'Selection Interviews In Relation To The Process Of Reaching Admissions In Schools Of Social Work : Report Of A Survey' Applied Social Studies Vol. 3 (1971) pp. 39-50. The two studies above, Ellis (f.n.149) and Jones (f.n.150) refer to British social work. Edwards's data on admissions to schools of social work in America points to diversity in selection methods and criteria, and suggests there is no evidence to show selection interviews provide an accurate measure of how well students will do in their academic and professional work (p. 48).


153 Ibid
heterogeneity are relative, not absolute, variables. Nevertheless, it may be hypothesized those professions, such as social work, which have a relatively high level of indeterminacy and ambiguity of role-definition are involved in a 'reproduction' of heterogeneity amongst its members through a self-reinforcing process: if heterogeneity in recruitment is sustained during occupational membership this implies future applicants and selectors are also in a situation of occupational indeterminacy which in turn is likely to attract a similarly heterogeneous range of candidates (154) and a similarly heterogeneous intake into the profession. Whether in occupations characterised by a relatively high level of occupational indeterminacy the 'cycle' of heterogeneity in recruitment - membership - future recruitment is 'broken' at some stage (eg. after entry into the occupation) is an empirical variable. In social work, the patterns of inter-constituency conflict examined in the first chapter, together with the material examined in the earlier section of the present chapter on cognitive indeterminacy surrounding variable and conflicting conceptualisations of 'theory-practice', suggest it is empirically improbable that - after having been selected - new entrants are professionally socialised into a homogeneous, unified professional culture extending across the whole of the social work community.

Internal practical, theoretical, philosophical and political diversity within social work is regarded by some radical critics of professionalism as an endemic characteristic of social work that professionals continually struggle against: efforts to secure professional integration and unity are, as already noted, re-defined by some radicals as efforts to secure professional 'closure' of political consciousness after candidates have been selected for professional.

154 Ibid. p.215
training. Radical critique of this kind was significant in the academic 'radical social work' movement of the 1970's, reflected in Pearson's comment that the professionally socialized subject goes about his(or her) business in a more or less routine fashion which embodies certain assumptions about ... (the) ... occupational group and the world at large, and these assumptions are not open to critical reflection' (italics added).

Pearson's concept of professional closure rests on his view that social work operates at a low level of 'theoretical appreciation' and professional social work culture is employed to 'eliminate troublesome enquiries by offering ready-made directions for use, to replace truth hard to obtain by offering comfortable truisms ...'. North suggests psychotherapeutic 'mystique' is pervasive in professional social work which in providing 'psychic hand-outs' to clients is highly conservative by virtue of 'directing the client inward towards himself rather than towards radical change'. Deacon and Bartley describe social work education as a form of professional socialisation employing experiential 'process' learning and teaching methods which they associate with 'the encouragement of students to adhere to a set of social work professional maxims which ... (are) ...

156 Ibid p.128
157 Ibid p.127
158 Ibid
159 North, M., (1972) *op.cit.*
160 Ibid p.84
161 Ibid p.91
162 Ibid p.81
163 Ibid p.87
very confused ... these processes are underpinned by a general
disavowal of intellectuality, of theoretical thinking ... . (165)

According to Deacon and Bartley professional education is an attempt to
'cool out' (166) politically radical students and 'is accomplished
primarily by the channelling of social-structural or institutional
criticism into psychologistic thinking' (167) in which 'any insistence
by the student on the criticism of institutions is taken as indicating
something about the student rather than about the institution' (168).
A point noted at the end of the second chapter is that radical
criticism sometimes centres upon the notion that social works' 'oral
culture' together with 'process' learning functions as a deflector of
radical challenge against professional social work. This is explicit
in Deacon and Bartley: in describing their empirical study of patterns
of interaction in a social work training course they observe

"If heated political debate did occur, it would somehow be
miraculously ended by a statement like 'It's good that we have
expressed our feelings on this issue'. The ideas and
criticisms expressed are ... regarded as having importance ... only in so far as they modify or clarify the relationship between
the members of the group' (169) (italics added)

A similar observation to Deacon and Bartley's is evident in Pearson's
(170) account of social work psychologizing of motives (171). North
(172) also associates oral occupational culture with professional

165 Ibid p.70
166 Ibid p.71
167 Ibid
168 Ibid
169 Ibid p.78
170 Pearson, G., 'Making Social Workers: Bad Promises and Good Omens'
171 Ibid p.18
172 North, M., (1972) op.cit.
mystification\(^{173}\), political conservatism\(^{174}\), and claims to esoteric expertise as a means to professional status\(^{175}\). He is critical of professional social work conceptualisations of casework relationships and suggests the 'obscurity that surrounds the mystical relationship'\(^{176}\) is a 'mystic interaction'\(^{177}\) based upon ideas that are 'a vulgarization ... of psychoanalysis'\(^{178}\) using methods that are 'essentially verbal'\(^{179}\). As noted in the reference in the second chapter\(^{180}\) to oral culture and the 'consequences of literacy' thesis there is no invariant or necessary connection between oral culture, 'process' concepts, and 'conservative' social work politics. Not only psychotherapy but also theories of radical conscientisation embody concepts of self-understanding through dialogue: self-discovery through oral converse is in some respects a trans-political 'supra-content

173 Ibid p. 84
174 Ibid p. 71
175 Ibid p. 92
176 Ibid p. 84
177 Ibid p. 85
178 Ibid p. 91
179 Ibid
180 See Chapter 2, pp. 208-222
concept' (181), or more accurately (182) a concept that can be employed from a variety of political paradigmatic perspectives. In social work education 'process' concepts of experiential learning may be a feature of some radical courses based upon rejection of social control ideologies of social work and of social work education. An example is Richards and Righton's (183) typology of social work courses: courses based upon a radical 'libertarian/conflict approach' (184) have a loosely


Examples of supra-content concepts are 'consciousness-raising', or 'role' as a concept. These concepts are said to exist partly independently of paradigms. A concept of 'false-consciousness' is, for instance, a feature of psychoanalysis and of marxism. However, in the example just given (false-consciousness) psychoanalysis and marxism may have an epistemological affinity (ie. the doctrine that individuals may be subjectively unaware of the 'true' nature of their personal and social situation) but in most other respects (eg. substantive theoretical and political world view) psychoanalysis and marxism are dissimilar i.e. paradigmatic explanation (contextualization) of the concept ('false-consciousness') changes the meaning of the concept so that it becomes paradigmatically-specific and in this sense it cannot be said to be a 'supra-content' concept.

182 See n.181


184 Ibid p.77
structured selection procedure where the 'ideal would be for all applicants to be admitted to the course' (185) (italic added) and the academic curriculum emphasises 'methods that require the active participation of the learner - especially ... those that engage him at an affective level. Intellectually demanding assignments may be seen as a relatively less urgent priority than the development of emotional authenticity' (186). Experientialism in the type of radical course referred to by Richards and Righton has a different political 'content' to the experientialism described earlier by Deacon and Bartley who inferred this learning mode per se is invariably a conservative professional strategem to deflect radical critics. Equally, written media may be deployed for disseminating either 'professional' or 'radical' values across sections of the social work community: an example of the second type is the significance of the marxist 'Case Con' journal in the dissemination of radical social values in the early 'seventies.

'One of the most significant of the early developments amongst socialist social workers was the magazine Case Con. Formed in the late 1960's, this magazine constituted an important focus for the increasing number of radicals and socialists coming into social work' (187).

A different radical construction of the 'professional' liberal-education model is to regard it not as a form of professional closure but as potentially a radicalising force within the social work community. This radical construction was noted briefly in the first chapter analysis of inter-constituency conflicts and articulation of these conflicts in social work education (188). Ginsberg argues that

185 Ibid p.79
186 Ibid
187 Jones, C., (1983) op. cit. p.137
188 See Chapter 1, p.49
'Radicals and socialists in social work education must ...' continue to defend the liberal higher education tradition against internal bureaucratic control and external or central government pressure, particularly those elements of the tradition which encourage fundamental questioning and analysis of values, policies and institutions' (189)

Watson and Lee(190) writing in 1982 argue social work education retains 'a certain amount of autonomy from controlling authorities' (191) and suggest 'if this autonomy is to be preserved then social workers must resist the move towards an orthodox professionalism, and the strict hierarchical control of a systematic theory of professional knowledge which this entails' (192). In the period since Watson and Lee wrote this it was not 'orthodox professionalism' but the frequently 'anti-professionalist' perspectives of employers that gained an ascendency in the social work community; this is demonstrated in the first chapter analysis of events leading up to the announcement in 1986 by the Central Council for Education and Training In Social Work that a new training policy was to be introduced in line with the 'new circumstances' that had arisen within the social services departments (193). The professional and radical constituencies have resisted moves towards more employer-controlled patterns of social work education, reasons for this resistance cited within the radical constituency being broadly in line with those noted by Ginsberg and by Watson and Lee above. Notions of education as a politically liberalising or radicalising force are evident in Freire (194) and also in empirical

190 Watson, M., and Lee, P., (1982) op.cit
191 Ibid p.151
192 Ibid
194 See Chapter 2, n.12
studies of professional and occupational training programmes. For example, studies of police training point to a 'liberalising' effect upon recruits though this effect appears to decline after training and is replaced by subsequent immersion in the 'occupational culture' of policing which becomes increasingly salient for experienced officers; this interpretation of the role of police training is noted in Van Maanen (195), Butler and Cochrane (196) and Fielding (197). A comparative analysis by Potter, Watson and Watson (198) examined data from three separately evolved studies of prison officer training, police officer training, and social work training. Each study employed the Wilson Patterson Attitude Inventory (WPAI) or a variant of it to examine attitudes and attitude-change during training. The authors note a need for methodological caution in interpreting data from psychometric test scores (199) but argue the data have sufficient reliability for making comparisons between the three studies. The WPAI in each study was employed for measuring attitudes on a scale of conservatism - liberalism. Potter, Watson and Watson conclude there were striking

199 ibid pp.1-2, and p.18
similarities in the data (200) in so far as each occupational group of entrants became more 'liberal' during the course of their training. In the 8 week residential training course for prison officers there was 'a consistent drop in conservatism scores from beginning to end of the course' (201). In the 10 week police officer training course the WPAI measure of conservatism when compared with data on other occupations suggests police entrants are more conservative than members of most other occupations, including occupations from which some of the recruits were drawn, but 'the observed difference is probably not so great that it might be expected to put them out of sympathy with large sections of the British public' (202). Pre-training WPAI scores suggested the higher the level of previous educational qualification the lower the scores on conservatism, but for police recruits taken as a whole there was a statistically significant tendency for conservatism scores to have declined by the end of the 10 week training course (203).

In social work training the WPAI tests were applied to students taking a two-year professional training course leading to the Certificate Of Qualification in Social Work. In comparing data for the three occupational groups Potter, Watson and Watson note that 'newcomers to all three occupations show a significant increase in liberalism from beginning to end of the relevant training period' (204). However the social work students differed from the other occupational groups in at least two respects. First, many social work entrants at the beginning of training are already significantly more 'liberal' than the 'general public' and than the two other occupational groups included in

200 Ibid p.1
201 Ibid p.6
202 Ibid p.11
203 Ibid p.12
204 Ibid p.16
the study. The researchers comment that the test scores indicate 'many ...' entrants to the social work profession have attitudes which are not ... in phase with those of the general public' (205). The social work students' liberalism was, as just noted, increased further during training (206), a finding which leads the researchers to suggest high rates of liberalism amongst social workers may be one factor in explanations of why 'as a group ... (social workers) ... may have more difficulty in communications with large sections of the general public than do either police or prison staff' (207). Secondly, the researchers point to a phenomenon already discussed earlier in the chapter: they note that of the three occupational groups 'the social workers had the most variation in attitude among themselves. There can be considerable disagreement among social workers over particular issues' (208).

In social work the potentially politically radicalising effect of the liberal-education model is, as noted in the first chapter, resisted by employers and also by the 'technical-professionalist' constituency represented in Davies who in a discussion of the liberal-education model suggests it has a politically debilitating effect upon professional students and for this reason 'I no longer consider it to be appropriate' (209). Davies's perspective of social work raises the question of imputed sources of radicalism and the question 'who are the radicalisers'? Davies does not regard radical values as part of the internal tradition of social work; he views radicalism as an external threat against social work and

205 Ibid
206 Ibid
207 Ibid p.19
208 Ibid
209 Davies, M., 'What We Have To Learn About Social Work Education'
Community Care 15 January 1981 p.19
asserts 'critical literature emanating from the social and political sciences ... (is an) ... external attack ...'(210). Davies appears to associate his concept of radicalism as 'external' attack with an epistemological theory that professionally experienced and qualified 'insider' members of the profession have welfare 'defining rights' which cannot legitimately be invoked or questioned by non-professional 'outsiders'. He amplifies this dichotomy of professional 'insider' and non-professional 'outsider' in a number of papers on social work. In a paper based upon critical rejection of the Barclay Report proposals for 'community social work'(211) Davies (212) refers critically to sociologists, though it is not stated whether this is because Davies believes sociologists are implicated in the movement towards community social work which, as will be shown in chapter five, has become a highly controversial movement in the 1980's. In criticising the concept of community social work Davies writes that social work students "cannot properly be taught by any who have never practised it. Many are the sociologists who seem to 'know better' than the social worker what the social worker should do. To them I invariably say 'just shut up' ..."(213). It is not clear, however, whether Davies's construction of non-professional outsiders includes all academic social scientists; in

213 Ibid p.63
another critical paper on community social work Davies (214) refers aprovingly to Pinker's rejection of community social work in defence of professional casework and remarks upon the quality of Pinker's 'wide-ranging' (215) critique of community social work. In an amplification of his formulation of professional insiders/non-professional outsiders Davies refers to Pinker's 'outsider' status and comments 'It is ironic that someone who was once under attack from BASW because he was appointed to a chair of social work though he himself was not and never had been a practitioner should now be defending what seems to me to be the mainstream and established position' (216) (italic added). This leaves open an interpretation that Davies is not criticising the whole of social science per se, but rather those versions which politically challenge his conception of professional social work. A variant of this noted in chapter one is Wright's (217) attempt in CCETSW Consultative Document No.3 to appeal to interests and perspectives contained within a variety of constituencies, including those of the employers, technical-professionalists, and of the academic-professional and professionalising movements. In Wright's formulation the 'problem' of radical dissent lies not in disciplines but in people i.e. in non-professional teachers of these disciplines who import their personal political values into social work education (218). It is not only some

215 Ibid p.29
216 Ibid p.30
218 See Chapter 1, pp.43-44
professional writers who view radical political values as 'external' to social work. In his radical critique of professional social work Jones suggests the liberal education tradition has

'made it difficult for social work courses to control closely the inputs made by those teachers of contributory disciplines such as sociology, psychology and social policy who, in the main, are not professional social workers, and who may not share the professional staff's objectives for the course' (219).

Critics of social science 'radicalisation' of professional social work frequently cite sociology as the main source of politically radical ideas, though considerable disagreement surrounds this interpretation. Davies believes it is 'theoretically possible that sociology might undermine or destroy social work ...'(220) but Leonard (221) writing from a marxist perspective suggests sociology is a highly conservative adjunct of welfare professionalism (222) and a further view is Clarke's (223) suggestion that a theory of contamination and 'corruption' (of social work) through the keeping of 'bad company' (sociology) is defective (224) because such a theory ignores 'internal' professional dissatisfactions with traditional concepts of professional social work (225). A related difficulty in formulations of the role of 'professional insider' as having exclusive welfare defining rights is that a number of radicals opposed to 'professional' perspectives of welfare are themselves professionally qualified social workers; this

219 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit p.109
222 Ibid
224 Ibid p.126
225 Ibid pp.126-127
applies, for example, to Leonard (226) Jones (227) Statham (228) Walker and Beaumont (229) and to some of the contributors - including Hugman, Bennett and Garrett - in Brake and Bailey's (230) text Radical Social Work and Practice. Whether radical critiques of the kind referred to as 'external' are more damaging to professional social work than 'internal' radical criticism, is difficult to establish empirically. In the sociology of professions Friedson (231) argues internal professional dissenters who have an established formal status within a profession are significant sources of internal challenge: and Perrucci (232) in a study of professional dissident groups in the United States showed that the ideology of internal professional dissidents was generally highly critical of professionalism as conventionally defined and centred upon a wish 'to move beyond questions of technique and means to questions about the kind of society in which one works' (233).

227 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit
231 Friedson, E., Professional Dominance: The Social Structure Of Medical Care New York, Atherton, 1970
233 Ibid p.222
The politics of social work are interwoven with issues of social work theory, practice, professionalisation, and organisational structure: in the final section of the chapter and also in the later chapters it will be apparent political aspects of each of the particular social work topics under discussion are closely enmeshed in these topics and in the ways they are constructed and responded to by different constituencies within the social work community. The nature and extent of political radicalism in contemporary social work is difficult to establish with accuracy. This is partly for empirical reasons, but partly also for conceptual reasons associated with the problem of unambiguously defining what radical social work is. The phenomenon of 'radical social work' in the 1970's was largely an academic radicalism founded upon intellectual critique of professional welfare under capitalism. Two features of these radical critiques are worthy of note. First, they co-incided with a massive expansion of professional social work services particularly in the social services departments in the post-Seebohm era (234), a scale of expansion reflected in a high rate of growth in financial expenditure on the personal social services in the early 1970's (235). It was not until the late 'seventies that professional social work services experienced in any significant way the impact of financial expenditure cuts associated with the 'legitimation crisis' of the welfare state, the effects of which are examined in chapter five. Second, as just noted, radical social work in the 'seventies was mainly in the form of...


intellectual critique and for the most part (though alternative theories of practice were sometimes offered) did not put forward viable alternative practices or alternative organisational structures or service-delivery systems to 'replace' the professional casework model that was being criticised by radicals. In the main, it was radical theories that were promulgated and these - as discussed earlier in the chapter - were widely criticised for failure to specify identifiably 'radical' alternative practical expressions of 'anti-professionalist' socialist or marxist theories of welfare. In some respects, professional casework experiences a far greater sense of threat in the 1980's than during the era of 'abstract radicalism' in the 1970's. Concrete proposals in the 1980's to 'reform' social work education along the lines favoured not by radicals but by the employers constituency are perceived within many sections of the professional constituency as a highly threatening form of de-professionalisation (236). Professional social work in the 'eighties has also experienced another form of challenge emanating, in large part, from outside the domain of radical theory. Professional perceptions of the movement in the 1980's towards service decentralisation, organic service-delivery systems and 'community social work' are analysed in chapter five. As will be shown in chapter five, the concept of community social work has been resisted by large sections of the professional social work constituency, and by some 'radical social workers'. Community social work and 'patch' methods of service delivery are more commonly associated with welfare pluralist philosophy for a mixed economy of welfare, rather than with radicalism: however unlike 'utopian' radical theorisation in the 1970's, community

236 Carter, D., 'Another Blind Leap Into The Dark' Community Care
20 June 1985 pp.27-29
social work is experienced as a practical alternative form of social work service which 'threatens' the professional casework model 'in practice rather than (only) in theory'.

One indicator regarded by some writers as a measure of social work radicalism is the pattern of declining membership in the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) during the 1970's. An instance of this is Parry and Parry's (237) analysis in 1979 of declining membership and financial crisis in the BASW, a state of affairs in the professional association also described in 1980 by Burns (238) and Harbridge (239). Parry and Parry suggest 'the strength of BASW has been declining ... because it ... (has) ... acquired an image as an elitist ... organisation' (240). They note in 1979 only thirty per cent of those eligible were members (241) and in a reference to increasing numbers of social workers joining the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) they argue this is partly because 'the more radical element share in the contemporary ethos which regards the professional aims of BASW as elitist' (242). Parry and Parry suggest another factor in the decline in BASW membership and expansion of NALGO social work membership is protection of jobs and services arising from cuts in welfare expenditure (243). In defending services, jobs, and salaries trade union activity is regarded as more politically effective.

238 Burns, J., 'BASW : Turbulent Years' Community Care 14 February 1980, pp.17-18
240 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit. p.45
241 Ibid
242 Ibid p.44
243 Ibid
than a professional association in danger of, as one member put it, a 'decline into exclusiveness ...' (244). However Jones (245) in 1983 suggested this was a 'reluctant' unionism (246) on the part of professional social workers. He notes BASW did not have the power or influence to protect professionalism (247) and increased numbers of professional social workers joined NALGO for protection of salaries, status, and working conditions (248) but were reluctant to abandon a professional for a 'labourist' (249) approach and would have preferred that the professional association was stronger as an alternative to unionization (250). Related conclusions adduced by some writers that the BASW is committed exclusively to a 'conservative' version of professional casework are not always empirically substantiated. It is probable that at least a proportion of professionally qualified members of the BASW are strongly oriented to social reformist objectives. Lees's (251) study of a local BASW branch showed the existence of commitments towards social reform, a finding supported in a later survey by Cypher (252): it may be noted also that the nature of social work defined in the BASW publication The Social Work Task (253) includes

244 Ibid p.45
246 Ibid p.137
247 Ibid p.117
248 Ibid p.135
249 Ibid p.137
250 Ibid p.135
251 Lees, R., 'Social Action' New Society Vol.18, No.474 (October) 1971
252 Cypher, J., 'Sections And Strife' Social Work Today Vol.4, No.4 1973
a reference to professional interventions designed to help create 'a social environment conducive to the well-being of all' (254). For these reasons, together with the previously noted problem of defining what radical social work consists of in theory and in practice, it is by no means certain that analysis of variations in the size of membership of the BASW is a reliable measure of the extent of radicalism within social work. It may be noted the pattern of decline in BASW membership has been arrested in the mid-eighties; membership in 1985 rose to 8418 from 8037 in the previous year, an increase over the previous year of approximately five per cent (255). This has to be viewed against a background of membership patterns in which far more social workers are members of NALGO than of BASW (256) and viewed also in terms of the observation, discussed in chapter five, that the success of inner city local authority professional social workers in the 1980's in resisting the implementation of 'decentralisation' programmes of service-delivery has been brought about by NALGO rather than by the BASW. In future studies of the nature of social work radicalism it may be helpful to re-employ Mungham's (257) distinction between 'inner' directed militancy which is concerned with 'salaries and conditions of work ... (and) ... occupational objectives' (258): and 'outer' directed militancy which "refers to the concern with client and 'social policy' affairs" (259).

254 Ibid p. 62
255 Report BASW Membership Services Divisional Committee 1985, reported in news item 'Membership Grows' Community Care 27 June 1985 p. 6
256 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op. cit p. 44
258 Ibid p. 30
259 Ibid
Mungham notes these forms of militancy are not necessarily mutually exclusive (260) though in his classification they are analytically distinct modes of militancy in pressing for improved occupational conditions in the first case, and for improved client conditions and social reforms in the second. In the light of developments in the 1980's - in particular, continuation of government policies for restricting financial expenditure on the personal social services, new patterns of 'practical' social work training influenced more closely by employers, and the movements towards decentralisation, 'patch' service-delivery systems and community social work - it is possible professional social work will in future seek a closer rapprochement between its professional and labourist dimensions rather than be in a position of having to make a choice between these dimensions. In the 1980's 'occupational' interests to do with salaries, job security, and conditions of service are perceived to be threatened by financial expenditure cuts which may be more effectively resisted through unionization and organized collective political action associated with labourist strategies, while 'professional' perspectives are also perceived to be under threat arising from the proposed new pattern of training referred to earlier and from the decentralisation movement. It may be noted efforts to combine labourist and professional dimensions outside of NALGO (which is open to state employees generally rather than being a union specifically for social workers) already exist in the form of the British Union of Social Workers which, as a union whose membership is restricted to social workers, was actively promoted by the BASW itself in the late 1970's.

260 Ibid
Some writers whose concern lies less with examination of the contents of radical theory than with radical practice in organisational and service-delivery contexts have concluded social work radicalism is chimeric. Two reasons cited for this conclusion are, first, failure on the part of radical theory to define and identify radical practices, and secondly, radical careerism. H hiatus between radical theory and practice was described earlier in the chapter. Hearn (261) suggests the failure of radical theory to specify radical forms of practice ('practice solutions') has a demoralizing effect upon students, an effect which promotes a paradoxical reaction. He claims "For some, the whole process of radical socialisation in educational establishments and political groups may be so 'conscientising' as to be immobilizing" (262) and this paradoxically leads erstwhile radicals to retreat to what Hearn describes as a conservative professional 'psychologism' (263). Hearn identifies a second obstacle against the development of radical practice, expressed in his notion of radical careerism (264). He argues 'professional' and 'radical' social workers in professional bureaucracies have similar organisational and professional interests (265) and that this affinity of interests is one reason why radical practices are similar to professional practices (266). A trenchant earlier anticipation of Hearn's view of 'radical careerism' is Moore's (267) account, written in 1976 at the height of the radical social work

261 Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit
262 Ibid p.26
263 Ibid p.26-27
264 Ibid p.26
265 Ibid p.23
266 Ibid p.25
267 Moore, P., 'Personally Speaking' Community Care 2 June 1976, p.10
movement; in describing the expansion of professional social work in the post-Seebohm social services departments Moore comments 'in a short space of time social work has become a thriving profession' (268) in which radical professional practitioners are 'thinking Left and living Right' (269). He argues radical professionals are unwilling to 'surrender' their monopoly of knowledge, and in his interpretation the persons who have gained most 'from the rise of the radical professional are the radical professionals themselves' (270). Moore's account has the merit of directing analytic attention to the possibility that professional occupational self-interests are one factor in the practical articulation of (professional or radical) theories-of-practice. However Moore's account is not wholly satisfactory, for three reasons. First, he readily imputes professional and organisational interests without reference to empirical data or systematic analysis that might demonstrate whether these interests have real, concrete existence. Secondly, if professionals and radicals are said to have common occupational interests this cannot constitute an explanation of why some social workers, even where practices are similar, identify with 'professional' theories and others with 'radical' theories of social work: an implication that some social workers identify with radicalism because this serves their occupational interests is misconceived - in Moore's own account identification with non-radical 'professional' theories would serve this function just as well. Thirdly, it is likely that occupational interests do play a part in social work's articulation of the relationship of theory to practice and in social work handling of the 'politics of social work'. These interests, however, remain to be defined and examined in terms of

268 Ibid
269 Ibid
270 Ibid
their interaction with other phenomenon. There may be many reasons why radicals do not 'put theory into practice'. One of these is that the politics of welfare and of theory-practice are ambiguous (271).

A point that will be made later in the chapter with regard to the concept 'front-line autonomy' is that formulation of the practice concomitants of 'professional' and 'radical' ideologies are often not amenable to precise specification: this arises not only from the operation of professional or occupational interests, but from theoretical issues concerning the form and structure of ideologies and the operation in concrete organisational structures and work situations of a diverse range of variables.

It is within practical work contexts that the perennial and contemporary problems of theory-practice and social work politics gain more tangible, visible forms of expression than those considered so far; in the remaining section of the chapter the theoretical and political dimensions of social work examined earlier are shown to be inscribed into professionalisation processes, organisational structures and patterns of service-delivery.

**PROFESSIONAL–ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES**

The third major perennial and contemporary dimension of social work centres upon the work context within which social workers operate. This dimension, as already noted, is interwoven with the issues of 'theory-practice' and 'social work politics' examined earlier. The material is arranged under three heads. First, review of

271 Pearson, G., (1975) in n.127
professional unification as an historically transmitted goal which remains only partly realized in contemporary social work's continuing search for professional 'unity'. Second, the relation of social work to sociology of professions with particular reference to 'trait' models of professional structure, the construction of professional knowledge mandates, and the relation of professionalism to bureaucracy. Thirdly, the concept 'front-line autonomy' in organisational contexts is examined from a sociological perspective.

THE SEARCH FOR PROFESSIONAL UNIFICATION

Professionalisation of social work and the search for a unified professional and occupational identity are empirically interrelated processes that first acquired significance in the late nineteenth century. Jones (272) notes 'Some of the first claims regarding social workers' professional stature were made by the Charity Organisation Society' (273). The question raised in a BASW publication in 1977 'Social Work - A Profession?' (274) had in 1915 been posed in the title of Flexner's (275) essay 'Is Social Work A Profession?'. Flexner posed his question against a background of occupational and organisational diversity in the field of what might loosely be described as 'welfare' activities. In the early and mid nineteenth century the main welfare

272 Jones, C., (1983) op. cit
273 Ibid p.81
274 British Association Of Social Workers (1977) op. cit. p.20
response to social problems came not from the state (276) but from voluntary charitable activity and philanthropic effort (277). The Charity Organisation Society had become influential by the end of the nineteenth century but social welfare in Britain remained a highly differentiated segmented social movement (278) with a minimal degree of organisational unity: 'welfare' work took place in a variety of state institutions and voluntary organisational contexts including university and church settlements, charitable philanthropic trusts, and local tenants and workers associations. At the turn of the century there was no homogeneous occupational culture of welfare nor did there exist any specific conditions of employment or organisational form, other than the Charity Organisation Society, that might have provided the basis for the development of a common 'welfare' occupational identity (279). The variety of welfare organisations and their diversity meant that each "...continued to have its own traditions, specific objectives, and terminology" (280) and during this early phase of its development social work "lacked specific organisational forms with which its adherents could be associated, and automatically by such association, claim to be 'social workers'" (281). The first recorded use of the term 'social

277 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1977) op.cit. p.21
279 Seed, P., (1973) op.cit. p.40
280 Ibid
281 Ibid
worker' occurred in 1893 in a paper presented by Bosanquet to the Charity Organisation Society (282) though her 'generic' use of this term was more in the nature of a statement of professional intent and aspiration than an accurate empirical description: as noted above, 'social work' retained its polymorphic structure and the term referred to relatively separate, structurally diverse welfare roles performed in a wide variety of organisational and associational contexts. These roles included those of hospital almoner, settlement workers, tenant association organisers, the poor law inspectorate, and reformatory school workers. The history of British social work since the turn of the century may be described as a gradual process of organisational and professional unification, a process which gained rapid momentum in the early 1970's. The degree of professional unification that exists in modern social work is, however, a comparatively recent phenomenon.

Seed (283) notes that even as recently as 1947 the Younghusband Report (284) listed the following 'forms of social work': almoning, child care, church work, colonial social welfare, community centre and settlement work, personnel management, and youth leadership (285). Seed further remarks 'to this remarkable list, the report of the Birmingham Social Studies Course added: housing managers, housemasters and housemistresses in Approved Schools, and social survey investigators' (286). Gradual movement in the 'fifties and 'sixties towards a compaction and 'narrowing' of the organisational base for social work (and of the occupational description 'social worker') was

282 This is cited in 'Editorial' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.4, No.1 (Summer) 1984 p.1
283 Seed, P., (1977) op.cit
285 Seed, P., (1977) op.cit p.55
286 Ibid p.56
given a major impetus in the Seebohm Report (287) which in 1968 proposed the creation of unified local authority Social Services Departments (SSD's). The creation of the SSD's in 1971 was a highly significant development which organisationally and professionally shifted British social work still further away from its nineteenth century origins as a structurally and occupationally heterogeneous welfare movement. In the modern era the drive towards occupational integration and professional unification is manifested in a number of interrelated dimensions which include social work organisations, social work theory and practice, and professional social work training. Professional unification is revealed in the process of professionalisation itself, as evidenced in the creation of the British Association Of Social Workers in 1970 intended as the major national professional association for social workers; in the movement towards a common 'generic' principle of professional technique intended for application by all social workers and the creation of a new organisational base (the SSD's) within which this unifying generic professionalism could be practised; and in the unification of training centred upon a single nationally recognized professional qualification (the Certificate of Qualification In Social Work) regulated by the Central Council for Education And Training In Social Work following the creation of the training Council by statutory instrument in 1971 (288).

The developments outlined above indicate social work has achieved a relatively high level of structural integration and professional unification when compared with the structural form of 'welfare' occupations at the beginning of the present century. However there

287 Home Office (Seebohm Report) (1968) op.cit
288 Seed, P., (1977) op.cit pp.77-80
are a number of indicators suggesting professional unification is far from fully achieved. Manifestations of segmentation and division within contemporary social work were identified in the first chapter—analysis of inter-constituency conflicts in the 1980's: and in earlier parts of the present chapter where it was shown, first, that cognitive indeterminacy and disagreement exists with regard to the question of what the knowledge base of social work does or should consist of and how this knowledge should be 'related' to practice, and secondly, that dispute surrounding the politics of welfare is a perennial but also contemporary source of conflict within social work. Other related factors operate in a way that frustrates social work's long-standing quest for professional unification. These factors are organisational and relate to the fact that despite a long-term historical process of development towards a relative narrowing of social work's organisational base, social work is nevertheless located in a comparatively diverse range of organisational and 'practice' contexts and in different systems and patterns of service-delivery. Even within the social services departments—which in some respects may be considered the organisational 'heartland' of modern professional social work—tensions of the kind described in the first chapter surround role-definitions with regard to the question of what constitutes 'professional social work' and 'social services work'. Disagreements also exist between those social workers who advocate a generalist ('generic') mode of practice and those who argue for specialist forms of practice. Outside the SSD's modern social work is practised in hospital social work departments, the probation service, education welfare departments of local education authorities, the health service and a variety of other organisational contexts. As

289 This is discussed in Chapter 1, n.253
noted in the earlier reference to 'forms of social work' in the late 1940's, organisational diversity was even more pronounced in the 1940's and 1950's when there was 'an extraordinary discrepancy between the theory of methods, based almost exclusively on casework theory derived from a narrow range of experience, and social work tasks which were defined in terms even broader than they are defined today' (290). That these tasks remain 'broadly defined' and to a large extent organisationally specific rather than professionally-generic is recognised in Young's (291) contention that a major identifying feature of social work is the particular organisational context in which the social worker is located (292). Against this historical but also contemporary background of social work organisational heterogeneity, Specht and Gilbert refer to 'the profession's perennial search for unity' (293). Some professional accounts of the 'unity' theme attempt to construct conceptual frameworks designed to 'secure' professional unity in the face of those organisational and service-delivery specificities of context which exert a de-unifying influence upon the profession. A number of these accounts - sometimes described under the rubric of the search for 'unity within diversity' - appear to be somewhat unsubstantial attempts to conceptually 'construct' professional unity out of materials ill-suited to this task. This is evident in the two illustrations below, both of which appear to offer analyses that lack

290 Seed, P., (1977) op.cit p.56
292 Ibid p.viii
theoretical and empirical explicitness. Germaine (294) seeks a 'balance between commonality and diversity' (295) and suggests professional commonality (unity) arises from the fact that social work interventionists, irrespective of the particular roles undertaken such as 'face to face practitioner, administrator, researcher, planner or educator' (296), share in common the fact that they are all concerned with the relation of persons (clients) to society (297). This concern with 'person-society' connections is said to provide professional unity and common professional identity deriving from social works' 'unique' role in focussing upon person-environment 'exchanges' (299). Social workers are located in different types of organisational settings and therefore in different systems of service-delivery which create pressures towards diversity, as does the distinction between direct and indirect service roles: but according to Germaine 'Commonality is found in our shared social purpose ... focussed on people-environment exchanges ...' (300) (italics added). Germaine's definition of the criterion for professional commonality is remarkably broad and ill-defined, and is also not confined to social work. Concern with 'person-environment' relationships, however these are defined, can equally be said to be a major professional concern.

295 Ibid p.49
296 Ibid p.50
297 Ibid
298 Ibid
299 Ibid
300 Ibid
amongst local government officers, town planners, judges, and psychiatrists. It may also be noted that within social work concern with the 'psycho-social connection' is deeply implanted in the politics of social work and could just as well be said to be a source of disunity and conflict rather than of 'unity': whether social work should address 'psycho-social' connections is not in dispute - but how to conceptualise these connections is a matter of intense 'internal' political disagreement, as evidenced in the widely contrasting 'psycho-social' social work perspectives represented by, for example, Hollis (301) Statham (302) and Leonard (303). Germaine's conceptualisation of the 'unity within diversity' rubric is not dissimilar to Gross, Murphy and Steiner's (304) concept of 'balance' between 'commonality and diversity' (305). As social work practice becomes increasingly diversified 'a tension emerges between the needs for cohesion and for differentiation' (306) (italic added). The 'need' for cohesion 'emerges from the importance of maintaining professional unity and solidarity' (307) and diversity arises 'from the demands

302 Statham, D., (1978) op.cit
305 Ibid p.79
306 Ibid
307 Ibid
placed on social workers to operate ... within an increasingly complex network of service-delivery.' (308) Gross et al. note 'tension' between professional unity and service diversity 'is not new' (309) and has existed 'ever since ... social work was first ... (defined as) ... an area of professional activity' (310) (italic added). Tension between unity-and-diversity is said by Gross et al. and by Germaine, earlier, to require the construction of a 'balance between commonality and diversity' (311): the former is threatened by the practice reality that social workers perform different roles employing different methods in a variety of organisational and service-delivery contexts. Gross et al. suggest the 'quest for unity within diversity ... is the quest of every social work student ...' (312) and it is important to 'develop and hold on to students professional identification ...' (313) and to recognize that 'the search for unity within diversity' (314) is necessary for '... a professional identity ... (and) ... central to the improvement of quality in social work ...' (315). A problem in professional analyses of 'unity within diversity' is that, at least in the two accounts reviewed here, they appear to be theoretically and empirically unsubstantial. In the account by Gross et al. the internal politics of social work are largely left out of the analysis: this is a significant omission, because - as noted earlier in the chapter - politics is a salient factor in the social construction of the phenomenon addressed.

308 Ibid
309 Ibid
310 Ibid
311 Ibid p.81
312 Ibid p.80
313 Ibid p.85
314 Ibid p.89
315 Ibid
in Gross et al's analysis. Also, Gross et al appear to be suggesting that striking a 'balance' between unity and diversity rests upon some functional necessity (or 'need') for this balance, which in turn is 'explained' in terms of another 'need' i.e. the 'need' for professional 'cohesion', common 'identity', 'commonality', 'unity' etc. Why professional social work unity is necessary as a 'need' within the framework of social work and the personal social services is a question not directly answered either by Germaine or Gross et al: nor is there much analysis of how in social and political terms this objective might be realistically achieved where social work is normatively and politically heterogeneous and organisationally diversified. Questions raised by analyses such as those of Germaine and Gross et al are astutely noted in Sainsbury (316) though left unanswered.

'So what basis can a collective identity for social work be re-established, bearing in mind the various diversities ...? More fundamentally, is collective identity necessary or desirable?' (317)

SOCIAL WORK AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF PROFESSIONS

THEORETICAL MODELS OF PROFESSION AND THE PROBLEM OF 'TRAITS'

Two relatively well established antithetical sociological models of profession are the 'trait' and 'processual' models. The first model differentiates professions from other structural forms (such as social movements, vocations, and occupations) by means of a definition of profession as possessing a number of core attributes or traits. In this approach the traits most frequently cited relate to task complexity and skill based upon formal knowledge acquired through professional training, altruistic service, rigorous...
testing of professional competence prior to certification and registration as a qualified practitioner, and adherence to a professional code of conduct which maintains professional integrity and regulates relationships between professionals and their clients (318).

In the sociology of professions conceptualisation of profession in terms of the 'trait' model is widely represented in, for example, the writings of Parsons (319) Goode (320) Cogan (321) Greenwood (322) Vollmer and Mills (323) and Millerson (324).

A process model of profession, an analytic approach grounded for the most part in interactionist sociological perspectives, is outlined in the work of Hughes (325) Bucher and Strauss (326) Freidson (327) Elger.

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325 Hughes, E.C., Men And Their Work Glencoe, Ill, 1958


In rejecting the traits or 'core-attributes' model, researchers involved in the 'processual' or 'segmentary' interactionist perspective indicate a tendency in the traits model to define professions as being characterised by professional homogeneity and cognitive and political consensus. Bucher and Strauss (331) identified internal conflicts of interests and perspectives within a number of professions and challenged the notion of a consensual, unsegmented 'professional community' which Goode (332) had argued is the definitional hallmark of a profession. Most writers in the 'process' tradition note the term 'profession' in industrial society is an honorific cultural symbol and the professional 'traits' a mark of approbation, reflected in listings of traits that refer to a client-service ethos and to altruism, to professional ethics which protect the interests of clients, and to superior highly specialised knowledge and expertise placed at the disposal of clients. The criticism frequently voiced against the traits approach is that sociologists who employ a 'trait' model for engaging in analysis of professions are merely reproducing professionals' own ideological self-descriptions, a criticism that led Freidson (333) to suggest the attributes model in most of its usages

331 Bucher, R., and Strauss, A., (1960) op.cit
332 Goode, V., (1957) op.cit
333 Freidson, E., (1970) op.cit
represents professional ideology rather than reality. Becker in rejecting the idea that sociologists employing the traits-model have identified a neutral 'scientific' definition of profession argues that 'there is no 'true' profession and no set of characteristics necessarily associated with the title. There are only those work groups commonly regarded as professions and those which are not ...'

(334) Becker argues it is more empirically productive to engage in the study of actual processes by which professionalising occupations 'claim' or 'appropriate' the description 'professional' as a way of describing themselves

'... we find many occupations trying hard to become professions and using the symbol of the profession in an attempt to increase their autonomy and raise their prestige. Optometrists, nurses, librarians, social workers - these are only a few of the many occupations engaged in this kind of activity' (335)

In his review of theoretical and empirical problems in the use of the trait-model Dingwall (336) concludes that analysis of professional activity should proceed by 'abandoning any claim to legislate a correct use of the term 'profession', but treating it as a concept invoked by members of particular collectivities and seeking to describe its practical usage' (337) (italics added). As well as sociologists, some social work writers have implicitly or explicitly criticised professional social work's self-invocation of the traits-model. Frequently, criticisms of this kind emanate from writers associated with 'radical social work', referred to in the previous section of the chapter. Criticism of professionalism is not, however,

334 Becker, H., (1962) op.cit. pp.32-33
335 Ibid p.39
337 Ibid pp.331
confined to radical critique: as noted in the first chapter some members of the employers constituency are highly critical (338) of social work's movement in the 1970's towards a professional mode of occupational structure. Amidst conflict and controversy surrounding the new training policy announced by the Central Council For Education And Training In Social Work, a paper in 1986 by Cooper (339) the chairperson of the CCHTSW began with the words 'In any profession education and qualifying training are the gateways to life chances in prosperity, social power and prestige' (340). Other social work leaders are critical of some aspects of professionalisation. Parsloe (341) in making out her case for a new training policy based upon a redefinition of professional social work and social services roles refers to 'what I believe to be a misguided urge on the part of some ... social workers and social work educators to claim for social work a professional status akin to that achieved by the traditional professions' (342). In Parsloe's view social work should be 'professionally anti-professional' (343) (italic added) and the 'anti-professional professionals must work with those who seek their services or are referred to them as partners and fellow citizens rather than as clients' (344) (italic added).

338 Harbert, W., 'Crisis In Social Work' Community Care 21 March 1985, p.15
339 Cooper, J., 'The Making Of A Social Worker' Community Care 17 April 1986, pp.18-20
340 Ibid p.18
342 Ibid p.109
343 Ibid p.110
344 Ibid
Another influential social work leader, Irvine (345) suggests social science may function as a legitimation of professional status:

"Knowledge as represented by academic qualifications, is undoubtedly useful for impressing those whose recognition confers status, power and autonomy, but if this were all it could justly be dismissed as no more than a part of 'the trappings of professionalism' ... I have expressed some doubt concerning ... (its) ... value ..." (346)

According to Irvine 'a good deal of the academic baggage of social workers is more useful for gaining official recognition and status than it is relevant to their actual practice ...' (347).

Neither sociological criticisms of the trait-model in the form described earlier nor the social work criticisms referred to above need imply that the concept of professional 'traits' is necessarily defunct in sociological analyses of professions or of social work: this point will be returned to shortly. First, it is necessary to note the interactionist 'processual' model is not the only one available as an alternative to 'trait' based analyses of professions. Critical structural theory is employed in Johnson's (348) analysis: he defines professions as occupations in which 'the producer defines the needs of the consumer and the manner in which these needs are catered for' (349).

In Johnson's analysis a profession is not an occupation but a means of controlling an occupation (350). Thorne (351) suggests this control is...

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346 Ibid p.93
347 Ibid p.100
348 Johnson, T., Professions And Power London, Macmillan, 1972
349 Ibid p.45
350 Ibid
achieved in the sense of claiming the right to define reality or at least that part of reality affecting the occupational group in question (352). Jones's application of the concept of professional 'closure' in his study of social work leads him to suggest the construction of defining rights is associated with 'professional closure techniques as a means of ... keeping out those ideas and theories that challenge ... (professional) ... perspectives on the problems of clients and poverty in general' (353). Saks (354) in a reference to Parkin's (355) use of the concept of closure indicates critical social theory avoids problems of sociological reproduction of professional ideology that arise through use of the trait model (356) whilst also providing a more historical and macro-institutional level of analysis than interactionist 'processual' theories of profession (357). Critical social theory incorporated into structural marxist theories of the relation of professions to the capitalist state define professionals as 'agents of capitalism' and the structural features of professions are explained in terms of 'the interests of capital': structural marxist accounts of professional structures were prominent in sociological writing in the 1970's, as

352 Ibid p.36
353 Jones, C., (1983) op.cit p.84
354 Saks, M., (1983) op.cit
355 Parkin, F., Marxism And Class Theory : A Bourgeois Critique London, Tavistock, 1979
357 Ibid
in Poulantzas (358) Navarro (359) Braverman (360) Carchedi (361) Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (362) and Esland (363). A recurring theme in most of these accounts is that modern capitalism increasingly relies on technical managerial and professional expertise, a factor in Esland's conclusion that 'The professions ... (are) ... agents of control for a powerful state' (364): in the case of health and social care professions a dominant theme in radical structural analysis is the function of these professions in the reproduction of capitalist labour in a 'docile' form (365) and the exercise on behalf of 'capitalism' of social surveillance and control functions over the working class (366). Analyses of professions as embodiments of 'objective' systemic interests or structurally 'given' needs of the social totality are open to the criticisms of structuralism examined in detail in chapter two.

361 Carchedi, G., 'On The Economic Identification Of The New Middle Class' *Economy And Society* Vol.4, No.1, 1975
364 Ibid p.214
Whether it is necessary to abandon a 'traits' model of professions is a significant question not only in sociology of professions but also for future work undertaken in the sociology of social work, particularly detailed work in the study of professionalisation processes. For this reason the concept of professional 'traits' requires evaluation in sociology of social work, rather than an automatic assumption that it is analytically redundant. A number of critics of the concept appear to have overlooked or paid insufficient attention to the fact that although 'trait' and 'functionalist' perspectives are often associated with each other, they are not synonymous. The former attempts to identify 'core' attributes as a method of defining professions, the latter approach carries an implication that these attributes are 'functional' for society and for client groups. A taxonomic perspective in the sociology of professions has in practice frequently blurred trait and functionalist analysis leading to criticism that sociologists in analysing professions have become the

367 Chapter 2, pp. 140-154
368 This is not to say all structural critiques of professions are grounded in theories of 'objective' structural 'needs'. Illich, for example, emphasises professional constructions of professional indispensability as a manifestation of professional self-interest, but not as in (say) Esland (n. 363) whose analysis defines professional 'indispensability' as a 'necessary' or 'given' effect of the objective needs of capitalism. See Illich, I., et.al Disabling Professions London, Marian Boyars, 1977
369 Saks, M., (1983) op.cit p. 2
'dupes' (371) of professional ideologists. However, if trait and functionalist analyses are not allowed to surreptitiously fuse together there is in principle no reason why a taxonomic approach in the study of professions need involve uncritical sociological reproduction of professional ideologies. It is not necessary in the study of professions to presume traits such as altruism and paramountcy of the ethos of client-service are the only or most significant defining characteristics of a profession. In many existing critical sociological accounts alternative 'traits' are already used: these include 'professional privilege' (372), professional 'self-interest' (373), exaggeration of task complexity through the creation of professional mystique (374), and occupational closure and monopolization (375). Viewed in these terms the relevant question is not 'whether' traits, but which traits. One attempted 'solution' to problems in the taxonomic approach is to avoid the problem of definition by focussing analysis upon professionalisation as a process: however as Johnson (376) and Turner and Hodge (377) point out, this does not 'resolve' the problem of

373 Perrucci, R., (1976) op.cit.
374 North, M., (1972) op.cit. p.63
375 Berlant, J.L., Profession And Monopoly: A Study Of Medicine In The United States And Great Britain Berkeley, University of California Press 1975
376 Johnson, T., (1972) op.cit. p.31
taxonomy, because the concept of professionalisation implies movement towards 'something', which remains to be defined. Freidson notes some definition of the phenomenon under investigation is essential in social research of occupational and professional structures and therefore what is at issue is not the idea of employing a definition of profession but the adequacy of the particular defining criteria ('traits') employed. The 'definitional problem ... is not one ... to be solved by eschewing definition entirely' as in exclusively 'process' perspectives which reject the notion that any definition is necessary. Freidson's contention is that 'One can avoid the issue of definition only if once adopts the patently anti-analytical position that all occupations - whether casual day-labour, assembly-line work, teaching, surgery or systems analysis - are so much alike that there is no point in making distinctions of any kind amongst them' (382).

The problem of definition lies in the tendency to employ a 'static', unhistorical concept of profession which ignores cultural and historical changes in the meaning of the concept. Freidson notes a long historical tradition in Britain where the 'learned' professions of medicine, law, university teaching, and the clergy are 'status professions' historically associated with 'traditional gentry status' unlike the 'new' middle-class technical-managerial

379 Ibid pp.21-22
380 Ibid p.22
381 Ibid
382 Ibid
383 Ibid
384 Ibid p.23
385 Ibid p.24
professions (386). In some societies attendance at particular elite educational institutions (no matter what particular occupational speciality this leads to) conveys a 'professional' status. In nineteenth-century Russia and Poland merely to 'be a graduate of a gymnasium was what was important, not one's occupation ... In Germany, what was important was to be a graduate, an akademiker ... In France, one's fortunes flowed from attending one of the grandes écoles ... (387). In Freidson's perspective, definition of profession is not wholly abandoned, as in 'process' perspectives, but neither is a static taxonomy of universal 'traits' adhered to i.e. the concept of profession is viewed not as a static definition but as a shifting concept which is variable in time and place. In this perspective the concept of social work as profession is temporally and spatially variable. Some of the underlying assumptions in Freidson's analysis are congruent with those outlined in chapter two. Micro-situational analysis and the 'building-in' of actors accounts ('definitions') of profession in local sites in organisational and training settings are part of the analysis. But the concept of profession is not, as Freidson acknowledges, wholly reducible to 'the phenomenology of profession' (388). Ethnographic description and analysis of the ways in which individual (social work) actors 'accomplish profession' in their everyday relationships with clients, colleagues and members of other occupations and professions is part, but only a part, of the broader picture. The concept of profession - and also rejections of the concept - is partly constructed through relationships between collective social (work) actors. These include the collective social work actors referred to in the first

386 Ibid p.25
387 Ibid
388 Ibid p.27
chapter analysis of inter-constituency conflicts in the struggle to define (or reject) the concept of profession: these actors included the British Association Of Social Workers, the Association Of Directors of Social Services, the Central Council for Education and Training In Social Work, the Standing Conference of CSS Courses, and The Association Of Teachers in Social Work Education. These collective actors sought, in the ways described in the first and second chapters, to define ('consign') the concept of profession in accordance with their perspectives and their discursively formulated interests and to disseminate ('propel') this defined material across social work sites. As also indicated in the sociological analytic framework outlined in chapter two, historical constructions of social work materials — including those identified in earlier sections of the present chapter — are significant empirical variables in the sociology of social work. Social work materials are transmitted/translated within and across contemporaneously existing sites, but also disseminated through time. As noted earlier, some social work material, including the concept of profession, have a perennial but also contemporary dimension. This is evident in some of the illustrations earlier in the present chapter. The search for a professional mode of structure existed, and was largely constructed, at the turn of the century through the 'professionalising' activities of the Charity Organisation Society: as shown in the first chapter the professionalising motif also remains strong in the 1980's in some social work constituencies. Professionalisation as motif is, at least in the period since the Charity Organisation Society, a perennial characteristic of (some constituencies within) social work and at its most general level of representation is transmitted through time: but the concept of profession is partly historically and socially situated and
therefore variable. When Flexner in 1915 asked 'Is Social Work A Profession?' his concept of profession was not that of the modern 'bureau-professional' (389) in the social services departments. This is not to say some aspects of the definition ('profession') may not become institutionalised and persist for relatively long periods of time; but it is to say the existence of space-time continuities and discontinuities in actors' constructions of 'profession' are matters for contextual empirical assessment, not theoretical pre-definition based on researchers' usage of an uncontextual listing of 'universal' professional 'traits'. A similar observation applies in the previous account of historical movement towards professional unification, a form of unification which remains largely unachieved. In Specht and Gilbert's earlier observation that social work professionals are involved in a 'perennial search for professional unity' the concept of professional unity in the 'social movement' context of British social work at the time of the Charity Organisation Society was different in key respects to the concept of professional unity, and its context, connoted in Germaine's and Gross's modern search for professional 'unity within diversity'.

SOCIAL WORK AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANDATES

A pervasive assumption in studies of the structure of professions and their cognitive 'authority' is that professions whose knowledge base is technical-scientific have greater political influence upon public policy and decision-making than professions whose knowledge base is 'non-scientific' and epistemologically 'uncertain'. This view is sometimes associated with critique of scientism and the

389 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit. p.43
spread of technical, instrumental rationality into decision-making processes where moral, political values and interests are obscured through the hidden ideologies of technocratic instrumentalism. In the sociology of medicine the thesis of medicalization in the work of Arney and Bergen (390) Figlio (391) and Cooter (392) implicates the extension of technical scientific and health knowledge into areas of policy which reproduce dominant political values and class interests. Habermas (393) is perhaps the most widely known critic of the spread of technical rationality to the domains of moral and political discourse. In Habermas critique of technical rationality as a false cloak of value-neutrality is not a 'luddite' suggestion that scientific or technical knowledge is itself ideological. It is the universalisation of technical or instrumental reason that Habermas says should be resisted: the general extension and universalisation of technical rationality and its dominance in ever-widening spheres of social life produces a 'scientization of politics' (394). Habermas assumes scientific and technical professions

393 Habermas, J., Theory And Practice (trans. Viertel, J.,) London, Heinemann, 1974
394 Held, D., Introduction To Critical Theory : Horkheimer To Habermas London, Hutchinson, 1980, p.10
have a firm epistemological knowledge base ('knowledge mandate') which imbues them with power in the wider public domain outside the profession per se. A broadly similar assumption is made by Halsey (395) who notes different professions rest claims to 'authority from knowledge' of various kinds, which may be 'cognitive, aesthetic, supernatural or scientific' (396). Halsey further states '... of particular relevance to social work, claims to professional legitimacy are more widely accepted when they rest on the natural as distinct from the social sciences' (397).

In the sociology of professions Halliday's (398) conceptual framework merits attention in that his analysis illuminates understanding of the operation of 'scientific' and also 'normative' professions, such as social work, in their 'primary' and 'secondary' institutional spheres. Halliday examines connections between types of knowledge mandates (in particular, the distinction between 'scientific' and 'normative' professions) and the degree of influence that a profession is able to exert in its primary and secondary domains. When a cleric speaks in church s/he is in her/his primary professional-institutional domain and has a clear knowledge mandate to speak and act within this domain; but when the cleric speaks out against government policies he or she is entering a 'secondary' domain.

396 Ibid p.78
397 Ibid
Similarly, the scientist working in his or her laboratory is operating within the scientific profession's primary institutional sphere and has cognitive authority (a knowledge-mandate) and considerable professional autonomy within this sphere; however the scientist who becomes embroiled in the ethics and politics of ecological, nuclear or national defence policy issues is entering a secondary domain in which he or she can claim no particular expertise, special authority, or professional 'knowledge mandate'. Halliday challenges notions that the cognitive legitimacy of professional knowledge and professional authority rests exclusively or primarily upon possession of scientific knowledge, and he notes 'two of the three longest standing professions - law and the clergy - are not scientific in any narrow sense of the term' (399). Halliday acknowledges analytic problems in constructing a distinction between scientific and normative professions: but despite epistemological problems in distinguishing 'facts' from 'values' it nevertheless is possible to construct a heuristic distinction between professions that possess technical-scientific authority and those professions that derive their influence from a claim to moral authority (400). Although a heuristic conceptual distinction can be made between scientific professions such as engineering and medicine, and normative professions such as the clergy and law, Halliday recognises the scientific/normative dichotomy is not only a researchers' classification but also a socially constructed concept employed by professional and other actors (401) who 'develop repertoires or ideologies of self-description to advance their interests' (402). An instance of this is when scientists employ

399 Ibid p.423
400 Ibid pp.424-426
401 Ibid p.425
402 Ibid
arguments and strategies of a kind designed to legitimate and expand their realm of activity into secondary institutional spheres, so as to 'justify' their involvement and pronouncements on moral and political issues in policies affecting the environment, deployment of various sources of energy, issues of national defence etc. However, Halliday makes a significant observation that when scientists and scientific professionals are challenged within a secondary institutional sphere they very quickly have to fall back upon their primary cognitive sphere (science). This is because issues of morality and politics in secondary ('extra-scientific') spheres patently lie well beyond the knowledge mandate of technical science outside of which scientists can claim no particular expertise or special cognitive authority, nor any professional rationale for involvement. Halliday comments 'Ironically, quintessentially modern professions, whose claim to professionalism rests on a rigorous science, by that very appropriation demarcate their cognitive domains from moral terrain and thus circumscribe their scope of moral influence' (404) (italic added). An implication from Halliday's analysis is that 'Habermasian' theses predicting an escalating intrusion of scientific technical-rationality into politics and ethics, may require reformulation. In Halliday's account it is normative professions, whose influence derives from their claim to moral authority, that enjoy the greatest scope for ranging across a variety of secondary institutional spheres outside their 'primary' institutional domain.

403 Ibid p.427
404 Ibid
Normative professions lose the authority of science but thereby obtain a broad mandate to range extensively over moral terrain... and legitimately address almost all matters of public policy... in other words, although its epistemological foundation may be somewhat insecure, the more normative the profession, the more expansive its potential collective influence' (405) (italic added)

Despite the greater capacity of normative professions to range widely across moral-political terrain, the cognitive legitimacy and authority of all professions (normative or scientific) is greatest when the profession is operating within its 'primary' institutional sphere (eg. a lawyer in the judicial system) rather than in a secondary institutional sphere (eg. a lawyer in a public or private bureaucracy).

Halliday defines the primary institutional sphere as

'that institution, and the organisations which comprise it, in which most of a professions work is undertaken... This is the field in which... a profession presides over a primary institutional sphere, usually from a position of dominance over other subsidiary occupations within the institution. Doctors... in the health system, engineers in the manufacturing system, lawyers in the legal system, clergy in the religious system... and academics in higher education.' (406) (italics added)

There is little evidence to suggest social work possesses a primary institutional sphere in the terms employed in Halliday's definition. A primary institutional sphere is a domain where the professional has prime cognitive authority, a high level of professional autonomy, and is politically dominant. In the social services departments the relation of professionalism to local government bureaucracy is not premised upon the notion of autonomous professionalism: in the 'seventies this point was conceptually

405 Ibid p.428
406 Ibid p.431
elaborated in the 'Brunel Studies' (407), discussed in chapter five, and signifies bureau-professionalism rather than professional autonomy in the sense associated with, for example, medical professionals within the national health service. Other, empirically contingent factors are no less significant than the formal 'constitutional' position of professional social work within local authorities. Many of these relate in one form or another to the emergence in the 1980's of protracted inter-constituency conflicts examined in the first chapter, in particular tension between employers and the professional constituency with regard to professional concepts of autonomous or quasi-autonomous professionalism and with regard to the question of whether a distinction between professional social work and social services work is desirable or necessary. Another dimension of primary institutional spheres is that in those institutional contexts that require inter-professional negotiations of perspectives and objectives a wide range of professionals, rather than only (say) social workers, are structurally involved in transactions that may require at least partial abandonment of 'primary' cognitive authority. An example is Carlen's (408) study of inter-professional interactions in magistrates courts where '... all participants made alliances with each other, trying to

407 See, for example, Social Services Organization Research Unit, Brunel Institute Of Organization And Social Studies Social Services Departments : Developing Patterns Of Work And Organization London, Heinemann, 1974

appear as if they are operating under the auspices of their professional ethic, whilst simultaneously managing inter-professional alliances whose very existence demonstrates that they are doing no such thing' (409) (italic added). However it is possible some professions, because of the existence of power differentials, are 'required' in inter-professional locations to abandon their primary cognitive sphere to a greater (or lesser) degree than others. In Carlen's study, probation officers were ranked lower than lawyers in the socially constructed court 'hierarchy of credibility' (410) and local authority social workers were ranked even lower in the negotiated order of inter-professional statuses and inter-professional 'authority' (411).

Another relevant empirical factor in analysis of social work and the concept of primary institutional spheres was identified in the earlier account of organisational diversity in social work. As previously noted, social work is located in the social services departments, local education authorities, the health service, the probation service and a variety of other organisational locations including child guidance and school psychological services, and in voluntary sector organisations in residential, fieldwork or community work fields. Involvement in these diverse organisational and service-delivery systems was observed earlier to be a major factor in the production of contemporary professional conceptualisations of the rubric 'unity within diversity'. A consequence of social work's organisational heterogeneity is noted in Young's (412) remark that '... social work as a professional activity

409 Ibid p.206
411 Carlen, P., (1977) op.cit p.208
412 Young, P., (1979) op.cit
cannot be practised *in spite of* the practitioner being a probation officer, a local authority or voluntary agency employee, but only *within that context* (413) (italics added). This point is amplified in Young's further observation that

'It is sometimes argued ... the essence of social work ... can be studied as a discreet activity ... My own view is that one factor which *identifies* social work is the context in which it is practised i.e. a social welfare agency, or an organisation which requires the *contribution of social work the better to carry out its primary function*. A hospital is a good example. In other words, I find it *difficult to identify social work as a professional activity separate from the functions of the agency*' (414) (italics added)

For the reasons identified above it is empirically doubtful whether social work may accurately be described as possessing, in Halliday's terms, a *primary institutional domain* within which it exercises prime cognitive authority and professional autonomy or has a controlling, dominant influence over other, 'secondary' occupants of the institutional sphere. In Halliday's typology, examples of secondary institutional spheres include engineers and doctors employed in the military services, or lawyers in business corporations: secondary institutional spheres are

'Where the practice of professionals is limited, and they have a circumscribed legitimacy *viz-a-viz the principal focus of an institution* ... All professions have such spheres: and every primary institutional sphere for one profession is a secondary institutional sphere for another. However, in the secondary spheres, the scope of professional authority is severely limited' (415) (italic added)

In terms of Halliday's classification social work may be said to be primarily located in secondary or quasi-secondary institutional spheres. In social work, one of the closest approximations to a primary institutional sphere is the social services departments, but for reasons identified in the first chapter and earlier in the present

413 *Ibid* p.viii
414 *Ibid*
chapter, the social services departments in the 1980's do not constitute, for social work, an ideal-typical primary professional institutional sphere in the form defined by Halliday. The social services departments are professional-bureaucracies, not sites for autonomous 'clinical practice'; also, professional authority has been further reduced in the 1980's through the 'de-professionalising' perspectives of social work employers. Additionally, as already noted, social work is located in a wide variety of organisational and service-delivery systems outside the social services departments. However, non-possession of a clearly identifiable primary institutional domain does not automatically imply incapacity to influence public policy-making processes in secondary institutional spheres: as noted earlier, Halliday suggests normative professions derive their influence from a claim to 'moral authority' and despite the epistemological uncertainty of their knowledge mandate these professions have greater capacity than scientific professions to influence policies in a wide range of secondary institutional spheres. In Halliday's typology social work approximates more closely to his definition of a normative profession than to a technical-scientific profession. Social work is less strong than some other normative professions in the sense that, unlike the normative professions in Halliday's analysis, it has no clearly identifiable professional autonomy or dominance within a 'primary' institutional sphere of its own: social work's capacity to influence social policies is, therefore, less in the nature of straying beyond a 'primary' domain to secondary institutional spheres than in attempting to influence policies in those secondary (or quasi-secondary) spheres within which it permanently operates. This implies social work capacity to influence local and national decision-making processes is not in relation to an abstract, de-contextualized concept
of 'professional social work': for this, it would be necessary for social work to be located in an unambiguously identifiable primary (and 'professional') institutional sphere of its own. Rather, social work's capacity to influence public policies refers to a capacity to influence policy in relation to 'welfare' and social planning aspects of policy objectives in organisations (in education, the health service, housing, probation and other sectors) where 'professional social work' is not the only or prime organisational function. As observed by Young, earlier, social work does not exist independently of organisational objectives in relation to which the role of social work is supplementary and contributory. The capacity of more well established normative professions (eg. law and the clergy) to influence policies in secondary institutional spheres is documented at some length in Halliday's analysis. He refers to Tocqueville's observation that '... there is hardly a political question which does not sooner or later turn into a judicial one' (416). Halliday makes similar observations about the involvement of the church in politics and social affairs (417) and although church involvement in politics is sometimes resisted by

416 Ibid p.432
417 Halliday suggests the clergys' spheres of influence, like law, 'seem unbounded' (p.432). He refers to a report in 1968 by the Fourth Assembly Of The World Council Of Churches which stated 'no structures - ecclesiastical, industrial, governmental or international lie outside the churches' (pp.432-433) and notes the Anglican Consultative Council's arguments for 'radical changes in economic, political and social structures' (p.433).
governments the church as a 'normative profession' has greater success than technical-scientific professions in legitimating its involvement in issues arising from social, economic and political policies. Halliday's conclusion regarding the greater capacity of normative professions to exercise power in secondary institutional spheres is conditional upon other empirical variables, in particular the degree of internal consensus and cohesion within normative professions and capacity to speak with the authority of a unified, collective professional voice. A normative profession which is highly segmented, internally divided, and with a low level of professional integration has less capacity to influence secondary institutional spheres than more 'integrated' professions. Halliday observes

An instance of this occurred shortly after the publication of Halliday's paper. In 1985 the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission published a report on social conditions in the inner cities: see Church House Publishing Faith In The City Church House, Deans Yard, London 1985. The report's call for new government policies provoked a number of hostile government responses along the lines that the clergy should not become involved in politics. The report was said to be 'the work of innocents': see Carvel, J., and Schwarz, W., 'Urban Report Dismissed As Work Of Innocents' The Guardian 3 December 1985, p.1. The then Environment Secretary, Kenneth Baker, described the report as 'negative and out of date' (Editorial The Guardian 3 December 1985, p.3). An unnamed cabinet minister is said to have dismissed the report as 'pure Marxist theology' (Ibid).

Examples of this kind do not negate Halliday's general thesis that normative professions have greater capacity than technical-scientific professions in influencing policies in secondary institutional spheres; however the contexts in which these capacities are exercised are variable and, as in the example just given, sometimes problematic.

Halliday, T.C., (1985) op.cit. pp.432-433

Ibid pp.436-441.
Beliefs of normative professionals may ... be more heterogeneous than their scientific counterparts (421) and in this respect the capacity of normative professions to influence secondary institutional domains is reduced. Attempts in normative professions by professional associations, professional educators or leaders to promote unity (as in professional social work's search for 'unity within diversity') may have a paradoxical, unintended outcome which lessens the ability of an occupational community to construct a unified, collective strategy for influencing policy-making in secondary institutional spheres. This is noted in Halliday's observation that

'Solving the structural problem of political integration may contain the collapse of its own promise. The more successful a profession in its integrative goals, the greater the heterogeneity of its ... membership, and thus the more difficult will be the problems of internal decision-making and mobilization' (422)

Where professional integration ('commonality') as an objective is structurally difficult to achieve, members of 'segmented' normative professions are especially vulnerable to control by other groups within the institutional sphere within which they operate. These other groups include administrators and bureaucrats - whose relationship to social work professionalism is, as examined below, both complex and ambiguous.

SOCIAL WORK BUREAUCRACY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Issues arising from the relationship of social work bureaucracy to professionalism are examined only briefly here, the purpose being to highlight general features of this relationship as grounding for the analyses later in the chapter and also in chapter five. In the final part of the chapter which refers to the concept 'front-line autonomy' some of the issues explored here are re-examined in more theoretical

421 Ibid p.438
422 Ibid
terms. In chapter five the relation of professionalism to bureaucracy is examined with particular reference to empirical studies of social worker attitudes to bureaucracy, and the relevance of these studies for analysis of professional social work involvement in the movement in the 1980's towards 'organic' systems of decentralised services.

A recurring theme in organisation theory in the 1960's was the study of institutionalised conflict between professionals and bureaucrats (423). A prevailing theoretical assumption in organisational analysis of that period was that the sources and mode of legitimation of professional authority and bureaucratic authority are antithetical (424). That is, the professional exercises independent 'autonomous' professional judgment legitimated through possession of specialist knowledge and expertise acquired through professional training; the bureaucrat exercises authority through the application to situations of formal organisational rules, and in accordance with hierarchical position in a formally stratified organisational structure (425). It was argued these two sources and modes of legitimation of authority encroach upon each others territory with the one seeking to control the other, thereby producing an institutionalised source of conflict in those organisations that employ both professionals and bureaucrats within the same organisational structure (426).

423 Kornhauser, W., Scientists In Industry. Berkeley, University Of California Press, 1962
Though professional expertise and bureaucratic authority are, in the sense just described, constructed and 'practised' in different ways, these differences of orientation and perspective were exaggerated and also oversimplified in many earlier organisational studies. These studies tended to rely upon 'ideal-type' trait-based approaches in the study of professions: the processual-interactionist perspective, examined earlier, introduced a note of scepticism with regard to definitions of the concept 'profession', and therefore, with regard also to the question of precisely what it was ('profession?') that was being contrasted with bureaucracy. Additionally, in the 1970's 'structural' critical theories of professions and professional control, many of which were directly or indirectly influenced by Johnson's widely quoted text, not only shifted the professional/bureaucratic antithesis from its former prominence in organisation theory but also, as in Larson, developed theories pointing to common origins and to similar roles of both professionalism and bureaucracy in the reproduction of capitalism. Another factor in the relative demise of the professional/bureaucratic dichotomy in organisation theory was an accumulation of data in a number of empirical studies pointing to an 'accommodation' thesis, as in Benson's account of the mutual accommodation of professionalism and bureaucracy. This is summarised in Davies who notes

427 Johnson, T., (1972) op.cit.
first, the empirical data has shown the joint occurrence of bureaucratisation and professionalisation. It would appear that far from being total alternatives these two are in some sense complementary. Secondly, successful accommodations of so-called incompatibilities have occurred. Thirdly, some role occupants occupy with apparent ease and satisfaction combined professional and bureaucratic roles' (431)

In social work, accommodation of professionalism and bureaucracy has occurred in two senses. First, conceptualisations of a combined organisational matrix of bureau-professionalism, as in the Brunel Studies (432), corresponds in general terms to the pattern of development that took place in the 'Seebohm' social services departments. The period of most rapid growth and expansion of professional social work in Britain occurred simultaneously with the large scale 'bureaucratic' expansion of the social services departments that were created specifically to accommodate the 'new' generic professionalism recommended in the Seebohm Report (433). Far from being antithetical the growth of modern social work professionalism and social work bureaucracy have been complementary. Parry and Parry (434) comment.

'... the new social services departments ... (were) ... a blending of elements of professionalism and bureaucratic organisation. Neither autonomous professionalism nor purely bureaucratic hierarchies emerged from the reorganisation. Instead, the new departments were a conflation of both elements ... a hybrid ... bureau-professionalism ... Autonomous professionalism could never be a serious possibility in social work ... Bureau-professionalism ... thus offered a chance to create a unified social work profession ... within a ... bureaucratic structure' (435).

431 Ibid p.180
432 Social Services Organization Research Unit, Brunel Institute Of Organization And Social Studies (1974) op.cit; and Billis, D., et.al Organizing Social Services Departments London, Heinemann, 1980
433 Home Office, Seebohm Report (1968) op.cit
434 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit
435 Ibid p.43
Secondly, an 'accommodation' thesis is articulated in critical analyses of attempts by social workers to control the bureau-professional context in which they operate. A special version of this, though more in terms of adjustment to than control of the work context, is the notion of 'radical careerism' referred to earlier: an instance of this type of analysis is Hearn's comment that 'Through conformity to agency role, as defined or predefined according to accepted organisational practice, radical social workers may operate in a very similar way to the traditional social worker'. Another account of the 'accommodation' of professionalism and bureaucracy is Parry and Parry's observation that bureau-professionalism offered possibilities to create a unified social work profession within a hierarchical structure and

'By this method the social work elite hoped to establish a position of ... professional control which could in the long run incorporate, through professional training, the large army of untrained social workers in the employ of local authorities, whether in field work or residential care services' (439)

A reference to Lee in the first chapter showed his analysis has some affinity with that of Parry and Parry, above. Lee argues professional social work has attempted to control the 'upper' hierarchy through a fusion of professionalism with managerial control, and control the 'lower' hierarchy through control of social services ('CSS') occupations. He refers to re-definition of professional social work skills in a way that includes 'management' skills within the 'professional' skills repertoire and suggests this is an attempt

437 Ibid p.25
438 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op. cit.
439 Ibid p.43
441 See Chapter 1, pp.51-52
442 Ibid pp.23-32
to secure the reconciliation, if not synonymous identification, of management control with professional competence (443). Lee contends it is because 'social work skill is redefined to incorporate the management skill of manpower control' (444) that "'Good' social work practice now implies the proper professional management of social work" (445). Though Lee does not draw the parallel himself there is a theoretical resemblance between his social work account and Parkin's (446) sociological treatment of occupational politics. In Parkin the concepts 'usurpation', where occupational groups attempt to control higher organisational levels, and 'exclusion', where occupational groups exert influence downwards to control subordinate levels, are said in the case of professions to be a form of closure in which 'credentialism' (control of role-definitions, recruitment, qualifications and training) plays a significant role (447).

From the standpoint of the theoretical perspective developed in the second chapter the relationship of professionalism to bureaucracy is not viewed as a structural determinant of the policies and strategies developed by individual and collective social actors involved in this relationship. This is to say the particular form of the relationship of professionalism to bureaucracy is variable and socially constructed i.e. the form of the relationship is not a 'necessary effect' of 'objective needs' or of structurally-given

443 Ibid p.27
444 Ibid p.29
446 Parkin, F., (1979) op.cit
447 Ibid p.54
'interests' of the social totality. Actions, policies and events in occupations and professions at particular periods in time occur within the context of definite and specifiable conditions of action which have variable (eg. enabling or constraining) effects upon social actors: but these conditions of action are of a highly diverse, shifting, and complex kind. Although elements of institutionalised continuity may be present these are socially constructed, acted upon, and sometimes transformed in the relationships between social actors, including relationships between collective social actors. The first chapter analysis of inter-constituency relationships, and of conflicts in these relationships, was not primarily concerned with 'professional' versus 'bureaucracy' patterns of conflict, though this aspect is implicit in the earlier analysis. Conflict surrounding the construction of employer-centred 'practical' training and the proposed dissolution of a distinction between the social services (CSS) and professional social work (CQSW) qualifications is a form of conflict relevant to the concept of bureau-professionalism noted above in Parry and Parry and in Lee. Bureau-professionalism, at least in the form that this concept was endorsed by the professional constituency in the late 1960's, is perceived by professionals in the 1980's as being under threat, for the reasons outlined in the first chapter. Earlier construction of the concept 'bureau-professionalism' is, however, not only compromised by 'anti-professional' hierarchical employer-definitions: as will be shown in chapter five, professional optimism in the early 1970's in the construction of bureau-professionalism is being reshaped in the 1980's through the dissemination of an anti-hierarchical and in some respects also 'anti-professional' ethos associated with the decentralisation movement, community social work, and the concept 'going local' in the planning and delivery of services in local neighbourhoods.
CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF 'FRONT-LINE AUTONOMY'

The concept *front-line autonomy* is indirectly related to the issues of professionalism and bureaucracy examined above. The concept qua concept in the analysis of organisational practices is of relatively modern origin, associated with the growth of large scale organisations, in particular the growth and scale of public bureaucracies. In social work, issues addressed by the concept are partly associated with the growth of professionalism. Reference was made earlier to the Charity Organisation Society (COS) and its historical role in the early construction of 'social work' as a distinct occupational activity. At the time of the COS a concept of social work professionalism, and of professional autonomy in making judgements and assessments of clients situations, was still in its infancy and the COS charity workers had only very limited 'front line autonomy': their task was to enquire about claimants personal circumstances and then report to the local COS committee who would decide an appropriate treatment strategy for each individual client (448).

A characteristic of the use of the concept in some empirical studies is its relatively low level of theoretical development; this does not apply to all work in this area, an observation that will be returned to later and in the following chapter on the structure and forms of social work knowledge. However it can be argued further theoretical development of the concept in its usage in empirical investigation of organisational practices, is an area requiring closer future attention in sociology of social work, particularly if one expectation of sociology of social work is that it should contribute empirically and also theoretically to an understanding of working

practices in the relationships between service-providers and service-users. For this reason, the analysis below is mainly in the form of a general overview of selected theoretical dimensions in the use of the concept: the treatment of these is not intended to be exhaustive and some of them are selected for closer analysis in the following chapter on the structure and forms of social work knowledge. It may be noted the concept is relevant to some of the issues of professional structure and organisation examined earlier in the chapter, but because the concept also relates to wider issues in the construction of social work knowledge (and of 'theory-practice') part of what follows may be regarded as an appropriate point of transition between the focus of the present chapter and broader issues of social work 'knowledge construction' explored in the following chapter.

The concept 'front-line autonomy' refers to practitioner 'discretion' and to the situated capacity of front-line workers to exercise creativity and innovation in 'shaping' legal or organisationally specified rules and policies and in exercising an entrepreneurial role in modifying service-delivery to clients in accordance with the personal, occupational or professional ideologies of the practitioner. In empirical studies of health and social care professional practice, interest in the concept stems to a significant extent from a paper by Dorothy Smith(449). Following Smith's work the concept has been defined and employed in a variety of ways. In a study of social services departments the term 'street level bureaucracy' is employed in Hill(450). Hardiker's empirically based

449 Smith, D., 'Front Line Organization Of The State Mental Hospital' Administrative Science Quarterly Vol.10 (1965) pp.381-399
450 Hill, M., 'Street Level Bureaucracy In Social Work And Social Services Departments' in Lishman, J., (ed) Research Highlights No.4 Social Work Departments As Organizations University of Aberdeen, 1982.
analyses explore patterns of interconnection between practitioner use of different 'types' of social work knowledge and situated organisationally-specific and client-specific variables which condition and set parameters to the use of knowledge and selection of practices. Hardiker's work extends and amplifies a distinction between theories of practice (formal social science theory and professional theories of practice) and practice theories (knowledge inductively derived by social workers from their practical work experience) in the form developed in Evans. Curnock and Hardiker suggest social work has made relatively slow progress in codifying and making explicit both these forms of knowledge and argue that fuller explication of tacitly deployed knowledge, not least the empirical codification of unwritten 'practice theories', may contribute to the knowledge base of the profession. Fielding in a study of probation officers concludes, in a form not dissimilar to Hardiker's general conclusion on this point, that probation officers' practical use of theories and practice is constrained by the work setting: probation officers evolve an 'operating ideology' and their practice is not an unmediated practical accomplishment of personal philosophical or

451 Hardiker's recent work in this field is included in the texts listed in Chapter 1, f.n.20
453 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op.cit
454 Ibid p.10
455 Ibid p.11
456 Ibid
458 See f.n.451
459 Fielding, N., (1983) op.cit p.2
political ideologies\(^{(460)}\). This is not an outcome of authoritarian management prohibition of 'personal ideologies' and is more in the nature of practitioner acculturation to the exigencies of the work situation; for probation officers, theoretical and practical eclecticism 'does not appear to be a significant problem ...'\(^{(461)}\).

The idea that the relation of ideology to 'rhetoric' is not coterminous with the relation of ideology to 'practice' is examined in Giller and Morris\(^{(462)}\) and, from a service-user standpoint, in Rees and Wallace\(^{(463)}\) whose review of research data on users perspectives leads them to conclude substantial differences and conflicts exist as between professional social work perspectives of service-delivery and the perspectives of clients and service-users\(^{(464)}\). Some of these writers, notably Hardiker, construct conceptual typologies of practitioner perspectives which might usefully form a basis for future theoretical and empirical work in the study of the perspectives employed by professional 'front-line' workers. It can, however, be argued there is a need for work of this kind to be more closely informed by recent theoretical work in sociology, some of which may require reformulation before it can be applied to the study of practitioners' perspectives. An example is King's\(^{(465)}\) typology which, though not directly addressed to the concept of 'front-line autonomy', consists of

460 Ibid pp.2-3
461 Ibid p.3
464 Ibid pp.152-153
a conceptual framework which has significance for understanding the ways in which health and social care professionals may conceptualise the 'state of being' of their patients and clients: in a perceptive identification of constructions of 'clients' status and behaviour King identifies four possible perspectival frames which he describes as 'orientation', 'condition', 'role' and 'false consciousness' (466).

Aside from contributing to the development of conceptual typologies in the study of perspectives employed by service-providers, sociological theory has relevance to the study of front-line practice in another, and wider, theoretical sense. A substantial part of chapter two was concerned with the debate of 'human agency versus structure' and the role of this debate in contemporary oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theories, sometimes expressed as an opposition between epistemological idealism and materialism or between constructionist and structuralist theories. It was noted in the second chapter that the 'human agency versus structure' debate in sociology was articulated in the 1970's at a highly abstract level of theorisation; however it was argued retention of a heuristic metatheory of 'micro-macro dialectics' (duality theory) has important theoretical and empirical advantages in social analysis, and that these advantages are achieved when duality theory is supplemented through the use of theoretical and empirical middle-range materials of the kind examined in the second chapter. Researchers who engage in empirical study of front-line practices necessarily invoke (though sometimes perhaps in a tacit, unacknowledged way) theoretical assumptions with regard to relationships between individuals, micro-social situations, and larger macro-social structures. These assumptions may incline towards epistemological idealism ('voluntarism'), materialism ('social

466 Ibid p.42
determinism'), duality theory, a combination of duality theory and middle-range conceptualisations of the kind outlined in chapter two, or to some other theoretical scheme addressed to the 'human agency-structure' debate. In the legitimate use of empirical method it is not possible to be agnostic in respect of the issues raised in the 'agency-structure' debate. In the investigation of front-line practice, researcher theoretical assumptions which incline towards a 'voluntarist' perspective are likely to be associated with a predisposition to interpret 'practice' as the creative acts of practitioners who impose their definitions upon situations: conversely, researcher subscription to structural 'determinist' epistemology is likely to produce a predisposition to view practitioner theories and practices as derivations produced by the situation. Some writers impute a relatively low level of practitioner autonomy: a view of social services departments as hierarchical, centralised authority structures in which practitioners largely conform to agency objectives is noted in Leonard(467) and also in Goldberg(468) and Parsloe et.al (469). Baker(470) suggests the formal theory-of-practice described as 'systems' or 'unitary' theory legitimates practitioner policy innovations, but this legitimation exists in theory only; hierarchical

managements resist practical application of the theory and therefore practitioners, if they innovate at all, do so 'surreptitiously'.

It is not suggested all the writers just referred to employ structural macro-social theory: only that (tacit or explicit) subscription to structural or voluntaristic metatheoretical assumptions engender respectively 'derivationist' or 'voluntaristic' interpretations of data on actors' practices, and that data conclusions reporting 'high' or low' levels of practitioner autonomy are not wholly epistemologically a-theoretical. Philp's structural theory of social work discourse, examined in the second chapter, is premised on recognition that there may be a very high degree of variation in the use of social work theories and practices - but in Philp these are derived from and determined by, not imposed upon, the social situation in which social workers operate: in Philp's account the social context 'controls the things that ... (social workers) ... say' (italic added). In organisational theory an explicit statement of a structurally determinist and also macro-reductionist interpretation of the significance and meaning of data on actors' organisational practices is Burrell and Morgan's contention that

'Organisations can only be understood in terms of their place within a total context, in terms of the wider social formation ... (the) ... totality ... (the) ... basic structural formation. Structures ... exist independently of ... consciousness of them ... organisations are ... structural elements of a wider structure ... from which they derive their existence and true significance' (italics added).

471 Ibid p.6
473 Ibid p.89
A dialectically opposed conception, in which organisational reality is conceptualised as primarily an actor construction (a 'negotiated order') is portrayed in Strauss et al.\(^\text{475}\) who comment that even explicitly formalized rules and organisational goals are re-negotiable at the front line; in this perspective even '... clearly enunciated rules ... can be stretched, negotiated, argued, as well as ignored or applied at convenient moments'\(^\text{476}\) (italic added). A similar interpretation is contained in Blau's\(^\text{477}\) study of a public bureaucracy where '... the officials in actual contact with clients re-defined abstract procedures ...'\(^\text{478}\) (italic added).

For the reasons referred to above, issues arising from the 'agency-structure' debate and from oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theories in the form examined in the second chapter have significance for conceptualisations of data on 'front-line autonomy'. In the perspective outlined in the second chapter as a theoretical framework for developing a sociology of social work the relationships between ideas, practices, and situations, are viewed as dialectical. These relationships were also viewed as space-time bounded, subject to the proviso that relatively enduring institutionalised continuities may also be present in situations; as subject to the operation of unintended outcomes of actions; and as constructed through relationships within and across social work sites, so that ideas and practices in one site may have consequences for, and be influenced by,

\(^\text{476}\) Ibid p.308
\(^\text{477}\) Blau, P., \textit{The Dynamics Of Bureaucracy} Chicago, University Of Chicago Press, 1963 p.29
\(^\text{478}\) Ibid p.29
ideas in other sites none of which is regarded as a necessary 'effect' of the social totality. So far as the issue of 'voluntarism' and 'determinism' is a factor in the research perspective, and therefore in the view taken here of concepts of front-line autonomy and practitioner ideologies, none of these polar epistemologies is employed. A wholly individualist, or a wholly micro-situationalist, perspective of practitioner ideologies and practices is regarded in the research perspective as inappropriate: this is because dissemination of materials (ideas, policies, practices etc) across sites through space and time has implications for 'internal' site events. Relationships between individual and collective social work actors are involved in these processes of transmission, translation and 'consignment' of materials within and across sites. These processes are empirically complex and variable. Sometimes, as just noted, they are conditioned by unanticipated outcomes; and in principle they are subject always to shift and 'reversibility' of differentials in power and influence. The individual practitioner, then, is not in this perspective viewed as structurally determined in the sense outlined in Burrell and Morgan, earlier: but is involved in complex 'conditions of action' which may have enabling or constraining effects. A wholly deterministic perspective as in Burrell and Morgan, or Philp, earlier, leads directly to a conclusion that in every social situation 'front-line' practitioner values, beliefs, theories etc. are merely practitioner justifications of actions made inevitable by the context. On the view taken here, the relationship between ideas, practices, and context within a site is socially constructed; ideas and practices located in other sites and at other times have a hand in this.

construction, but precisely what form this influence takes, and how long it persists, are empirical variables.

Sociology of social work has a potential in some other theoretical areas in contributing to an understanding of 'front-line autonomy' and practitioner ideologies. Developments in sociology of knowledge may be able to extend a number of theoretical and empirical insights already available in, for example, Curnock and Hardiker\(^{(480)}\) and Hardiker and Barker\(^{(481)}\) who are clearly aware of complexity in processes of front-line practitioner 'applications' of knowledge and theories. One aspect of this complexity rests on recognition of inherent problems in delineating practical expressions of an ideology. It is erroneous to assume practical expression of a theoretical idea is an unproblematic process which is 'thwarted' only by recognizable and obvious limitations of power, organisational constraints and practical exigencies. Sometimes, fundamental doubt may exist as to what a practical expression of a theory or ideology does or should consist of in essence, independently of the operation of empirical constraints and situated contingencies. An example was provided earlier in the chapter, with regard to problems in identifying practical expressions of radical social work theory: another is developed at some length in chapter five where controversies are examined in the debate of whether service-decentralisation and community social work is an 'expression' of radical theories of democratic user-involvement in the planning and provision of services, or an expression of welfare pluralism, or of consumer-sovereignty in the welfare ideology of the 'new right'.

A related consideration is that a theory or ideology is not necessarily internally coherent, consistent and conceptually

480 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op. cit. Chapter 1.
integrated. Phenomenological sociology and in particular the concept of a negotiated 'social construction of reality' in Berger and Luckmann \(^{(482)}\) is predicated on the view that constructions of reality in the form of theoretical world views occur in the context of multiple systems (and contexts) of meanings within which individuals and groups are located. One dimension of phenomenologically oriented notions of 'multiple realities' concerns the distinction between 'particular' and 'general' conceptions of ideology. This distinction is also developed in the sociology of knowledge by theoreticians not normally associated with constructionist sociology: a classic example is Mannheim's \(^{(483)}\) distinction between 'particular' and 'total' conceptions of ideology \(^{(484)}\). This distinction is applied by Bernardes \(^{(485)}\) to the study of family ideology: in Bernardes's multidimensional framework the Mannheimian distinction between particular/total ideologies is juxtaposed with phenomenological/constructionist concepts of situational (and multiple) meaning systems

> "Ideology should be conceptualised as being multiple in two senses. Not only is an ideology multi-layered in terms of ranging 'vertically' between the 'particular' and the 'total' but the lived experience of individuals also involves multiple 'readings' of an ideology upon any specific 'horizontal' dimension at any point between 'particular' and 'total'. Thus, for example, an individual may accept the universal existence of 'The Family' ('total family ideology') and yet wish to defend his or her own slightly variant personal 'family' circumstances ('particular family ideology'). Further in any one context he or she may emphasise the joy of parenthood at one moment and then bemoan the economic burden of 'family' responsibilities; thus an individual may 'read' 'family ideology' in different ways for different purposes" \(^{(486)}\)


484 *Ibid* p.49


486 *Ibid* pp.277-278
The multi-layered 'structuring' of ideologies is relevant not only to an understanding of 'personal' and collective 'professional' dimensions of practitioner front-line ideologies but also to an understanding of 'macro'-social processes: in chapter five, for example, the legitimation crisis of the welfare state is shown to involve ambiguity in perceptions of state welfare, as in instances where a strongly held general 'anti-state' ideology of welfare may be accompanied by strong commitment towards and defence of a particular state welfare service.

In terms of practitioner perspectives, and the notion that ideologies are not necessarily internally consistent, Levitas (487) notes 'Inconsistency is not necessarily a barrier to the adoption of sets of ideas. Since people are quite capable of holding mutually contradictory beliefs, both the questions of adoption and rejection of beliefs must be discussed without too much recourse to arguments about logical consistency, and such arguments must be treated with extreme caution' (488).

Levitas refers to Goffman's theory that involvements in different roles and social contexts may entail different behaviours; and to Bergerian concepts of pluralization of consciousness, lack of normative consistency and of integration of beliefs as intrinsically linked to 'modernisation' (489). A further and social-psychological dimension is introduced in Levitas's reference to theories of cognitive dissonance indicating emotional consistency may in some instances be more important than logical consistency, though there may be some overlap between the different kinds of consistency; on this point Levitas notes 'Adoption and rejection of ideas are connected to the emotional orientation to the source of ... ideas as well as to the content, adoption of ideas from a positively evaluated source being more

488 Ibid p.546
489 Ibid p.546-547
probable than from one negatively evaluated ..." (490). In social work knowledge-constructions this social-psychological dimension may have a particular relevance associated with fusions of affective and cognitive forms of understanding, as in the 'process versus content' debate discussed earlier in the chapter and at the end of chapter two.

The concept of front-line autonomy and associated questions to do with practitioner 'applications' of theories and beliefs are not only complicated by phenomenal issues concerning the 'contents', and degree of consistency, in ideologies. Situational contingencies and constraints are also significant factors in the practical 'realisation' of ideologies. Situational contingencies, however, are related to the previously discussed issues of consistency. Levitas (491) in a different paper to the one just referred to makes the point that 'beliefs, aims and activities are constrained by the publics to which the group addresses itself ...' (492). The notion that ideologies for their survival may require pragmatic flexibility and plasticity in relating to their 'publics', which may be diverse and embody mutually competing values, definitions, and purposes, is developed in Bouchier's (493) account of 'radical ideologies and the sociology of knowledge' (494). Bouchier's analysis is primarily concerned with the ideology of social movements, though his theoretical framework is relevant to an understanding of occupational and professional ideologies. The 'publics' of an ideology include members of the movement itself (495).

490 Ibid p.547
491 Levitas, R., (1977) op.cit
492 Ibid p.61
494 Ibid p.25
495 Ibid p.28
not all of whom may concur on issues of theory or of strategies and practices. This has a particular relevance for social work in view of its internal heterogeneity in recruitment and membership, discussed earlier in the chapter: the point is relevant also to the professional search for 'unity within diversity' discussed earlier with regard to organisationally-specific contexts which create diversity in the practices of social work. Other publics include external social groups who are potentially 'new converts' to the ideology; overtly hostile external opponent groups; the mass media; political institutions and organisations whose support may be mobilized in favour of the ideology and its social reproduction; and 'the public at large'. Bouchier notes the relationship between an ideology and its publics may take diverse forms: he observes the relationship is 'sometimes dialectical, sometimes repressive, sometimes creative, sometimes destructive ...'. There is, also, a temporal dimension in the social construction and practical application of ideologies by practitioners. This is evident in radical social movements concerned with long-term radical goals for transformation of social structure, but where there may be a tactical recognition of the need for 'working within existing systems' in the short term: here, Bouchier refers to the concept of a 'transitional programme' in radical social movements. The concept of a 'transitional programme' is evident in radical social work, as in Cohen's discussion of

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496 Ibid
497 Ibid
498 Ibid p.37
499 Cohen, S., 'It's All Right For You To Talk: Political And Sociological Manifestos For Social Action' in Bailey, R., and Brake, M., (1975) op.cit pp.76-95
Mathiesen's (500) notion of 'the unfinished' (501). The concept of the unfinished refers to welfare theories and practices which seek to achieve a 'balance' between, on the one hand, short-term practical activity which avoids unrealistic revolutionary or utopian rhetoric, and on the other, long-term political goals: achieving this balance in theory and practice runs the risk of a loss of sight of long term goals and of legitimating the existing system (502), so that the problem for radical social workers in 'practising' their ideology is one of engaging in everyday practice in a way that will not 'corrupt long-term work' (503). Rees and Wallace (504) address this issue and in arguing that social work has 'overbalanced' towards a conservative version of pragmatism (505) they state 'We are arguing that social workers should operate both at the short-term individual level and at the long-term social/political level.' (506).

The concept of 'front-line autonomy' and associated concepts to do with front-line practitioner applications of theories, values, and beliefs, raise theoretical questions of the kind examined in chapter two, in particular the debate of 'human agency versus structure' and, as just noted, issues addressed in the sociology of knowledge. It is evident, also, that the concept is intertwined in various ways in the three major perennial and contemporary problematics of social work.

502 Ibid p.93
503 Ibid
505 Ibid Chapter 10.
506 Ibid p.163
identified in this chapter as 'theory-practice', the politics of social work, and professional and organisational structures and their relation to service-delivery issues. Some of these issues are taken up in the following chapter where the question of which forms of knowledge are 'applied' by practitioners in performing social work tasks is analysed in the broader theoretical terms of a sociology of social work knowledge.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE STRUCTURE AND FORMS OF SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE

This chapter explores three major dimensions in the structure and forms of social work knowledge. The first section of the chapter focuses on variations in the 'types' of knowledge employed in social work and examines issues of theory and methodology in classifying and typologizing forms of knowledge. The second section is concerned with unresolved problems in social work epistemology. It will be shown issues of epistemology are relevant to an understanding of client perceptions of social workers; to policies and practices in the development of anti-racist and anti-sexist social work; and relevant also to the objectives of 'emancipation - through - dialogue' which are represented in professional and radical humanist theories of practice. In the third and final section attention shifts to a theme that has been raised in other contexts in the preceding chapters: this concerns the study of processes through which social work knowledge is disseminated temporally and spatially within the social work profession. In this part of the chapter it will be argued
comparative analysis drawing, in particular, upon recent developments in the sociology of science, is a resource for the future development of a sociology of social work knowledge.

Taken together, these three areas of enquiry are major theoretical and empirical foci in the sociology of social work knowledge. In the wider perspective of a sociology of social work the study of 'knowledge forms' cannot be divorced from professional, organisational and service-delivery issues examined in the previous chapter, aspects of which are analysed in a different context in chapter five; it is, nevertheless, in sociology of social work necessary to treat these as relatively discrete, analytically separable categories as a means to developing greater understanding of each and of their interactions.

**TYPES OF SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE AND PROBLEMS OF CLASSIFICATION

**ISSUES IN THE RELATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO 'THEORY-PRACTICE'

Phenomenological sociology indicates 'everybody is a version of the social theorist' though the theory employed may be formal paradigmatic knowledge or 'informal' experientially-acquired cognitions

'... every person is necessarily a version of the social theorist ... some model or theory will and has to be employed by every practitioner who seeks to make sense of ... (his or her) ... professional world ... (which is) ... only known and knowable by means of the interpretive schemes imposed upon it by individuals or groups of individuals'. (1)

In Curnock and Hardiker's\(^{(2)}\) formulation 'The choice ... is not whether to have a theory, but what theoretical assumptions to hold'\(^{(3)}\) (italics added). 'Theory' may be classified, in the ways examined later, in a number of different dimensions which include epistemology, substantive world view, methodology, and field or 'object' of study. One significant issue in the relation of social science theory to social work practice is the distinction between nomothetic (generalising) and idiographic (particularising) ways of constructing knowledge about social phenomenon. In, for example, the sub-field of the Sociology of the Family the object of study is 'families' in general, or perhaps in a more narrowly delineated field of family studies like 'the family in industrial society', or 'working class families'. There is no sociological textbook written about the particular family that a practitioner may be working with; moreover, the practitioner is not only working with a particular family, but with that family at a particular moment in its 'life-cycle', at (say) a time of family crisis which had not existed previously and which might not recur in the future. In this illustration the practitioner necessarily is involved in the construction of idiographic ('particularising') knowledge about a particular family in a set of circumstances that exist at a particular period in its history. The cognitive mechanisms by which nomothetic knowledge might be mediated, re-defined, re-shaped into an idiographic format and 'applied' to a particular situation are complex, though as will be noted shortly social work conceptual schema exist which attempt to facilitate cognitive alternation between these two modes of interpreting social reality. In one respect the tension


3 Ibid p.10
between nomothetic and idiographic ways of knowing the social world is an issue of epistemology and ontology. In another, it is the product of immersion in occupationally-specific cognitive routines. Trained incapacity on the part of at least some sociologists to attempt the risky business of forming a coherent analysis of the life of a particular individual or family is probably a not unknown phenomenon. Conversely Hearn (4) comments 'when one examines the meanings ... of theory and practice in social work one can never be quite sure whether asking the meaning of 'x' or 'y' may begin an infinite regress to solipsism' (5).

An assumption that social science knowledge is wholly nomothetic, and practitioner knowledge wholly idiographic, requires some qualification. Most forms of social science knowledge are nomothetic, but not all. Mitchell (6) in a description of Eckstein's (7) classification of different types of case-studies employed in sociology and anthropology refers to

'Configurative - idiographic studies in which the material is largely descriptive and reflects the particular concatenation of circumstances surrounding the events in a way which, while they may provide insights into the relationships among the component elements in the case, do not ... lead to direct general theoretical interpretations' (8)

5 Ibid pp.97-98
8 Mitchell, J.C., (1983) op.cit p.195
'Grounded theory' to a limited extent, and ethnomethodology in particular, employ versions of configurative-idiographic methodology; the highly episodic nature of the 'accounting moment' places ethnomethodology at least as close to the problem of 'infinite regress' as the social workers referred to above by Hearn. At a more macro-level of analysis sociologists working in the field of community studies also in some instances employ a version of configurative-idiographic methodology. However in most fields of sociological enquiry case-studies are employed either to illuminate or illustrate general theoretical postulates; or are intentionally designed to contribute to theory building; or are used as provisional testing sites to tentatively explore general theoretical propositions developed elsewhere; or in some cases may be designed as 'crucial' case studies for rigorously testing a specific theoretical hypothesis. Configurative-idiographic knowledge forms are also rare in formal psychology. A notion that psychology is 'about individuals' and therefore more relevant to caseworkers is erroneous if this rests on a view that psychology is an idiographic form of knowing: academic psychology is about 'types of individuals' and Sutton in her text on psychology for social workers suggests:

'Reliable prediction ... is rooted in sound theory, and herein lies the necessity for those who seek to be effective in their role as professionals both to be acquainted with theory, and to be able to use it with advantage in their work' (12)

One way of attempting to bridge the gap between nomothetic and idiographic knowledge constructions is social work conceptualisation of

10 Mitchell, J.C. (1983) op.cit
12 Ibid p.2
'psycho-social' (or micro-macro) connections, where the former is assumed to refer to idiographic knowledge, the latter to nomothetic. Three aspects of this are worthy of note. First, it is not clear that this cognitive-practico mechanism is available to some psychological theories which appear not to have an explicit systematically formulated ('nomothetic') theory of the macro-social order. This is not to say cross-disciplinary, cross-paradigmatic connections between psychology and social and political theory are not possible: only that close theoretical attention is required in addressing problems in the construction of such syntheses. Second, it is necessary to take into account the existence of dispute as to the political form of hypothesised linkages between individual clients and 'society'. Third, conflation of idiographic/nomothetic and micro/macro dichotomies does not of itself 'resolve' the problem of theory-practice. A conflation of this kind is developed by, for example, Corrigan and Leonard(13) who appear to have a confused and contradictory view of whether practice should be derived from theory; or theory derived from the experience of practice; or whether theory and practice should interact dialectically one with the other(14). These are not reasons for abandoning the objectives of formulating 'psycho-social' frameworks and for attempting to relate these frameworks to nomothetic and idiographic constructions: rather, they are reasons for seeking greater theoretical clarity in the construction of the objectives themselves. It was noted earlier the idea that practitioners engage 'only' in the construction of wholly idiographic knowledge requires qualification. Nomothetic generalisations may be of the formal social


14 This point is made in Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit. p.103
scientific variety or be in the form of 'informal' theories (the question of whether nomothetic social work knowledge incorporates informal and formal theory is discussed later). Toren suggests '... the knowledge base of social work is still, to a large extent, drawn from experience i.e. generalisations inferred from many specific cases' (15).

Nomothetic reasoning, though sometimes in social work said to be a form of 'categorisation' that has the negative connotations of stereotyping and generalising about unique human beings (16), is routine and cognitively endemic in everyday life. Examples of the use of nomothetic concepts in everyday life are the concepts of 'chair', 'vegetables', or 'books' and also conceptions of people with whom we have never had personal contact (17) as in the concepts 'men', 'women', or 'children'. Social workers also employ occupationally-specific nomothetic concepts, as in the concepts of 'helping', 'sharing', or 'clients'. In Toren's statement, above, it was suggested these generalisations are 'inferred from many specific cases': if this is so, it indicates the existence of an experientially accumulated stock of knowledge and meanings (theories, understandings, insights etc) that are, at least in part, 'carried forward' by the social worker and applied to an understanding of the social workers 'next' case. These nomothetic meanings may acquire a collective dimension. Nomothetic generalisations inductively derived in the way suggested by Toren do not necessarily remain in the possession of individuals: they may be disseminated to other social workers and become part of the 'language

habits' (18) that exist within particular occupational 'speech communities' (19) or within particular segments of an occupational community. Social work examples of collectivised nomothetic constructs include the 'presenting problem' thesis (20) which rests on the view that a clients' self-formulated account of why s(he) requires help may mask the 'real' or underlying problems being experienced by the client: and the 'ventilationist' thesis which rests, usually, on a presupposition that expressing emotions in interaction with social workers (or with social workers and others in a group situation) has therapeutic value (21).

Some of the issues referred to above have engendered a view amongst some writers that theory and practice are unavoidably and necessarily conjoined. Jacoby's (22) intention is descriptive rather than only prescriptive in stating 'Theory is not to be reduced to practice nor severed from it' (23). In sociology, Harris's (24) attempt to combine micro-social theory with structural precepts leads to a view that theory-practice is essentially dialectical. Sheer 'activity' can imply practical actions and physical movement outside of human culture, much in the way that non-human animals might engage in

21 Carew, R., 'The Place Of Knowledge In Social Work Activity' *British Journal Of Social Work* Vol.9, No.3 (Autumn) 1979 p.361
23 Ibid p.120
animal activity' (25). However the concept 'social practices' (26) refers to an amalgam of human cultural ideas (cognitions) and activities. In Harris's conceptual framework human actors do not engage in activity or thought, but in both: and each affects the other to produce 'practices' in the sense that

'it is not that (people) ... engage in ... activity or in thought, but in activity which engenders and embodies thought, and in thought which arises out of and is in turn embodied in practice. Without activity there would be no thought; without thought there would be no practice, only activity' (27)

In Harris's conceptual framework people engage in social practices (fusions of cognitions and activities) which on the one hand embody pre-existing cognitions (themselves arising from engagement in prior social practices) and on the other engender cognitions which are then inserted into future practices. As well as offering a view of social practice as the dialectic between activity and thought Harris's framework has the merit of avoiding the conceptual trap of tacit micro-reductionism: whether micro-situational social practices in their relation to 'macro' cultural-structural configurations are 'change-producing' or else 'reproductive' is treated as an empirical variable (28). Harris's framework may be contrasted with the Althusserian 'problematic' discussed in chapter two (29). For Althusser, ideology is not ideational. Ideology is a 'true-but-refracted' practically performed inscription into human consciousness of the structures of capitalism secreted in role 'rituals' in the Ideological State Apparatuses. As indicated in chapter two (30) it is partly the Althusserian 'problematic' that informed

25 Ibid p.31
26 Ibid p.29
27 Ibid p.31
28 Ibid pp.176-195
29 See Chapter 2, pp.129-133
30 See Chapter 2, pp.131-133
Leonard's (31) distinction between action-oriented practice and consciousness-oriented practice (32). From Harris's standpoint, Althusser's structuralist anti-ideational perspective is redundant as also is the (Althusserian construction of) traditional marxist concept of ideology as theoretical 'false-consciousness', and Leonard's distinction between 'action' and 'consciousness' oriented practice becomes largely superfluous because social practice, in Harris, embodies and engenders cognitions and activities that are anyway inextricably co-produced (33).

In social work, Harris (34) addresses 'theory-practice' in terms of the nomothetic/idiographic dichotomy referred to earlier. Harris outlines his concept of 'transfers' of knowledge between 'holist' and 'serialist' modes of comprehending reality (35). Holism as a cognitive mode is a generalised way of comprehending reality at a relatively high level of theoretical abstraction (36) and involves the observer (or social worker) in applying general concepts in interpreting a range of particular situations, so that aspects of commonality - rather than

32 Ibid pp.209-210
33 Harris, C.C., (1980) op.cit p.31
34 Harris, R.J., 'Social Work Education And The Transfer Of Learning' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.3, No.2 (Winter) 1983 pp.103-117; an abbreviated and revised version of this paper is Harris, R.J., 'The Transfer Of Learning In Social Work Education' in Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) Educating Social Workers University of Leicester, Association Of Teachers In Social Work Education, 1985, Chapter 10
35 Harris, R.J., (1985) op.cit p.82
36 Harris, R.J., (1983) op.cit p.106
only particularity - are perceived to exist in situations. Serialism as a cognitive mode accords greater perceptual and interpretive emphasis to idiographic constructions, to the particularistic aspects of individual situations or 'cases' (37). In Harris's framework both modes of cognition are adjudged necessary: ability to analyse a particular situation is facilitated through a capacity to distinguish situationally-specific phenomenon from trans-situational phenomenon present in a range of situations. One of Harris's main concerns is educational, centred upon designing learning experiences for social work students that will equip them to alternate cognitively and practically between holist and serialist perspectives. Harris's framework is a considerable conceptual advance on some accounts of social work learning that appear to urge students and practitioners to integrate theory with practice 'willy-nilly' (38). There are, however, issues arising from Harris's framework that require critical attention. Harris's model in its application in social work education requires central 'organizing concepts within which the learning can be located' (39). Harris suggests these central organizing concepts may be 'supra-content concepts' or they may be substantive 'metatheories' (40) such as Marxism (41) or, presumably, psychoanalysis, behaviourism, structuralism, or some other 'meta-theory'. Harris's reference to 'supra-content concepts' raises the epistemological question of whether these exist in a form independent of theoretical or paradigmatic contextualization (42). One of Harris's examples of a supra-

37 Ibid p.107
38 Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit p.102
39 Harris, R.J., (1983) op.cit p.105
40 Ibid
41 Ibid
42 See Chapter 3, f.n.181
content concept is the concept of 'problem-solving'\(^{(43)}\). A difficulty here is that even were it possible to remain within a quasi-supra dimension of conceptualization there are alternative models of problem-solving and decision-making: this is evident from work by Bulmer\(^{(44)}\) and in Weiss's\(^{(45)}\) recent typology of the 'knowledge-driven model'; the 'problem-solving' model; the 'interactive' model; the 'political' model; 'tactical' model; and the 'enlightenment' model\(^{(46)}\).

It is not clear how selection from alternative models of problem-solving and decision making can be achieved in 'supra' dimensional terms. This is related to a general problem in the epistemological status of 'supra-content concepts'. If supra-content concepts are defined principally in terms of cognitive processes or in any other dimension other than that of substantive theoretical or paradigmatic content, it might be argued another supra-content concept is the concept of 'contradictions' which is widely employed in social science writing. However the point was made in chapter two\(^{(47)}\) that for structural marxists this concept typically refers to 'objective' contradictions of or within 'structures'. In phenomenological and constructionist sociology the concept refers to ('subjective') social constructions of (a sense of) contradiction in the minds of human actors: in the latter perspective, for example, a legitimation crisis is literal — a crisis in the legitimation of structures

43 Harris, R.J., (1983) op.cit p.112
46 Ibid pp.31-39
47 See Chapter 2, pp.173-174
rather than a crisis of 'internal' structural contradictions within 'objective structures'\(^{(48)}\). Paradigmatic disputes surrounding, in this illustration, the concept 'contradictions' are exemplified in Holmwood and Stewart's\(^{(49)}\) contention that theories predicting structural contradictions may themselves as theories be contradictory in the sense of 'explanatory failure' in the theory-of-contradiction itself. For example, some contemporary theories of social stratification employ concepts of the type 'status discrepancy' or 'contradictory class location' to postulate the empirical existence of structural contradictions. However, it is possible these contradictions are 'produced' through theoretical contradictions (explanatory failure) in the theory itself\(^{(50)}\) rather than 'in' the empirical reality to which the theory refers. Whether it is theoretically legitimate to invoke the notion of 'supra-content' concepts ('role', 'problem-solving', 'emancipation', 'contradictions' etc) as existing independently of paradigmatic contextualizations is, at the least, problematic. It seems likely Harris's theoretical project for social work education is better sustained through the alternative procedure noted by him i.e. selection of a substantive 'meta-theoretical' central organising principle as in his example of marxism\(^{(51)}\) or through comparative incorporation of 'central organising concepts' drawn from a range of theories. Here, attention should be drawn to three areas requiring further amplification. First, as noted in the earlier reference to Corrigan

48 Ibid
50 Ibid p. 235
51 Harris, R. J., (1983) op. cit. p. 105 and p. 109
and Leonard, advocacy of a fusion of, and alternation between, nomothetic (holist) and idiographic (serialist) modes does not of itself resolve the problem of 'theory-practice': as indicated earlier, Corrigan and Leonard are unclear as to whether (nomothetic) theory should precede or be derived from inductive, idiographic practice-based insights, or be part of an interactive dialectic between theory and practice. Second, it was noted in chapter three that ideologies and theories are not necessarily internally consistent and may contain contradictory elements, a point that will be returned to later in the present chapter: if theories rather than 'supra-content' concepts are employed in student learning programmes it is necessary to evolve criteria for deciding which elements of a theory(ies) are to be selected, and which (if any) rejected. Thirdly, frameworks built upon the holist/serialist rubric mean some theories, unless re-worked in terms of the rubric, cannot be incorporated within it. In some macro-social theories, including marxism, individualising psychodynamic theories of 'self' are dismissed as bourgeois categories of thought; conversely Shaw is implicitly critical of serialist-nomothetic precepts and states 'social work, as I see it, is about understanding the individual, rather than knowledge about people in general' (italic added).

Harris's prescriptions are in part a critique of those social work curricula which he describes as being '... a hotch potch of disparate demands ... and ... individual disciplines ... (which) ...

52 See Chapter 3, p.330-332
54 Shaw, J., (1974) op.cit
55 Ibid p.xiii
It was suggested earlier that Harris's framework is a considerable conceptual advance upon some other attempts to conceptualise 'theory-practice' and is an instance of an attempt to formulate an educational programme which addresses explicitly and theoretically the relationship of idiographic to nomothetic constructions. In the way that the framework is formulated there do not appear to be theoretical grounds either for refutation nor total endorsement of it: in the version of Harris's model not predicated upon the deployment of 'supra-content' concepts, further theoretical specification of unaddressed issues may reveal more explicitly its potential in social work education and more generally as a conceptual tool for exploring the relation of theory to practice.

Theoretical and practical issues centred upon the question of whether and if so how theory should be integrated with practice are articulated in different contexts and thereby raise the further dimensions of when and where this integration should be achieved:

'Does one try and bring theory and practice together in the placement, in supervision, in tutorials or in classroom sessions before, during, or after the ... (student practice) ... placement?'

From social work perspectives that are strongly committed to individualistic psychodynamic precepts the social worker-client interview ('the casework relationship') is a key site for the integration of theory with practice, a point noted in Trevillion's observation that 'The social work process attains its paradigmatic form in the interview' (italic added). From the standpoint of a

56 Harris, R.J., (1983) op.cit p.113
57 This point is made in Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit
58 Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit p.97
60 Ibid p.24
broader 'systems' or 'unitary' perspective (61) it is argued theory and practice should be 'brought together' in casework relationships with clients but also in a range of other situations including inter-agency liaison and social work involvement in attempts to influence social policies and organisational procedures if these are adjudged by the social worker to be operating against the clients best interests (62).

The conceptualisations of social work knowledge and theory examined so far go some way towards an analytic understanding of complexities and ambiguities surrounding the use of the term 'theory' in social work. The term, however, has a larger range of variation in meaning than those examined so far: selected aspects of these variations are assembled below in the form of a classificatory framework that identifies 'types' of theory in more than one dimension.

'TYPES' OF THEORY: A CLASSIFICATORY FRAMEWORK

In a brief but insightful reference to variations in definitions and usages of the term theory, Timms and Timms (63) observe there are '... at least three possibilities: theory about what constitutes or justifies social work, theories about how to do social work and theory in the sense of propositions from, say, the social sciences' (64). This classification may be re-stated in the form: theories of what social work is, theories of how to do social work, and theories about the nature of the client world. Each of these three major types of theory

62 Ibid
64 Ibid p.17
may be said to exist in their formal and informal theoretical versions, employing the distinction made earlier in the chapter between 'formal' paradigmatic knowledge and 'informal' theory. When the formal/informal dimension is superimposed upon the three types of theory noted by Timms and Timms, a six-cell matrix is produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'FORMAL' THEORY</th>
<th>'INFORMAL' THEORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal written paradigms of welfare e.g. personal pathology, liberal reform, marxist, feminist etc.</td>
<td>Moral-political cultural values of welfare internalized by practitioners and drawn upon for defining the nature and purposes ('functions') of social work in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal written 'theories of practice' e.g. casework methods theory, family therapy or groupwork or community work theories-of-practice.</td>
<td>Inductively-derived informal 'practice theories' constructed experientially from the practical experience of 'doing' social work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal written social science theories and empirical data on personality, social behaviour, marriage, the family, class, community, deviancy etc.</td>
<td>Experientially-acquired general cultural meanings and definitions of (for example) the nature of social behaviour, class, 'the family' as an institution, 'normal' behaviour, parenting, and the roles of women in society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this classificatory framework the cells interact vertically and horizontally. The distinction between formal theories of practice and informal practice-theories employs the terms used by Evans (65), referred to briefly in relation to the concept 'front-line autonomy' at the end of the third chapter. The framework is heuristic and exploratory: whether, for example, informal practice-theories should occupy a separate cell is one of the questions raised by the framework. There is a sense in which informal experientially-acquired practitioner...

definitions of 'how to do social work' are analytically separable from (though empirically may be interwoven with) the contents of the other cells. If, however, 'practice-theory' is defined as including the 'total' cognitive perspective of the practitioner then it may be argued practice-theory includes the contents shown in the other cells. This last usage is explicit in Curnock and Hardiker (66) who illustrate their conceptual framework with reference to a probation officer who 'was using theories (some of them home-made and commonsense, some of them based on social work principles and social science knowledge) ...' (67). A definition of 'practice-theory' as including a fusion of contents from the other cells in the framework is also implicit in Curnock and Hardiker's observation that

'... the idea of practice theory conveys two things. One relates to the active process of conceptualisation required in day-to-day social work practice; the other relates to the frameworks social workers use to help them make sense of the mass of material they must handle. These frameworks range from psycho-dynamic to sociological theories ...' (68)

Curnock and Hardiker suggest some forms of social science knowledge may be employed in a relatively direct, unmodified form, an example being the application of behaviourist psychology in behaviour modification methods (69); but in most instances social science knowledge is intermixed in empirically complex ways with other forms of knowledge and also with affective experience (70).

The first type of theory (theory of what social work is) has significance in analyses of the relationship of theory and knowledge to practical activities; in analyses of the relation of theory to

66 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op. cit.
67 Ibid p.6
68 Ibid pp.6-7
69 Ibid p.8
70 Ibid p.9
practice, to 'by-pass' or underemphasise this first type of formal 
theory is to fail to recognise that formal theory of the second type 
(theories of how to do social work) and of the third type (theories of 
the nature of the client world) are in strictly logical terms 
interactive with formal theory of the first type. Exhortations to 
practitioners that they should (71) 'integrate' formal theory with 
practice necessarily embody moral-political assumptions contained in 
formal theory of the first type (theory of what social work is). To 
engage in such exhortations without specification of the contents of 
the first kind of theory (i.e. paradigmatic definition of the nature 
and purpose of social work) is an instance of encouragement to 
integrate-theory-with-practice 'willy-nilly'. Social work is not a 
pre-theoretical entity to which 'theory' is added afterwards: theory is 
already 'in' the use of the term 'social work'. In the framework 
outlined earlier this implies a vertical interaction between the 
contents of the three cells in the formal dimension: for example, a 
formal marxist definition ('paradigm') of welfare (theory of the first 
type) is interactive with and 'requires' formal marxist 'theories of 
practice' (theory of the second type) and formal marxist theory of the 
client world (theory of the third type). But whether this logical 
principle represents empirical reality is highly questionable. A 
complicating factor incorporated in the framework is that each of the 
three 'logically' interactive types of theory in the vertically 
interactive cells in the formal dimension also interact laterally with 
an 'informal' equivalent. Conversely, if vertical interaction exists 
between these three types of theory in the 'informal' dimension it is 
likely this vertical interaction is also laterally interactive with the

71 Meyer, H.J., 'Professionalization And Social Work' in Kahn, A., 
(ed) Issues In American Social Work New York, Columbia University 
Press, 1959, pp.319-40
three cells in the formal dimension i.e. it is empirically unlikely that social workers, particularly if professionally trained and qualified, are completely uninfluenced by formal written theories of the three types described in the framework. In future work in the sociology of social work knowledge conceptual refinement of unresolved questions raised by this framework is likely to be necessary as a guide to empirical investigation of the structure of social work knowledge and its relation to practice: in particular, vertical and lateral interactions between the forms of knowledge contained in each of the six cells shown in the framework will require more precise specification. In the sociology of social work knowledge this work is underway in Hardiker whose writings\(^{(72)}\) reveal awareness of complexity in these interactions, although it will be suggested later in the chapter Hardiker's work raises an issue of theoretical (data) interpretation which remains largely unresolved in empirical social work studies.

A point noted in chapter three\(^{(73)}\) is that doubt may exist as to what a practical expression of a welfare ideology or theory does or should consist of. The classificatory framework described earlier requires extension to incorporate another dimension of ideologies and theories. This is derived from Rootes\(^{(74)}\) who identifies three 'levels' of ideology ranked in descending order of internal coherence, explicitness, and consistency. These are, first, a level of ideology or theory that has a relatively high level of conceptual crystallisation, as in theories that are 'more or less systematic, coherent and well articulated world views'.

\(^{72}\) In particular those listed in Chapter 1, f.n.20

\(^{73}\) See Chapter 3, p.329

Second, 'para-ideology' which is a level at which 'a variety of ideological elements, components of, for example, possessive individualism or, in late capitalism, technical rationality, are articulated or respected in practice but rarely systematically or fully consciously' (76). Thirdly, a level of ideology or theory "directly relevant to practice, directly influenced by experience, and unreflectively uttered as 'common-sense'" (77). Rootes's typology rests upon a postulate that:

' These levels of ideology are ranked in descending order of coherence, explicitness and self-consciousness, but they are all elements in the ideological process. At the lower levels internal inconsistency is to be expected not merely because they are relatively remote from the constraints of conscious articulation but also because they reflect, at the most practical level, the contradictoriness of ordinary life-experience ...' (78)

The context of Rootes's paper is his criticism of Abercrombie et.al (79) who reject the 'dominant ideology' thesis. Rootes's argument is that Abercrombie et.al defined the ideology of capitalism in such a way (ia. premised on the notion that ideology is always highly crystallised,

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75 Ibid p.440
76 Ibid
77 Ibid
78 Ibid
explicit, and internally consistent) that it was not surprising they should find no evidence for its existence. Abercrombie et al. are said to be 'intolerant of ambiguity, theoretical complexity and subtlety' (80) and to have stated "so 'hard' a version of the dominant ideology thesis ... that it is difficult to see how the authors' could have arrived at any but a negative conclusion" (81). According to Rootes, the dominant ideology of capitalism is subtly mediated and exists at the three 'levels' of crystallisation referred to above. Once the 'requirement of internal consistency is relaxed,' (82) dominant ideology can be shown to exist in mediated form in practice. Rootes's defence of the dominant ideology thesis as an expression of 'the interests of capitalism' is questionable (83). However, two elements of his typology are relevant to sociological analysis of social work knowledge. These are, first, the possibility that ideologies and theories (e.g. those developed by collective social work actors) may exist at 'high' but also low levels of explicitness: for example, para-ideologies in the form of 'technical rationality' (the social construction of an image of practice as a value-free pragmatic and technical response to everyday empirical exigencies at the 'front-line' of practice) may be subtly reproduced in practice. Second, as an extension of the point just made, there is a sense in which practice - whether or not said to refract a 'higher level' of ideology in subtly mediated form - has to be pragmatically opportunist to some degree. Academic ideologies and theories may, though this could also be said of some 'lay' ideologies, exhibit a relatively high level of internal conceptual consistency in the form of a consciously articulated, integrated

81 Ibid
82 Ibid. p.440
83 See Chapter 2, pp.140-154
'world-view'. One reason for the existence of these characteristics in academic ideology (or, for that matter, in formal professional theories) is that 'armchair theorists' and philosophers do not have to confront the same types of practical contingencies faced by practitioners in their everyday work. If, for example, a probation officer's 'academic ideology' indicates a recommendation to the court that his/her client be placed in a probation hostel there may not be very much point in making this recommendation if the probation officer is already aware that for resource reasons no suitable hostel accommodation exists. Another instance of practitioner 'adjustment' of academic or professional theory to situational constraints is where the social worker's formal academic or professional theory-of-practice (eg. family therapy or behaviour modification) cannot be implemented because the client refuses to co-operate. The client is one of the many 'publics' to which social work ideologies are variously connected, and which may have enabling or constraining effects upon the 'application' of ideology or formal academic or professional theory. This does not mean situational constraints to do with power, organisational procedures, resources, legal constraints, client-cooperation etc. are the only factors standing in the way of an application of formal theory to practice: as noted in the final part of the third chapter in the section on front-line autonomy, fundamental conceptual doubt may exist as to what a practical expression of a theory or ideology (eg. 'radical social work') does or should consist of in essence, independently of the existence of situational exigencies and practical empirical constraints.

Issues raised in Rootes's typology and in the interactions between each of the elements identified in the six-cell classificatory framework described earlier, together with theoretical and empirical
issues arising from the relationship of Roots's typology to the six-cell classificatory scheme, are identified here exploratively as issues in need of future theoretical development in the sociology of social work knowledge. A general empirical conclusion arising from Hardiker's writing, referred to earlier, is that formal and informal theories co-exist in social work practice. The general form of this empirical conclusion is indirectly supported by work in some other fields, including the sociology of science examined in the final section of the chapter. Comparative analysis offers a broader theoretical and empirical vision than where sociology of social work knowledge is restricted exclusively to an interest in social work. At least some aspects, though clearly not all, of 'theory-practice' are common to a number of professions and occupations. An instance of this is Fielding's (84) study of 'theory-practice' in the context of the police service. Fielding's work indicates everyday police activity at street level is not as formally portrayed in police training manuals or on police training courses. But neither is everyday police practice totally unrelated to formal ('theoretical') definitions of practice: as Fielding observes "... courses of action are embedded in the dialectic between formal definitions of legitimate practice and informal work practices" (85).

84 Fielding, N., 'Police Socialization And Police Competence'
British Journal Of Sociology Vol. xxxv, No. 4 (December) 1984 pp.568-590
85 Ibid p.583
'OBJECTIVIST' AND 'SUBJECTIVIST' CONCEPTIONS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

One aspect of oppositions between micro-social and macro-social theory traced in chapter two is the opposition between 'situated' conceptions of meaning and language, and structuralist formulations as in Saussure's theory of the determination of parole (situated speech-acts) by langue (language) (86). This opposition refers respectively to subjectivist or quasi-subjectivist theories of human knowledge (as in phenomenological sociology and symbolic interactionism) and objectivist theories (as in structuralist linguistics) which define human knowledge as an embodiment of meanings and 'internal' logical cognitive structures (87) that exist independently of the conscious awareness and intentionalities of those who 'practice' the knowledge (88). A structuralist perspective in sociology of social work is regarded here as problematic, for the reasons provided in chapter two (89). However a quasi-objectivist conception has the advantage of avoiding theoretical problems of subjectivism, relativism, and solipsism. Unless it is possible in quasi-objectivist terms to speak of (for example) the psychoanalytic paradigm it is not possible to construct a 'rational' classification of theories or paradigms or to compare the contents of one paradigm (eg. psychoanalysis) with another (eg. marxism). A wholly subjectivist perspective of human knowledge and meaning, founded upon a view that human meanings exist in a constant

86  See Chapter 2, pp.134-138
88  Culler, J., Structuralist Poetics London, Routledge, 1975
89  See Chapter 2, pp.140-154
state of flux through individual or situational variations of usage, would imply there are as many meanings attached to the (eg psychoanalytic) paradigm as there are individuals who have heard the term 'psychoanalysis'. Hearn, earlier, was highly critical of subjectivism when he suggested that to ask the meaning of theory 'x' or concept 'y' in social work might 'begin an infinite regress to solipsism'. From the standpoint of a sociology of social work knowledge, problems of relativism, infinite regress, and individual solipsism are reduced through the use of a non-structuralist, but quasi-objectivist, perspective in the form connoted in Bergerian sociology (90). Social constructions of the 'meaning' of particular knowledge forms, including the meaning of formal theoretical knowledge, may become empirically institutionalised and disseminated through time and space in collectivities which take the form of 'speech communities' (91). In this sense, where meanings have ceased to be privatised, idiosyncratic solipsistic possessions of individuals and assume the form of 'collective representations', it becomes possible to speak of the 'psychodynamic' or the 'marxist' speech communities. Through processes of socialisation and objectivation, acculturated members of a particular speech community internalise the cognitive contents of their speech community as an 'objective' facticity which, until this process of cognitive immersion is broken or de-objectified, is typified and objectified in 'language-forms' that exist 'over-and-above' the individual socialised members of the speech community: at this 'moment' in the dialectic between individuals and their speech community, individual consciousness is socially determined and objectified. In

91 Whorf, B., (1956) op.cit.
the non-structuralist, quasi-objectivist terms just described it is theoretically and empirically legitimate to avoid solipsistic perspectives in the sociology of social work knowledge by borrowing in re-contextualized form a central tenet employed in structuralist classifications of human knowledge. This tenet rests on a view that the contents of theories can be understood in terms of their autonomously existing constituent elements and their internal cognitive structure. As example of a structuralist typology of theories is provided in Glucksmann(92) who notes structuralism attends to 'the internal construction of social and cultural phenomenon' (93) (italic added). In Glucksmann's focus upon the 'internal structure' (94) of thought structures she argues theories as thought categories can be treated as 'objective entities' (95). As noted above, a re-contextualized 'social constructionist' use of structuralist knowledge-classification methods is advocated here: problems in treating theory as a wholly 'objective' entity in the way suggested by Glucksmann is an issue that will be returned to shortly. Glucksmann's objectivist classificatory framework has the advantage that it offers a way of typologizing theories in a number of dimensions, defined as follows

'epistemology: theory of the acquisition of knowledge
philosophy: substantive world view
theory: substantive hypotheses to account for their object of study
methodology: lower level prescriptions as to method e.g. thought experiment, or hypothetico-deductive method
field of study: actual object of study, e.g. myth or kinship'(96)

93 Ibid p.243
94 Ibid p.231
95 Ibid
96 Ibid pp.231-232
Glucksmann's particular interest is in comparing the theories of Althusser and Levi-Strauss, and she comments

'By comparing the theorists along these dimensions, it becomes possible to assess the similarities and differences between them systematically, and more important, it avoids the problem of having to come to some overall, yes or no, conclusion as to whether the thought structures of Althusser and Levi-Strauss are either the same or different' (97)

In Glucksmann's multi-dimensional framework theories may be said to be alike in some dimensions, and unalike in others. An epistemology of client false-consciousness is present, for example, in some versions of psychoanalysis and marxism: it is clear, however, that the dimension of theory ('substantive hypotheses to account for their object of study') is respectively different in psychoanalysis and marxism as also is the dimension of philosophy ('substantive world view'). Cross-paradigmatic combinations of affinities and discontinuities in these dimensions of theory are fairly common in social science. Another example is the use of ethnographic method in process-structuralism (98) which employs the same methodology as symbolic interactionism and (at one level of analysis) the same field-of-study; but the macro-reductionist data-interpretations of process structuralism are unlike those of symbolic interactionism in the dimensions of philosophy, theory, and epistemology. Multi-dimensional variations of this kind also occur within paradigms. In marxism, for example, Poulantzas (99) is critical of Miliband's (100) epistemology but the substantive theoretical positions

97 Ibid p.232
of both writers with regard to the dominant ideology thesis are broadly similar (101). It may be noted multi-dimensional frameworks in the classification of theories qualify an observation made in chapter two (102) where it was argued concepts drawn from anti-thetical paradigms may be combined in re-contextualized form, but can not legitimately be intermixed in unmediated form to constitute a theoretical 'synthesis'. When paradigms are compared multi-dimensionally it becomes clear that an unmediated, direct synthesis between two or more paradigms may be possible in some dimensions, but not in others.

A problem arises when quasi-objectivist classificatory frameworks, despite their legitimate necessity in the sense described above, are employed without the use of a complementary quasi-subjectivist conception of human knowledge and meaning. If theoretical relativism and a wholly subjectivist conception of human knowledge (including theoretical knowledge) is problematic for the reasons adduced earlier, so too is analysis based wholly upon 'quasi-objectivist' classificatory procedure derived from (say) Glucksmann's model. At one level of analysis it is appropriate, in the way outlined above, to theoretically overcome problems of relativism and solipsism by heuristically examining the internal (multi-dimensional) structure of social work theories without reference to individual or situational particularities in the negotiation and construction of these theories. At another, complementary, level of analysis it is necessary for data on empirical interpretive variations in time and space to be 'built into' sociological analysis (and classification) of social work knowledge and theory. In the 'Bergerian' conceptual framework referred to earlier the relation of individuals to their speech communities is a (temporary

101 This point is made in Abercombie, N., *Class, Structure, And Knowledge* Oxford, Blackwell, 1980 p.167
102 See Chapter 2, pp.175-179
or long-lasting) 'determination' of consciousness in the sense of an actor-reification, but not in the sense of a 'Saussurian' structural determination of parole by langue. If the deterministic 'moment' in the dialectical relation between individuals and their speech communities is for whatever reason humanly 'broken' (de-objectified) the cognitive contents of the speech community may be rejected or, less radically, given 'new' or 'particular' meanings reflecting the intentionalities and social situations of the human actor(s) involved. Also, a theoretically and empirically significant insight from contemporary middle-range sociology is that social work material (including social work knowledge and theory) may be transmitted or translated in its passage 'between' collective social work actors through time-space (103) and may be translated (transformed) within and across sites.

One aspect of the process of knowledge 'translation' can be seen to operate in the relationship of theory to social work practice. At a formal, quasi-objectivist level of paradigmatic classification it seems clear that in most of the dimensions described in Glucksmann's framework, behaviourist psychology and psychoanalysis are mutually exclusive (104). In Eysenck's (105) robust verdict Freudian hypotheses are said to be 'unscientific and useless' (106). In a formal (objectivist) classificatory comparison of paradigms, behaviourism and psychoanalysis (and hence social work techniques and methods derived from each theory) rest upon two diametrically opposed sets of

103 See Chapter 2, pp.198-208
105 Eysenck, H.J., Uses And Abuses Of Psychology Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1953
106 Ibid p.234
theoretical assumptions that cannot each be 'true': to say that antithetical theories are equally true is an affront against logic, at least if formal canons of logic are being applied in the theory-classification. However in social work practice it is by no means unusual for practitioners and social work students to employ behaviour modification techniques and a psychodynamically-based 'insight casework' approach in working with a particular client or family; and in so doing to be praised for displaying 'flexibility' and 'creativity' in trying out a variety of approaches. It may be noted this is not exactly a case of social work being the practical accomplishment of the theoretically impossible: it is empirically feasible that social workers employ their own contextualizations to re-define concepts from antithetical paradigms and either fuse these into a 'new' integrated schema and/or employ them to facilitate eclectic shift from one theory to another (and 'antithetical') theory. Dingwall (107) in his study of health visitor training is perplexed by this apparent ability of practitioners to achieve in practice that which seems impossible in theory, or more precisely, that which seems to be impossible from the standpoint of a taxonomy of the kind contained in Glucksmann's 'objectivist' classificatory framework. Dingwall comments that health visitor students seem '... quite happy to invoke whatever theory seems to be relevant in any given situation without regard to its consistency with any other that might be invoked

on any other occasion' (108). In contrast, Hardiker (109) suggests practitioner theoretical eclecticism is a legitimate necessity arising, in part, from situational exigencies which constrain and/or enable different types of cognition and practice: a practitioner may 'draw upon a wide range of theories' (110) including biological, psychodynamic, behavioural, and sociological (111). In Glucksmann's terms this is a logical impossibility: one cannot 'endorse' and practice psychodynamic psychology and behaviourism and structural sociology. It may be inferred from Hardiker's data that contextual (practitioner) definition of the 'meaning' of formal theories is qualitatively different from that constructed in 'objectivist' classificatory frameworks such as Glucksmann's: if Hardiker's data is valid, no other inference is possible. This suggests definitions of the contents and meanings of human knowledge (including theoretical knowledge) are partly situationally-specific. Situational specificity, which in some instances may amount to an over-turning by the practitioner of the meanings imputed in quasi-objectivist (and certainly structuralist) perspectives of human knowledge, are empirically discoverable not through the use of objectivist classificatory typologies but through ethnographic research methods based upon a quasi-subjectivist, situational conception of human knowledge and meaning.

110 Ibid p.87
111 Ibid
At 'middle-range' and 'macro' levels of social process there is a further sense in which a quasi-subjectivist classification of social work knowledge is a necessary adjunct to objectivist classifications. This, as briefly noted earlier, relates to the transmission/or 'translation' of social work materials across larger space-time configurations than those examined in micro-situationalist empirical studies. Formal social work theories and paradigms are partly disseminated through written texts. From the perspective of structuralist linguistics a social work text-as-paradigm has its own inner organizing principles ('logic') stemming either from its universal immanence qua text or, as in Culler (112) because the historical epoch surrounding the text dictates a 'totality of the interpretive process' (113). From other perspectives, however, a social work text does not have a single, invariant meaning. The 'meaning' of the text may be modified or transformed in the relationship ('phenomenological space') that exists between the writers and readers of texts. More than one 'reading' of a text is possible: the particular form of reading employed is likely to embody the political values, theories, social situation and practical concerns of varied readership groups who encounter the text. Each readership group 'reads' (constructs) the text in a different way; in this sense it is no longer the 'same' text. The notion that multiple readings of (eg. social work) texts-as-paradigms are possible, is a possibility noted in phenomenological hermeneutic theory. In Ricoeur's dictum '... with written discourse, the authors' intention and the meaning of the text cease to co-incide ... the texts career escapes the finite horizons

112 Culler, J., (1975) op.cit
113 Ibid p.91
lived by the author'. A conception that multiple readings of a
text (as paradigm) are possible suggests that these readings do not
have an epistemologically 'inferior' status when compared with an
imputed single 'objective' reading. This may be illustrated with
reference to Webb's 'objectivist' depiction of latent similarities
in the contents of traditional and radical social work theories.
Although Webb's conclusions are criticised below, his analysis is
insightful: analyses depicting latent ('hidden') affinities and
continuities amongst social work theories 'normally' regarded as anti-
thesis, are in an objectivist sense providing an increment in
knowledge i.e. they reveal something (a 'deep structure') about these
theories that was not previuously 'known'. Problems arise, however,
when conclusions are drawn in a way that does not also incorporate the
'subjectivist' dimension.

Webb argues there is a 'quiet radicalism' in social work
orthodoxy and 'equally, radicalism is less of a theoretical break ...'
(from orthodoxy) ... than its partisans would have us believe'.

In Webb's analysis, a claim is made that

'It is in how these theories have approached the central
social work problematic of the person-in-situation that we may be
able to adduce ... convergence between radicalism and
traditionalism' (italic added)

Through a comparison of statements drawn from Hollis in traditional

114 Ricoeur, P., 'The Meaning Of The Text: Meaningful Action
Considered As A Text' Social Research Vol.38, No.3 1971 p.532
115 Webb, D., 'Themes And Continuities In Radical And Traditional
116 Ibid p.150
117 Ibid
118 Ibid
119 Hollis, F., 'The Psycho-Social Approach To The Practice Of
Casework' in Roberts, W., and Nee, R.H., (eds) Theories Of Social
Casework Chicago University Press, 1970
social work and Alfero(120) in radical social work, Webb identifies convergence in their 'common usage' of the concept psycho-social. Webb suggests a latent affinity exists between traditional and radical theory in the sense that both theories appear to be saying the same (or similar) things regarding 'the contributory role of society to personal problems' (121), 'the capability of ... (persons) ... to act back on society' (122), 'the pursuit of client autonomy' (123), and 'the place of understanding and consciousness' (124). An example of a hidden congruence in traditional and radical constructions of the themes 'client autonomy', the role of 'consciousness' and 'self-understanding' is illustrated by Webb through comparison of quotations from Hollis, and from Leonard's (125) marxist text on the development of critical consciousness. On a literal reading of these quotations, Hollis and Leonard do indeed 'appear' to be saying the 'same' thing (126). Both speak of non-authoritarian, non-didactic social work where the client is encouraged to reflect critically upon his or her personal and social situation (127) and there is, as Webb indicates, a resonance between Leonard's 'prescriptions for conscientization' (128) and Hollis's...

121 Webb, D., (1981) op. cit p.150
122 Ibid p.151
123 Ibid p.152
124 Ibid p.153
127 Ibid
128 Ibid
'talk of understanding' (129).

Webb in terms of an 'objectivist' classificatory framework succeeds in identifying latent affinities between traditionalism and radicalism; though it may be noted these affinities exist only in some of the dimensions identified in Glucksmann's typology, earlier. Congruence exists only in the dimensions of 'epistemology', 'field of study' and (possibly) 'methodology'. In terms of philosophy ('substantive world view') and theory ('substantive hypotheses to account for their object of study') traditional and radical social work cannot legitimately be said to be speaking the same language or saying 'the same things'. To some extent Hollis's concept of 'self-understanding' and Leonard's marxist concept 'critical reflection' share a common commitment to epistemological idealism (130); but the necessity for critical reflection and self-understanding, the reasons why the client became 'a client' in the first place, and theories of the type of society to which 'reflection' should be addressed are respectively different in the theories of these two writers. One of these writers, it is worth remembering, is a marxist: the other is not. Nevertheless, Webb in at least some dimensions analogous to those in Glucksmann's objectivist classificatory framework, identifies some affinities in the relationship of traditional to radical theories. However, from the standpoint of a quasi-subjectivist perspective in the terms outlined earlier, Webb's conclusion that an affinity exists between traditionalism and radicalism is questionable. As Webb indicates (131), radical theory has problems in specifying identifiably 'radical' practices. But this is a separate issue to the question of which

129 Ibid
130 Ibid p.153
131 Ibid p.156
moral-political values, theoretical explanations, and substantive world-views are from the standpoint of most 'readers' perceived to exist in Hollis's non-marxist psycho-social theory, and in Alfero and Leonard's marxist theory of 'the personal and the political'. Webb states mutual affinity between traditionalism and radicalism has been largely overlooked by traditional and radical writers alike(132). When the work of these writers is inspected from a quasi-subjectivist standpoint, their 'oversight' in not glimpsing affinity between themselves may be regarded as a deliberate, conscious articulation of opposed welfare values. Leonard refers to the repressive impact of capitalism upon clients. Hollis's non-marxist psycho-social model is of a quite different kind. It is doubtful if Leonard and Hollis intended their theories to have the degree of affinity imputed by Webb and doubtful also whether their readers typically impute this degree of affinity. Though Webb does not claim the writers and readers of these 'opposed' texts-as-paradigms construct a close affinity between the texts, the point has significance. Those 'loyal' readers who respectively read Hollis or Leonard 'sympathetically' and endorse one writer whilst criticising the other are probably not conscious of an affinity in the sense imputed by Webb - which in terms of a quasi-subjectivist conception of human knowledge and meaning is an indication that (at least for the readership groups just referred to) the affinity does not 'exist'. A parallel analysis to Webb's is Davies's(133) comparison of statements drawn from Rogers(134) in traditional

132 Ibid
134 Rogers, C., On Becoming A Person London, Constable, 1961; and Rogers, C., Freedom To Learn, Columbus, Ohio, Chas Merrith, 1969.
psychotherapy and Freire (135) in radical social work. Davies's conclusion that a relatively close latent affinity exists between Rogers and Freire is open to criticism for reasons similar to those outlined above with regard to Webb's analysis. Davies's focus is predominantly on 'process' rather than 'content' and in terms of the latter it is clear that Rogers is not a marxist: as Davies himself comments, Rogers has a 'conventional' (136) theory of self-understanding and learning, whereas Freire's 'clear intention was that such learning should be used for revolutionary ends' (137) (italic added). Though social workers in the 'radical conscientisation' mode share with Rogerian therapists a method of work 'through discourse' there does not appear to be an affinity between Rogers and Freire in any of the dimensions (other than epistemology) in Glucksmann's objectivist classificatory framework. When the analysis shifts to a quasi-subjectivist perspective an affinity might be said to 'exist' if evidence were provided, for example, that the 'followers' of Rogers and of Freire subjectively become aware of and endorse the notion of a close affinity: however Davies does not provide such evidence.

It has been suggested theoretical grounds exist in favour of a view that quasi-objectivist frameworks of theory classification (Glucksmann's being of particular advantage because it is multi-dimensional) are necessary in the sociology of social work knowledge in order to avoid theoretical problems of relativism and solipsism.


136 Davies, B., (1982) op.cit p.173

137 Ibid
Equally, consideration of theoretical issues together with critical examination of the form of analysis provided by Webb and replicated in Davies, indicated objectivist 'single reading' classifications of social work theory have poor explanatory value unless supplemented by quasi-subjectivist classifications which recognise that 'multiple-readings' are possible: it was shown that two factors are relevant here. First, the 'meaning(s)' of social work knowledge and theory is partly micro-situationally 'produced' by practitioners, and secondly, in larger space-time configurations texts-as-paradigms may be subjectively 'translated' in ways corresponding to the theoretical and value preferences and practical concerns of actors in diverse 'readership groups'. Tension between objectivist and subjectivist conceptions of human knowledge and meaning cannot, clearly, be said to have been fully resolved in sociology, nor in the sociology of social work knowledge. In the perspective developed here both perspectives are defined as necessary, the prefix ‘quasi’ in each case being an indication of a qualified, and dialectical, use of these terms. These theoretical issues, and their empirical connotations, are tangently addressed by Fauconnier (138) who is critical of structuralist 'autonomizing' theories which presume language, cognition, and meanings can be studied as having an internal autonomy or 'deep' ('objective') structure independent of human intentionalities and consciousness, and independent of situational contexts of usage; for this reason he is

critical of the work of Searle \(^{139}\) and Sadock \(^{140}\) who employ 'autonomist' classificatory schemes. However Fauconnier, while critical of autonomous speech-act theories, nevertheless observes 'Autonomizing ... theoretical components can be heuristically useful ...' \(^{141}\). A large part of Fauconnier's specialised paper consists of empirical linguistic analysis of the relation of Jesuit speech-act phenomenon to language-independent properties (especially those bound to social conventions) of their social context: his theoretical extrapolations from these data are relatively brief, cautious, and inconclusive. Fauconnier is critical of 'autonomizing' theories of language but does not abandon 'objectivist' classifications in favour of a wholly solipsistic, relativist or situationalist perspective of human meaning and knowledge \(^{142}\). Fauconnier's work does not of itself provide a basis for a relativist autonomist perspective of human knowledge, language, and meaning, though elements of his work appear to hint at this possibility. However the perspectives developed in this part of the chapter assemble into what might described as a relativist autonomist conception of social work knowledge. In the use of this term, the relation of individuals (or groups of individuals) to a particular social work 'speech community' is regarded as dialectical: institutionalised knowledge (e.g. a theory) may come to acquire its own 'objectified' (socially determinist) meaning and the theories contained in different speech communities may therefore be compared and classified 'autonomously' in terms of their objectified meaning.

141 Fauconnier, G., (1981) op. cit. p.201
142 Ibid
Meanings objectified in this way are, however, regarded as theoretically and empirically open to negotiation and modification by actors, or to de-objectivation in which case autonomy from them is very high or even total.

**EMPIRICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN ANALYSES OF SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE**

Carew's (143) empirical study is employed here to identify empirical and methodological issues in sociological analysis of the relation of social work knowledge to practice. His study will be examined in detail, followed by an assessment of its methodological and empirical implications for a sociology of social work knowledge. Carew notes most of the social workers interviewed in his study considered formal theory was important as a 'framework from which to practice' (144) but only twenty-five per cent of his respondents said that they 'took any particular theoretical stance in their work with clients' (145) and these respondents stressed that they '... only use these theories when appropriate' (146). The remainder of Carew's respondents thought theory was useful as a general 'framework' for practice, though most of these suggested its use was 'unconscious' (147) and eclectic (148). Carew notes this is not a 'conscious' eclecticism based upon explicit critical inspection of theories and selection of a particular

143 Carew, R., (1979) *op.cit.*
144 Ibid. p.353
145 Ibid
146 Ibid
147 Ibid
148 Ibid
theory, but a tacitly eclectic use of 'theory'\textsuperscript{(149)}. His respondents indicated use of social science research data in social work practice was problematic, either because they were unsure how to apply research material to practice, or because research material consists of generalisations that may 'not apply to specific cases'\textsuperscript{(150)}. The social workers in Carew's study 'indicated that their primary source of reference, as far as obtaining ideas for practice was concerned, would be from their more experienced colleagues rather than from books or journals'\textsuperscript{(151)} (italics added). The participants based their practice on certain underlying social work values (eg. 'client self-determination' and 'respect for individuals') and upon a number of social work concepts (eg. 'ventilation, client 'reflection' and 'insight')\textsuperscript{(152)}. These values and concepts were only rarely related by the respondents to professional social work literature and the respondents tended '... to claim they have developed these concepts in practice based on their own and other workers experience'\textsuperscript{(153)} (italic added). Some connections between formal theory and practice were discernible to the researcher, but rarely to the social workers themselves. Carew makes a distinction between psychology and 'social science' theory, the latter being broadly equated by Carew with sociology. Carew states that so far as the use of formal psychological theory is concerned

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid p.354
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid p.355
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid p.358
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid
"Because of the participants' constant assertions that most of the responses in this category stemmed from their own experience, it is not possible to state categorically that these participants were basing certain of their activities on psychological propositions, but there is little doubt that some of the responses can be traced ... (by the researcher) ... to a theoretical base, irrespective of whether the workers were conscious of such a base or not" (154) (italics added).

Carew also examined practitioner use of theory drawn from 'social science' and in this category reports '... none of the responses ... were based upon a knowledge of social science theory and research' (155) (italic added). He further states "... few responses appeared to be related to propositions from social science, though the researcher did interpret a number of responses as possibly being based on 'role theory'" (156) (italic added). However when Carew reported back to respondents that he could 'see' in their activities a connection between formal theory and respondents' practices and assessments of clients situations, his interpretation was sometimes rebuffed by respondents. Carew illustrates this in a description of his observation of a social worker's interview with a client: it seemed to Carew the social worker's interpretation of the client situation could be said to rest upon the use of role-theory, in particular 'role-conflict' theory. Carew reports 'When this was discussed the worker indicated that a knowledge of 'role conflict' was not at the base of his response' (157) (italic added). To the social worker, the assessment of the client situation was based on 'well-known facts' about local cultural norms and family life in the north of England where the social worker and the client lived (158). In this illustration a point may be noted that will

154 Ibid p.360
155 Ibid
156 Ibid
157 Ibid
158 Ibid
be returned to shortly. Carew said the social worker 'indicated' no use of formal social scientific theory was involved in the social work assessment of the client's situation. Carew did not say the social worker 'denied' a use of social science theory that he (Carew) believed was 'actually' being tacitly or unconsciously deployed by the social worker. Though Carew reports he can sometimes trace connections between formal social science theory and practice, he seems unsure as to the phenomenological status of his own 'researcher-account' *viz*-a-*viz* the phenomenology of the participants themselves.

Carew reports the social workers in his study were using '... tried and trusted procedures that are passed on from practitioner to practitioner.' (159) In the terms described earlier in the chapter these appear to be 'informal' generalised *nomothetic* constructions applied by social workers across a wide range of cases. That is, the social workers had '... techniques and procedures that could be used to meet most of the demands made by clients' (160) (italic added). Briefly stated, these *nomothetic* constructions of social work practice and procedure consisted of asking clients to state the nature of their problems and encouraging clients to discuss their feelings about these problems; next, social workers would try to resolve clients problems through the social workers' knowledge of availability of resources and knowledge of relevant procedures or legislation that related to the clients' problem; if the problem could not be resolved in this way the client would be '... encouraged to ventilate and reflect further' (161). In describing these social worker cognitions and procedures Carew observes 'As far as the majority of these social workers were concerned, they had a *system of operations* that could be applied to

159 *Ibid* p.361
160 *Ibid*
161 *Ibid*
facilitate their interaction with clients' (162) (italic added). Use of this body of 'practice wisdoms' (163) by social workers was justified by '... the fact that they and their colleagues had used them in numerous and varied situations over a period of time and as far as they were concerned these operations had facilitated, to a satisfactory degree, the interaction with those they are attempting to assist' (164).

Carew acknowledges any conclusions drawn from his study have to be viewed against the fact that his sample is small, based upon interviews with twenty social workers (eighteen of whom were employed in social services departments) and with a number of their clients (165). His general conclusion is that the social workers in his study '... were not using theoretical knowledge as a basis for their activities to any significant extent' (166) (italic added). Carew cites data from other studies in support of his contention that his own findings are broadly representative of social work practice in general. He refers (167) to data in a number of studies including Gordon (168) and to an earlier study by Karpf (169) who reported 'There is little evidence that the caseworker used any other than the common sense concepts and judgements relating to the attitudes, emotional states, personality and personality traits of the client ... and a host of other types of

162 Ibid
163 Ibid p.362
164 Ibid
165 Ibid p.352
166 Ibid p.362
167 Ibid
important problems and situations" (170). Other studies relevant to Carew's conclusion indicate social workers in their practice rarely draw in any developed, explicit way upon social science theory; conclusions of this kind are reported in, for example, Stevenson (171) Kadushin (172) and Bartlett (173). Carew's conclusions regarding what 'is' are set alongside his view of what 'ought' to be the primary knowledge-base for social work practice. He asks '... is it necessarily a negative if social workers base their activities on practice wisdom rather than on theory?' (174). He suggests those advocating the use of theoretical social scientific knowledge in social work tend to subscribe to a 'trait' model of professions in which theory and 'theoretical knowledge' is advocated as a way of achieving 'professional status' (175). Carew's view is that social work should not try to emulate professions such as medicine, and use of formal theory is not a suitable modus operandi for social work (176).

Exhortations to social workers that they should employ formal social science knowledge in their practice could 'negatively

170 Karpt, M., (1931) op.cit p.350, quoted in Carew, R., (1979) op.cit p.349
174 Carew, R., (1979) op.cit p.362
175 Ibid
176 Ibid
affect'. (177) The future development of social work: in Carew's perspective of social work '... theoretical knowledge is not a necessary trait for its survival whereas, on the other hand, practice wisdom is' (178) (italics added). Advocacy of the use of formal theoretical knowledge also serves to '... undermine the knowledge that social workers already appear to possess, their wealth of experience ...' (179). For these reasons, theoreticians should 'get into the field to see what is happening ...' (180) and Carew concludes 'There is something very questionable about the whole exercise of theory building in social work. It seems to be an exclusively academic exercise' (181). Viewed in broad historical perspective Carew's study is a detailed empirical exemplar of perennial as well as contemporary expressions of tension between theory-and-practice in social work. These tensions described in the first section of chapter three (182) were shown to have been amplified through the early efforts of the Charity Organisation Society to construct social work as a formal knowledge-based profession founded upon a 'bedrock' of social scientific knowledge. At another level, Carew's study is significant by virtue of specific empirical and methodological questions that arise from it: those examined below centre upon theoretical, methodological and empirical issues arising from Carew's contention that social workers do not employ formal social science knowledge to any significant extent.

177 Ibid
178 Ibid
179 Ibid
180 Ibid p.363
181 Ibid
182 See Chapter 3, pp.226-240
In Carew's study social workers are described as employing 'practice-wisdoms' as codes of practice developed primarily through practical occupational experience. As already indicated, when Carew reported back to the participants that it was possible for him to sometimes elucidate a connection between formal theory and practice, it frequently happened that this interpretation - as in the 'role-conflict' example referred to earlier - was rejected by the participants. In the case of psychology, researcher prompting would sometimes produce a participant 'recognition' of the use-of-theory but even where this occurred participants invariably qualified their response by a reference to personal experiences (including life-experience outside social work) that suggested to them the formal theory might be valid (183). In describing the use of psychology, Carew notes responses indicating use of theory were untypical and

"When these responses were discussed, it was found that the participants tended first to claim that the source of this knowledge was their own experience, and then, as with the discussion of social work knowledge, to agree, after further probing, that their responses could have been based on what they had read or learned during training. Even when a participant agreed that a response had been based on theoretical knowledge, he would invariably qualify this reference through his own experience ..." (184) (italics added).

Carew's data-interpretations and his conclusions referred to earlier may be contrasted with those of Hardiker (185) who suggests that 'asking' social workers whether they employ formal theory is bound to produce the kind of response obtained by Carew. Formal theoretical knowledge is internalised and through habitualised usage is tacitly and

183 Carew, R., (1979) *op.cit.* pp.359-360
184 Ibid p.359
unbeknowningly 'applied' by practitioners in their work. Hardiker writes "... if we ask social workers what theories they use, most will look askance and probably reply, 'none.' (186). One reason why '... it is usually inappropriate to ask social workers directly what theories they use in their practice is that knowledge becomes internalised with experience, so that what seems explicit theory to an observer may be implicit to the practitioner." (187). Hardiker comments some social workers may never have been exposed to or internalised formal theory and so rely on 'hunch ... and commonsense,' (188); she also cautions that social work knowledge is never 'reducible' (189) to social science knowledge and is a complex amalgam of 'situated' cognitions adjusted to the immediacy of the context, and of (usually tacit) social science knowledge. Nevertheless, Hardiker indicates that (tacit) practitioner use of social science theory is a substantial part of the social workers' cognitive style in making assessments of clients' situations, and this knowledge is drawn from a variety of social science paradigms rather than from a single paradigm (190). Social workers' internalised usage of theory is tacit and social workers are, in effect, using social science theory 'by another name': for example, in Hardiker's methodological procedure "...we have to 'read into' a statement that an offender's behaviour was 'acting out', the psychodynamic assumptions underlying such an observation" (191) (italic added). Another illustration of this method of data-interpretation is Curnock and Hardiker's reference to a case in which a probation officer

186 Ibid p.101
187 Ibid p.104
188 Ibid p.105
189 Ibid p.104
190 Ibid p.105
191 Ibid
192 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op.cit.
assessed the situation of a client. Curnock and Hardiker observe that
the probation officer

'... used words such as insecurity, ashamed, rejection, inadequate and symptom; he linked ... (the client's) ... unemployment with his insecurity and thought that his offences were connected with his loss of masculine pride. This seems to suggest that the probation officer was drawing on some kind of psycho-dynamic framework to help him to make sense of the case' (193).

So far as practitioner use of formal social science theory is concerned, it is evident Carew and Hardiker incline towards different interpretive procedures, and arrive at different conclusions regarding the question of whether social workers do employ formal social science knowledge and the question of whether they should do so. Carew in some respects is closer than Hardiker to Glaser and Strauss's (194) edict that explanatory theory should emerge from participants own data and be familiar to and understandable by them. In Glaser and Strauss, theory that is 'grounded' is of the kind that '... laymen involved in the area to which the theory applies will usually be able to understand it' (195). This is not to say the actors will wholly endorse every aspect of the researcher's account but that its general phenomenological contents will be familiar, even 'mundane' to them. When Carew, in asking whether social science theory was being employed, put an alternative account to the actors (ie. an account that was not part of the phenomenology of the participants) his account was in some instances rejected as 'alien', in others endorsed but heavily re-interpreted and qualified by the participants in ways that brought it closer into line with their constructions of the reality of

193 Ibid p.6
195 Ibid p.4
their situation. Carew concluded the actors accounts were closest to 'the way things really are'. In contrast, Hardiker's interpretive procedure as described earlier is based on an interpretation that social workers do employ social science theories but are not subjectively aware of doing so. Her references to tacit, internalised knowledge imply a theoretical position of the kind embodied in Holzer's (196) concept of 'the natural attitude', Sapir's (197) 'language habits', and Whorf's (198) perspective on 'speech communities'. In particular, the notion that knowledge may become tacit and habitualised is developed in Schutzian phenomenology (199) and social constructionist sociology in the form outlined by Berger and Luckmann (200). To predict theoretically that knowledge may become institutionalised and through the process of habitualisation become a tacit component in 'the phenomenology of everyday life' is not to say this process occurs in every instance: whether it occurs in particular social situations, and if so, in respect of which phenomenal properties of the situation, is an empirical variable that (unless structuralist macro-reductive interpretations are employed) relies upon demonstration at the empirical level. There may be a priori grounds for inferring an empirical balance of probability in favour of Hardiker's and not Carew's data-interpretations. In the six-cell classificatory framework outlined earlier no empirical assumptions were made concerning social workers 'actual uses of theory'. However it was

196 Holzer, B., Reality Construction In Society New York, Schenkman, 1968 p.1
197 Sapir, E., (1966) op.cit
198 Whorf, B., (1956) op.cit
suggested a balance of probability existed that professionally qualified social workers who had been exposed during their training to social science theory and to formal 'theories-of-practice' would be likely to have been influenced in some way by this exposure to formal paradigmatic knowledge: though the theoretical framework was not intended (nor equipped) to specify the precise empirical contents of lateral interactions between the cells in the 'formal' and 'informal' dimensions, it was postulated this interaction in one form or another was empirically probable. The framework, as just noted, is predicated on an interactive concept of interrelation between the formal-informal dimensions, and in the ways described earlier is also extended via Rootes's typology to include a concept of theory-practice in which 'situational' factors mediate and act upon cognitive styles and upon practices. These largely theoretical constructions of the general structure and forms of social work knowledge and of 'theory-practice', together with a theoretical prediction that 'habitualisation' may in some social situations be a relevant empirical variable, are a priori grounds for predicting that formal theory used in explicit or tacit ways is an empirically predictable feature of social work practice. This prediction appears to gain a measure of empirical support in the data, and interpretations, contained in Hardiker's writing. In his study Carew appears to have been searching for a 'direct connection' between formal social science theory and practice. It is perhaps not surprising that he did not find such a connection. Hardiker, earlier, suggested social work knowledge is not 'reducible' to social science knowledge: this is noted in Curnock and Hardiker's observation that '... there is rarely a direct link between theoretical concepts and their practical

201 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op.cit.
application, because social work has to organize and select its knowledge in the light of its tasks and the people it works with ...

(202) ... Curnock and Hardiker's perspective of social work knowledge appears to be similar to the theoretical construction of this knowledge in the classificatory framework described earlier: their work also, as already indicated, lends a measure of empirical support to at least one element in the framework i.e. the postulate of lateral interaction between the cells in the formal and informal dimensions.

Hardiker's conceptualisation of social work knowledge as a complex amalgam of different 'types' of knowledge, and her empirical data-interpretations and the methods by which these are derived, appear to indicate social workers may typically draw upon social science knowledge to a greater extent than suggested by Carew. Whether, however, social workers draw (tacitly or explicitly) upon social science knowledge to the extent suggested by Hardiker is an empirical question that remains largely unresolved. Kahn (203) suggests it is not that social workers use 'non-theoretical' occupational nomenclature in a way that disguises a 'real-but-tacit' underlaying use of social science theory: in Kahn the opposite case is said to apply, and Kahn's interpretation is that social workers use technical terms to describe assessments arrived at through the use of common sense or based on practical experience (204). Other studies, some of which were referred to earlier, indicate social workers do not typically make use

202 Ibid p.7
204 Kahn, A.J., (1954) op.cit referred to in Carew, R., (1979) op.cit p.350
of social science theory in their practice: unless a tacit 'use-of-
theory' is inferred by the researcher there is very little other
tacit employment of social science may occur in some social work settings but whether
this is true for all settings including those in other studies that
report 'no use of theory' is a hypothesis that has not been empirically
demonstrated. There is, too, a wider dimension of 'theory-practice'
that is relevant to these issues: this concerns the professionalisation
process. In the sociology of professions a number of writers suggest exaggeration of task complexity and of the degree of
theoretical complexity in the knowledge-base of professions, may be one
element in the social construction of professional knowledge. This hypothesis predicts the deliberate creation of cognitive indeterminacy
and theoretical complexity as a method of defence against external (eg bureaucractic) controls; whether the issues raised by this hypothesis are relevant to an understanding of contemporary social work and
imputed 'uses of theoretical knowledge' by practitioners is one of the
issues examined in chapter five in organisational terms and against the
background of the legitimisation crisis of the modern welfare state.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES

This section of the chapter is not primarily concerned with the contents and structure of social work knowledge; the emphasis in what
follows is on (epistemological) theories of the ways in which 'valid'

205 In particular, Jamous, H., and Peloille, B., 'Changes In The
French University - Hospital System' in Jackson, J., (ed)
Professions and Professionalization Cambridge University Press
1970, pp.111-152
knowledge is acquired. Theories of epistemology are explored in three areas. First, review of a paper by Merton (206) in the sociology of knowledge, with assessment of its implications for the sociology of social work knowledge. Second, examination of sociological epistemologies of 'emancipation' that have a bearing upon social work emancipatory objectives. Thirdly, review of the relation of epistemology to the social work concept of emancipation - through dialogue; this is examined with reference to radical humanist social work, a social work paradigm which highlights the relation of epistemology to emancipation and practice more poignantly than most others.

MERTON'S 'THREE EPISTEMOLOGIES' AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Merton (207) in his paper Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter In The Sociology of Knowledge identifies three major epistemologies. He refers to these as the 'Insiderist' doctrine; the 'Outsiderist' doctrine; and the 'Verstehen' or 'Empathetic Understanding' epistemological tradition. Below, each of these are examined in turn. In the description and analysis below these epistemologies are examined, following Merton, in terms of their 'strong', distinctive 'ideal-typical' characteristics. This is in order to clearly elucidate their underlying epistemological assumptions. In the real world of policy and practice it is not suggested the form of these epistemologies is unmediated by a variety of contextual factors;

207 Ibid
rather, policies and practices may be said to correspond to a greater or lesser degree towards one or another of these ideal-typical epistemological positions.

THE INSIDERIST DOCTRINE

Merton suggests the strong, distinctive version of this doctrine rests upon the principle that only actual members of an 'in-group' (e.g., a gender category, social class, religious or ethnic collectivity) can validly know their own reality. This is not, says Merton, a doctrine of individual solipsism (the belief that self-experience is the only valid form of knowing) but rather, a doctrine of group-solipsism.

"In this form of solipsism, each group must in the end have a monopoly of knowledge about itself... The Insiderist doctrine can be put in the vernacular... you have to be one to understand one... that one has monopolistic or privileged access to knowledge, or is wholly excluded from it, by virtue of one's group membership or social position" (208) (italics added)

It is not that some Outsiders might be stupid or incompetent but that all Outsiders are in principle debarred from 'knowing' in the way that Insiders know: this is because 'According to the doctrine of the Insider, the Outsider, no matter how careful and talented, is excluded in principle from gaining access to the social and cultural truth' (209). Outsiders have not been experientially immersed in the group and... therefore cannot have the direct, intuitive, sensitivity that alone makes empathetic understanding possible' (210). For this reason the Outsider '... cannot understand the fine-grained meanings of behaviour.

208 Ibid pp.14-15
209 Ibid p.15
210 Ibid
feelings, and values.\(^{211}\) The Insiderist doctrine, as just described, rests on a view that social role, group membership, and structural location creates a cognitive monopoly of group self-understanding from which all Outsiders are excluded. If it is the case that it is necessary to 'be one to understand one' it follows that only members of an occupational group or social class can empathetically 'understand' the social situation of the occupational group or class or social collectivity. This suggests, for example, that only women can understand women; only men can understand men, and this epistemology applies to social groupings ad infinitum. A strict application of the doctrine suggests, for instance, that unless one has as a woman directly experienced in everyday life the personal and social manifestations of a sexist culture one cannot understand in any real sense what it actually 'means' to be a sexually oppressed woman in a male-dominated society.\(^{212}\) Morgan suggests "it might be argued just as it is impossible for a white person to write about the 'black experience' so too is it impossible for a man to write about the experience of being a woman."\(^{213}\) The insiderist epistemology, if held to be a universally 'true' doctrine, has to apply equally to all in-groups. In this respect the doctrine poses major problems for social workers (and for social scientists). A vital ingredient of social work counselling is being able to meaningfully and empathetically 'understand' other people (clients) and their situation. This would require, according to the ideal-typical version of the Insiderist doctrine, that only women social workers should engage in social work with women clients; and there should be working-class

\(^{211}\) Ibid pp. 15-16


\(^{213}\) Ibid
social workers for working class clients, black social workers for black clients, gay social workers for gay clients ... and elderly social workers for elderly clients. Without this homogamous matching of insider-to-insider it is not possible, in the terms of the insiderist doctrine, to achieve an empathetic symbiosis and valid interpretive insight (cognitive access) into the meaning of the 'life-world' of others. For inner-city social workers this means basic interpretive-empathetic understanding, still less theoretical 'analysis', of the racist situations facing black people cannot be undertaken by white social workers: this can only be undertaken by black people themselves as black citizens or as black citizens who have become social workers. In the insiderist doctrine it is the professional 'stranger' who possesses false-consciousness, not the client or citizen group. In this perspective only oppressed groups themselves can truly 'know' their own experience and their own oppression and only they can develop a true analysis of their oppression, on the basis of direct social experiencing 'from the inside'.

THE OUTSIDERIST DOCTRINE

This epistemology is the converse of the insiderist doctrine in that the Outsiderist doctrine suggests 'One must not be one to understand one'. In the case of occupations or professions, for instance, it might be argued non-professional outsiders who have not been 'processed' through a cognitive filter of professional socialisation and acquired professional interests and attitudes can more accurately perceive 'what is actually happening' in a profession than can the socialised ('insider') professionals themselves. Lawyers, to take one example, are from this perspective hardly the definitive source of a
critical, objective, or 'independent' analysis of the legal profession, its practices (214), its values, or its social and political functions within the capitalist state (215). Merton suggests those who endorse the Outsiderist epistemology point to cognitive closure of consciousness arising from socialisation processes and immersion in the culturally-defined roles of (say) women, the elderly, or working-class clients. In this sense 'the working class' as an in-group may be said to possess 'false consciousness'. Tacit, unreflective internalisations of values, discourses, and culturally-prescribed role-practices are acquired and sustained precisely through group-membership, ongoing participatory involvement, and direct 'insider' experience: as Merton puts it 'Dominated by the customs of our group, we maintain received opinions; distort our perceptions to have them accord with these opinions' (216). In the Outsiderist doctrine, then, it is the culturally socialised citizen or client-group who are defined as possessing false consciousness. This suggests the 'outside' stranger, the non-indigenous, unacculturated social analyst or unsocialised professional outsider has a cognitive monopoly. With regard to problems experienced by the citizen or client group, it is not the socialised 'inside' client group but the non-socialised Outsider who has objectivity and 'undistorted' cognitive insight and who therefore is most validly placed in the role of analyst, interpreter, therapist, adviser, or advocate. This rests on the view that professional outsiders; in appraising the personal and cultural situation of a group

216 Merton, R.K., (1973) op.cit p.30
of insiders, possess none of the cognitive closure of consciousness which for insiders is a product of direct ongoing social experience and cultural indoctrination within the social reality and role repertoire culturally assigned to them. In its strict application, the Outsiderist epistemology implies a homogamous welfare matching of insider-to-insider, as in, for example, the 'new careerist' movement (217) is not required, and indeed is something to be avoided. A logical application of Outsiderist epistemology in 'pure' form indicates 'liberation' in the sense of new forms of awareness can only come from 'the outside'. Working-class clients cannot 'self-conscientise' nor can they have their consciousness 'raised' by other members of the working-class who by virtue of their common group-membership will also have internalised the distorted self-understandings produced through the mechanisms of socialisation and cultural indoctrination. In the sense just described the doctrine carries an implication that 'self-help' movements based on mutual insider-to-insider discourse as in women's consciousness-raising groups, are redundant and unproductive if the objective is the development of new forms of personal and social awareness.

THE VERSTEHEN OR 'EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING' TRADITION

This is Merton's preferred epistemology, resting on the rubric not that 'one must be one ...' nor 'one must not be one ...' but rather, 'one need not be one to understand one'. This doctrine derived from Weber's concept of verstehen ('understanding') (218) as the primary method of


218 A description of this concept is in Hamilton, P., Knowledge And Social Structure: An Introduction To The Classical Argument In The Sociology Of Knowledge London, Routledge, 1974, p.91
comprehending actors meanings, requires little description here in the light of the earlier description of the insiderist and outsiderist doctrines. The notion of capacity to exercise 'verstehen' (interpretive or 'empathetic' understanding) implies it is not a person's role situation or structural location as insider or outsider that determines the quality and accuracy of perception. In this epistemology valid knowledge and understanding, whatever else it depends upon, does not depend upon structural role-location: neither the self-experiencing insider group nor the outside 'stranger' can claim an automatic role-given cognitive monopoly of capacity to analyse the social reality of an 'insider group'. In terms of welfare relationships, the epistemological tradition of 'empathy' offers certain advantages. Unlike the Outsiderist doctrine it does not cast the client or client-group in the role of 'cultural dupes' who have no capacity or potentiality for developing self-understanding: on the one hand the client is no longer seen as the hopeless victim of false-consciousness, and on the other, the outside therapist is not cast in the role of having cognitive omniscience. Also, once the social solipsism of the Insiderist doctrine is abandoned the 'outside' therapist instead of being rejected on epistemological grounds is deemed to have an interpretive role to play, and to have a capacity for empathetically understanding the situation of the client or citizen group: this means no necessity arises for welfare relationships to be based upon a homogamous matching of insider-to-insider. This epistemology is widely written about in social work and psychotherapy. Traux and Carkhuff (219) in describing the concept of empathy state

... we find ourselves as therapists 'living' with the patient much as we do with the central figure in a novel ... Just as with the character in a novel, we come to know ... (the patients') ... own internal frame of reference ... we see events ... as ... (the patient) ... experiences them ...' (220)

Irvine (221) outlines the central role of empathy in casework relationships (222) and also suggests 'empathy' is a significant factor in understanding between members of different professions, rather than only between professional and client (223). In describing relationships with clients, Carkhuff (224) gives primacy to the concept above any other considerations: he suggests 'Empathy is the key ingredient of helping. Its explicit communication, particularly during the early phases of helping, is critical. Without an empathetic understanding of the helper's world ... there is no basis for helping' (225) (italics added). In marxist social work Leonard (226) argues collective consciousness-raising is a way of '... connecting individual change to collective experience' (227). It is clear Leonard believes an element of structurally-produced client or citizen group false-consciousness may exist: he comments 'circumstances ... social relations ... ultimately determine consciousness' (228). However Leonard also suggests false-consciousness can be 'breached', and through collective consciousness-raising new, emancipatory forms of

220 Ibid p.42
221 Irvine, E., Social Work And Human Problems: Casework, Consultation, And Other Topics Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1979
222 Ibid pp.198-199
223 Ibid p.241
225 Ibid p.173
226 Leonard, P., (1984) op.cit
227 Ibid p.207
228 Ibid
awareness may develop. Leonard writes 'If we are not be bound forever within ideology ... of the social relations of capitalism, then we must gain knowledge of these social relations and how they are constituted in our personalities.'(229). Leonard does not suggest the 'outside' professional counsellor has cognitive monopoly as a 'de-mythologizer' in unravelling the impact of capitalism upon clients' personalities. Nor does he impute a group-solipsistic 'insiderist' epistemology in which citizens and clients have cognitive omniscience: if this were the case there would be no necessity for engaging in consciousness-raising. The role of the social worker in consciousness-raising activities is mentioned by Leonard, but not clearly defined: he states social workers may '... assist in the development ... of increased understanding ...'(230) (italic added). There is here a significant epistemological problem of emancipation-through-dialogue. This will be returned to later. Briefly stated, the problem is that if the client despite a long process of mutual dialogue ultimately rejects the (marxist or traditional) social worker's interpretation of the client's situation and relation to society, it is not clear which of Merton's 'three epistemologies' the social worker should draw upon in deciding how to respond to this disagreement.

The material in the preceding pages indicates epistemological analysis in the sense intended here focuses less upon the contents of social work knowledge than upon the study of actors' own epistemological theories of how and under what conditions valid knowledge and understanding is acquired. Some studies of client perspectives reveal the existence of particular epistemological assumptions. For instance, some clients look for 'maturity' and 'life-

229 Ibid
230 Ibid p.215
experience' in their social workers: a number of studies indicate clients believe social workers who have similar life experiences to themselves, or who belong to the same gender, class, or other social category to themselves, are better equipped to 'understand' the client's situation. Rees and Wallace (231) in their review of client studies refer to Worby's (232) data which suggest adolescents seeking counselling prefer the counsellor be of the same sex as themselves. Age and life-experience may be another factor in clients' perspectives of social workers' ability to understand clients' situations, as in the client statement 'He was just a young lad. He wasn't old enough to understand my problem properly' (233). A combination of age, 'family' and child-rearing experience are relevant factors in some client perspectives, reflected in the statement '... well for someone like me who's older and got children, if they did have someone about my age group with children they might understand better' (234).

Issues of epistemology are also visible in recent debates of trans-racial fostering. An instance of this in the mid-1980's is the sharp division of opinion expressed on this issue by two opposed groups of social workers employed in a number of London boroughs. The Association Of Black Social Workers And Allied Professions (ABSWAP)

argues black children requiring foster or adoptive parents should in all circumstances be placed only with black families. This view is opposed by the 'Children First' group of social workers, who argue pragmatically that until such time as sufficient numbers of black foster or adoptive families become available it is better for black children to be placed with white families if the only alternative is residential care.

'Ideally it is better to place a black child with a black family, but we believe most strongly that if the alternative is between a white family and residential care, then a family life is almost always better' (235)

The response of ABSWAP against this pragmatism is that it can be a 'cop out' (236) which diminishes efforts by social services departments to develop anti-racist attitudes and strategies that might encourage more black families to become involved with social services departments as prospective adoptive or foster parents (237). The standpoint taken by ABSWAP rests upon what Merton, earlier, described as the 'insiderist' epistemology; in the perspective of ABSWAP it is argued '... no matter how sympathetic white parents are, many will never be able to prepare a black child to cope with racism, because they themselves have not experienced or understood racism' (238) (italic added). As noted earlier, the 'Children First' movement also subscribe to this epistemology as an 'ideal', though argue it should not be fully implemented in the short-term for resource reasons and in the best interests of black children who should be prevented from entering residential care if 'family life' is available as an alternative.

235 Gaffaney, P., "Trans-Racial Adoption is 'Professional Madness'" Community Care 1 January 1987, p.3
236 Editorial Community Care 1 January 1987, p.7
237 Ibid
238 Ibid
In this illustration, issues of epistemology are intertwined with values, policy, practice, and resource factors. Though theoretical analysis alone is unlikely to resolve the complex problems of trans-racial fostering and adoption it can be argued greater clarity about the underlaying epistemological assumptions may contribute to greater understanding of the issues involved. A problem in the 'pragmatist' position, noted earlier, is that continued preoccupation with putting 'children first' (in the way that this is defined by the Children First movement) may detract attention from analysis of why insufficient numbers of black families put themselves forward to social services departments as prospective foster or adoptive parents. However it can be argued those who advocate the standpoint taken by ABSVAP

'... also have a problem. Trans-racial fostering doesn't just mean black and white. Children in care come from an immense variety of backgrounds. It's surely not good enough just to separate them into two groups and say one has a shared experience of racism and the other hasn't. There are many different traditions, experiences and cross-currents. Where do you stop trying to find ever more precise matches between children and foster parents? Isn't it unlikely that 'perfect' placements in this sense will ever be possible for everyone?' (239)

The above statement invokes theoretical and epistemological issues made explicit in Merton's reference to

'... the crucial fact of social structure that individuals have not a single status but a status set: a complement of variously interrelated statuses which interact to affect both their behaviour and perspectives' (240)

and

'The array of status sets in a population means that individuals share some statuses and not others: or, to put this in context, that they typically confront one another simultaneously as Insiders and Outsiders' (241) (italics added)

Merton in effect is saying people are not only black or white; they are simultaneously other things as well, like men or women, old or young,

239 Ibid
240 Merton, R.K., (1973) op.cit p.22
241 Ibid
rich or poor. In Northern Ireland to speak of a working-class population as a generic group of insiders who 'understand' each other because they are insiders in social class terms, is to ignore the fact that some members of the working-class population are Catholics and others are Protestants. On the religious dimension some working-class Catholics are perceived as being 'Outsiders' by some working-class Protestants, and vice-versa. The notion that multiple affiliation is a factor of social structure, is a long-standing one in sociology. Coser (242) and Dahrendorf(243), for example, indicated cross-cutting group memberships and immersion in multiple role-networks points to the empirical existence of cross-cutting conflicts where the same individuals or groups who are 'allies' on one occasion of institutional conflict (e.g. antagonisms between social classes) are transformed into 'the enemy' on another occasion of institutional conflict (e.g. antagonisms between opposed religious groupings). Theoretical reductionist attempts (as in marxism) to explain these conflicts as a disguised expression of 'objective' structurally-determined class 'interests' are problematic, for the reasons developed in chapter two (244). The empirical existence of multiple group memberships points to a paradox rooted in the Insiderist epistemology. An assumption that people are uni-dimensional in the sense of having a single 'key status' leads to the paradox that 'Some Insiders Are Excluded From Understanding Other Insiders'(245). In the illustration above, working-class Catholics in Northern Ireland are -

243 Dahrendorf, R., Class And Class Conflict In Industrial Society London, Routledge, 1959
244 See Chapter 2, pp.140-154
245 Merton, R.K., (1973) op.cit p.22
epistemologically speaking - precluded from any 'understanding' of working-class Protestants, and vice-versa. Yet all those in the example are said to share common membership as 'insiders' in the social class dimension; according to the Insiderist doctrine all those (and only those) within this (class) dimension are supposed to be able to empathetically 'understand' each other. This epistemological paradox arises when the Insiderist doctrine is said to be a universally true doctrine that applies to all social groups and collectivities. Of illustrative relevance to the paradox of insider-epistemology is Morgan's (246) observation that the Women's Liberation movement was the first social movement to base the core of its politics on personal experience (247). The existence of multiple membership categories creates the paradox which Merton suggests faces supporters of the women's movement who regularly '... find themselves contending with the division of blacks and whites within their ranks' (248). In Merton's view, the problem of how to juxtapose (or superimpose) social categories like men/women and black/white explains why '... social movements of every variety that strive for unity ... press for total commitments in which all other loyalties are to be subordinated ... to the dominant one' (249). In terms of Merton's analysis, insiderist epistemology construes a situation in which (say) men members of the Black movement who invoke Insiderist doctrine (be black to know black) are in an epistemological sense logically precluded from gaining any valid or 'real' understanding of the personal and cultural situation of their black women members (because be a woman to know women): here the

247 Ibid p.xvii
248 Merton, R.K., (1973) op.cit p.23
249 Ibid
conflation of black men and black women into a single generic category 'black persons' creates its own immediate paradox of understanding in which one black (but male) insider is epistemologically excluded from the possibility of gaining empathetic understanding of another black (but female) insider. The paradox of insiderist epistemology in the example just given becomes more complex when it is extended to include various combinations of other group or collectivity memberships along the lines, for example, of age; sexual orientation; social class; or separate cultural or religious identifications within ethnic or race social categories. This is why in the debate of child fostering and adoption policies referred to earlier, 'perfect placements' predicated upon an insiderist doctrine requiring a homogamous matching of insider-to-insider are ultimately an unachievable policy objective. As Merton put it, people 'face' one another simultaneously as Insiders and Outsiders in the different dimensions of their social being.

Epistemology has a particular relevance to social work in another sense, which was briefly referred to earlier. This concerns the social work project of 'emancipation'. This is examined below, where the objective of seeking to assist in the objective of emancipating or in some sense 'liberating' others is discussed, first, in sociological terms and then with reference to radical social work. The objective of helping other people to achieve a less oppressive state of social existence is hardly specific to modern social science or to contemporary social work, a point implicit in Miller's (250) comment that

'Wilberforce was not a slave; John Stuart Mill was not a woman; John Bright was not denied the franchise; Gladstone was not an Irishman' (251)

None of the above, however, relied principally upon the method of 'sharing' knowledge in personal relationships with clients; it is in these relationships that some of the epistemological issues examined earlier are directly confronted by social workers and those they are attempting to help.

**SOCIOLOGY AND EMANCIPATION**

Some versions of sociology embody emancipatory objectives in a form that have an affinity to those examined later in social work terms. These centre upon concepts of critical awareness and the development of new ways of understanding 'self' in social context. Berger\(^{252}\) suggests sociology has a role in unmasking vested interests and legitimations enshrined in cultural meaning-systems. Sociology according to Berger is able to

'... provide a very simple and therefore all the more useful insight ... (for individuals) ... trying to find their way through the jungle of competing world views. That is the insight that every one of these world views is socially grounded. To put this a little differently, every Weltanschauung is a conspiracy. The conspirators are those who construct a social situation in which the particular world view is taken for granted' \(^{(253)}\)

In Berger's perspective, sociology can not make moral decisions or 'dictate' courses of action, though it can enhance critical awareness and sociology '... by no means solves the problem of truth. But it makes us a little less likely to be trapped by every missionary band we encounter on the way' \(^{(254)}\). Rex\(^{255}\) argues sociology '... should be available to the great mass of people in order that they should be able

253 *Ibid* p.78
254 *Ibid* p.80
to use it to liberate themselves from the mystification of social reality which is continuously provided for them by those in society who exercise power and influence' (256). This is not a case of seeking to replace one ideology with another (257) and sociology should '... not take the point of view of any group as valid in its own right' (258) (italics added). In this perspective the proper role of sociology is that '... it opens up the possibility of true moral judgement which is not itself a sociological matter' (259). It is clear that for Rex, as for Berger, sociology may enhance critical awareness but can not of itself make decisions 'for' others. In the major sociological theories examined in chapter two Giddens (260) observes duality-theory has a liberating potential because 'The dissolution of reification is evidently tied to the possibility of the (cognitive) realization by actors that structures are their own products and to the (practical) recovery of their control over them' (261). A broadly similar conception is developed in Berger and Luckmann's concepts of de-reification (262) and de-objectivation (263). In contemporary middle-range sociology Betts (264) notes social reform consists of 'pushing

256 Ibid p.ix
257 Ibid pp.8-9
258 Ibid p.9
259 Ibid
261 Ibid p.125
263 Ibid p.144
back, (265) unacknowledged conditions of action in order to 'draw a wider scope of social life into a widening circle of discursive understanding and human agency' (266). Harre (267) and Hindess (268) indicate attempts to secure social change should be directed at collective social actors ('supra-individuals') who have causal powers in structuring the social world; in their analysis, to direct emancipatory strategies against rhetorical, taxonomic classifications ('society', 'capitalism', 'classes', or the 'social totality') is fundamentally misconceived (269). Callon and Latour (270) in their EDF/Renault study and Callon (271) in the St. Brieuc study indicate the power of collective social actors is not structurally 'given'; power is a contingent effect of the successful 'consignment' of materials, but the empirical outcomes of control strategies are variable and always potentially open to 'reversibility' (272) by individual and collective actors. It is evident that sociological perspectives of

265 Ibid p.49
266 Ibid
269 Ibid pp.124-125
social reform and individual or group emancipation are theoretically diverse; also, in some of these perspectives 'reformist' objectives are not specified to any significant degree, though implications for social reform are in most cases extractable from them.

Habermas's sociological writings are probably closer than most other versions of sociology to the social work theories examined later. In Habermas, critical reflection and communicative competences are 'negotiated' states of social awareness. 'Pure' intersubjectivity and 'mutuality of understanding' in dialogue-for-liberation rest upon equality and symmetry in dialogical relationships.

'Pure intersubjectivity is determined by a symmetrical relation ... dialogue ... demands ... that no side be privileged ... pure intersubjectivity exists only when there is complete symmetry in the distribution of assertion and disputation, revelation and hiding, prescription and following, among partners of communication' (274)

An instance of distorted communication (275) is where participants believe they 'understand' each other and have reached a negotiated consensus, but in reality they have not. Distorted communication arises when the participants have unacknowledged interests, and when they have hung on to their previous modes of thinking which constitute a barrier to effective communication. An example of failure in 'communicative competence' (276) is where some participants, having previously internalised a cultural mentality founded upon technical-instrumental rationality, continue to retain this mentality in

274 Ibid p.143
276 See f.n.273
dialogue that is essentially about moral and political values (277). An 'ideal speech-situation' based upon acknowledged interests, mutuality and symmetry, and upon a genuine discursively-achieved consensus, is in reality rarely attained (278) but is a goal worth striving for in order to attempt to achieve 'the emancipatory power of reflection' (279).

Habermas's exemplar of a process for overcoming distorted communication, is psychoanalysis (280). This is not because Habermas is interested in the contents of psychoanalytic theory but because he regards psychoanalysis as a form of discourse which illustrates his model of dialogue i.e a model of human interaction based upon unmasking hidden, unacknowledged determinants of behaviour and based on re-addressing earlier cognitive habits in a process of critical reflection through dialogue. What this process of emancipation through dialogue will 'lead to' is in Habermas, inevitably so given his model of dialogical construction of the social world, left as an open-ended question

'While the theory legitimizes the work of enlightenment ... it can by no means legitimize a fortiori the risky decisions of strategic action. Decisions for the political struggle cannot at the outset be justified theoretically and then carried out organisationally' (281)

EPistemology and Emancipation in Radical Social Work

Some versions of radical social work are not 'personalist' in the Habermasian sense, and rest on a structural, collectivist perspective. An approach of this second kind is evident in Bolger et al. (282) who

277 Habermas, J., Knowledge And Human Interests (trans. Shapiro, J.J.,) London, Heinemann, 1972
278 See f.n's 273, 275
279 Habermas, J., (1972) op.cit p.197
280 See f.n.275
281 Habermas, J., Theory And Practice Heinemann, London, 1974 p.33
write 'If welfare workers succeed in moving towards a socialist welfare work they can only do this by a direct relationship with working class organisations' (283) (italic added). Bolger et al. are primarily interested in organisational and inter-organisational strategies (including alliances with trade unions and with other forms of working-class organisations) and do not provide '... an explicit description of interpersonal relationships between (socialist) social worker and client or client-group' (284). Radicalism of a more personalist, humanist kind is developed in Statham's (285) perspective of welfare; in her perspective progressive welfare practices and relationships can...

"... only be advanced by developing consciousness which is not internal to 'the profession', however radical social work might become, but by breaking down barriers between those inside and those outside social work. This cannot be achieved either by social workers standing in a hierarchical relationship to their clients or by attempting to stand apart, but by entering into the 'horizontal interpersonal relationships of ... (persons) ... who together unveil the world' " (286) (italics added)

and

'... conscientisation can only begin when there is an assumption that the social worker stands among, and not apart from, clients' (287) (italic added)

A recurrent theme in theories of radical conscientisation is that the professional cannot legitimately claim cognitive or interpretive superiority over the client or client-group; in theories of radical practice directed to consciousness-raising the emphasis, as in Habermas, is upon symmetry, cognitive sharing and negotiation, and is not a form of didactic marxist hectoring of unconscientised working -

283 Ibid. p.156
286 Ibid. pp.91-92
287 Ibid. p.94
class clients. This is amplified in the concept **authentic education** described by Freire (288) who states

> 'Authentic education is not carried on by A for B or by A about B, but rather by A with B, mediated by the world - a world which impresses and challenges both parties giving rise to views or opinions about it' (289)

In this model the epistemology defined by Merton as Outsiderism is rejected; the client-group is not defined as fatalistic, unable to break away from a distorted or partial view of the world, nor is the professional worker regarded by any of the parties as having cognitive omnipotence as a de-mythologizer of clients 'false-consciousness'.

Equally, client or citizen-group Insiderist solipsistic doctrine is not part of the conscientisation process: on the one hand the client 'has something to learn', on the other the non-indigenous professional outsider is not axiomatically denied capacity to engage in interpretive ('empathetic') activity. Radical conscientisation rests upon the verstehen or empathetic-understanding epistemology; and is based upon a model of interaction which aims at a negotiated consensus in which neither party is regarded as possessing a priori cognitive supremacy. Views and interpretations are not static or fixed, and neither party didactically 'produces' the view of the other: but neither is each party wholly cognitively self-reliant - in Freire's perspective, authentic education is by A with B. In Fay's (290) account of these processes

> '... explanations which result from such an approach would always be in terms of the felt needs and experienced privations and suffering ... human actions and systems of action are rooted


289 Ibid p.66

in the self-understandings, perceptions, and intentions of the actors involved, so that it is in terms of these — though not these exclusively — that one must understand human actions' (291) (italic added)

Fay's words 'though not these exclusively' are significant. Earlier, the question was posed — what happens if a negotiated consensus cannot be reached? This potential of impasse is an epistemological problem lying at the heart of Habermas's theory and the radical conscientisation objective of emancipation through personal relationships and through dialogue with 'clients'. The epistemology of empathy-verstehen is not only endorsed by those who support the objectives of radical consciousness-raising: the concept of empathy, as noted previously, is central in non-radical social work including counselling in the form developed in Traux and Carkhuff (292), Carkhuff (293) and in Irvine (294).

Whether empathy is a 'supra-content concept' in human welfare, is an epistemological as well as political question. The concept of empathy, on the one hand, appears to be 'empty' unless the moral-political values and perspectives ('professional' or 'radical') of those who employ it are openly declared; and on the other, creates problems for the 'non-didactic' motif (in orthodox professional social work and radical conscientisation) immediately these underlying values are declared. Few recent social work writers have addressed this issue as astutely as Webb (295), who observes radical social work '... however democratic or non-hierarchical, however non-didactic ... cannot be anything other than the teacher having an agenda, a path,

291 Ibid p.96
292 Traux, C.B., and Carkhuff, R.R., (1967) op.cit
293 Carkhuff, R.F., (1969) op.cit
294 Irvine, E., (1979) op.cit
which is the preferred one to follow' (296). Though Webb rejects professional or radical social work 'didacticism' (297) every doctrine of liberation 'whether ... psychoanalysis ... or ... Marxism' (298) necessarily embodies moral-political values and assumptions about the nature of society and of individuals, and the relationship between individual-and-society. Because radical social work '... accepts the material basis of personal troubles, conscientisation inevitably accords ... (a) ... privileged status to certain kinds of causal accounts of those troubles' (299). Webb's explicit recognition of epistemological issues, and of the moral-political grounding that inevitably shapes interaction between social workers and their clients, leads him to an understanding that attainment of the equivalent of Habermas's 'negotiated consensus' is probably even more difficult than Habermas himself allowed for. Webb endeavours to hold onto a position that reflects a commitment to non-didactic, even 'agnostic' (300) dialogue with clients whilst also recognising radical social work 'does have a priori categories with which it explains the human condition ... It is impossible to deny the directionality behind critical consciousness; since it regards consciousness as a human capacity which should be developed it can only do this if it breaks with solipsism' (301)

The issues of epistemology examined here and earlier have been shown to have relevance for social work, in such areas as self-help groups and issues confronted by social workers involved in the black and women's movements; client-perspectives of social workers own life-experiences and group-memberships; trans-racial child adoption and

296 Ibid p.98
297 Ibid p.97
298 Ibid pp.97-98
299 Ibid p.99
300 Ibid p.98
301 Ibid p.99
fostering; and orthodox and radical social work objectives for client
'emancipation' through personal relationships and dialogue. How these
epistemological issues are constructed within social work is also a
topic for sociology of social work knowledge: they are complementary to
the issues of knowledge 'content' and structure examined in the first
part of the chapter. In the final section of the chapter social work
knowledge remains the focus of enquiry, examined from the standpoint of
a topic that has recurred in other contexts in previous chapters; this
is the question of how social work knowledge is disseminated temporally
and spatially across the social work profession. Though considerable
further theoretical and empirical work remains to be done in the topic
areas identified in the previous two sections of the chapter, the topic
of knowledge dissemination is in some respects the least developed area
within contemporary sociology of social work knowledge.

DISSEMINATION OF SOCIAL WORK
KNOWLEDGE

The analyses in the earlier sections of the chapter were concerned with
the structure and forms of social work knowledge, and also
epistemological issues in the production of social work knowledge and
practice. In this third part of the chapter on the dissemination of
social work knowledge it will be demonstrated recent developments in
the sociology of science have a bearing upon this topic. Scientific
knowledge has a socially constructed 'hard' epistemological
foundation when compared with that of 'normative professions' (302) such

302 Halliday, T.C., 'Knowledge Mandates: Collective Influence By
Scientific, Normative, And Syncretic Professions' British Journal
Of Sociology Vol.xxxvi, No.3 (September) 1985, pp.421-447
as social work; comparative analysis of these two contrasting knowledge-bases is in a number of respects an aid to understanding knowledge-dissemination in social work. Also, it will be shown recent theoretical and methodological perspectives developed in sociology of science are relevant to sociological analysis of social work knowledge. The analysis of these issues is divided into three main parts. First, comparative analysis of processes in the 'circulation' of knowledge in the scientific community, and in social work as a normative profession. Second, review of general theoretical factors in the study of knowledge dissemination, in particular the role of transformational concepts. Third, and of particular relevance to the 'oral tradition' noted in the second chapter as a co-existing element alongside social work's written culture, the significance of written and non-written communications in the social work profession is examined with reference to empirical illustrations.

KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION IN SCIENCE AND IN A NORMATIVE PROFESSION

A relatively high level of epistemological and ontological certainty is associated with the 'hard' cognitive foundations of physical science. Nevertheless, Barnes (304) observes 'Transmission of the current paradigm is ... a problem' (305). Barnes rejects notions that scientific knowledge is shaped only by a general, occupational-wide 'logic of evaluation' (306) and because knowledge is partly situationally-shaped
in specific scientific locations\(^{(307)}\) one of the tasks for sociology of science is the study of knowledge in relation to its 'contexts of justification'\(^{(308)}\) within which knowledge claims are formulated, responded to, modified, confirmed, or rejected\(^{(309)}\). In the normal course of events the dominant form of knowledge is transmitted less problematically than in most other academic or professional communities. Though scientific knowledge is partly situationally shaped and social factors affect its production and dissemination, its transmission is regularised\(^{(310)}\) through techniques of professional socialisation\(^{(311)}\) which produce a relatively high degree of cognitive and procedural uniformity\(^{(312)}\). Unlike the knowledge base of normative professions\(^{(313)}\), scientific knowledge and procedure is relatively highly institutionalised and codified for transmission to members of the scientific community: because of this, even 'new' problems and tasks are routinely responded to using validated techniques.

'A chemist might find standard techniques of synthesis, the practical and calculative techniques of quantitative analysis, standard spectroscopic operations and inferences from their results, all very much a matter of routine, even for a large number of compounds he had never encountered before'\(^{(314)}\)\(^{(italic added)}\)

In Kuhnian\(^{(315)}\) terms, an accumulation of 'anomalies' may signify the beginnings of a paradigmatic revolution. But the empirical probability of paradigmatic revolution is low, because

\(^{307}\) Ibid
\(^{308}\) Ibid p.59
\(^{309}\) Ibid
\(^{310}\) Ibid p.64
\(^{311}\) Ibid p.66
\(^{312}\) Ibid
\(^{313}\) Halliday, T.C., (1985) \textit{op.cit}
\(^{314}\) Barnes, B., (1974) \textit{op.cit} p.85
\(^{315}\) Kuhn, T.S., \textit{The Structure Of Scientific Revolutions} University Of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 1970
New knowledge claims are always assessed in ways which rely heavily upon existing, accepted knowledge. And this existing accepted knowledge is not the personal knowledge of the individual, distilled from his or her individual experience. It is the inherited and shared knowledge of the scientific community. Individuals typically acquire this knowledge from teacher or texts, much of it in the course of their training, and they tend to trust it and take its validity for granted. Very few physicists, for example, feel any need to give the laws of heat flow a personal check-over. Indeed, if they were to obtain results at variance with the laws, it would probably be the results that they rejected (316) (italics added).

A number of elements in this description of scientific knowledge contrast sharply with the structure of social work knowledge and its dissemination. In social work, the 'personal' knowledge of the individual practitioner is frequently highly valued if, unlike scientific knowledge, it is 'distilled ... from individual experience' (317). In describing social worker scepticism towards nomothetic generalisations in social science theory or in empirical research data on personal and social problems, Shaw observes

'Adhering strongly to a belief in the uniqueness of the individual ... (social workers)... are reluctant to entertain generalisations. General rules are held to be restrictive, and the objectivity of science is seen as inferior to the warmth and spontaneity of the social workers relationship with his client' (318).

The chemist involved in applying routine, tried-and-tested standard spectroscopic procedures in the analysis of new compounds, is cognitively immersed in an occupational gestalt at variance with Irvine's objection to social science: she writes 'science deals splendidly with all that can be weighed, measured or counted, but this involves excluding ... the intangible, the imponderable ...' (320).

317 Shaw, I., 'Making Use Of Research' in Jones, H., (ed) (1975) op.cit pp.151-166
318 Ibid p.151
320 Ibid, quoted in Shaw, I., (1975) op.cit p.152
These 'imponderables' are associated with debate of whether the knowledge-base of social work does or should consist of social science knowledge (321), cultural commonsense and use of 'life-experience' (322), creative literature in the form of novels, plays, and poetry (323), 'practice wisdoms' gained directly from practical occupational experience (324), or whether practice-theory is a combination of formal and informal theoretical knowledge mediated by the functions and tasks social workers perform in particular organisational settings (325). Additionally, the politics of social work (326) infuses these cognitive indeterminacies: in social work 'theory, concepts and values ... (are) ... mixed with each other' (327) (italic added). Bartlett (328) does not appear to have helped clarify the relation of social science theory to values in stating, not that some accommodation of theory and values is necessary, but that verification of the former should be in terms of the latter

321 Stevenson, O., (1981) op. cit. pp.21-23
324 Carew, R., (1979) op.cit.
325 Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op.cit
327 Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit. p.100
'The profession needs to examine ... theory ... but this theory should be examined and tested within the professions' own value-knowledge frame of reference in a manner that was not previously possible' (329) (italic added)

A significant empirical difference in the transmission (and 'translation') of knowledge within the scientific and social work communities centres upon the role of professional training in knowledge transmission. A factor here is the relatively high level of cognitive indeterminacy in the knowledge-base of social work. Cognitive and value indeterminacy in the wider social work community is reflected in and reproduced by social work education (330). In the scientific community 'a reason why natural scientific knowledge is so readily accepted ... is that teachers, having themselves agreed what in their field is reliable and important, and having constructed a curriculum accordingly, generally take care to invest the curriculum with authority' (331) (italic added). Authority in this context means transmitting well-established forms of knowledge to students. This may be contrasted with the 'process' orientation in social work education, an orientation that appears to have become influential in British social work education (332). An illustration of this approach is in Sargent (333) who in a paper titled 'The Use of Self In Teaching Social Work' describes her role as a social work academic tutor. Sargent's written statement of seminar ground rules to students includes the following statements

'We are all learners ... what I know is not adequate for what you need to know, the environment is continually changing and there is more than one viewpoint ... we should aim to be creative

329 Ibid pp.135-6
330 Hearn, J., (1982) op.cit
331 Barnes, B., (1985) op.cit p.70
332 Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985) op.cit p.145
333 Sargent, J., 'The Use Of Self In Teaching Social Work' in Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985) op.cit pp.103-107
in our thinking, working towards the formation of a few guiding principles ... Planning will be within the broad framework of the syllabus, but anyone can negotiate a change ..." (334) (italics added).

This may be contrasted with Barnes's (335) description of the scientific curriculum

'Typically, the curriculum is embedded in a textbook or books which set out the key components of accepted doctrine as the correct way ... Texts are expressly designed to create conviction: they usually present one interpretation only, play down any problems and uncertainties ... Science students are not on the whole encouraged to treat their literature as philosophy students, for example, treat theirs. Philosophy students are expected to pull arguments to pieces; look for weaknesses, lacunae in reasoning; set off one interpretation against another; one writer against another. There tends to be only a nominal gesture in this direction in scientific training. The main point is to assimilate the material and become competent in its use ...' (336)

The role of professional training and curricula is significant in reproducing the cognitive structures of both the scientific and social work communities. The social construction of (a relatively high level of) ontological and epistemological certainty within the scientific community is reflected in, and in turn reproduced by, the scientific curriculum and its institutionalised mode of transmission in the relationships between teachers, texts, and those taught. In social work the professional curriculum, through its 'negotiability' associated with norms of mutuality and experientialism between teacher and taught in local interpersonal co-productions of knowledge, reflects and also reproduces and engenders the cognitive indeterminacies that characterise the wider profession.

334 Ibid p.105
335 Barnes, B., (1985) op.cit
336 Ibid pp.70-71
A different emphasis than Barnes in contemporary sociology of science is provided in Law (337) and Callon and Law (338) whose work is relevant to the future development of sociology of social work in at least three areas. First, Law employs contemporary empirical middle range theories associated with the 'sociology of translation' as developed by Callon (339) Callon and Latour (340) and Latour.

In this perspective scientific knowledge is not transmitted, but translated by translation-agents and therefore '... the sociology of

Latour, B., 'The Powers Of Association' in Law, J., (ed) (1986) op.cit. pp.264-280. Latour's sociology of translation is critical of a 'diffusion' (or transmission) model of culture based upon an extensive definition of society (p.269) and he substitutes in its place a translation model resting on a performative definition of social processes (p.269). Materials in the form of ideas,policies, practices do not 'travel' in the sense of having a massive initial impetus from a powerful original source. The diffusion of social phenomenon in space and time is viewed by Latour as a series of 'translations' at and between each link in actor-chains ('the translating agents') who may modify, re-shape, or simply 'drop' the material. Latour observes 'the spread in time and space of anything...is in the hands of people...(who)...may act in different ways...letting the token drop, or modifying it, or deflecting it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it' (p.267). Though 'faithful transmissions' (p.267) can occur, these are empirically rare (p.267). The translation model of power and of dissemination of materials is likened by Latour to a rugby match where the first throw of the ball has no more significance than the fortieth or four-hundredth throw of the ball as the game proceeds and 'the token' is passed from actor-to-actor; he writes

'... displacement is not caused by the initial impetus since the token has no impetus whatsoever; rather it is the consequence of the energy given to the token by everyone in the chain who does something with it, as in the case of rugby players and a rugby ball. The initial force of the first in the chain is no more important than that of the second, or the fortieth, or of the four hundredth person. Consequently, it is clear that the energy cannot be hoarded or capitalized: if you want the token to move on you have to find fresh sources of energy all the time; you can never rest on what you did before, no more than rugby players can rest for the whole game after the first player has given the ball its first kick' (Latour pp.267-268).

Power in this model is not a structurally-given or 'fixed' attribute of a few powerful social actors but is, rather, a consequence ('effect') of 'an intense activity of enrolling, convincing, and enlisting' (p.273) in which the outcomes are empirically variable rather than structurally pre-ordained (p.274)
science should treat power as an effect of variegated and differentially successful strategies to enrol others rather than as a cause of that success (342) (italics added). The outcomes of efforts to define scientific knowledge and practices and to propel this definition across scientific sites, are outcomes that are uncertain, unpredictable, and potentially reversible (343). Therefore sociology of science, in Law's middle range perspective, should be addressed to the study of methods used by individual and collective scientific actors to persuade and convince others and to control them through strategies of translation and enrolment which (if successful) limit temporarily or for long periods the field of action and capacity of others to consign and disseminate materials (344). A second feature in Law's sociology of (scientific) knowledge is his conclusion that written dissemination is more effective than oral dissemination in securing cognitive power and 'long-distance' or 'large scale' social control (345). Words, conversations and gestures are important in local translations of other local actors but conversations 'are not ... especially suited for long distance or large scale attempts at social control' (346). Talk is not as 'mobile' or as 'durable' a material as texts, academic papers, research reports, and scientific journals; through use of written media, power may be defined not as a cause but 'as an effect of the creation of a network of mobile, durable ... (materials) ... ' (347). This is not only a case of written material being more spatially mobile and historically durable than non-written material; another

342 Law, J., (1986) op.cit p.5
343 Ibid p.6
344 Ibid pp.6-7
345 Ibid p.33
346 Ibid p.12
347 Ibid p.34
factor is that writing is a medium that enables scientific arguments to be given formal codification and elaborated presentation and schematization\(^{(348)}\) in a more powerfully convincing, persuasive way of presenting arguments than is possible in conversations. This is noted in Law's observation that '
... methods for schematizing on paper are more powerful than their conversational counterparts ...\(^{(349)}\)'. Part of Law's thesis is that enrolling, convincing, enlisting, involves scientist's in making their own links between 'micro' and 'macro'-social dimensions of the scientific community. One aspect of strategies for long-distance social control is to convert what is less mobile and durable into something that is more mobile and durable, and

'It is only by so doing that it is possible to make a link between the large and the small-scale, to collapse the distance, so to speak, between the macro-and the micro, and exert influence upon the social world from a particular place' \(^{(350)}\) (italic added).

Consistent to the perspectives of a sociology of translation Law observes written materials are not invariably or irreversibly effective in translation strategies, only that they are relatively more effective (more 'mobile' and 'durable' and with greater 'schematization' capacity) than oral materials in shaping the cognitive structure of the scientific community in space and time. For one thing, materials, to become influential, have to be sent to contexts where dominance can successfully be exerted on materials that are less mobile and durable \(^{(351)}\). Just as conversations may fail to persuade or inform, so too may written material, and the contexts in which both talk and written ideas are deployed are crucial to their reception\(^{(352)}\). Law's

348 Ibid p.14
349 Ibid p.15
350 Ibid p.32
351 Ibid p.34
352 Ibid p.12
observations on knowledge dissemination rest, as already indicated, upon general theoretical perspectives in the 'new' middle-range sociology of translation. These sociological perspectives lead to an empirical postulate that establishing obligatory points of passage through which other (competitive) actors, ideas, and practices have to 'pass' is never a structurally pre-given process and the outcomes of actors activities are empirically contingent and variable. A third element in Law's work with relevance to the future development of a sociology of social work knowledge, is the notion of unintended consequences. This was examined in chapter two (353) where it was argued the concept has significant explanatory value in social theory and in the sociology of social work, as in the empirical illustration provided in the first chapter analysis of consequences arising from the introduction of a new form of social services qualification in the 'mid-seventies. Unintended consequences are one element in the way actors 'bridge' micro- and macro-social worlds. This 'bridging' process may happen in ways that the actors themselves may not have intended or foreseen. For example, knowledge that is disseminated within a scientific or professional community may have effects not envisioned by the individual or collective actors involved in its production or involved in its dissemination. Law in the paper referred to above does not expand upon this point, though his reference to the work of Pasteur is empirically illustrative. Pasteur's laboratory work on the anthrax bacillus had the outcome that this work '... profoundly altered the relationship between French farmers, veterinarians and scientific laboratories' (354). When Pasteur conducted his laboratory experiments and disseminated his findings it is highly improbable that

353 See Chapter 2, pp.155-160
354 Law, J., (1986) op. cit. p.6
he had full discursive awareness and foreknowledge of its scientific, social, economic, and political consequences. Although actors themselves attempt to, "make ... connections between the 'micro' and the 'macro' thereby altering ... the social and scientific landscape" (355) this process is sometimes complicated by unintended outcomes which in turn facilitate or constrain the actions and goal-seeking behaviour of a range of other actors. This is one reason, amongst others, why knowledge dissemination within an academic or professional community is a variable and complex process. It is highly unlikely that social work knowledge-dissemination is any less complex than in the scientific community; a priori it may be presumed these processes are more complex in social work, given the indeterminacies of its cognitive structure. In social work research, as indicated in the first section of the chapter, some of these complexities have been empirically explored in micro-situational contexts. However compared with sociology of science (though even here contemporary middle-range sociology as yet is confined to the work of a few writers) the sociology of social work knowledge at the present time is less well equipped conceptually and empirically for exploring knowledge production and its transmission/translation at a 'higher' (i.e. middle-range) level of social process within and across sites through their space-time dimensions. This is an issue that is returned to below in identifying conceptual and empirical areas for future development in sociological analyses of knowledge dissemination in social work.

355 Ibid
Implicit in the issues examined earlier, and also in the second chapter dealing with theoretical issues in contemporary social theory, is a view that one focal concern in the sociology of social work knowledge is the study of processes of knowledge transmission and translation at a level of analysis that complements (but does not replace) micro-situational methodologies. One aspect of future theoretical and empirical research in this area is the need to develop theoretical transformative concepts as a resource for conceptualisation and empirical investigation of the transformative concepts employed by actors themselves. In developing these concepts it seems likely their use in empirical work will reveal social work knowledge is partly 'transmitted', partly 'translated'. For most social situations it is reasonably well-established that micro-situational technologies of representation (of knowledge) are not uninfluenced by previously structured patterns of cognitions, values, and practices, and in this sense are already partly decision-impregnated (356). However it is likely '... their application in situ can be shown to involve continual further interpretation, translations, and selections' (357). Jacobs (358) in a recent re-appraisal of Fleck's work (359) notes that Fleck, a practicing microbiologist, ascribed to

357 Ibid
scientific facts and theories qualities of 'illusions that arise after knowledge-claims have circulated in thought collectivities for some time' (360). Fleck asks 'Whose thought is it that continues to circulate...?' (361) but also notes that '... knowledge changes unpredictably and ideas alter in the process of communication' (362) (italic added). Jacobs in a statement that extends some of Law's observations, earlier, comments that

'Informal communication (ad hoc and unrecorded discussions) is crucial in scientific research, and differs in kind from the formal mode. As informal communication conveys tacit knowledge ... the property of people, not documents ... communication in science should be studied in terms of informal social processes of interaction and negotiation' (363)

This suggests formal written, but also informal, media are significant technologies-of-representation of knowledge and its dissemination within the scientific community. Jacobs refers to Knorr-Cetina's (364) empirical study of 'transepistemic arenas', a concept analogous to the notion that professional knowledge, theories, or ideologies (have to) relate to a diverse range of 'publics' some of which may be outside the academic or professional community in question. Jacobs in an appraisal of Knorr-Cetina's empirical study comments that

"As an observer of laboratory life she found letters being written, papers sent out, grants applied for, phone conversations, visits paid, meetings attended, correspondence filed away, raw materials acquired and samples exchanged ... Connections are formed with scientists in diverse subjects, with government...

360 Jacobs, S., (1987) op. cit. p.269
362 Fleck, L., quoted in Jacobs, S., (1987) op. cit. p.269
363 Jacobs, S., (1987) op. cit. p.272
officials, university administrators, lay representatives of private corporations, any one of whom may affect the form and content of research projects" (365)

There is a case for suggesting future work in the sociology of social work: knowledge production and dissemination should include investigation of the relationship of knowledge to 'transepistemic arenas' ('publics'); and to written and unwritten media and formal and informal technologies of representation, transmission, and translation of 'materials' (ideas, policies, and practices). Some of this work may require re-location of the concept 'front-line autonomy' into a wider empirical space-time dimension that includes but also extends beyond the micro-situational. An illustration of this is the 'passing' by Parliament of a legal statute. Statutes are normally very tightly-defined and precisely specified, so as to minimise interpretive 'loopholes' that might be exploited by a variety of actors ('publics') in ways not intended by the law-makers. When parliament passes a new law this may have relative 'mobility' and 'durability' and travel across sites with a 'low' level of transformation of its meaning and applications; but this cannot be empirically known without employing a range of empirical methods and data from multiple sources (ethnographic-situational case studies, formal contemporary documents and also historical records, public-opinion surveys etc.). In these ways it is possible to study the 'passage' of a law from parliament to other contexts (including public and private bureaucracies within which the law may be applied) and investigate its 'travel' temporally and also within and across a range of relevant sites (366). It is likely different types of materials (scientific knowledge, statutes, and

365 Jacobs, S., (1987) op.cit. p.274

social work knowledge) possess properties that suggest they have different translation 'thresholds'. In the case of legal statutes, a variety of factors are operative, including notions of constitutional rights, justice, fairness, equity and consistency in the application of the law to particular cases. The perceived need for precise specification of the content and context-of-usage of laws is intended to avoid situational interpretations which (relative to the original intent of the law-makers) might otherwise be idiosyncratic, or deviant, or be vulnerable to disavowal or misinterpretation (367); for these reasons law typically has a higher 'thematization threshold' (368) than many other types of materials circulating in professions and occupational communities. In social work, legal and non-legal contexts of action are present: the legal contexts include work in the probation service, and also 'statutory' work in the fields of child care and mental health. In the illustration employed here the different 'types' of knowledge being employed in social work micro-situations (i.e. in their local contexts of application) may each have different 'thematization thresholds'. This also has implications in a larger space-time dimension within which occurs the transmission or translation of a variety of materials that may have different levels of transformability as they circulate within and across sites; these materials include statutory work of the kind just mentioned, use of 'objective' medical or 'welfare rights' knowledge relevant to work with clients, the use of social science or psychotherapeutic theories, and experientially-acquired 'practice-wisdoms' and various forms of general 'cultural commonsense' that may be significant elements in the

367 Ibid
cognitive structure(s) of social work. In this sense it is probable, for example, that the 'process' learning perspective in social work education has to be judicious in selecting social work materials and forms of knowledge of a type that it can appropriately work upon; these include a high proportion of materials with relatively low thematization thresholds and sufficient cognitive indeterminacy to allow the experiential-learning model to continue to function on the basis of the technologies of representation associated with it. It may also be noted if future work on social work technologies of representation, transmission and translation is theoretically macro-reductive this will have the undesirable effect of reductively predefining interpretations of empirical outcomes: local interpretations, for example, can 'act back' upon official policies and even upon legislation, as when the practical application shows 'in the light of experience' that formal edicts require modification or reformulation.

The use and development of transformative concepts in the study of technologies of representation and for investigating the contents, contexts, and media of transmission and translation is in some ways a familiar rubric: this is because the use of transformative concepts is already well-established in microsociology, particularly symbolic interactionism. For example, the notion that ideas may alter in the process of communication is a familiar axiom in symbolic interactionism; however conceptions as in Law's work, earlier, on material mobility and durability in 'bridging' sites as part of a translative, enrolling process indicate a need for moving beyond (without abandoning) micro-situational perspectives in ways that are not macro-reductive. Theoretical and empirical re-location of

369 Harris, R.J., et al. (eds) (1985) op.cit.
transformational concepts in the study of social processes that include micro-contexts but also a 'higher' level of social process than connotated in micro-situational sociology is a potentially significant area for future development in the sociology of social work knowledge. This will require time to develop and will require an initial exploratory phase partly because these perspectives, despite some movement towards them in the 1980's, are still relatively undeveloped in mainstream sociology. Their low level of development in social theory and empirical sociology is highlighted by Lidz (370) who notes:

'Transformational theory now calls the sociologist to examine such properties of macro-social operations, as s/he now routinely does for micro-social processes' (371)

Further aspects of transformational operations developed by social work actors are explored below with reference to the roles of written and oral media in the social construction of social work materials, and the relation of the use of these media to other empirically contingent features of the social work community.

WRITTEN KNOWLEDGE-DISSEMINATION IN SOCIAL WORK

Written knowledge dissemination, as indicated earlier, is a relevant topic for investigation as part of the more general study of (individual and collective) actors' technologies of representation and their use of transformative concepts in shaping and disseminating ideas and practices. In the work of Law, earlier, written media are said to be more 'mobile' and 'durable' and to have greater thematization capacity than other media; and therefore to have greater effectiveness in securing long-range social control of the knowledge forms that

371 Ibid p.230
circulate within the scientific community. In Jacobs, Knorr-Cetina, and Fleck, earlier, this was qualified by a more explicit recognition of the role of formal and informal media and also the relationships of these media to a variety of internal and external 'publics' ('transepistemic arenas'). In many academic and professional communities the role of written transmission is significant in the sense noted in Collins's (372) observation 'The choice of whether or not to accept something as part of the corpus of knowledge is the same act as deciding whether or not to pass it on, either by publishing it in a journal or book, or by making reference to it in ones' own writing' (373) (italic added). However Collins also suggests the role of written media in knowledge dissemination is greater in science than in other occupational communities: he writes that if an occupational community '... is a network of communications, in science alone do we have most of the major communications recorded and readily inspectable, in the form of publications and citations' (374) (italic added).

The social and political roles of different media and technologies of representation in an occupation or profession may be manifest at a micro-situational level. They are also manifest at a more macro-social level of social process. Below, three illustrations are employed to illuminate a hypothesis that written media may assume different significance in periods of professional social work activity that are not 'tranquil' or routine and which (though this is a very loose analogy) are not the equivalents of a Kuhnian period of 'normal science'. Compared with communications usages in period of routine

373 Ibid pp.494-495
374 Ibid p.494
pattern-maintenance it is possible written media assumes a different social and political significance in those historical periods when social work is struggling hard against competitors to 'establish' its role in a particular paradigmatic form; or, once the profession has become relatively well established, at times of 'crisis' and professional perception of internal or external threat to its stability; or in constructing (or re-constructing) new policies in circumstances of conflict or controversy; and also on those occasions that involve the social construction of an emergent perception that major new social problems are confronting the profession on such a scale that a new professional response is required. An instance of the role of written media in times of professional turbulence is the first chapter analysis of intense inter-constituency conflicts associated with attempts in the 1980's by some collective social work actors to define social work in ways that were resisted by others who considered the 'essence' of social work (as defined by them) was under major threat. This struggle involved a process of consignment and 'enlisting' of ideas, policies, practices and of other actors, and may be regarded as a series of attempts to make defined material 'travel' so as to render less 'mobile' and less 'durable' other, competing ideas and policies. The interactions between the competitive collective actors involved in these struggles were articulated through expressions of condemnation, appeal, persuasion, and critique disseminated in written reports, academic papers, working party documents, and articles in journals such as Community Care and Social Work Today that have widespread circulation within the social work community. This is not to say written transmissions of materials have no role in 'routine' circulation of materials. Nor in situations of professional 'crisis', reconstruction, adaptation etc. is it suggested oral transmissions and
translations and informal communications have no role. It is probable, for example, that informal 'behind the scenes' lobbying is a significant medium in the construction and handling of 'non-routine' materials at times of special crisis and re-adjustment in the social work profession: however informal 'committee politics' require the use of written media if they are to be transported effectively within a reasonably short period of time across a large range of sites within the profession. Law, earlier, suggested in the scientific community written media are important for bridging the gap between micro-social and macro-social worlds, for exerting influence 'from a particular place'. In Law's analysis written media, because of their mobility, durability, and schematization capacity, are more effective (have greater 'translative' potential) than other media in securing long-distance, large-range control during periods that include ongoing, routine maintenance of particular knowledge-forms. In social work, as hypothesised earlier, it would appear written media as well as co-existing with other media in the routine circulation of materials also have a particular role in special, non-routine circumstances. In the three illustrations below the first refers briefly to a competitive phase in the early historical construction of a 'professional' paradigm for social work; the second and third refer respectively to recent social constructions of 'child abuse' and 'violence against social workers' as major problems confronting the profession.

In attempting to initiate a new unified concept of 'professional' social work at the turn of the century the Charity Organisation Society (COS) was confronted by strong opposition from other social and political groups and faced by structural and organisational factors which were not conducive to the construction of a modern welfare profession. In that period 'welfare' activities were organisationally
and occupationally highly segmented; the notion of basing practice upon formal knowledge and theory was largely unestablished and resisted by many COS trainees and other welfare workers; and the concept of professional casework in the way this was politically defined by the COS leadership was under fierce attack by the 'social reformers' (375). In negotiating these adverse structural circumstances and the political opposition that stood in the way of the COS's attempts to define the core elements of a new aspiring 'professional' casework occupation, the role of the COS's monthly journal was a significant factor. An objective of the COS was propagation and dissemination of the cognitive, philosophical, and political values and assumptions underpinning its 'new' definition of social work. To this end the COS developed a communication network and

'Prominent in this ... network was the Society's monthly journal which contained numerous articles on how to undertake 'good' casework and in particular articles which established and legitimized the ... underpinning of its strategy' (376)

In this illustration written media appears to have been a significant factor in at least one phase in the historical movement to initiate, against opposition, a concept of a modern, unified welfare profession based upon a casework paradigm; in struggling against a variety of adverse conditions the COS defined social work in a particular way and disseminated this definition through a communications network in which written media played an important role.

A second example of the 'non-routine' role of written media in the social work community is the social construction of child abuse as a major 'new' social problem confronting the profession. It is not proposed to debate here whether social work concern about child abuse

375 See Chapter 3, pp.279-81
is a form of professional 'moral panic' (377); rather, emphasis is given to media technologies of representation and, in this illustration, the occurrence of 'unique' events as a contingent factor in the social construction of social problems. Parton (378) refers to an influential American paper published in 1962 by Kempe et al. (379) on the 'battered child syndrome' which was a factor in the taking up of this issue in a number of British papers on the topic (380). The notion of child abuse as 'the hidden problem' (381) was amplified in the 1970's by the National Society for The Prevention Of Cruelty To Children (NSPCC) who had a crucial role in the diffusion of a belief that a massive social problem existed (382). These developments in the construction of child abuse as a social problem were given further impetus by a 'unique' event, the death in tragic circumstances of a child called Maria Colwell and the high level of publicity given to this event. This event and its investigation was communicated to a wide audience in a way which sustained movement towards the construction of a sense of 'crisis' surrounding the topic of child abuse. The death of Maria Colwell was followed by the holding of an enquiry and Parton notes

377 Cohen, S., Folk Devils And Moral Panics (2nd ed.) Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1980
380 See Parton, N., (1979) op. cit p.436
381 Ibid
382 Ibid p.438
The enquiry formed a regular item in the press and on TV news programmes, so that by the time the report on the death of Maria Colwell was published in September 1974, the issue was established as a major social problem requiring formal interventions' (383).

In this illustration of the role of written media as a transformational process in the construction and dissemination of 'non-routine' materials, a combination of written and other media, together with the activities of collective social work actors such as the NSPCC, interacted with a 'unique' event to establish child-abuse as a major new social problem, or at least, as a problem said to be new in the sense that it had hitherto been largely undetected.

A further illustration of the role of written media and the relation of these media to other contextual factors in the social construction of a belief that a major 'new problem' is confronting the profession, is the topic of physical violence against social workers. Unreported physical assault by clients and others upon social workers is doubtless not a new phenomenon; however according to Small (384) the construction of this phenomenon as a widespread, and legitimate, sense of major professional concern '... began in 1975, at a time when a number of contributing events co-incided' (385). Small refers to publication in the British Journal Of Social Work of two articles on this topic in 1975 and 1976 (386). In the period immediately following these articles relatively little was written on the topic (387). However

383 Ibid. p.442
385 Ibid
387 Small, N., (1987) op.cit. p.42
in the early 1980's the issue was re-activated as a focus of concern.

A number of surveys on the phenomenon were begun and some professional associations and trade unions representing staff employed in hospitals, prisons, and welfare agencies expressed a desire to explore the topic further (388). Small's analysis indicates it was not only written media per se which transformed an 'occasional concern' (389) into a significant social and professional problem: conferences, skills workshops, short courses, study days and seminars were held in increasing numbers in the early 1980's and by the mid-1980's the role of collective social actors in publicising the problem had become a significant factor in disseminating a sense of professional apprehension. These social actors included government departments, unions and professional associations such as COHSE and WALGO, the TUC, the British Medical Association, the DHSS, and the British Association of Social Workers (390). Also, relatively unique events and contingently-related phenomena had the effect of heightening an already developing sense of professional concern (391). A conjunction of events and circumstances in the period 1985-87 contributing to an escalation of professional anxiety about violence-towards-social workers is described by Small in these terms:

A review of the literature illustrates a recurring if occasional interest in violence towards social workers which has changed into a more substantial interest in the last two years. This new interest began at a time when a number of social workers were undergoing retraining to conform to new mental health legislation. Additionally there occurred considerable criticism of the profession following the death of Jasmine Beckford. The result was a period of uncertainty and felt vulnerability. At the same time within a short period three social workers were

388 Ibid
389 Ibid p. 41
390 Ibid pp. 42-43
391 Ibid p. 44
murdered. Professional insecurity, adverse criticism and identifiable risk all contributed to the construction of the social worker as victim and the elevation of threat to its major place amongst the preoccupations of social work' (392)

An implication from Small's analysis is that the study of transformational concepts and processes of construction, transmission, and translations of materials, has to refer to an interwoven matrix of involvements and activities by collective social actors; the role of non-written communications in the form of (for instance) conferences and seminars and other similar mechanisms that bring professional actors together to exchange and disseminate information and focus concerns about a particular problem or problems; and the impact of unique events or other contingently-related professional circumstances. However Small also highlights the crucial role of written media in the social construction and dissemination of material surrounding the problem in the two-year period after 1985; in describing the role of written media Small writes

'Of particular note has been the coverage in Community Care and its six part series on violence beginning on 13 November 1986 and finishing on 11 December 1986. Also in the 11 December issue was an editorial, a page report on a DHSS Conference on violence to staff and a page of news which included four items on, or relating to, violence. This major coverage follows a number of articles throughout 1985 and 1986 ... this preoccupation of the social work press ... as yet has not ... been transferred to the rest of the non social work press' (393)

Small's paper was published in the summer of 1987 and his review of the literature suggests, as noted earlier, that an '... interest in violence ... has ... (been) ... changed into ... sustained interest in ... two years' (394) (italics added). A similar comment may be applied to Small's paper itself; its contents, context, and time of publication is one aspect of the very process of social construction,
amplification, and dissemination that he described, as maybe is the act of referring to Small's paper here. However the outcomes of written disseminations of material are empirically variable. Law, earlier in his sociology of translation noted written dissemination of material, despite being more politically potent than oral communications in macro-shaping professional definitions, does not automatically sustain and amplify one particular set of definitions. Small's paper, though he does not say violence towards social workers does not exist, is a written account which raises the possibility that the scale of the problem has been exaggerated and that some 'de-construction' of the topic may be necessary. This suggests written media may be highly significant in the construction and dissemination of non-routine or 'new' social work materials, but may be significant also in the production of subsequent responses. These written responses may include disagreement about appropriate technical or practical ways of handling the 'new problem' facing professionals, and disagreement too regarding the extent to which the problem is 'real' or a socially constructed 'moral panic' about a problem that exists but on a much smaller scale than portrayed in the technologies of representation and transformative concepts brought to bear upon it by the social actors involved.

In the above illustrations, reference was made to protracted struggles by the COS to initiate a professional casework paradigm for social work at the turn of the century in the face of political opposition and other adverse circumstances; to a period of intense social work inter-constituency conflicts in the 1980's; and to the social construction of child abuse, and of violence towards social workers, as major 'new' social and professional problems confronting the profession. These involved conflicts and struggle amongst
competitive actors to define social work in a particular way during periods of professional uncertainty amidst perceptions that some definitions of social work were under major threat, or else adjustment to definitions of 'new' problems (as in the cases of child abuse and violence) said to be confronting the profession on such a scale that new professional (and societal) responses are required. In each of these instances, written media played a significant part in the dissemination of materials expressing these professional concerns, conflicts, and apprehensions. The role of written media in social work's 'routine' modes of operation, outside of occasions of perceived professional crisis, threat, or innovation of major new professional definitions and policies, is examined below where a previous observation is re-inspected with special reference to material dissemination: earlier. It was suggested social work's routine handling of knowledge and practice includes strong elements of an 'oral tradition' and experientialism which reproduces the relatively high level of cognitive indeterminacy that is one of the characteristics of the profession.

Previous reference was made to studies in the sociology of science suggesting written dissemination is highly significant in the transmission and translation of scientific knowledge. However even in the case of scientific knowledge, which is premised on a relatively 'hard' epistemological foundation and the use of written media and 'authoritative' curricula for its institutionalised transmission, other media are also significant. For example, some of the writers referred to earlier pointed to the importance of informal communications, and Law observed written materials, despite their greater mobility, durability, and schematization capacity when compared with orally-transmitted material, are not always effective in translati
operations. Another factor is that structural aspects of science and its organisation limit the 'range' of influence that written materials are capable of exerting. Two limiting aspects in particular are relevant: one is the sheer volume and output of written material in the scientific community, the other is the existence of specialism in the division of academic labour. Law notes that 'many scientific papers are not read at all' (395). Some studies of scientific communication networks point to the existence of readership 'clusters'. Cole (396) and Hagstrom (397) observe that many scientific texts and papers circulate exclusively within small networks and never enter into a 'mainstream' system of written academic communications. Contrary to popular lay conceptions of mathematics as a relatively unified scientific discipline, Hagstrom (398) indicates in mathematics there is no occupational-wide paradigm nor a unified communication network of academic writers or readers. In social work, very little data exists on readership networks that may be associated with certain texts, journals, and with particular research, practice, or educational institutions, nor on the relationships that may exist between these networks and the various 'constituencies' (and constituency sub-groups) that comprise modern social work practice, organisation and training. It is possible the social and political significance of some of these networks and their role in knowledge dissemination within the profession has become considerably greater in parallel with an

395 Law, J., (1986) _op.cit_ p.33
397 Hagstrom, V.O., _The Scientific Community_ New York, Basic Books, 1965
398 Ibid
increased volume of literature associated with the professionalising movement since the 1950's. In the 1950's and early 1960's social work journals and the comparatively few major social work texts then available tended to circulate mainly amongst social workers in particular specialities, although Stevenson notes American 'generic' texts were beginning to have an impact upon British social work perspectives, this impact to some degree being upon professional educators rather than students amongst whom some generic texts were 'largely unread'. In modern social work, the use of written media in knowledge dissemination co-exists with the 'oral tradition' of experientialism referred to earlier. This tradition exists in 'process' learning orientations in social work education, and in concepts of individualism, personal casework relationships, and practitioner scepticism of generalised, nomothetic forms of knowledge associated with written social science. Earlier it was hypothesised written media in the social work profession have a special role in situations of professional crisis, threat, or innovation, but that oral disseminations of social worker cognitions have (in relation to written academic or professional communications) a prominent role in the dissemination and handling of 'routine' social work materials. Social work of the kind associated with the psychotherapeutic casework tradition may to some degree share a characteristic which Vance suggests is a feature of

399 Stevenson, O., (1981) op.cit pp.33-34
400 Ibid p.33
401 Ibid p.32
402 Ibid
psychotherapy in America. According to Vance routine dissemination of experientially-acquired 'practice wisdoms' is achieved almost entirely through mechanisms of oral transmission. A reason for this is said to be the tension between 'practice' and abstract, nomothetic social science' generalisations. This leads Vance to suggest '... books concerning theories of therapy are usually directed away from practitioners needs altogether, or else they are pitched at the most general level ...'(404). The literature on psychotherapy is 'a... nightmare combination of the incomprehensible and inconsequential ... books and journals ... (are) ... suitable for archival use only'(405).

Vance's criticisms of written knowledge dissemination are also a criticism of the role of professional educators in academic institutions

"Published materials ... are of no help in increasing ones therapeutic skills, and they are of limited value in the initial stages of training. I have no hard evidence that reading has actually harmed beginning counsellors or therapists but I believe it is so. I have certainly had the experience of being forced to uneducate trainees so they could begin to learn from their practicum experience' (406).

For those psychotherapy practitioners who are well-experienced the dissemination of practice-knowledge is almost exclusively through communication networks that rely on verbal exchanges of practically-relevant ideas; this is noted in Vance's statement that

'Much of the advanced training of psychotherapists consists in sharing experiences with colleagues. I am convinced ... the regionalism that exists in theory and practice is determined by the fact that the only really effective channel now available for distributing clinically useful information is word-of-mouth' (407).

Vance's claims that conversational knowledge-transmission is a superior

404 Ibid p.115
405 Ibid
406 Ibid
407 Ibid p.117
media when compared with written-disseminations, is a view that recurs in his depiction of communications in psychotherapy; he writes 'To sum up this matter ... let me say bluntly ... Those of us really concerned about training practitioners are living in a world where our skills are transmitted by an oral tradition ... '(408). Vance's criticisms of academic professional educators rest on his implied dichotomy between professional-academic educators as 'carriers' of a written tradition, and practitioners as exponents, in Vances' words, of 'an oral tradition'. However an oral tradition is not invariably confined to practitioner culture; it may also be part of the culture of academic professional educators. In British social work education an oral tradition, as noted earlier, is rooted in the experiential 'process' learning orientation in a significant number of professional schools of social work in academic institutions (409). Academic-professional educators in these schools are clearly part of an academic (and therefore 'written') tradition and 'process' learning is never wholly divorced from intellectual examination of the contents of formal written theories; nevertheless, educators who employ 'process' learning methods are also heavily involved in precisely that form of media (oral converse in the personal construction and interpersonal sharing and dissemination of knowledge) that is advocated by Vance. Tension between theory and practice, generally regarded as a tension between 'academia' and the 'world of practice', is partly associated with social worker's apparent preference for use of unwritten 'practice codes': in British social work, this is noted in Curnock

408 Ibid p.115
409 Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985) op.cit. p.145
and Hardiker (410) and in Carew (411), discussed earlier. Vance, as just noted, associates formal written theory with academia; and unwritten personalised knowledge and unwritten practice-codes with the 'world of practice'. However in British social work if tension exists between academic and practice contexts this cannot entirely be a dispute arising from conflicting opinions as to which media ('books or talk') should be employed for communicating social work knowledge; as just noted, an 'oral tradition' is a media common to large areas of social work practice and to those academic-professional schools which give emphasis to interpersonal construction and conversational dissemination ('sharing') of social work knowledge, affective experiences, and of personal insights. This suggests attention in future research should be given to investigation of heterogeneity within social work's 'oral tradition'. There may exist a plurality of such traditions in terms of their contents. For example, the 'in-depth' psychological and in some cases psychodynamic insights sought-for in the 'process' learning model in social work education is different in kind from the unwritten practice-codes described in Carew's study. Though social workers in Carew's study encouraged clients to express their feelings about the specific problems affecting their situation, the unwritten practice codes described by Carew are far more 'practical' than psychological or psychotherapeutic in their content.

Communication media are one dimension amongst a range of others examined in this final section of the chapter on knowledge-dissemination processes. For reasons that were developed earlier it can be argued the sociology of social work knowledge, as well as

410 See Curnock, K., and Hardiker, P., (1979) op.cit. pages 10, 11, 159, 161
411 Carew, R., (1979) op.cit.
addressing issues of a different order raised in the first two sections of the chapter, is likely to be advanced through increased attention to the investigation of actors transformative concepts (412) and technologies of representation in the construction, dissemination and 'application' of social work materials. As stated earlier, this involves study of the contents, contexts, and media of transmission and translation at a level of analysis which includes micro-social processes but also phenomena that make their appearance at what Lidz (413) terms the level of 'macro-social operations' (414) conceived of in non macro-reductive terms.

412 Lidz, V., (1981) op.cit
413 Ibid
414 Ibid, p.230
CHAPTER FIVE

PROFESSIONALISATION, ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND SERVICE-DELIVERY ISSUES

The analyses developed in this chapter explore patterns of interconnection between professionalism, organisational structure and service-delivery issues in modern social work. Analysis of these interconnections builds upon some of the material on professional and organisational structure in chapter three though with less emphasis on historical perspective than in the earlier chapter, and draws also upon some of the topics in the preceding chapter on the structure and forms of social work knowledge. The main focus is the organisational and service-delivery context of British social work practice in the 1980's, though to put this context into broader perspective it will be necessary in places to draw upon material relating to earlier periods. The chapter is divided into four sections. First, an appraisal of empirical data on social workers' attitudes to bureaucracy, together with inspection of a thesis that cognitive indeterminacy may serve to protect professional social work from external control, in
particular from administrative and bureaucratic control. Second, an examination of empirical data on the 'legitimation crisis' of the modern welfare state. Arising from these data it will be suggested one dimension of the 'crisis' in state welfare services refers not the general principle of state welfare but to public and service-user dissatisfactions with the particular organisational and service-delivery frameworks by which these services are provided; this has led some writers to suggest a movement towards 'looser', more flexible user-responsive 'organic' structures in the delivery of state services will have the effect of enhancing service-user satisfactions. Third, arising from the preceding section, the concept of 'organic' organisational structure is analysed in the light of American and British empirical and theoretical material relating to the organic concept. Finally, the largest section of the chapter is a detailed analysis of the decentralisation movement and the concept 'community social work'. The decentralisation movement is highly significant in sociology of social work for the reason that it throws into sharp relief many of the issues raised in previous chapters, including the politics of welfare, the relation of theory to practice, and the long-standing ('perennial') concern to construct and defend in each historical epoch a professional mode of occupational structure for social work; the decentralisation movement is significant also for the reason that it gained considerable momentum in the 1980's and on present evidence is likely to be a major, and controversial, dimension in the future development of social work and the personal social services in Britain.
PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK, BUREAUCRACY, AND COGNITIVE INDETERMINACY

SOCIAL WORKER ATTITUDES TOWARDS BUREAUCRACY

Analysis of the relation of professionalism to its organisational context in part hinges upon how 'profession' is defined. Reference was made in chapter three to 'process' concepts of profession employed in analyses developed in, for example, the work of Hughes, Freidson, Elger, Becker and Bucher and Strauss. These writers are critical of the notion exemplified in Goode's concept of an integrated 'professional community' characterised by cognitive consensus and a shared, homogeneous and explicitly crystallised body of professional norms. These characteristics of 'profession' are empirical variables and apply in different degree to different

1 See Chapter 3, pp.289-91
2 Hughes, E.C., Men And Their Work Ill. Glencoe, 1958
professions. The highly segmented nature of British social work was evident in the first chapter analysis of conflict between various social work 'constituencies'; and in the third chapter which examined conflict and ambiguity surrounding three perennial and contemporary social work problematics identified as the relation of theory to practice, the politics of social work, and the relation of professional and organisational factors to service-delivery issues. Hall\(^{(8)}\) refers to empirical evidence that suggests professional autonomy and 'professional impact' upon organisations is strongest in those professional bureaucracies where the norms of the professional group are relatively highly crystallised, coherent, and cohesive. Large-scale organisations which employ 'semi-professionals' \(^{(9)}\) such as social workers have a tendency to be more bureaucratised and with less emphasis upon professional autonomy than organisations that employ members of the so-called 'established' professions. Data indicating hierarchical authority structures and a relatively high level of bureaucratisation in semi-professional welfare organisations are reported in work by Waldow\(^{(10)}\) Arlene\(^{(11)}\) and Aiken and Hage\(^{(12)}\).


This does not mean social work as a semi-profession (13) is invariably oriented towards bureaucratic 'agency' norms rather than towards 'professional' values; as already noted, social work is normatively segmented, one aspect of this being variation in social work values and attitudes towards professional and bureaucratic norms. Nevertheless a number of American and British studies indicate a general disposition on the part of many social workers to incline more strongly towards a bureaucratic ethos than towards professional values. In analyses of data from a series of American studies Epstein (14) reports normative variation exists amongst social workers (15) including variations in role-orientation with regard to professionalism and bureaucracy and with regard to 'conservative' or 'radical' practices (16). Epstein's typology of social worker attitudes identifies a professional orientation based upon strong attachment to 'professionally' defined values and practices; a bureaucratic orientation reflecting a commitment to agency norms, rules, and procedures; and client orientation, a more politically radical role-perspective in which clients' interests are accorded primacy even if this clashes with 'bureaucratic' or 'professional' role-orientations (17). Epstein reported social workers who subscribe to a client-orientation tended to identify positively with 'radical' practices; those with a bureaucratic-orientation disapproved of radicals and were strongly

15 Ibid
17 Ibid
predisposed towards 'conservative' political conceptions of welfare and towards agency rules and procedures; the professional-orientation appeared not to be highly correlated with either conservative or radical practices but because 'bureaucratic' (rather than either 'professional' or 'client') orientations were more strongly evident amongst most social workers there existed in the settings studied by Epstein an overall predominantly conservative role-orientation (18). In a further study Epstein (19) concluded '... among social workers there seems to exist a hierarchy of normative commitments beginning with agency norms ... '(20). Epstein's data are supported by broadly comparable data reported in Wilensky (21) Varley (22) Hefferman (23) and by Billingsley (24) who noted that '... social workers in our sample are relatively more bureaucratic than professional in their ... orientations ... This is in contrast to other studies of other professionals working in formal organisations which show more orientation to the profession than to the agency' (25). Two related conclusions in Epstein's data analyses are worthy of note.

18 Ibid
20 Ibid p.74
22 Varley, B., 'Are Social Workers Dedicated To Service?' Social Work Vol.11, No.2 (April) 1966, pp.84-91
23 Hefferman, W., 'Political Activity And Social Work Executives' Social Work Vol.9, No.2 (April) 1964 pp.18-23
25 Ibid p.403
These are, first, that professional caseworkers have a greater tendency to attach themselves to 'conservative' strategies of intervention than community-workers, who show a tendency to be more predisposed to the 'radical' client-orientation; and secondly, that when methods of working (casework, groupwork, or community work) are held constant in the data analysis there is a general tendency for radicalism to be disproportionately clustered at lower hierarchical levels and for conservatism together with the highest levels of commitment to agency norms to be disproportionately concentrated at the higher levels of social work hierarchies (26). This last finding may be compared with Satyamurti's (27) data on social workers' dissatisfaction at not being involved in hierarchical decision-making processes (28); with Pearson's (29) account of social worker 'bandits' (30) as professional deviants who circumvent bureaucratic procedures in the interests of their clients; and with Cypher's (31) reference to data suggesting '... there is evidence ... that social work supervisors exhibit a greater bureaucratic orientation than do basic grade social workers' (32).

From a radical socialist perspective Bolger et al. (33) imply managerial

26 See f.n.14
28 Ibid p.187
30 Ibid p.39
32 Ibid p.14
perspectives and management ideologies of intervention 'begin' at the hierarchical level immediately above that of team leader (34). It does not follow from these accounts that basic-grade social workers typically adopt 'radical' client-orientations or are hostile towards bureaucratic norms. This is noted in Epstein and the other data sources cited earlier, and also in Hearn's (35) reference to 'radical careerism' together with problems in identifying practical expressions of radical theory as two factors underlining his observation that radical social workers operate in a very similar way to the traditional social worker (36).

An underlying theme reported in a number of empirical studies is a tendency of basic-grade social workers to express general dissatisfaction at not being more closely involved in hierarchical decision-making, whilst at the same time welcoming a concept of hierarchical supervision that is closer to a 'bureaucratic' than 'professional autonomy' model. Research data reported in Scott (37) and Aiken and Hage (38) indicate social workers exhibit a sense of frustration and powerlessness at being uninvolved in hierarchical decision-making, yet also exhibit a predisposition to readily accept supervision from superordinates. In their study of social workers in

34 Ibid p.66
36 Ibid p.25
38 Aiken, M., and Hage, J., (1966) op.cit.
nine social services departments Kakabadse and Worral(39) found social workers have a positive view of hierarchical supervision(40) and the same point is highlighted in a study of the probation service by Williamson(41). Parry and Parry(42) suggest social workers welcome the concept of bureau-professionalism and management hierarchy because the existence of hierarchy is associated with possibilities for promotion and career advancement(43), though Whittington(44) makes the point that social workers in their daily work may welcome hierarchical supervision less for 'careerist' than for educational, professional development or even 'therapeutic' reasons in handling complex cases(45). Whittington and Bellaby(46) observe that whatever social workers' motivations and

40 Ibid p.67
43 Ibid p.43
45 Ibid p.70
reasons are for endorsing the concept of hierarchical supervision, the body of data available indicates 'we might reasonably expect the main concern of ... social workers to be with ensuring that supervision is available, not opposing hierarchical organisation with which it is conventionally ... associated' (47). Data broadly similar to those referred to above are reported in Parker and Allen's (48) study of local authority social workers. Parker and Allen observed a notable absence of social worker involvement in policy-making; they concluded the situation of social workers so far as involvement in policy development is concerned '... shows them to be in a rather uncomfortable position. Yet the majority were satisfied with their work' (49). Writing in the mid-1970's at a time when radical theoretical critiques of welfare capitalism were strongly evident in some social work training courses and in the social work literature (50) Cypher (51) in a review of American and British data on social workers' perceptions of their organisational and practice contexts suggests a notion of 'social work students ... as bringing radicalism wholesale into social work practice should be received with caution' (52). Other data suggest a notion of wholesale social worker conservativism may also need to be received with caution; some studies, for example, emphasise pragmatic practice-diversity on the part of social workers. This is noted in Whittington

47 Ibid p.528
50 See Chapter 1, f.n.'s 56-65
51 Cypher, J.R., (1975) op.cit
52 Ibid p.14
who suggests 'bureaucratic' or 'client-centred' orientations are merely two amongst many and that social workers sometimes move from one orientation to another, depending upon the particular nature of the case that they are handling. An analogous conclusion, at least in so far as pragmatism and practice-diversity is concerned, is Hardiker's and Curnock and Hardiker's interpretation that social workers selectively deploy different theories and methods (eg. psychotherapeutic casework, attempts to influence agency policy or to bring about environmental change) according to the particular situation and 'type of case' they are confronted with. Despite interpretations of the kind just referred to it is not fully established whether individual social workers typically switch pragmatically from one role-orientation to another, or whether 'diversity' exists in the sense of different social workers subscribing to different role-orientations; for example, Epstein (earlier) noted significant differences of perspective and role-orientation between professional caseworkers and community workers. Sheppard reports trained psychiatric social workers regard psychotherapeutic casework as

54 Hardiker, P., 'Heart Or Head: The Function And Role Of Knowledge In Social Work' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.1, No.2 (Winter) 1981, pp.85-111
56 Hardiker, P., (1981) op.cit p.87
their primary method of working; and Casserly and Clarke (58) together with Parsloe and Stevenson (59) report relatively few local authority social workers regard engagement in welfare rights 'advocacy' on behalf of clients as a significant element of their preferred role-orientation. One difficulty in comparing data from these and other sources is the classic methodological problem that different studies use data obtained by different methods (60). It can however be inferred from the data noted earlier and below on social worker role-orientations that social workers are in general not strongly hostile towards the hierarchical organisational principle, and exhibit a general predisposition to positively endorse it. Cypher (61) refers to McLeod and Mayer's (62) study and to Rein's (63) survey of American research data on social worker role-perspectives; in Rein's assessment these data ... reveal the extent to which social workers personally comply with bureaucratic norms ... (64). Cypher's data-review, written

58 Casserley, J., and Clarke, B., A Welfare Rights Approach To The Chronically Sick And Disabled Strathclyde Regional Council (March) 1978 p.11


61 Cypher, J.R., (1975) op.cit


in 1975, leads him to suggest "... we should not expect large numbers of social workers to adopt critical or 'change' stances" (65). Rees and Wallace (66) in 1982 examined empirical material from a number of studies on social worker role-orientations and their conclusions (67) regarding social worker attitudes towards bureaucracy and towards engagement in 'change' strategies are broadly similar to those of Cypher. Rees and Wallace's assessment is critical: they refer to hierarchical and also statutory constraints upon social workers' scope for action, but comment '... such constraints do not have to be accepted with such a sense of resignation ...' (68). In particular, Rees and Wallace are critical of what they adjudge to be 'organisational, professional and other considerations ... incorporated in idéologies ... in which accountability to clients' interests is given only lip service' (69).

The empirical data examined in the preceding pages refer mainly to an attitudinal predisposition on the part of social workers towards the hierarchical principle associated with bureaucracy. Viewed in structural terms a wider body of data than those noted here suggests the professional-bureaucracy dichotomy is itself rested on a falsely exaggerated notion of incommensurability between professionalism and bureaucracy. This was noted with reference to the sociology of professions in chapter three, where it was also noted the expansion of post-Seebohm professional social work, because a fully professionally 'autonomous' model was an unrealistic aspiration, was achieved through the construction of (a modified version of) bureaucracy in the form of

65 Cypher, J.R., (1975) op.cit. p.14
67 Ibid. pp.162-163
68 Ibid. p.165
69 Ibid. p.167
bureau-professionalism (70). Accommodated within a bureau-professional organisational structure, professional social work in the conventional usage of this term as defined by, for example, the British Association of Social Workers (71), is 'in theory' relatively well-placed organisationally to sustain a 'professional' mode of occupational structure. Nevertheless, the relationship between professionalism and bureaucracy is not wholly congruent. This poses something in the nature of a 'structural' dilemma for professional social work. On one hand professional social work cannot easily survive in its existing form outside a bureaucratic organisational context; on the other, this context contains an ever-present threat of professional de-skilling, bureaucratic control, and administrative routinisation of professional knowledge-and-skills. It was this tension that underlined the sharp expressions of conflict between employers and the professional constituency, examined in the first chapter. In that chapter it was noted the employers condemned what appeared to many of their representatives to be a professional quest for 'higher status ... professional power and prestige' (72) (italic added). What the professional constituency feared was employer-domination, de-professionalisation, and employer efforts to 'socialise' (73) professionals into 'existing structures' (74).

70 See Chapter 3, p.316
72 Harbert, W., 'Crisis In Social Work' Community Care 21 March 1985 p.15
73 Carter, D., 'Another Blind Leap Into The Dark' Community Care 20 June 1985, p.27
74 Ibid
In the sociology of professions a number of writers have suggested preservation of a sense of 'mystique' surrounding professional knowledge is a means of professional protection from external administrative or bureaucratic control. Knowledge and skill that is esoteric, indeterminate, and incapable of being 'reduced' to written procedural specifications may function as a form of professional insulation from bureaucratic routinisation of the professional task. If, however, cognitive indeterminacy (professional 'mystique') is taken 'too far' its protective function may become self-negating and expose the professional to precisely those forms of bureaucratic-administrative reassertion of controls (one version of which may be managerial or employer 'takeover') that threaten the existence of 'professional' work. These issues are explored below, with particular reference to the concept of 'balance' between cognitive ambiguity and technical rationality and the social construction and negotiation of this balance in professional-bureaucracies.

COGNITIVE INDETERMINACY AND TECHNICAL RATIONALITY IN PROFESSIONAL BUREAUCRACIES

Ability to control and work within an area of uncertainty enhances professional autonomy from bureaucratic regulation and from external control by administrators, politicians, clients, or members of other professions. In, for example, the legal or medical professions insulation from external controls is likely to be greatest where the outcomes of professional actions are relatively intangible; if 'everyone' (clients, politicians, bureaucrats etc) is able to judge-by-results professional autonomy is diminished, a possibility that led
McKinlay (75) to suggest professional autonomy is secured through '... the removal of certain activities from external observability and evaluation' (76). Professionals emphasise individual professional 'virtuosity', flexibility, imagination, and 'creativeness'; they do not emphasise the standardised and predictable elements of their work tasks, and in particular do not emphasise rules and procedures that can be written down and straightforwardly applied to each client situation. Medicine is a relatively strongly established profession by virtue of laying claim to a scientifically-validated knowledge base and to a highly specialised 'creative' diagnostic 'art' in applying this knowledge to particular cases: in the case of professions that have a relatively high level of autonomy, the power of senior administrators is curtailed and 'If it is true that management cannot rationalize such work ... then it can only maintain an administrative framework around it' (77). A notion that construction and preservation of cognitive indeterminacy is a strategic mechanism for securing professional autonomy is implicit in Wilkensky's (78) thesis that professional power is maximised when it operates in a field of activity that is relatively unpredictable and

76 Ibid p.77
77 Freidson, E., 'Professionalization And The Organization Of Middle-Class Labour In Post-Industrial Society' in Halmos, P., (ed) (1973) op.cit. p.55
78 Wilensky, H.L., (1964) op.cit.
uncertain. A more explicit statement is Freidson's\(^{(79)}\) observation that if professional knowledge is portrayed as the antithesis of formal, readily communicable rules, techniques and procedures it is easier for professionals to claim that '... their work is of such complex character requiring so much judgement, that formal standards or rules are too arbitrary to be applicable.'\(^{(80)}\).

Despite the functionality of cognitive indeterminacy for professional autonomy, there are structural limitations to its application. Professional knowledge and skill cannot be wholly ambiguous, esoteric, or so individualised that it is uncommunicable; there has to be sufficient clarity and definiteness of knowledge, values and skill if professionals are to pass these on to new recruits and be able to evaluate who shall be granted a qualification to practice in accordance with (ideally) a set of commonly 'shared' professional definitions of appropriate values, knowledge, and skill. Also, if the outcomes of professional actions are wholly intangible there is no possibility of being able to demonstrate effectiveness to others; if this happens, the professional group in question is vulnerable to the imposition of external performance indicators and susceptible to a partial 'takeover' by administrators or politicians or other occupational groups. Imposition of external controls or domination by bureaucratic, political or lay interests and perspectives may be associated with standardisation of tasks and, in effect, become

80 Ibid. p.34
a form of professional 'de-skilling'\(^{81}\). Professional power, not least in public bureaucracies that require social expenditure in the financing of services to clients, is likely to be greatest where a correct 'balance' is struck between two conflicting criteria. These are, on the one hand, sufficient cognitive indeterminacy and technique-ambiguity to achieve professional autonomy; and on the other, sufficient demonstration of 'technical-rationality' and observable effectiveness to avoid losing professional autonomy. As Collins\(^{82}\) observes '... the strongest professions occur in the case of ... (those) ... which are of the right degree of effectiveness and ambiguity'\(^{83}\) (italic added). Jamous and Peloille\(^{84}\) note the 'virtualities' of professionals are associated with personalised and individualised applications of knowledge to particular cases. The notion of 'balance' between cognitive indeterminacy and technical rationality is a central feature in Jamous and Peloille's analysis. Organisational contexts lay emphasis upon technicality, visible procedural knowledge and techniques, and externally 'assessable' criteria for judging the outcomes of professional interventions, in order to demonstrate organizational effectiveness and competence in the delivery of services to clients and

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83 Ibid p.342

In industrial societies this ethic of effectiveness also has a larger social dimension; efficiency in role-task performance in industrial societies embodies 'modernist' cultural values enshrined in the concept of cognitive rationality, noted in Parsons (86), in Weber's (87) concept of rationalism, and in Habermas's (88) analysis of 'rational-purposive action'. Jamous and Peloille describe the contradictory imperatives of indeterminacy/instrumental rationality as a ratio, which in the case of professions as compared with non-professional occupations is a relatively 'high' ratio: they write that professions or professionalising occupations are '... occupations or activities whose indetermination/technicality ratio ... is generally high ...' (89). However if, as indicated earlier, this ratio of indeterminacy/instrumental technical rationality becomes too 'high' or too 'low' the professional-autonomy model is threatened.

Professional training curricula are an element in the reproduction of 'indeterminate' professional knowledge. A complicating factor is that most if not all professions have the 'segmentary' structural form referred to at the beginning of the chapter. Professional curricula may be regarded as embodying the difficult-to-achieve objectives of 'containing' divided professional loyalties and internal divisions of political, technical, or philosophical perspectives, whilst at the same time attempting public presentation of a cognitive structure that is

85 Ibid
86 Parsons, T., 'Professions' in International Encyclopedia Of The Social Sciences 12, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1968 p.536
88 Habermas, J., Communication And The Evolution Of Society Boston, Beacon, 1979, pp.116-123
89 Jamous, H., and Peloille, B., (1970) op.cit p.113
relatively indeterminate, esoteric, and distinctive to the profession 
as a whole. Drawing upon the work of Bordieu and Passeron (90), 
Atkinson (91) observes professional curricula

'... promote the appearance of consensus while actually 
enshrining sectional interests and perspectives ... curricula ... 
incorporate - while often masking - intraprofessional interests, 
as well as reproducing the esoteric expertise which is held to be 
the preserve of the profession as a whole. Relatively little 
attention has been paid to this aspect of professional curricula' 
(92) (italics added)

Atkinson's formulation points to a complex process consisting of 
professional attempts to secure at least a degree of normative 
consensus amongst occupational protagonists ('constituencies') whilst 
simultaneous attempts are made to construct a principle of professional 
'exclusion' through esoteric 'indeterminate' knowledge that identifies 
the profession, first, as a profession (i.e. as a highly complex 
expertise-based activity), and secondly, as a distinctive, recognisably 
homogeneous entity that has professional 'unity'. If Atkinson's 
hypothesis on the role of professional curricula is combined with 
Jamous and Peloille's concept of the indetermination/technicality 
ratio a postulate emerges broadly in line with Larson's (93) 
observation that professional knowledge

90 Bordieu, P., and Passeron, J.C., Reproduction In Education And 
91 Atkinson, P., 'The Reproduction Of The Professional Community' in 
Dingwall, R., and Lewis, P., (eds) The Sociology Of The 
Professions. London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1983, 
pp.224-241
92 Ibid p.239
Analysis Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977
"... must be specific enough to impart distinctiveness to the professional commodity, it must be formalized or codified enough to allow standardization of the product, and ultimately of the producers, and yet it must not be so clearly codified that it does not allow a principle of exclusion to exist" (94).

Fox's (95) paper 'Training For Uncertainty' published in 1957 in Merton's text The Student Physician (96) bears the same part-title as Heraud's (97) Training For Uncertainty Social Work Education (98).

An implication from the work of Bordieu and Passeron, Atkinson, and Larson, above, is that 'training for uncertainty' emphasises cognitive indeterminacy and intellectual and practical complexities the solution of which is never allowed to be 'too' close at hand i.e. an emphasis upon the need for continuous further learning in 'the search for clarification' is itself part of the construction of knowledge indetermination in professional communities. Atkinson is critical of curricula studies in the sociology of professions which "treat such matters as 'training for uncertainty' ... in terms of individual psychology and adaptation" (99); the 'uncertainties' that Atkinson, and Jamous and Peloille, earlier, have in mind refer mainly to structural factors in the professionalisation process, not the individual

96 Merton, R.K., et.al (eds) (1957) op.cit
98 Ibid
99 Atkinson, P., (1983) op.cit p.238
psychological adaptation of students to 'given' professional complexities that they may face after graduation.

A hypothesis that discursively formulated professional interests, in particular professional-autonomy and insulation from external controls, are served through deliberate professional construction and reproduction of indeterminate knowledge may have explanatory value in sociology of social work. Criticisms of professional 'mystification' of social work knowledge are too well-known to require repetition here. For at least three reasons, however, most of these criticisms do not of themselves fully demonstrate that the cognitive indeterminacy thesis, in the form just referred to, is relevant to an understanding of social work. First, large areas of social work are 'practical' rather than esoteric. In social work education, a part of the curriculum consists of the teaching of factual information to equip students with a knowledge of the law, financial and housing and other client entitlements, functions and procedures in welfare and other agencies, physical and health-care needs of children, the elderly, and physically-disabled persons, together with a variety of other forms of practical knowledge. In social work practice, psychotherapeutic casework perspectives may be said to embody an element of knowledge 'indetermination' rather than, in Jamous and Peloille's terms, 'technicality'; however psychotherapy and social work are not synonymous. Davies argues for a style of social work based upon 'essential knowledge' of a highly practical.

100 A vivid expression of criticism of this kind is North, M., The Secular Priests : Psychotherapists In Contemporary Society London, Allen and Unwin, 1972
102 Ibid p.222
kind and Pratt and Grimshaw's study suggested education social workers draw upon cultural 'commonsense' and 'life-experience' rather than upon theoretical knowledge or psychologically-conceptualised 'uses of self'. There is evidence, also, that a preferred role-orientation amongst some, though not all, social workers is provision of practical help to clients in such matters as housing and entitlement to financial benefits. Second, it can be argued ethical, philosophical, and political indeterminacies are an inherent, inescapable concomitant of human welfare. In chapter three it was noted ambiguities surrounding 'theory-practice' and the politics of social work were, in part, associated with the movement begun by the Charity Organisation Society to construct a modern profession predicated upon 'creative' individualised applications of theoretical-knowledge to particular cases. However the professionalisation process cannot be said to be the only factor in the development of complex ambiguities surrounding social work knowledge, politics, and 'theory-practice'. Pearson observes problems of human welfare are intrinsically ambiguous. Professionally constructed indeterminations, if these can be shown to exist, may be 'overlaid' upon the complex moral-political calculus of human welfare and of welfare systems but they are not the cause of extant complexities.

103 Ibid pp.225-232
107 Ibid Chapter 5.
108 Ibid
already 'in' that calculus. Third, it is not necessarily the case that intentional constructions of cognitive indeterminacy are an expression of professionalising aspirations. Such constructions may be undertaken for a variety of different purposes. It has, for example, been argued by some writers that professionalisation, rather than exaggerate the complexity of professional operations has resulted in an intellectual oversimplification of the 'true' complexity of professional welfare activity. Timms and Timms (109) argue for greater intellectual understanding in social work of complicated issues of philosophy, values, and theory, that underpin welfare practices. In Timms and Timms's appraisal, social work has been guilty of 'smug sanctimoniousness' (110) and 'ill-founded certainty' (111) in its intellectual grasp of moral-political ambiguities in matters of social welfare. Timms and Timms's 'solution' is not to encourage further movement towards professionalism as a way of securing firmer intellectual understanding of the complexity of welfare; on the contrary, their view is that too much effort has already been put into trying to '... dress social work in the borrowed, ill-fitting clothes of professionalism' (112).

For the reasons just indicated ambiguity, indeterminacy and complexity surrounding social work knowledge, 'theory-practice', and welfare politics, cannot accurately be said to be wholly professionally constructed. This does not mean cognitive indeterminacy is unrelated to professionalism and professionalisation processes. Wilson (113)

110 Ibid p.5
111 Ibid p.220
112 Ibid p.217
in reporting a paper presented by Butrym in 1972 at a conference of
the National Institute of Social Work Training states that Butrym in
her paper

"... succeeded in highlighting the complexities involved in
satisfactorily defining 'social casework', but the conference was
also reminded by Miss Butrym that 'clarity can be a bad thing if
it is viewed in either too absolute terms or if it is allowed to
become a disincentive to further learning' " (114) (italics added)

There is more than one form of cognitive indetermination in social work
and welfare. Butrym's notion that 'clarity can be a bad thing', or
the cognitions and psychological insights developed in social work
'process' learning as described in Simon (115) and Harris et.al (116)
refer to 'areas of complexity' that are a different order of phenomenon
to those analysed in, say, Offe's (117) macro-critique of complex social

114 Ibid
115 Simon, B., The Nature And Objectives Of Professional Education
Association Of Social Work Teachers, University of Leicester,
1967. Simon's criticism of process-learning is 'The danger... is...
of swinging the pendulum too far - of seeing so clearly the need
for releasing and stabilizing the emotional life of our students,
of assisting them to become rich and balanced personalities, that
we end up by throwing the intellectual content of our course out
of the window and remaining on the psychotherapeutic plane' (p.10)
Almost twenty years after Simon wrote this a similar, though less
strongly stated, criticism is made in a text on 'process' learning
also published at the University of Leicester by The Association
Of Teachers In Social Work Education: in this text the main
editor, Harris, comments that in correcting an overemphasis on
'content' it is possible to 'go too far in the opposite
direction'. See Harris, R.J., in Harris R.J., et.al
(eds) Educating Social Workers University of Leicester,
Association of Teachers In Social Work Education, 1985, p.145
116 Harris, R.J., et.al (eds) (1985)
117 Offe, C., Contradictions Of The Welfare State (ed. Keane,
J.,) London, Hutchinson, 1984
and political contradictions in modern welfare systems. In social work practice, it was noted earlier that social work research points to the existence of a plurality of role-orientations, including an orientation which gives primacy to providing 'tangible help (material/financial)' (118) to clients. However this orientation is not predominant and Rees and Wallace (119) conclude from their review of research data on social worker role-perspectives that

'In our account of social workers' valued images and activities, we found them with goals which sounded worthy yet esoteric ... major social issues affecting peoples lives were not addressed. For example, people who are poor or unemployed or homeless generally feel at a loss in the social service market place, trying to find their way in a maze of alleged social service entitlements. In relation to people with such difficulties some social workers acknowledged that their objectives referred to talking about feelings and heightening self-awareness' (120)

Emphasis upon psychotherapeutic perspectives are closer to the first part of Jamous and Peloille's indetermination/technicality ratio; emphasis on providing 'tangible help' to clients is closer to the second element in this ratio. This is illustrated in Gammack's (121) defence of a psychotherapeutic orientation. Gammack is highly critical of Green's (122) account of practical social work help given to victims of a major winter blizzard that occurred in 1978. Green suggests practical assistance in times of emergency is likely to help gain 'more public approval' (123) of the social workers role through demonstration of social work's capacity to be 'visible, purposeful,

120 Ibid p.155
123 Green, G., (1979) op.cit quoted in Gammack, G., (1982) op.cit. p.5
useful'. Gammack acknowledges 'checking on the physical well-being of old and handicapped people in the wake of flood and disaster are essential and admirable duties'. He asks 'Are they, however, social work?' . Gammack suggests Green's role-orientation is symbolic of social work having 'succeeded to the pressure ... (of) ... external, environmental ... sources of distress'. In Gammack's perspective '... the heart of social work consists of interpersonal activities' but social work is threatened because it is 'under great pressure to produce tangible, immediate, practical services'. This threat is traced to 'societal pressures for concreteness ... (which) ... are paralleled in contemporary trends in social work ... towards an increasing focus on the definable element in ... social work practice'. (italic added).

Gammack proceeds to outline his concept of social work from a psychotherapeutic perspective: he refers to a 'maturational dynamic' in casework relationships with clients, 'projected self-acceptance', 'resistance' and 'transactional process'.

In the conclusion to his paper Gammack re-emphasises a need to oppose 'the current tendencies to want to have everything explicit...'.

124 Ibid
125 Gammack, G., (1982) op. cit p.5
126 Ibid
127 Ibid
128 Ibid p.4
129 Ibid
130 Ibid p.5
131 Ibid p.7
132 Ibid p.8
133 Ibid p.15
134 Ibid p.13
135 Ibid p.20
for Gammack 'the art of social work'(136) refers to phenomena that like 'Air and water cannot be cut or clutched ...'(137). In this description of the psychotherapeutic orientation in professional social work, Gammack's 'Air and Water' characterisation of social work processes is a (slightly exaggerated) exemplar of the 'indeterminate' professional role-orientation rejected by the employers constituency, described in the first chapter.

In welcoming the new 'practical' training policy described in the first chapter the employers expressed pungent criticisms of professionalism. This prompted some members of the professional constituency to respond by arguing for 'more' not 'less' professionalism. Harbert(138), a Director of Social Services, in a highly critical article referred to 'status professionalism'(139). Perspectival distance between these two constituencies is evident in Measures's(140) rebuttal of Harbert's criticisms. Measures, a 'senior practitioner'(141) and member of the British Association Of Social Workers (BASW), responded to Harbert's article by arguing for a tightening of eligibility criteria for professional membership of the BASW(142) and for a policy of appointing only professional social workers to senior management posts, including the post of Director Of

136 Ibid
137 Ibid
138 Harbert, W., 'Status Professionalism' Community Care 10 October 1985, pp.14-15
139 Ibid p.14
140 Measures, P., 'Professionalism' Community Care 17 April 1986, pp.16-17
141 Ibid p.17
142 Ibid p.16
Social Services (143). In Measures's view there is a need to '... increase professionalism in order to avoid ... unprofessional failings' (144) (italics added) and in order to enable professionals to cope with 'the increasing ... (task) ... complexity of social work' (145) (italics added). In an article published in 1986, Warner (146) writing in his capacity as Director of Social Services at Kent County Council, refers to '... a shrinking cadre of professionals' (147) and states '... social workers cannot insulate themselves from ... the reality of 1980's style social services' (148). Warner's indictment of professionalism is that it is 'difficult' to persuade social workers to '... accept their accountability should be defined and their performance monitored and appraised ... More appraisal and stricter accountability means bringing things out into the open - not something that professionals like ... social workers always like to do' (149) (italics added)

In this statement Warner is challenging the professional-autonomy model of social work. As noted previously, construction of professional cognitive indeterminacy is described by McKinlay, Wilensky, Friedson and others as a mechanism for preserving professional authority. Unless there is at least some cognitive indeterminacy, there is no 'professionalism'. The crucial question, however, in terms of sustaining professional legitimacy and professional authority, is 'how much' indeterminacy. Collins, earlier, noted the most powerful professions are those 'which are of the right degree of effectiveness

143 Ibid p.17
144 Ibid p.16
145 Ibid
147 Ibid p.15
148 Ibid
149 Ibid
and ambiguity'. The parameters of cognitive ambiguity in Jamous and Peloille's indetermination/technicality ratio are socially negotiated, not objective 'givens'. If the ratio is too low, there is no professionalism. However when the ratio is perceived as having become too high, and the parameter of cognitive ambiguity perceived by powerful bureaucratic or political actors to have been exceeded, a concept of individualised professional 'virtuality' becomes self-negating. It can be argued this process is manifest in modern social work. In the 1980's the increasing dominance of the employers' constituency described in the first chapter, and employer criticism of 'esoteric' professional practice and professional curricula in academic institutions, were factors in the decision taken in 1986 to reform social work education in the direction favoured by employers but which had been strongly resisted by the professional constituency and by academic-professional educators. Pearson (150) in a reference to radical social work theories in the 1970's refers to a perception of some of these theories as a form of 'radical immaturity' (151). However 'radical social work' in practice did not turn out to be the threat employers had initially feared it would pose. In the 1980's professional social work is said by Howe (152) to have 'failed' not because it is regarded as 'too radical' but because of its preoccupation with individual casework based upon 'psychotherapeutic presumptions' (153). In Howe's analysis, it is an accumulation of

151 Ibid p.80
153 Ibid p.77
perceptions that professional social work is ineffective and 'irrelevant' (154) that have led to its bureaucratisation (155). Glastonbury (156) in his text Social Work In Conflict published in 1980 anticipated some of the inter-constituency conflicts that developed more strongly later in the decade and which, as described in the first chapter, were 'activated' in the form of conflict over proposals to reform social work education. In describing tensions and ambiguities surrounding opposed definitions of the nature and role of social work, Glastonbury observes 'Given such uncertainties, any group with a clear idea of how to proceed must be well placed to gain a strong position' (157). In the period since Glastonbury wrote, the political strength of the professional constituency in the internal structure of the social work community appears to have been considerably weakened. On the evidence reviewed here one of the reasons for this is that professional social work in the 1980's is perceived by powerful collective social work actors to have 'exceeded' Jamous and Peloille's indetermination/technicality ratio and to have failed to demonstrate its effectiveness in visible and assessable terms.

Other factors have a bearing upon internal conflicts of perspective in modern social work. Professional and employer constituencies jointly operate within a larger socio-political context and one element in social work's internal conflicts of purpose and method in the late 1970's and 1980's is service-user and public criticisms of state social services. Perceptions of the status of these criticisms, and of how they should be responded to, are matters of internal dispute within social work. Below, the legitimation crisis

154 Ibid
155 Ibid
157 Ibid p.40, quoted in Howe, D., (1983) op.cit p.78
of the modern welfare state is examined as a crucial macro-contextual factor influencing perceptions of social work and the social services, and as a factor in social work's internal struggles to find ways of demonstrating its effectiveness.

THE LEGITIMATION CRISIS OF THE MODERN WELFARE STATE

A crisis of public confidence in the ability of the modern welfare state to provide effective solutions to personal and social problems is relatively well-documented, although interpretations of the form of the legitimation crisis vary. Most analyses concur the legitimation crisis predates the political ideology of the 'new right' (158) associated with 'Thatcherite' policies following the Conservative Party election victory of 1979. Benton (159) observes

'Labour and Conservative administrations ... have exhibited a degree of convergence in their support for the voluntary sector. Both parties have ... endeavoured to cut expenditure on social services. As a corollary to social expenditure cuts made or attempted, and as a gesture to mollify adverse public opinion, both parties sought to make a virtue out of necessity in presenting a glowing case for the superior advantages of voluntary action of all kinds' (160)

Gough (161) notes that '... quantitative attack on the welfare state was initiated by the Wilson/Callaghan administrations in 1975: the Conservative policy is simply more (or rather less) of the same' (162).

160 Ibid p.134
162 Ibid p.7
Lawrence (163) identifies social expenditure cuts as an outcome of political pragmatism that was later reinforced by new right political ideology.

"Despite the evidence of a traditional hostility in the Labour Party to voluntary action, the 1974-79 government was, broadly speaking, sympathetic to the voluntary sector. This can be identified as a pragmatic response to the cuts in welfare services, especially from 1976 onwards. If voluntary effort were encouraged it might be a way of reducing the impact of cuts in state spending or, at the least, a way of being seen to be doing something to soften the blow. In many respects Tory policy is a continuation of this with the added ideological aspect of 'rolling back the frontiers of the state' " (164)

As well as public and political support for principles underlining the existence of the voluntary sector as both a cushion against reduced social expenditure and (as will be shown later) a 'counterweight' against state monopoly of services, the private welfare sector has expanded considerably - though not as a direct consequence of Thatcherite welfare ideology. Taylor-Gooby's (165) statistical analysis of the expansion of private welfare in the period 1951-83 reveals an upward trend in movement towards the private sector (166). This applies, for example, to the percentage of the labour force in occupational pension schemes and in occupational sick pay schemes; the percentage of the population in private health insurance schemes; the percentage of pupils in independent schools, and the expansion of housing owner-occupation (167). The data examined by Taylor-Gooby reveal no sharp rise in the long-term expansion of private welfare.

164 Ibid p.27
166 Ibid p.230 Table 2 'The Growth Of Private Welfare In The United Kingdom 1951-83'
167 Ibid
after 1979 and he concludes '... the long-run expansion of private welfare has been little influenced by the policies of the 'eighties' (168).

In a series of analyses published in the 1980's Taylor-Gooby indicates public perceptions of the welfare state are complex and variable. His analysis of empirical data on public perceptions of state services leads him to a general conclusion that the notion of '... an imminent crisis in the welfare state as a response to public opinion and a watershed in the politics of welfare is mistaken' (169). This general conclusion rests partly on data reported elsewhere by Taylor-Gooby (170). These data published in 1983 were challenged on statistical grounds in a paper by Marsland (171). In a response to Marsland, Taylor-Gooby (172) re-asserted the statistical basis for his conclusion that large areas of the welfare state remain publicly popular, and noted also that public attitudes towards state services are in some instances highly ambivalent; he makes reference (173) to an

168 Ibid pp.228-229
173 Ibid p.89
American study by Free and Cantril (174) in which a distinction is made between 'ideological' and 'operational' attitudes. Ideological attitudes refer to approval or disapproval of the principle of state public services, operational attitudes refer to approval or disapproval of specific services; the relation between these two attitudinal spheres is often not consistent (175) so that it is possible, for example, to hold a general 'anti-state' ideological philosophy, yet also place high value upon particular state services. In a paper published in 1986 Taylor-Gooby (176) returned to the question of ambivalence in public attitudes towards public welfare services. His analysis of opinion poll data for the period 1979-83 suggests the proportion of the population wanting higher public expenditure on health, education, and welfare rose from thirty-nine to fifty-nine percent (177). However these and other data also indicate large sections of the population do not wish to see a monopoly of state services and '... are in favour of both more state spending and more private welfare' (178). In a reference to supporting data in Harrison and Gretton (179) this finding is said by Taylor-Gooby to be unsurprising because '... after all, people may just want more welfare ... and not be too particular as to whether it comes from state

174 Free, L., and Cantrill, A., The Political Beliefs Of Americans
Rutgers University Press, 1967
175 Taylor-Gooby, P., (1984) op.cit. p.89
177 Ibid p.229
178 Ibid
179 Harrison, A., and Gretton, J., Health Care UK 1985 London,
Chartered Institute Of Public Finance And Accountancy, 1985 p.47,
or market. Taylor-Gooby's analysis of data from a national survey of 2,000 adults contacted in 1984 reveals dissatisfaction with the quality, standards, and level of funding in state services. For example, occupational pension schemes are seen as superior to the state retirement pension scheme, primarily because occupational schemes are regarded as providing more information to members and give members more scope for collectively influencing how schemes should operate, and because the level of provision is regarded as superior in non-state schemes. In private health schemes quantity and quality of resources, waiting lists, information provision, and adequacy of consumer complaints procedures were all rated as superior to state health provision and similar views existed in respect of the 'superior' quality, standards, level of resources and user-responsive nature of private education and other private services. Almost all respondents, however, were opposed to cuts in state services. For state health, education, and pensions the proportion of respondents who wanted expenditure cuts were 4 percent, 3 percent, and 5 percent; for these three services the proportion wishing to see levels of current expenditure maintained varied between 41 percent and 44 percent, and the proportion who wanted increased expenditure on these three services was between 41 percent and 45 percent. Taylor-Gooby's conclusion is that the private welfare sector is regarded as superior to the state sector in terms of quality of service, level of resources, and consumer-

180 Taylor-Gooby, P., (1986) op.cit p.229
181 Ibid p.236
182 Ibid p.237
183 Ibid p.239
184 Ibid pp.238-244
185 Ibid p.241
responsiveness (186) and on the last of these criteria he notes '... there is strong dissatisfaction with state welfare resulting from the experience by clients of oppression by state professionals and bureaucrats' (187). Equally, there is evidence of a strong body of public opinion that welfare state services should be more adequately resourced, made more effective, and democratised to provide greater user-responsiveness (188). Taylor-Gooby concludes the principle of state welfare is relatively well-entrenched, and further cuts in valued state services are likely to be strongly resisted: he notes '... sentiments that support privatization are real ... (but) ... they co-exist with countervailing sentiments of collectivism' (189) (italic added).

Less empirically-based analyses than Taylor-Gooby's reveal a variety of interpretations of 'the legitimation crisis'. Levitas (190) fears the doctrines of socialism itself are threatened by the persuasiveness of new right ideological rhetoric and 'The electorate has been persuaded to give ... support to a set of extremely damaging policies which are not in their interests' (191) (italic added). A different emphasis is provided by Deacon (192) who notes the state's solution to the problems of social welfare in Britain and other western capitalist societies has been challenged since the mid-seventies in

186 Ibid p.244
187 Ibid p.243
188 Ibid p.244
189 Ibid
190 Levitas, R., (ed) (1986) op.cit
191 Ibid p.18
192 Deacon, B., 'Strategies For Welfare: East and West Europe'

Critical Social Policy Issue 14 (Winter) 1985/86 pp.4-26
... a remarkably parallel way from both the right with its case for consumer sovereignty through the market and the left with its case for user control through less bureaucratic, centralised, and professionally dominated forms of provision' (193)

Most left-political analyses of the modern welfare state, though containing a wider range of detailed emphases than need be explored here, reflect one or the other of two broad interpretive approaches. The first rests on a view that though it may have a contradictory relationship to capitalism the welfare state is ultimately functional for capitalism, and also—despite the phenomenon of new right politics—commands a high level of public support. Although variation exists as between the form of analysis employed by different writers in this first approach its major exponents, including Therborn (194) Offe (195) and Taylor-Gooby (196) concur that the welfare state is largely intact, well entrenched, and likely to survive its 'legitimation crisis'. The second approach, which takes a less 'optimistic' view of the future of state services, rests largely on an (unproven) assumption that there is massive public disaffection from the welfare state and this combined with the impact of new right political rhetoric is likely to produce '... a steady, drip-by-drip, attrition of public support for the statutory services ... preparing public opinion for a more severe pruning of the welfare state in due course' (197). As already noted, there is no empirical evidence to support the notion that there is widespread public support for reduced state expenditure and most of the evidence points in the opposite direction. In some

193 Ibid p.4
196 Taylor-Gooby, P., (1985) *op.cit* p.82
197 Brenton, M., (1985) *op.cit* p.151
analyses the term 'welfare state' is used in a broad sense without reference to particular services. Data employed in Taylor-Gooby (198) indicate some sections of the welfare state are unpopular, particularly means-tested provision like social security, and council housing, but other sections of the welfare state command widespread public support, in particular education, the NHS, and retirement pensions (199). Riddell (200) notes public support for universal state services in health, education, and provision for the elderly is consistently indicated in opinion polls (201) and public support for the social services was indicated in poll surveys taken before and after the election of the 'Thatcher' Tory government in 1979 (202). Empirical data assembled from a variety of sources over a number of years point consistently to a high level of public endorsement of large areas of the welfare state and to widespread public resistance against further cuts in social expenditure. These data lend a degree of credence to a view that the Tory election success in 1979 was partly an outcome of pre-election promises (repeated in countless radio and television broadcasts and interviews and in the national press) in the form of assurances that if elected to office a new Tory government would not dismantle the welfare state (which would be 'safe in our hands') but would 'shake-up' the welfare state, make it more cost-efficient, less bureaucratic and more effective in its operation, and more responsive to the 'real' needs and preferences of service-users as 'consumers'.

199 Ibid pp.29-32
201 Ibid p.138
202 Ibid pp.239-40
Other factors ranging from international politics to public and media-influenced perceptions of public-sector union activity in the 'winter of discontent' of 1979 undoubtedly had electoral significance. These factors, however, do not have any particular explanatory significance in the data referred to earlier concerning public opposition to cuts in social expenditure, and perceptions that state services (relative to the private sector) are inadequate for reasons of quality and standards, level of resources, and (lack of) user-responsiveness. Mishra\(^{(204)}\) cites Butler and Kavanagh\(^{(205)}\) and other data on public perceptions of state services and suggests there is no evidence '... that Thatcher won political support and the election (1979) on a platform and an ideology which repudiated the welfare state'\(^{(206)}\). Though the policy platform of the Tories '... took a strong anti-statist line, it did not go so far as to attack the social services and social expenditures per se'\(^{(207)}\). During the election campaign...

'... what conservatives promised to cut out was ... wasteful public expenditure ... eliminating unnecessary ... bureaucracy ... making public services more efficient ... unlike the Reagan platform of reducing social expenditures and programmes in the United States, the Thatcher campaign (1979) did not propose retrenching the welfare state.' \(^{(208)}\)

This is reiterated in Mishra's conclusion '... it is clear that Mrs. Thatcher and the Tories did not fight the 1979 election (or 1983 for that matter) on a platform that was opposed to the mainstream social

\(^{(203)}\) Mishra, R., 'The Left And The Welfare State: A Critical Analysis'

\textit{Critical Social Policy} Issue 15 (Spring) 1986 pp.6-7

\(^{(204)}\) Mishra, R., (1986) op.cit


\(^{(206)}\) Ibid p.6

\(^{(207)}\) Ibid

\(^{(208)}\) Ibid pp.6-7
programmes such as health care, education, and pensions ... In sum, the idea that the Thatcherites campaigned on a platform opposed to the welfare state has no basis in evidence' (209).

Mishra's central conclusion is that there has been no public rejection of the principle of state welfare services; what has been rejected is '... the actual administration of the services i.e. the form or manner in which the service is delivered' (210) (second italic added). A distinction between the principle of state social services and the particular form of service-delivery framework through which social services are provided to users is

'... an important distinction relevant to the struggle for de-bureaucratising the services, making them more accountable and bringing them closer to the community. It is a struggle that progressives have been waging within (and without) the welfare state for some time now. But the nature of the 'enemy', i.e. the organisation and delivery systems rather than the principle of collective provision, has not always been kept clear.' (211)

The distinction between '... the welfare state as idea or principle ... and the structure or form in which the idea is realised ...' (212) is in Mishra's analysis a basis for socialist welfare

'... what is involved is both the idea of state responsibility for maintaining minimum levels of living as well as a set of institutional arrangements which translate the idea into practice. They are logically separable and the distinction is important. Surely the left must defend the former while it wages the struggle to change the latter' (213)

In reforming the institutional arrangements of welfare one of the problems requiring solution is 'bureaucratic or professional imposition' (214). Mishra notes that though opinion polls consistently show public support for the principle (or 'idea') of state social
there is evidence that 'many working people ... have experienced ... the social services ... with officials, professionals and others, as negative' (216). Mishra criticises 'bureaucratic administration ... (and) ... professional dominance ... (in) ... the social services ...' (217). He argues for the development of '... less bureaucratic and more self-managed and participatory services ...' (218) which in his analysis are a less 'dominating' and more user-responsive '... progressive struggle against the depredations of capitalism ...' (219) and, as suggested earlier, a way of responding to an electorate that 'voted with its feet' in rejecting not the general principle of state social services but the particular institutional frameworks and service-delivery systems through which these services are experienced by those who use them.

Some of the themes raised in Mishra's analysis, particularly those of service-decentralisation, democratisation and user-involvement in the planning and provision of services, are examined in the final section of the chapter on service decentralisation and community social work. It may be noted Mishra's account was not addressed to the debate of professionalism or bureaucracy, both of which are criticised in his account of service-delivery systems in the social services and in the electorate-perspectives and service-user experiences reported in his data and in those of Taylor-Gooby, discussed earlier. In the previous analysis of cognitive indeterminacy it was suggested professional social work in the 1980's is perceived by employers and senior social services managements to have 'exceeded' what Jamous and Peloille

215 Ibid pp.7-8
216 Ibid p.8
217 Ibid p.10
218 Ibid
219 Ibid p.11
describe as the indetermination/technicality ratio. If a perception of the 'failure' of esoteric professionalism has, as suggested in the earlier analysis, been a significant factor leading to bureaucratisation of the social services, the form of this bureaucracy may rest on the principle of centralised hierarchical control in the planning, organisation, and delivery of services. It is clear that Mishra, however, does not seek to 'replace' professionalism by unbridled management bureaucracy: his main interest was in democratic, flexible, and user-responsive services together with user-involvement in the planning and delivery of services. A number of writers, including advocates of service decentralisation and community social work, argue a non-hierarchical 'organic' concept of organisational structures and service-delivery frameworks is a remedy for some of the problems of 'legitimation deficit' revealed in Taylor-Gooby and Mishra's data analyses of the legitimation crisis of state social services. The organic concept is examined below, first in general terms and then with particular reference to social work and the personal social services.

**ORGANIC' ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES**

Burns and Stalker's (220) distinction between mechanistic and organistic organisational structures is broadly similar to definitions of these concepts employed in the studies referred to below. Mechanistic (or 'bureaucratic') structures are characterised by hierarchical systems of control, authority, and of communication, and by predetermined

allocations of tasks and roles that are relatively precisely predefined by senior managers; organistic structures are characterised by decentralisation of authority and relative absence of predetermined role-allocations in favour of a process of adjustment and continual re-definition of individual roles through informal as well as formal interaction with others, and where individuals' particular expertise or interests are 'negotiated' in the distribution of tasks\(^{221}\). Burns and Stalker suggest mechanistic structures are appropriate in stable environmental conditions where the quantity and nature of demands for organisational goods and services are relatively predictable; conversely, organic structures are '... appropriate to changing conditions, which give rise constantly to fresh problems and unforeseen requirements for action which cannot be broken down or distributed automatically arising from the functional roles defined within a hierarchic structure\(^{222}\). The organic concept in its application to welfare systems has received attention in a large number of American studies of organisational processes in welfare agencies. Litwak and Meyer\(^{223}\) distinguish social processes and problems in local communities as being composed of 'uniform' aspects (recurrent and predictable) and 'non-uniform' (idiosyncratic and emergent) and suggest for responding to the former the predictability, consistency, and standardisation of mechanistic structures are appropriate, but for responding to non-uniform environmental demands and processes a 'looser' organic structure is better equipped for coping with change.

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221 Ibid pp.119-22
222 Ibid p.120
and uncertainty\textsuperscript{(224)}. An identical conclusion to Litwak and Meyer\textsuperscript{'s} is reported in work by Lorch and Lawrence\textsuperscript{(225)}. In these studies it is not suggested a distinction between uniform (predictable) and non-uniform (emergent) community problems and processes refer to 'static' phenomenon: problems that at one period are uniform may quite quickly become 'non-uniform', and vice-versa. An implication of this is that an 'organic' community project may identify recurrent problems and a predictable pattern of need for which at some later stage standardised, statutory programmes of service-delivery or resource provision become appropriate; or the reverse process may occur, where community problems previously thought to have been appropriately handled through mechanistic systems of service are shown to require movement towards short or long-term organic, 'negotiable' decentralised neighbourhood schemes. The idea of synchronising welfare service-delivery frameworks to changing environmental processes and of 'linking' formal and informal systems of activity is developed in Litwak\textsuperscript{(226)} and in Litwak and Meyer\textsuperscript{(227)}. Litwak and Meyer\textsuperscript{(228)}, for example, show 'detached' community based workers are potentially a

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid

\textsuperscript{225} Lorch, W., and Lawrence, P., \textit{Environmental Factors And Organizational Integration} American Sociological Association, Boston, Massachusetts, 1968 (mimeograph)


\textsuperscript{228} Litwak, E., and Meyer, H., (1966) \textit{op.cit}
valuable 'linkage' mechanism between local opinion and neighbourhood perspectives, and the resources and services provided by welfare bureaucracies who operate within the neighbourhood. A similar conclusion is drawn in a study of detached workers in the Los Angeles Probation Service by Klein and Snyder (229) whose study points to issues also identified in Scott's (230) British text Going Local In Probation.

In the British social services the creation of the social services departments (SSD's) at the beginning of the 1970's were regarded with professional optimism. The SSD's were regarded as new 'unified' structures that would offer more efficient services to clients and also create higher, more 'professional' standards of practice amongst social workers (231). The social work journals of that time carried a number of articles suggesting a major challenge lay ahead and a few cautiously noted that many details of the new 'generic' professionalism remained to be worked out in their new organisational context (232). The dominant professional sentiment, however, was one of enthusiasm and optimism. Social Work Today the journal of the British Association Of Social Workers described social work expectations in its editorial comment of April 1971, and observed '... there is currently much excitement among social workers and expectations are high. It is

229 Klein, M., and Snyder, N., 'The Detached Worker : Uniformities And Variances In Work Style' Social Work Vol.10, No.4 (October) 1965, pp.60-68
230 Scott, D., et.al (eds) Going Local In Probation University Of East Anglia Social Work Programme/University of Manchester Department of Social Administration, 1985
important that this enthusiasm should be encouraged ... (233). Writing in the same edition of *Social Work Today*, Kay Richards (234) in a conference paper to newly appointed directors of social services argued that the prevailing feeling of confidence was built upon a sure foundation:

'Let us not forget the wisdom and the skills that our professional stance can give to us; nor the great value that we are inheriting in our new departments, and the fund of goodwill that exists in many quarters within the community ... The extent to which we use responsibly and creatively our new powers ... will have a fundamental effect during the next decade, and I do not think we have yet realised the influence we may be able to bring to bear on society as a whole as well as on individuals' (235)

Though over-optimistic when viewed with the benefit of hindsight these aspirations in their time and context were not entirely unjustified, and it is difficult to see how later problems in social work (and the welfare state generally) could have been reliably predicted. However, within a relatively short space of time criticisms of bureaucratic 'pathologies' in the social services departments accumulated (236). Criticisms of bureaucratic pathologies - considered separately from the professional or bureau-professional structural features of the social services departments - were to some extent predictable. Though, as Hall (237) has noted, there is no simple or universal correspondence between bureaucracy and organisation size it is largely true that:

235 Ibid p.7
236 These criticisms are noted in, for example, Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit; Satyamurti, C., (1981) op.cit; and Lee, P., (1982) op.cit
... as organisations increase in size they face characteristic problems ... informal methods of communication and administration become increasingly inappropriate, and more formal ... patterns of interaction are necessary. Thus large scale organisations develop bureaucracy as a means of coping with increased size and complexity' (238)

Pugh et.al (239) note increased size does not in all cases necessarily lead to intensification of all the attributes of bureaucracy. However a relevant variable affecting the structure of the social services departments is the relationship between the total size of an organisation and the size of its administrative unit; a number of studies, including those by Terrien and Mills (240) and Anderson and Workow (241) suggest the larger the size of an organisation, the greater will be the proportional size of its administrative component.

In the personal social services organic or quasi-organic 'responses' to criticisms relating to organisational size and structure did not receive much attention until the early 1980's, when they were inserted into social work debate in the highly controversial concept of community social work associated with the decentralisation movement.

In the 1970's bureau-professionalism in a form that was strongly opposed to the organic concept received intellectual support through the academic and management consultancy work that has come to be


239 Pugh, D., et.al 'The Context Of Organizational Structure' Administration Science Quarterly Vol.14, No.1, 1969, pp.91-113


associated with 'the Brunel studies' (242). These studies have
significance, first, because the model of social services structure
advocated by them is analytically useful as a comparative framework
that may be contrasted with organic concepts, and secondly, their role
in providing intellectual support for the principle of social work
organisational hierarchy in the 1970's is politically significant. A
large volume of research and management consultancy material was
produced over a number of years by the Social Services Organisation
Research Unit (SSORU) of the Institute Of Organisation and Social
Studies directed by Elliott Jaques at Brunel University. The unit was
established through central government funding in the late 1960's to
research and advise upon the organisational and management structure of
the new social services departments. The research, publication, and
consultancy service of the unit was the largest to have been undertaken
in the British personal social services (243) and the unit's consultancy
services and research data were disseminated through publications,
seminars and conferences attended, in the main, by senior
social services management staff and representatives of other
bodies associated with the work of the unit and of the social work
profession, including the Central Council for Education and
Training In Social Work and the Department of Health and Social

242 As well as a series of papers and research reports two major
'Brunel' texts are Social Services Organization Research Unit,
Brunel Institute Of Organization And Social Studies Social
Services Departments: Developing Patterns Of Work And Organization
London, Heinemann, 1974; Billis, D., et al. Organizing Social
Services Departments: Further Studies By The Brunel Social
Services Unit. London, Heinemann, 1980

243 Brown, M., (review) in Social Service Quarterly (Summer) 1974,
p.185; and Westland, P., (review) British Journal Of Social Work
Security (244). An objective of the unit was to engage in 'the ... general dissemination ... of ideas through conference activity, publications, contact with professional and other staff in central government ...' (245). A proactive role is expressed in a statement by the Brunel unit in 1974 that

... change ... (is) ... sought at two distinct levels - change in individual departments as a result of intensive project work within them over extended periods of time, and change nationally through the dissemination of ideas in written form and through the national conference programme ...' (246)

The Brunel researchers employed organisational and management concepts developed earlier by Jaques (247) in his 'Glacier Project' writings and in the work of his associate, Brown (248). Many of these concepts (eg. 'work-stratum levels', 'time-span zones', 'prescribed output') rested on an assumption that a natural hierarchy of work exists in organisations (249). This assumption is associated with the concept 'work-strata' (250) which implies objective, rational criteria are available for constructing a vertical task-stratification model in which definitions of, for example, 'professional work', 'non-professional work', 'more (or less) complex tasks' etc are logically-defined categories dictated by the functional requirements of the

244 SSORU/BIOSS (1974) op.cit. pp.14-15
245 Ibid p.15
246 Ibid p.237
249 Whittington, C., and Bellaby, P., (1979) op.cit. p.518
250 Billis, D., et.al (1980) op.cit. p.121
organisation and its formal purposes. A problem in analyses predicated upon the assumption of a 'natural' hierarchy is their tendency to overlook processes involved in the social production of a 'negotiated order' in which the social construction of hierarchies reflect differences of power, interests, and perspectives amongst the various social groups involved in their construction. Formalist management concepts of the kind used in the Brunel Studies may be contrasted with Bulmer's (251) analysis of organisational decision-making processes and with Hardy's (252) analysis of how the two contrasting conceptions of 'rationality' and of 'negotiation' are deployed in the study of processes involved in the formulation of social policy. The social construction of work hierarchies is graphically illustrated in Dingwall's (253) study of constructions of meanings surrounding the concept 'dirty work' (254) in the nursing profession. The 'dirty-work' end of the nursing work-continuum consists of tasks such as bathing or toileting severely physically-handicapped persons or, for example, confused elderly patients. In the older 'vocationalist' conception of nursing as a 'calling' (255) the performance of 'dirty-work' was regarded as integral to the nursing task. In contrast, the modern 'professionalist' nurse role-orientation is associated with preferences for working in high technology medicine in intensive care units, the establishment of a scientifically-validated professional knowledge base for the nursing profession, involvement in nursing administration

251 Bulmer, M., et.al Social Science And Social Policy Hemel Hempstead, Allen and Unwin, 1986
254 Ibid pp.47-51
255 Ibid p.50
and nursing research, and the professional supervision of nursing auxiliaries, aides, and students (256). Viewed from the standpoint of organisational concepts based on the notion of an objective rationally-determined 'natural' hierarchy it is possible to construct a vertical task-stratification model of professionalist/vocationalist nurses that locates 'dirty work' as a 'less complex' task that should be assigned to 'non-professional' nursing staff. However a different and 'constructionist' conceptualisation leads to a perception that the meaning of dirty-work is historically relative and socially and 'politically' constructed within the nursing community. Its meaning has changed as a consequence of the professionalisation of nursing, and at one time the performance of such work was regarded as integral to the role of the nurse.

"To pursue the example of the meaning of 'dirty work' ... this can be seen as a way of self-fulfillment for the vocationalist nurse. It is a privilege, a way of asserting the moral worth of the occupation and the humanity of the patient. To the professionalist it is something rather messy and dirty which should not really be dealt with by a professional person. It is to be sloughed off to lower status personnel. These people are notoriously badly-paid and accorded the most menial status by other professional and para-professional groups in the hospital' (257)

In this illustration the notion of a 'natural' hierarchy of tasks is supplanted by Dingwall in favour of a 'process' concept which directs attention to the social and political construction of vertical task-stratification in organisations. The organic concept rests on a view that work roles, and task-performances are 'negotiable' within limits that are wider and have more fluid, re-definable boundaries than those connedted in systems predicated upon assumptions that a 'natural' work hierarchy exists in organisations. Whittington and Bellaby (258) are

256 Ibid pp. 47-51
257 Ibid p.51
258 Whittington, C., and Bellaby, P., (1979) op. cit
critical of the Brunel Studies' tacit invocation of the concept 'natural' hierarchy, which in Whittington and Bellaby's view resulted in an aura of 'scientificity' being given to the Brunel researchers' "... ideological justification for hierarchical management structure" (259). Whittington and Bellaby's thesis is that the Brunel Institute through its publications, management consultancy services and other methods for disseminating its organisational perspectives, sought to provide academic legitimation for a 'natural' hierarchical structure that was fused to the principle of social work professionalism; this was achieved through the construction of complex management structures and lines of accountability designed to accommodate professional social work in a controlling position in what would otherwise be a professionally-threatening bureaucracy. The concept 'bureau-professionalism' as defined in Parry and Parry (260), or 'professional bureaucracy' in Taylor-Gooby and Dale's (261) similar use of the term, is fashioned from an 'either-or' conception of professionalism or bureaucracy: that if 'ideal-typical' professional autonomy is unattainable, the unpalatable alternative of 'ideal-typical' hierarchical bureaucracy is avoidable only through the construction of a hybrid model of professional-bureaucracy. It was this hybrid organisational structure that Lee (262) had in mind in his suggestion that control of social services work ('CSS work') by professional social work ('CQSW work') is achieved through a vertical task-stratification model in which traditional definitions of professional skill ('interpersonal' work with clients) are re-

259 Ibid p.524
260 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit p.43
262 Lee, P., (1982) op.cit
defined to include the notion that 'professional competence' (in social work) is synonymous with the skills required for 'management control' (of the social services) (263). Whittington and Bellaby (264) are critical of the 'Brunel' assumption that ideal-type professional autonomy (identified by the Brunel researchers with the role of hospital medical consultant) was unattainable in social work and that professional-bureaucracy was therefore the only alternative to a wholly non-professional bureaucratic hierarchy; in particular, the Brunel researchers in their advocacy of professional-bureaucracy failed to evaluate the organic concept as an alternative solution (265). The Brunel researchers make note of the organic concept but appear to dismiss it without engaging in analysis of it. Shortly after the publication of Whittington and Bellaby's paper the Brunel text Organising Social Services Departments (266), published in 1980, devoted a short paragraph to the concept, and suggested the literature '... about the correlations between various kinds of organisational structure and organisational environment ... (is) ... at broad descriptive or ideological levels ...' (267). In fact, there are a number of highly detailed American studies of the application of the concept in welfare organisations, including those referred to earlier,

263 Ibid pp.28-29 and p.32
264 Whittington, C., and Bellaby, P., (1979) op.cit
265 Ibid p.514
266 Billis, D., et.al (1980) op.cit
267 Ibid p.29
and a number of British studies\textsuperscript{(268)}. Whittington and Bellaby in their criticism of the Brunel Institute's 'dismissal' of the possibility that alternative structural forms (other than professional-bureaucracy) might be possible in the personal social services, write that

'The SSORU findings and recommendations on the personal social services ... amount to an approval of the principle of hierarchy and an attempt to discredit alternatives. Such alternatives, not all of them discussed by the SSORU group, were advocated by others ... and most often these were variants of the 'organic' structure described by Burns and Stalker ... (but) ... so resounding was their defeat that little has been heard of them since. The hierarchical principle familiar elsewhere in local government departments was implanted in a variety of ways in the social services departments' \textsuperscript{(269)}

When Whittington and Bellaby wrote this in 1979 the decentralisation debate in social work, and the notion of organic service-delivery frameworks inherent in the concept 'community social work', were still relatively muted. Nor, in 1979, did debate of a 'legitimation crisis' in state social services preoccupy the social work and welfare literature to the same degree that was to occur afterwards. Viewed historically the 'organic' concept of service-delivery, in the particular forms given to it in the decentralisation movement, is a modern encapsulation of perennial social work complications that have existed in differently expressed form since the time of the Charity Organisation Society; the relationship of social work theories and


\textsuperscript{269} Whittington, C., and Bellaby, P., (1979) \textit{op.cit} p.514
politics to organisational structure and practice, and to a concept of professional social work, are shown in the remainder of the chapter to be issues that figure strongly in the relationship of professional social work to the theories and practices of the decentralisation movement in the 1980's.

DECENTRALISATION OF SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK

As remarked above, some of the controversies surrounding the theories and practices of the decentralisation movement in the 1980's contain strong traces of social work themes that have a long history. Abstract theories of decentralisation have prompted an unfolding of perspectives in the various social work constituencies which are in some instances 'for' decentralisation, in others 'against', and in some cases ambivalent. The concrete practices of 'decentralisation' in those local authorities that have recently implemented major decentralisation programmes is no less controversial than the competing social and political theories that surround the decentralisation movement. As will be shown later, decentralisation programmes in the mid-eighties have been endorsed by a number of local authorities in the category of 'shire counties', but also by left-wing socialist inner city authorities. An aspect of decentralisation and the community social work concepts examined later is that these have been variously defined as an expression of democratic socialist welfare; of welfare pluralist values; and of 'new right' anti-state ideology said by some writers (erroneously so in the light of the data examined earlier) to be the major causal factor in the legitimisation crisis of state services. The decentralisation debate is a vivid contemporary expression of problems
in the relationship of politics and theory to practice; the debate itself is a demonstration that there is no simple or straightforward correspondence between theories and political ideologies of welfare and 'preferred' organisational and practice rubrics for implementing these theories. In another context, this was noted in chapter three where it was observed that sometimes fundamental doubt and disagreement may exist as to what a practical expression of a theory or ideology does or should consist of in essence i.e. independently of the operation of empirical constraints or situational contingencies to do with power, resources, or organisational dynamics. To what extent the theories and practices of decentralisation will dominate future social work debate and practice is difficult to predict, not least because issues of decentralisation may become increasingly interwoven with the impact upon the social work community of the new training policies currently planned for introduction in the early 1990's. It seems likely, however, that the theoretical and political issues that have been raised by the decentralisation movement will be a highly significant component in future debate of policies affecting professional social work, a significance that will become increasingly sharpened if increasing numbers of local authorities decide to follow other recent examples in implementing decentralisation programmes.

Many of the issues examined later are directly or indirectly related to proposals contained in the Barclay Report which was

270 See Chapter 3, p.329
published in 1982. The Barclay Report contains descriptive material on issues other than decentralisation and community social work. Here, only those issues raised in the Report's controversial prescriptions for community social work are examined, this being the issue upon which professional controversy has centred; indeed, the 'centring' of this issue by professional social work and other social work constituencies is a demonstration of the earlier observation concerning its role in re-activating major perennial and contemporary issues surrounding theory-practice, politics, and professionalism in its organisational and service-delivery context. Rather than itemize here the proposals by Barclay and others for decentralised 'organic' or quasi-organic service-delivery systems these are examined under a series of headings each dealing with a distinct aspect of these proposals; this is preferable in view of the range and complexity of interrelated but analytically separable dimensions of decentralisation, some of which in a number of accounts have been allowed to become blurred and confused with other issues. In what follows decentralisation is examined under two broad analytic categories. The first is described under a heading Problems and Issues of Decentralisation, identified in sub-categories dealing with conceptual and also practical division-of-labour issues in the relation of social care planning to counselling; the issue of client 'confidentiality'; consequences of community social work for the roles of women as 'informal carers'; and the implications of decentralisation for social work education. The second broadly defined category of analysis is described under a heading The Social Construction Of Responses to Community Social Work. This begins with a short overview of responses by professional, academic, and employer constituencies to decentralisation and community social work. The remaining sub-categories consist of analyses of factors in the
construction of opposition against community social work and decentralisation. These refer to the labourist dimension, including fears by professionals and unions that decentralisation programmes may erode legitimately held occupational interests to do with conditions of service; the objection that professional social work should not become involved in local 'community politics'; rejections of community social work on the grounds that it is a form of professional de-skilling likely to lead to lower standards of service to clients; the notion that community social work has ignored the argument 'there is no community' and is predicated upon an illusory, romanticised view of the structure of local communities; arguments that community social work is incompatible with the performance of 'statutory' control and protective functions assigned legislatively to social work; and objections to decentralisation and community social work practices on the grounds these are expressions of the welfare ideology of the 'new right'. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of these issues set against the broader theoretical perspective developed in chapter two. In the light of the analysis developed in the earlier chapter it will be concluded welfare politics and practice, including therefore the complex range of issues raised by the contemporary decentralisation movement, are not embodiments of structurally-given 'objective' interests. Decentralisation, and the arguments variously deployed 'for' and 'against' the decentralisation of services, are not 'necessary effects' of a social totality: if opposing interests and perspectives can be said to have developed around the decentralisation movement in the 1980's, these are the discursively formulated products of individual and collective social actors' (sense of having) particular perspectives and interests. In this last sense, as well as for the reasons noted in the chapter introduction, the modern
decentralisation movement has singular analytic significance in sociology of social work, as well as political and practical significance for future patterns of development in social work and for the formulation of future responses to the decentralisation movement by professional social work and other groups involved in policy for the personal social services.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES OF DECENTRALISATION

SOCIAL CARE PLANNING, COUNSELLING, AND DIVISION OF LABOUR ISSUES

The analysis in the first chapter showed opposed social work constituencies employ strategies-of-presentation in putting forward a particular set of arguments, one of these strategies resting upon making 'appeals to a variety of constituencies'. Another is to present a case for change whilst also arguing that 'in reality' it does not involve any major departure from existing practices, other than an extension or amplification of already-existing practices. A variant of this is where proposals for change are said to be merely a logical, if belated, putting into effect of a long-established policy. A strategy of this kind was one of the presentational arguments employed in the Barclay Report which suggested community social work is merely giving effect to an unimplemented intention of the Seebohm

273 The term 'decentralisation movement' is used for convenience to refer to individuals or collective social actors who are broadly in favour of service-decentralisation and community social work. As is made clear in the final part of the chapter this movement is not politically homogeneous nor do advocates of decentralisation share identical views on practice issues to do with, for example, the division of labour as between social care planning and individual counselling.

274 See Chapter 1, pp.38-46
Report (275) at the time of the creation of the social services departments in 1971. In fact, suggested the Barclay Report, the report's recommendation for community social work is doing '... little more than repeat the recommendations of Seebohm' (276) (italic added) regarding a community approach. However the actual course of development in the social services departments, as indicated earlier, centred upon a professional casework model implemented and managed through the hierarchical principle of bureau-professionalism. As shown previously, the possibilities offered for developing a 'new' professional social work in the social services departments were greeted in the early 1970's with professional optimism and enthusiasm; but this professional enthusiasm centred largely upon the professional casework model rather than community social work, a factor in subsequent rejections of 'Barclay' community social work by the professional constituency as represented, for example, in Pinker (277) and Davies (278). Pinker in rejecting community social work titled one of his papers 'Social Work Is Casework' (279). Post-Seebohm professional attachment to the casework model is explored in Howe's (280) paper below which also will serve the purpose of identifying the quasi 'organic' conceptualisations of

276 NISW (Barclay Report) (1982) op.cit. para.13, 18
278 Davies, M., 'Questions To Be Answered' in Philpott, T., (ed) (1983) op.cit. pp.28-31
279 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit. p.68
280 Howe, D., (1983) op.cit.
organisational structure and practice associated with decentralised service-delivery systems.

Howe argues traditional professionalism is based on 'psychotherapeutic presumptions' (281) that individual casework or family work is the key defining characteristic of social work (282) and that therapy as care-giving cannot be effectively provided by untrained people (283). He cites the Kent Family Project (284) and Community Care Project For the Elderly (285) in support of his argument that professional social work has lacked effectiveness and 'relevance' (286) as a consequence of which the search for efficiency in service-delivery has led to the dominance of the bureaucratic model (287). In effect, Howe is suggesting traditional professionalism has 'failed' and this led to managerialism; but managerialism as 'the dead hand of bureaucracy' (288) has also failed to provide effective services. Howe suggests the double failure of both traditional professionalism and bureaucracy requires a search for fresh solutions based on the exercise of a new 'social work imagination', a term borrowed from C. Wright Mills's (289) text The Sociological Imagination where imagination refers to a capacity to shift 'imaginatively' from one perspective to another (290).

A problem inherent in managerialism ('bureaucracy') is that there is a

281 Ibid p. 77
282 Ibid p. 83
283 Ibid pp. 81-83
284 Ibid p. 81
285 Ibid p. 82
286 Ibid p. 77
287 Ibid
288 Ibid
290 Howe, D., (1983) op. cit p. 80
separation between those who **design** service-delivery programmes (managers) and those who **implement** them (291), which removes or reduces possibilities for social worker 'front-line autonomy' (292). If proper scope is to be given for the development of new and more autonomous forms of 'social work imagination' there should be a fusing together of the functions of design and implementation of service-delivery programmes (293) in the new role of social worker as 'practitioner-manager' (294) who

'... has much in common with Barclay's 'social care planner' who not only attempts to help ameliorate existing social problems, but also works indirectly, preventing social problems arising. She is expected to discover and bring into play the potential resources of the community' (295)

Howe notes his conception of the role of practitioner-manager involves organisational reform of a kind which may be perceived as a threat to middle-management interests, and suggests devolving increased authority to practitioner-managers requires demonstration of capacity for developing 'social work imagination'

'... the practitioner-manager is seen to have more power than her Barclay counterpart and would be expected to transcend some of the current limitations of hierarchically-bound workers whom Barclay still sees as having a traditional caseload ... the practitioner-manager adopts many of the responsibilities previously assigned to conventionally placed managers. The Barclay Report also notes that it is present-day managers who assume responsibility for whatever social care planning takes place, though as I have suggested those removed from practice are not necessarily well placed to conceive such plans. Rather, managerial power and responsibility ought to become available to social workers who are in direct contact with clients and their community. But control will not just be handed over. Social workers at this level have to demonstrate that they have moved out of traditional frameworks of action and are capable of operating with new perceptions more appropriate and effective than those held by middle managers' (296).

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291 Ibid p. 78
292 Ibid
293 Ibid pp. 80-81
294 Ibid p. 84
295 Ibid
296 Ibid
Howe's model of organisational structure and service-delivery requires decentralisation of organisational control (297) and 'deformalisation' (298) of procedures along 'organic' (299) lines with practitioner-managers exercising an entrepreneurial proactive role (300). Not all social workers would be practitioner-managers and some would continue to undertake specialist work, others generic work in 'intake' teams (301). The role of practitioner-manager, as noted above, would affect middle-management staff who would become fewer in number and whose duties would be mainly administrative (302) leaving conception, implementation and monitoring of service-delivery and social care planning in the hands of practitioner-managers. Abandonment of the social work role of professional therapist is a core element in Howe's model. In a reference to the Kent Family Project he describes how foster-parents working with disturbed and 'difficult' adolescents became 'therapists' and they rather than social workers became the 'experts' in inter-personal relationships (303). Instead of engaging in direct work with 'clients' through professional casework, the role of the project's social workers was that they were

'... the central negotiators and brokers with an expertise ... in linking with available services, recruitment management, matchmaking and administrative trouble shooting. What the social workers did not presume to offer was relationship based therapy, thus challenging notions of practice which are still founded in the faith that personal change can be effected through a caring relationship and that social workers are the people to offer them' (304)

297 Ibid p. 85
298 Ibid
299 Ibid
300 Ibid p. 84
301 Ibid pp. 85-86
302 Ibid p. 86
303 Ibid p. 81
304 Ibid
Howe's description of the Kent Community Care Project for the Elderly refers to social work's role in generating and mobilizing extra help in the community for the elderly (305) in a way intended to ensure that community care '... would interweave with existing services' (306) as between care provided by family, neighbours, paid helpers, home helps and district nurses (307). Howe argues for 'specialism' in the sense that it is not possible for social workers to be both social care planners and direct counsellors. Because social care planning requires specialist knowledge, skills, and training Howe argues for separate training and rejects the Barclay notion that social workers should have a basic competence and training in both roles (308). Howe is explicit in stating training for the role of practitioner-manager or social care planner '... cannot be the concern of basic training courses' (309). Pinker (310), as will be noted later, is strongly opposed to the concept of community social work and his view that professional casework is the key defining characteristic of social work is at odds with Howe's analysis; however Howe appropriates one of Pinker's arguments and says he concurs with Pinker that it is undesirable to try to insert community social work into an already large basic training curriculum (311).

Organic systems, and methods of work resting upon 'teamwork' concepts rather than a concept of individual social worker 'casework

305 Ibid p. 82
306 Ibid
307 Ibid
308 Ibid p. 87
309 Ibid
310 Pinker, R., 'A Fussiness Of Thinking' Community Care, 14 October 1982, p. 13
311 Howe, D., (1983) op. cit. p. 87
responsibility' for individual clients, raise problems of task allocation, decision-making, and accountability that are not directly addressed by Howe. These will be returned to shortly, together with examination of the generic/specialist issue raised by Howe's separation of the roles of social care planner and counsellor (caseworker). First, two other aspects of Howe's 'organic' model of service-delivery merit attention. These are, first, its political viability, and secondly, its reliance on the notion of decentralised budgets. Concerning the former, Howe's concept of a flat pyramidal structure with a much smaller middle-management strata than at present, and removal of social care planning functions from existing middle-management groups, may be regarded as a proposal likely to be perceived by many existing members of middle management as a threat to their established roles. Also, Howe's model threatens a concept that professional social work is largely defined by inter-personal therapeutic expertise in casework relationships with individual clients and families. The professional casework model is a firmly established concept in post-Seebohm professional social work, a point that will be returned to later with reference to professional criticisms of Barclay. Howe in outlining his 'organic' model is not unaware of these political contextual features of social services departments into which he argues his model should be implanted; however a fuller analysis of these aspects would have helped clarify issues related to the question of how his model might be implemented in the face of opposing professional and bureau-professional perspectives.

The reliance of Howe's model on decentralised budgets is also an aspect that requires attention. He describes how in the Kent Community Care Project for The Elderly decentralised budgets were important to the 'organic' service-delivery framework. In order to encourage more flexible methods of working
'A decentralised budget was provided to experienced social workers who had to take responsibility for the co-ordination and development of care for the elderly people in their area. With their money and time the social workers could buy and enhance additional sources of help—local agencies, neighbours, and other willing and interested members of the public. These people were paid for their services' (312)

Howe argues the 'success of the Kent workers' (313) was because they had 'their own budget and freedom of action' (314). Sainsbury (315) notes the idea of decentralising budget controls stands in tension with the tendency for these controls to have become increasingly centralised and hierarchical in recent years as a response to a prolonged period of reduced public expenditure (316). This does not 'negate' Howe's model and from the standpoint of his analysis is more reason for decentralisation of budget controls; it is, however, a significant contextual factor that has consequences for implementation of Howe's model in organisational structures where particular organisational assumptions and practices have become institutionalised. Other issues arise from Howe's advocacy of 'organic' decentralised budgets in service-delivery systems. Jordon (317) notes tensions exist between the concepts of 'proportional justice' (consistent non-discretionary 'bureaucratic' application of uniform rules and criteria of eligibility for financial benefits) and of 'creative justice' which is based on a notion of official discretion so as to 'interpret' eligibility according to the unique needs and circumstances of the claimant.

312 Ibid p.82
313 Ibid
314 Ibid
316 Ibid p.6
Both concepts operate within welfare systems and in public organisations that are intended to secure equitable distribution of public welfare benefits. However occupational or professional ideology, and agency contexts, are important variables affecting the actual implementation of these concepts. Stevenson in her text *Claimant Or Client?* raises the possibility that if social workers operating a psychotherapeutic ideology become extensively involved in making financial payments to claimants these may be treated as 'clients' and subjected to 'psychological' analysis or even be required to alter or improve behaviour as a condition of financial entitlement. In Howe's analysis 'helpers' who receive payments from social workers are often not welfare claimants (or if they are this is a separate role outside their relationship to project social workers handling decentralised budgets) nor either are they social work clients. Nevertheless the issue raised in Jordon and in Stevenson is relevant to the more general notion of social work decentralised budgets. In Howe's terms, psychotherapeutic criteria are 'removed' by his model in the making of payments to local individuals and groups. However if decentralised budgets become a more widespread concomitant of social care planning in the 'interweaving' of resources between formal and informal care sectors, the question of criteria for payments to informal carers will require scrutiny and monitoring - not least with regard to class and gender and also ethnic differences amongst those who provide support and care of various kinds to family, relatives or others with whom they have some social bond. Also, decentralised budgets include the idea of 'buying-in' care from the private (commercial) sector; this already happens under existing

318 Ibid pp.72-73
centralised social services budgetary arrangements, but its implications in decentralised-budget schemes remain to be more fully assessed. None of these factors lead to a conclusion that Howe's and other similar 'organic' systems of service-delivery are unoperable. They indicate, however, that analysis of constraints and problems is important in appraisal of such models and in analysis of issues raised by their implementation.

Baker (320) is primarily concerned with a 'systems' or 'integrated' conception of social work practice (321) which advocates social workers as well as engaging in casework should become more involved in organisational, policy, and service-delivery issues. His paper raises questions that are relevant to analysis of decentralised organic models of service delivery in social services departments. Baker suggests 'systems' methods of working are resisted by professionals who are attached to the casework tradition (322) and resisted also by administrators and managers (323). Baker's analysis contrasts existing orthodox methods of practice with the 'teamwork' approach, an approach that is defined in a particular way in Barclay concepts of service-delivery. Professional casework largely rests on working practices whereby individual social workers are 'responsible' for work with individual clients, and social workers (subject to hierarchical supervision by senior social workers) are involved in making 'individual decisions' about individual 'cases'. Case files and recording systems are geared to the individual professional casework.

320 Baker, R., 'Is There A Future For Integrated Practice? Obstacles To Its Development In Practice And Education' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.3, No.1 (Summer) 1983, pp.3-16
322 Baker, R., (1983) op.cit p.4
323 Ibid p.5
approach and these files frequently are the basis for assessment and evaluation of 'progress' in handling a particular case. A difference of emphasis arises in organic models of service-delivery; these models typically advocate flexible role-definition and shared team responsibility and accountability for 'packages' of services arranged by social workers for individuals, families, or neighbourhoods. This has implications for recording and information systems, for systems and procedures suited to 'team' evaluation of services, and for decision-making and patterns of accountability. Baker asks whether the whole team should be accountable to senior management and to clients for the judgements made and actions taken by the team and also raises the question of whether in the event of team disagreement the issues involved should be decided by a 'majority vote'. Sainsbury addresses a similar range of issues. He notes the well-established concept of individual professional caseloads and individual professional worker responsibility for individual clients is difficult to reconcile with the concept of 'organic' teamwork implied in community social work models. Sainsbury describes existing systems of practice then poses a series of questions regarding roles and responsibilities under the organic community social work model.

'The profession of social work has hitherto involved the assumption by individual workers of personal and discrete responsibility for a cluster of individual clients, encapsulated within individual caseloads... social workers pay lip service to team work, but seldom to the kinds of teamwork implicit in a broad community focus. Who, in a team, will be responsible for the interweaving of formal and informal care, for the integration of volunteers within caseload management, for outreach work, for the analysis of local networks, for social prediction, for statutory-voluntary partnership?' (329)

324 Ibid p.8
325 Ibid
326 Sainsbury, E., (1985) op.cit
327 Ibid p.7
328 Ibid
Sainsbury also notes organic community social work systems of service delivery raise issues which have as their background the blurring of a distinction between 'professional social work' and 'social services work' (329). In the first chapter the 'negotiation' of this distinction was shown to be a central factor in the pattern of conflict that developed in the 1980's between academic-professional, professional, and employer constituencies. Fusion of professional social work and social services, a fusion implicit in the new 'unified' qualification planned for introduction in the early 1990's, is re-inforced by organic community social work systems of service-delivery and community 'teamwork' concepts: as Sainsbury observes, these developments signify that 'Defining the relevant knowledge-base and defining professional social work skills have become highly problematic' (330) (italic added).

Decentralisation and community social work are also new factors in the long-standing debate of specialisation 'versus' genericism. Divided professional opinion surrounding this issue (331) has been a prominent topic of debate in modern social work following the recommendations for 'generic' professionalism in the Seebohm Report (332). Beresford and Lyons (333) note two major lines of development have taken place in social services departments in the 1980's; the first of these has been movement towards specialisation by client group, the second "a more generic trend through decentralisation, 'patch' or community social work" (334). While some departments have moved predominantly in one or

329 Ibid
330 Ibid
331 See Chapter 1, f.n.253
332 Home Office (Seebohm Report) (1968) op. cit.
333 Beresford, P., and Lyons, K., 'Patch: Training Focus' Social Services Insight, 17 May - 24 May, 1986, pp.18-19
334 Ibid p.18
another of these directions, some have evolved a 'mixed' organisational model in which 'specialist' and 'patch' teams co-exist in a particular locality, or with some localities having specialist teams and other localities within the same local authority having 'patch' teams (335). Stevenson (336) favours genericism and integration of 'direct' and 'indirect' service roles within the social work profession, partly as a means to sustaining professional unity and integration (337). Though their analyses are not identical a broadly similar view is Baker's (338) 'systems' or 'integrated' approach, which favours the notion of a generalist practitioner because this 'does not create boundaries between social problems, settings and people' (339). Earlier, however, it was noted Howe's model is based upon a clear separation of the roles of social care planner ('practitioner-manager' in Howe's model) and counsellor (caseworker). Supporters of organic community social work systems of service delivery are themselves divided on this issue. Cooper and Denne (340) of the Wakefield Social Services Department are in accord with Howe, at least in so far as the specialist/generalist dimension in concerned. Cooper and Denne endorse 'Barclay' concepts of community social work, though comment that the Barclay Report was vague in its concept of the relationship between social care planning roles and counselling roles (341). Although critical of the tendency of proponents of patch or specialism to polarize their views into either/

335 Ibid
336 Stevenson, O., Specialisation In Social Service Teams, London, Allen and Unwin, 1981
337 Ibid pp.21-23
338 Baker, R., (1983) op.cit
339 Ibid p.4
340 Cooper, M., and Denne, J., 'Patch: A Problem Of Co-ordination' Community Care 31 March 1983, pp.16-18
341 Ibid p.17
or options' (342) it is argued by Cooper and Denne that specialist workers engage in counselling and patch workers in social care planning and '... these are separate activities unable to be successfully achieved by the same worker' (343). Patch or community social workers are '... those who know their neighbourhood intimately and can call upon local helping mechanisms to prevent people becoming ... (the) ... clients ... (of specialist counsellors) ...' (344). Community social workers may have 'clients', but not 'cases' in the sense implied in the counselling role (345); the specialist concentrates on treatment, the community social worker on prevention (346). Community social workers in a preventive role are more likely to have success in minimizing 'the risk of clienthood' (347) because the community social worker is 'close to the community' (348) and has close knowledge of the formal and informal care resource networks that can be strengthened and supported to help individuals and families (349). A significant resource may in some circumstances be informal help from neighbours, friends, and family; where this pattern of help exists for an individual or family it should be strengthened and supported by the community social worker and by the social services department (350). Cooper and Denne's thesis that social care planning cannot be undertaken by the same person (351) is

342 Ibid
343 Ibid
344 Ibid
345 Ibid
346 Ibid
347 Ibid
348 Ibid
349 Ibid
350 Ibid
351 A point noted in Bailey, C., and McGrath, M., 'Patchwork: The Extrapolation Of Principles' Community Care 31 May, 1984, p.18
challenged by Bailey and McGrath\(^{352}\) who suggest individual workers should be able to '... take responsibility for the total package of care'\(^{353}\). Bailey and McGrath's model rests on a view that not all counselling requires specialist knowledge, and patch workers should combine a counselling role with social care planning. Bailey and McGrath acknowledge some areas of work do require specialist counselling; here they refer to fostering and adoption officers, work with mentally or physically handicapped persons, and the role of 'Approved Social Workers' required under the Mental Health (Amendment) Act of 1983\(^{354}\). Cooper and Denne, above, had proposed patch teams with specialists operating across the patches\(^{355}\). This contrasts with Bailey and McGrath's arguments for having specialists (eg. in work with the elderly) located within patch teams\(^ {356}\). Bailey and McGrath indicate their model may require flexible adaptation to, for example, resource availability; where patch teams are too small to contain a range of specialist expertise it may be necessary to have some specialists working across patches in direct work with clients and in providing specialist advice to patch workers\(^ {357}\). However because most counselling is said by Bailey and McGrath to not require specialist expertise the central tenet in their community social work model, subject to any modifications to the model that may be required by local circumstances and resource availability, is that individual workers should combine social care planning and counselling roles in patch teams.

353 Ibid p.19
354 Ibid
355 Noted in Ibid
356 Ibid
357 Ibid
The debate of specialism versus genericism as applied to the relationship of social care planning to counselling is not a mirror reflection of the debate between those who support and those who oppose 'community social work'. Those who support community social work are, as already noted, internally divided on the generalist/specialist issue as too (though in a different sense) are those professional social work groups who are opposed to, or ambivalent towards, community social work. Amongst advocates of decentralisation and organic service-delivery systems of the kind associated with community social work there are those, such as Bailey and McGrath, whose position is similar to the view taken in the Barclay Report that '... social workers should be capable of social care planning and counselling. A combination of the two is the hallmark of the social worker ...'. Other advocates of community social work argue for specialisation in the sense of a separation of the roles of social care planning and counselling roles, as in Howe earlier and in Cooper and Denne's assertion that social care planning and counselling cannot be undertaken by the same person. The generalist/specialist debate in the 1980's has at least two dimensions relevant to social care planning. The first, as just discussed, is the question of whether counselling and social care planning roles should be combined in the same individuals; the second is the question of whether social care planning has any role at all in 'social work'. If it hasn't, it is largely superfluous to consider the question of whether some social workers should specialise in this work or else combine it with counselling work. From the standpoint of the professional constituency a major historical and contemporary concern is

professional integration and the perennial search for 'unity within diversity', (359). It might be supposed the professional constituency despite, as noted earlier, its close attachment since Seebohm to the professional casework model, is likely to prefer the 'integrationist' concept of fusing social care planning and counselling roles within social work. The problem in not doing so is that a separation of 'direct' (casework) and 'indirect' (social planning) service roles may exacerbate existing tendencies towards a 'divided' or, in Gilbert and Specht's (360) terms, an 'incomplete' (361) profession. However the professional constituency, as will be noted later, is largely opposed to community social work and voiced strong objections (362) against the idea of community social work at the time of its recommendation in the Barclay Report. Relevant factors in this context are internal divisions within the professional constituency on the specialist versus generalist question, an internal division that pre-dates the community social work debate of the 1980's; and differences in professional assessment of whether the movement towards social care planning and community social

361 Ibid p.219
work is inevitable, despite professional criticism of these concepts following their recommendation in the Barclay Report. If new professionally unwanted policies appear to be inevitable one response is to accept the inevitable and accommodate to them in a way that does not result in a 'loss' of major constituency interests and perspectives. This is not Pinker's response. Pinker is a strong advocate of professional casework; an advocate of a relatively high level of casework specialisation within the social work profession, which he regards as synonymous with casework method; and is also highly critical of community social work which he says is not a legitimate part of (professional) 'social work'. Pinker is strongly opposed to community social work: he argues for '... (a) ... specialist solution ... (which) ... makes a distinction between social work and social services' (italics added) and he rejects 'the Barclay ... notion of community social work' because it is a '... generalist solution ... to combine social work and social service roles and tasks ...' (italics added). Pinker's defence of the professional casework model against community social work is in its method of sustained resistance (rather than 'accommodation') similar to his related 'resist to the end' defence of the professional casework model against the new training proposals.

363 Pinker, R., (1982) op.cit
364 See f.n.277
366 Ibid
367 Ibid
examined in the first chapter\(^{(368)}\). This may be contrasted with another response from within the academic-professional constituency, that of the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education (ATSWE). In 1983 the ATSWE response\(^{(369)}\) to the Barclay report's proposals for community social work was not in the form of Pinker's rejection of community social work but was, nevertheless, for the most part highly critical of Barclay's formulation of the community social work concept. Later, in a joint working party document on the future of training published in 1986 by the ATSWE in association with other professional education groups\(^{(370)}\), it was stated the 'Barclay' social care planning function involves complex analytical skills, is a function that should be regarded as integral to social work, and because of its complexity should be undertaken only by qualified social workers\(^{(371)}\). This difference in responses from the academic-professional constituency is partly for the reason, noted above, that the ATSWE has not stated it is committed to Pinker's view that community social work has no role in 'social work'; and may be partly also for the reason that the ATSWE, though critical of Barclay's failure to emphasise the need for social

368 See Chapter 1, pp.61-65
As indicated in the references to the two preceding footnotes, his opposition to the new training proposals and to the 'generalist' approach in the Barclay Report are in Pinker two parts of the same argument.


370 Report Of The Joint Working Party Of The Association Of Teachers In Social Work Education, Joint University Council (Social Work Education Committee), The Standing Conference Of Heads Of CQSW Courses Preparing For Practice: Towards A Future Education Strategy In Social Work ATSWE, JUC (Social Work Education Committee), Standing Conference (Heads Of CQSW Courses), June 1986

371 Ibid p.22, paras. 2.11 and 2.12
workers to have a 'firm professional identity',\(^{372}\) (italic added), perceives a possibility of further professional fragmentation if social care planning develops outside 'social work'.

The issues of community social work 'teamwork' methods of working, decentralised budgets, and of the generalist/specialist controversy in the relationship of counselling to social care planning, have a degree of complexity that is directly experienced in local authorities that have implemented decentralisation programmes. A decentralisation programme was introduced in 1981 at East Sussex Social Services Department and two years later it was stated '... learning the skills of community social work is ... one of the most difficult challenges facing the department',\(^{373}\). MacLaren and Pierson\(^{374}\) in 1984 described efforts by themselves and other staff to introduce Barclay community social work concepts into the Chester office of Cheshire Social Services Department. In this particular example of an attempt to 'decentralise', central management took a relatively passive role\(^{375}\) and the Chester district staff were encouraged to form their own study groups to consider various aspects of community social work and assess its viability. MacLaren and Pierson refer to the failure of the Barclay report to provide guidelines for implementing the concepts of patch and community social work\(^{376}\), and discussions within the Chester staff study groups generated a mixture of 'controversy, anxiety, and enthusiasm'\(^{377}\). No consensus emerged for defining 'community

\(^{372}\) ATSWE (1983) op. cit p.15
\(^{373}\) Young, K., and Hadley, R., 'Decentralization: Managing To Go Patch' Community Care 29 September 1983, p.19
\(^{374}\) Maclaren, B., and Pierson, J., 'The Ghost In the Bureaucratic Machine' Community Care 24 May 1984, pp.14-16
\(^{375}\) Ibid p.16
\(^{376}\) Ibid p.15
\(^{377}\) Ibid
social work' nor how it might be achieved in practice, policy, and organisational terms, and the process of debate and exploration of the concept '... has been, from beginning to end, very frustrating'(378).

MacLaren and Pierson conclude with the words

'Does this mean that for us Barclay has had its day? Probably; we cannot foresee new departures based on the report's recommendations ...' (379)

COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK AND CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information provided by clients to social workers has been cited as one reason for retention of a professional casework model and for rejection of Barclay concepts of community social work. Client confidentiality is closely related to another core value of professional social work, that of individualisation(380) in personal relationships between professional and client. A study group formed by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work to examine social work values observed in its report

'That affairs should be treated as confidential by social workers has always been firmly emphasised by the profession ... Major concern has been expressed about the passing on of information ... Anxiety has been expressed about privileged information ... and the keeping of records. Case conferences and the sharing of information with other people within a team have been seen as potentially breaching this principle' (381)

Relatively little research exists on the social construction of 'confidentiality' as a concept in professional social work: even in

378 Ibid p.16
379 Ibid
381 Ibid p.35
Timms's trenchant analysis of social work values the concept attracts remarkably little attention.

'Confidentiality is not ... very difficult to define, and the problems it creates in social work seem much less difficult than those involved in acceptance, self-determination, and respect for persons. It seems to function in a relatively straightforward way as a norm or rule ...' (383)

Invocation of the concept 'confidentiality' has the characteristic that it is not, in most circumstances, a precept that any reasonable or honourable person would wish to 'deny' or seek to construct an opposed concept, whatever that might be. Clients, for instance, will presumably not seek to deny the importance of the concept, indeed may be presumed to have a greater vested interest in it than anyone else. It is possible, however, that clients are far less concerned than social workers about the issue of confidentiality, a point noted in Maluccio's study. Carew's study is discussed in chapter four. In his methodological description Carew refers to an initial research group of sixty-one professional social workers who were asked to participate in research interviews; in his comment that only twenty agreed to participate Carew observes.

383 Ibid p.52
386 See Chapter 4, pp.376-383
'The major reason given for refusal by the remainder was confidentiality, despite assurances that great care would be taken about this. It is interesting to note that none of the clients who participated in the study raised questions about confidentiality' (387)

If it were reliably established that clients are typically far less concerned than professional social workers about the issue of confidentiality, it would still be necessary to know why this is so. It may be, for example, that clients have little concern in the matter for the reason not that they regard confidentiality as unimportant but because they 'take it for granted' that social workers, bound by a professional ethic of confidentiality, are like (say) family doctors who can be relied on not to disclose confidential information to others. Whether service-users are likely to have this perception in the community social work model is a question raised by some critics of community social work. Hadley (388) suggests 'patch' workers have the advantage that they operate as 'detached' unbureaucratised workers and 'Many problems will be referred to patch workers as they move about their patches ... information will be gathered in a casual, often unsolicited fashion by patch workers through their daily contact with local people' (389). Hadley has in mind neighbourhood workers seeking relevant information about local social networks as a way of improving service-delivery. The method itself is informal and closely geared to detecting needs and to providing services that relate to social networks, including informal patterns of care that may be strengthened and supported by the local social services department either directly or through mobilisation of other resources (eg. voluntary or paid

387 Carew, R., (1979) op.cit p.352
helpers). However Pinker (390) suggests this informal method of work creates a serious problem of individual confidentiality, through gossip and the passing of 'private' information to neighbourhood workers.

... in a patch system of social work, staff would be able to build up a detailed knowledge of the local patterns of informal care and ... this knowledge will be augmented by fostering contacts with intermediaries or 'gatekeepers', including people such as publicans, corner shop-keepers, lollypop ladies, and so on. ... enterprises such as pubs and corner shops would become recognized as important sources of information" (391)

Pinker's conclusion is that 'The best way of preventing breaches of confidentiality is to collect as little information as possible, and to confine the collection of it to professional workers' (392) (italic added). Whether Pinker's objection to community social work on the grounds of confidentiality reflects the realities of practice in schemes which 'interweave' formal, informal and neighbourhood-care systems cannot be reliably assessed until more information becomes available from these schemes. However the issue of confidentiality is undoubtedly a potential problem in such schemes. Professional social workers have an ethical code of confidentiality and, as noted earlier, appear to have a strong normative attachment to this code. Bulmer (393) notes community social work, in the case of neighbourhood care schemes, entails the holding of private information by neighbourhood care-givers (eg. 'street wardens' and neighbourhood helpers) who in

390 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit
391 Ibid p.73
392 Ibid
many cases are part of a local network(394) and Darvill(395) raises the possibility that attempts to mobilize neighbours and other residents as carers may '... provide the different forms of the public world, including neighbourhood groups, with channels for spreading their tentacles into the privacy of family life more than is acceptable'(396). Not all codes of confidentiality have to be of the 'professional' variety. Volunteer workers in, for example, the Samaritans and Citizens Advice Bureaux are bound by such a code, though it's true such workers typically provide individualised forms of help and are not neighbourhood workers in the Barclay sense. In the case of 'patch' social workers and neighbourhood workers the reverse side of the coin described by Pinker is their accessibility to individuals in the neighbourhoods they serve. Thomas and Shaftoe(397) in describing the 'distance' of bureau-professionals suggest the patch worker will have to 'get his boots dirty'(398) and the patch worker not only 'receives' local knowledge but also provides knowledge about services and is likely to be 'interviewed' by local residents in a variety of informal situations which may be 'in the street rather than ... carefully arranged interviews'(399). In this way the authority of

394 Ibid p.216
396 Darvill, G., (1983) op.cit p.258, quoted in Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit p.216
398 Ibid p.37
399 Ibid
the social worker '... will not be imposed, it will be earned and witnessed in the neighbourhood' (400). Information flow is not only as between residents and workers but also amongst the workers themselves and Stacy's (401) account of the operations of a patch team suggests 'The flow of communication between the wardens, home helps and patch workers is very much the lifeblood of the system and enables speedy responses to be made' (402). In Bulmer's (403) review of neighbourhood care schemes one of the most successful was the Stonegate Home Warden Scheme and 'confidentiality' does not appear to have been a problem in this scheme (404), nor in the decentralised social services project described in Bennett (405) where despite the teams accessibility to and involvement in local networks 'It was also important for us to retain our right to exercise confidentiality' (406). Issues of confidentiality raised by Pinker and others as grounds for objection against community social work merit attention; it seems desirable, however, that firm conclusions be avoided until further data become available, and are systematically evaluated, from the large variety of 'Barclay' community social work projects and decentralisation programmes begun in the early and mid 1980's.

INFORMAL CARE NETWORKS AND WOMEN'S ROLES

Howe's organic service-delivery model, referred to earlier, outlined a process of 'interweaving' resources as between voluntary, formal, and

400 Ibid
402 Ibid p.13
403 Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit
404 Ibid pp.122-126
405 Bennett, B., (1980) op.cit
406 Ibid p.180
informal care sectors. Elsewhere Howe (407) describes sexual inequality in the hierarchical and also 'lateral' allocation of roles and tasks in formal welfare professional-bureaucracies. The history of a welfare ideology of women as 'natural carers' is portrayed in, for example, Platt's (408) account of child-care work, in Hearn's (409) analysis of patriarchy in the professionalisation of occupations and semi-professions, and indirectly in Banks and Webb's (410) account of 'ideas' and 'vocationalist' career routes for men and women sociology graduates. Howe's data on modern welfare bureaucracies demonstrate a formal welfare system in which men predominate in middle and higher-management positions (411). A common criticism of community social work is that its emphasis upon interweaving formal and informal care may have little impact upon sexual stratification in formal welfare bureaucracies whilst also having the effect of exacerbating sexual inequality in the informal care sector. This last aspect is examined in Finch and Grove (412) and noted in Pearson's (413) comment that the

411 Howe, D., (1986) op.cit pp.22-23
413 Pearson, G., (1983) op.cit
concept of informal care networks in community social work practice '... will mean placing even more burdens on the unpaid domestic labour of women' (414). Lawrence (415) appears sympathetic to 'anti-statist', libertarian welfare perspectives and regards the voluntary sector as having a valid role, but is concerned that social expenditure cuts may result in a 'community care' policy that is under-resourced. Lawrence touches upon a dilemma in the relation of 'statist' to 'anti-statist' welfare perspectives as they relate to the roles of women. This will be examined more fully in a moment, with reference to a paper by Finch (416). In Lawrence's analysis non-state welfare organisations and voluntary groups are said to have a capacity to develop '... more democratic working practices, without self-interested bureaucratic structures' (417). Though his analysis is far more focussed on the voluntary sector than was Mishra's, examined earlier, there is in Lawrence an affinity with Mishra's hypothesis that the legitimation crisis of state services centres not upon the principle but the method of 'delivery' of these services. However Lawrence devotes less attention than Mishra to the democratisation of state services, and is more concerned to argue for non-state forms of organisation as a counterweight to state bureau-professionalism. He suggests the voluntary sector increases consumer choice (418) whilst also contributing to '... the vital demystification of 'professional' expertise which the monolithic, state structures have reinforced' (419).

In Lawrence's account, without there being '... at the minimum, a small

414 Ibid p.82
415 Lawrence, R., (1983) op.cit.
416 Finch, J., 'Community Care: Developing Non-Sexist Alternatives' Critical Social Policy Issue 9 (Spring) 1984 pp.6-18
417 Lawrence, R., (1983) op.cit. p.29
418 Ibid
419 Ibid
quasi-independent sector ... the opportunity to reject received notions and encrusted practice would be much reduced.\(^{(420)}\). It is here that Lawrence encounters a problem, which arises from the requirement that more democratic, more user-responsive and user-defined 'community care' alternatives should be properly resourced - if they are not, and if formal state resources are also inadequate, the burden of welfare will fall disproportionately upon 'informal carers'. Lawrence refers to possible future reductions in state welfare provision without corresponding policies or resources for developing complementary alternatives\(^{(421)}\); in this scenario the consequences '... particularly for the position of women in society is largely unexplored'\(^{(422)}\).

Finch's\(^{(423)}\) paper encapsulates a number of the issues just referred to, and in certain respects pushes analysis of them further than most other accounts of the relation of community social work to the roles of women. Her starting point is that issues of gender (and race) are central in the debate of service-decentralisation and community social work and it '... is ... important to go on studying the impact of such policies upon women (and indeed upon men), and building comprehensive and up-to-date critiques as these policies develop through the 1980's'\(^{(424)}\). Finch observes it is easier to specify what anti-sexism is against than what it is for\(^{(425)}\). On the one hand, a 'Barclay' philosophy can be made compatible with anti-statist, libertarian, grassroots values attractive to those sections of the political left who argue against bureaucratic, professional

\(^{420}\) Ibid
\(^{421}\) Ibid p.27
\(^{422}\) Ibid
\(^{423}\) Finch, J., (1984) op.cit
\(^{424}\) Ibid p.6
\(^{425}\) Ibid
domination of services. On the other, the informal care sector and also the quasi-informal 'neighbourhood care' sector in the form that these are advocated in 'Barclay' community social work, embody gender inequalities; in 'informal' care the burden of caring for family and kin falls disproportionately upon women, and in neighbourhood care schemes it is typically women who are appointed to lower-paid jobs as front-line workers such as street wardens, home helps, and paid 'good neighbour' workers. In examining postulated non-sexist alternatives to state bureaucracy and professional domination Finch refers to Graham's analysis of the concept of caring. Informal care for family members, relatives or friends is often both a form of labour and an expression of love, but caring about is not synonymous with caring for. The former can exist without being expressed in the form of the latter. There is no reason why caring about must always lead to caring for, though those who choose to care 'for' (say) elderly parents, a handicapped spouse or child should be supported through policies and resources designed to 'help the helpers'; these policies should include expansion of domiciliary services, provision of adequate income in the form of financial payments to informal carers, and legal entitlement to periods of leave from employment (on the model of maternity leave) for those who choose to provide informal care and support to others. Choice is a key

426 Ibid p.9
427 Ibid p.10
428 Ibid pp.14-16
431 Ibid p.13
factor in non-sexist systems of care. However the exercise of choice in deciding whether to care 'for' is not a real choice if no alternatives to informal care exist, and because these alternative resources do not exist in sufficient quantity or quality nor are they likely to be 'developed ... (in) ... this decade' (432) there seems to be, in Finch's view, very little prospect for developing non-sexist community care programmes (433). Finch is evidently reluctant to abandon a 'choice' model based on adequate formal state services and adequate resources for community care, a model in which those who care 'about' may freely choose to care 'for'. However because she sees no practical non-sexist alternative to institutional care for the elderly, handicapped persons and others in need of care she gives a 'cautious vote' (434) to '... the residential alternative' (435) and concludes 'On balance, it seems to me the residential route is the only one which ultimately will offer us a way out of the impasse of caring' (436).

Finch's analysis, and other similar analyses of the role of women in informal care, raises a significant problem that challenges many of the assumptions of community social work. If, however, as is almost certainly the case, existing patterns of informal care embody sexist values it is possible that this is a question of degree, or more precisely, of variety in patterns of informal care. Sexist values may be dominant in most empirical instances of informal caring 'for' - but not necessarily in all. If this is so, the 'either-or' polarisation of institutional and community care may to some extent be breached through

432 Ibid p.16
433 Ibid pp.15-16
434 Ibid p.16
435 Ibid
436 Ibid
pragmatic policy options in programmes that acknowledge informal care exhibits a degree of diversity and local variability. Harris(437) is critical of Finch's analysis and suggests patterns of informal care are more variable than the archetypal case of a woman looking after her elderly mother: he refers, for example, to the care of discharged married women mental patients, disabled younger wives, and the care of elderly parents without daughters or married sons(438). Harris cites unpublished research at the University of Wales at Bangor and reports data that indicate '... the majority of daughterless non-dependent elderly people who need help to live alone rely on sons rather than daughters-in-law'(439). These data also indicate

'... where these non-dependent elderly have both sons and daughters the child living nearest tends to be relied upon regardless of sex. It is, of course, possible that if and when such non-dependent elderly mothers become dependent, the cultural taboos discussed by Ungerson may result in daughters and daughters-in-law becoming more involved in caring. But this does not mean that sons drop out of the picture. Nor is it necessarily such a distasteful prospect to daughters and daughters-in-law that 'the residential alternative' becomes the policy of first choice' (440)

The existence of empirical variability in patterns of informal care raises a question mark against suppositions that all informal care is sexist. It could, of course, be argued that the men in Harris's data who cared 'for' had greater choice than women, who may feel under stronger cultural compulsion to provide care; or that the men and women carers in Harris's data had no unconstrained choice

437 Harris, R., 'End Points And Starting Points' Critical Social Policy. Issue 12 (Spring) 1985 pp.115-122
438 Ibid p.117
439 Ibid
440 Ibid. The reference to Ungerson in this quotation is to Ungerson, C., 'Why Do Women Care' in Finch, J., and Groves, D., (eds) (1983) op.cit
formal resources in North Wales are deficient in quantity or quality; or that the particular type of care provided by men and women itself reproduces the sexual division of labour in society. Evaluation of these issues is, as noted by Finch, a necessary task made more urgent by the movement towards decentralisation in the 1980's. It is evident that more empirical data are a necessary basis for systematic empirical evaluation of patterns of care and assessment of their implications for community social work. It is desirable that part of this assessment be based on data showing actors own constructions of meanings surrounding such concepts as care 'about', care 'for', and 'choice'. Epistemological problems in dialogical negotiations of the concept 'emancipation', examined in the second part of chapter four, refer not only to casework relationships but also to systems of care. People sometimes construct meanings in a way that is different to professional or academic constructions of them - where this happens theoretical (not to mention other) problems arise if it is suggested, for example, that the expressed preferences and preferred actions of informal carers are a form of false consciousness which is a 'necessary effect' of structurally-given 'objective' interests (of 'men') (441). When further, empirically-based work has been undertaken on this topic it should be possible to better evaluate Pinker's(442) observation that one reason amongst many for rejecting decentralised community social work in favour of a professional casework model is the burden that '... would fall largely on women in a community based model of social welfare'(443).

441 See Chapter 2, pp.140-154
442 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit
443 Ibid p.71
Future impact of the theories and practices of decentralisation upon social work education are likely to be complicated by existing proposals, examined in chapter one (444), for the introduction in the early 1990's of a new unified qualification which removes the distinction between professional social work ('CQSW work') and social services work ('CSS work'). A further complication is internal division within the decentralisation movement on the generalist 'versus' specialist issue. As previously noted, some advocates of decentralisation, such as Howe and Cooper and Denne, argue social care planning and counselling roles cannot effectively be performed by the same individual and that two separate forms of social work training are therefore required; others within this movement, as in Bailey and McGrath discussed earlier, argue for 'Barclay' community social workers who combine these roles and receive preparation for this task in generalist social work education curricula. Internal diversity was also noted earlier within the academic-professional constituency. It was noted Pinker (445) rejects a notion that community social work is a part of ('professional') social work which he regards as largely synonymous with casework. A related argument developed by Pinker is that the introduction of community social work into social work education would mean "most if not all forms of specialist training in ... (social work) ... courses would have to be abandoned to make room for more teaching about the 'community dimension'" (446). It was also noted earlier the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education

444 See Chapter 1, p.56
445 Pinker, R., (1983) *op.cit*
446 ibid p.71
and other groups within the academic-professional constituency take a different line to Pinker and in their joint working party report of 1986 concluded 'Barclay' social care planning should be incorporated into the new social work qualification (447). Usages and definition of the term social care planning may acquire particular political significance in future negotiations between competing social work constituencies. Though the point cannot be explored here it is possible some professional groups may wish, first, to construct a distinction between 'community social work' and 'social care planning', and secondly, evolve a definition of the latter that distances social care planning from the view of those who associate it largely with detached neighbourhood 'patch' workers, and bring the concept into a closer approximation to (suitably revised versions of) current conceptions of professional social work 'planning' roles within social services departments. Some future possibilities in the social construction of these issues by various constituencies are noted in the final chapter.

One view of the incorporation of the theories and practices of decentralisation into social work education is that this can be achieved relatively smoothly with only minor modification to existing professional training being necessary. An interpretation of this kind is provided by Stone (448) who argues, first, that casework skills are relevant to community social work (449), and secondly, that most existing professional courses are in any case usually broadly based in their

449 Ibid pp.31-32
approach and teach 'systems' perspectives which extend beyond casework to the broader concerns of policy, organisational and community structures implied in the community social work model. There will in Stone's view need to be some shift of emphasis to include more teaching on 'organisations and communities' and on the concepts of 'teamwork and informal care networks'. But even if community social work becomes the predominant mode of practice it does not follow that the qualifying courses for social workers need change much in form or content — although, as previously noted, some shifts of emphasis are required ... social work education and training (where based on unitary models) have been relevant to ... (community social work) ... for some years ...'

It would appear Stone's perception that social work education need not 'change much in form or content' is not congruent with that of the employers' constituency; as described in the first chapter, the conflicts between the major social work constituencies in the 1980's largely stemmed from demands from employers for substantial 'reform' of social work education in the direction of a less professionally 'esoteric', more 'practical' form of training. Also, Stone's assertion that the 'integrated' or 'systems' approach is a major component in social work education rests upon a widely contested perception of professional education. Rees and Wallace suggest social work education is primarily a training in a 'rarefied' form of professional casework; in their assessment

450 Ibid p.32
451 Ibid p.33
452 Ibid p.34
453 Ibid p.38
455 Ibid p.166
a major difficulty in encouraging ... (new) ... forms of practice ... is social work education's proclivity for continuing to teach a type of individual casework that is rarely ever encountered in the practice of most social workers in most agencies. In this respect university and college departments which ought to be contributing to solutions are in reality part of the problem' (456)

Baker (457) argues the 'integrated' or 'systems' perspective is accorded only a minor role in professional training, which is primarily addressed to '... the nature of professional relationships, interviewing skills and techniques.' (458). A similar observation is made by Sainsbury (459) who argues community social work implies a necessity for a more sociological approach (460) in professional social work education, which is '... still largely concerned with the production of soloists rather than members of the chorus' (461). Beresford and Lyons (462) argue training for community social work will require substantial re-orientation of existing courses because 'patch' social work requires new skills that involve movement 'from a reactive to a proactive style' (463) and ability to address 'new' issues of communication within teams, within departments, and in the relationship of social workers with 'the community' (464).

As indicated earlier, the impact of the decentralisation movement upon social work education is not predetermined, first, because of cross-cutting dissensions regarding the generalist/specialist issue in

456 Ibid
457 Baker, R., (1983) op.cit
458 Ibid p.4
459 Sainsbury, E., (1985) op.cit
460 Ibid p.7
461 Ibid
462 Beresford, P., and Lyons, K., 'Patch: Training Focus' Social Services Insight 17 May - 24 May 1986, pp.18-19
463 Ibid p.19
464 Ibid p.18
the relationship of social care planning to counselling, and secondly, events will inevitably be influenced by future outcomes in negotiations between the competing social work constituencies identified in the first chapter. There is a relationship between professional criticisms of the Barclay Report's proposals for community social work, and professional opposition to the Central Council for Education and Training In Social Work (CCETSW) decision to introduce the form of training favoured by the employers i.e. a unified training system which abolishes the distinction between professional social work and social services work and combines the CQSW and CSS qualifications into a single new qualification. This association between professional criticisms of 'Barclay' community social work and of the new training policies of the CCETSW is noted in Parsloe's response to criticism of the training policy proposed in CCETSW Paper 20.1 which had been prepared by the CCETSW Working Group chaired by Parsloe. She notes the professional social work/social services distinction has become 'blurred' in social work agencies and that if CSS-holders are now performing social work tasks their training needs are the same as those who already have a CQSW qualification. Parsloe indicates a broader conception of social services is now required in training and she endorses the Barclay Report because '... its emphasis upon social care planning as

468 Ibid p.113
well as counselling, took a wider view of social work.\(^{(469)}\). For this reason Parsloe states she rejects Pinker's emphasis upon professional casework as the central defining characteristic of social work\(^{(470)}\). Two years after Parsloe wrote this the CCETSW announced its decision in favour of a new pattern of training which embodied the 'enlarged' concept of social work referred to by Parsloe. In announcing this decision in its policy document CCETSW Paper 20.6 \(^{(471)}\) in 1986 the CCETSW stated its proposals took account of the "... increased use of patch systems in the delivery of social work services" \(^{(472)}\). The future training policy for British social work services therefore may be said to be a reflection of a wider movement (in which the role of the employers and of the CCETSW have been significant) away from the post-Seebohm professional casework perspectives that had predominated in the 1970's; this is reflected both in the proposed abolition of the professional social work/social services distinction and in the movement towards a pattern of decentralised service delivery which includes community social work concepts and practices as key defining elements of social work in the 1980's.

**THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK**

In the preceding analysis of issues raised by decentralisation and community social work emphasis was given to the issues themselves,

\(^{469}\) Ibid p.110

\(^{470}\) Ibid

\(^{471}\) CCETSW Three Years And Different Routes: Councils Expectations And Intentions For Social Work Training. Paper 20.6, London, Central Council For Education And Training In Social Work, 1986

\(^{472}\) Ibid p.4
rather than to investigation of patterns in the construction of these issues by the various social work constituencies and by different political groups in social work. Inevitably some treatment of the latter was necessary, just as in what follows the responses of various constituencies to community social work cannot be examined in isolation from the issues examined earlier. In tracing the responses of the various groups involved in social work it will also be necessary to address specific community social work issues not so far examined, such as the view-developed largely but not exclusively within the professional constituency - that community social work is incompatible with statutory social work tasks. Following a general overview of constituency responses to the Barclay Report proposals for community social work, the labourist dimension is examined with reference to perspectives developed by professional staff associations and trades unions, senior managements, and elected local authority representatives. The material in the later part of the chapter focuses mainly upon responses to community social work by the professional constituency and issues raised in these responses, though in the closing pages it will be observed left-radical welfare responses that in the past have been critical of social work professionalism have also had a significant role in the social construction of 'decentralisation' in the 1980's.

CONSTITUENCY RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK

The responses of the professional social work constituency to the Barclay Report proposals for community social work were for the most part critical. In a paper published in 1983 Cypher the general secretary of the British Association of Social Workers was highly critical. Cypher, J., (1983) op. cit.
critical of 'Barclay' community social work. Cypher questioned which groups would have responsibility for professional social work, expressed concern at the possibility of a 'fragmentation' of professional social work, and also raised the question of whether community 'social work' should instead be undertaken by community 'social service' staff.

'If community social work becomes the vogue ... There is a real issue of who will take charge and develop those things like knowledge, values and skills lying at the core of social work. For in the cause of flexibility and relevance social work practice does have an inbuilt tendency to fragment. ... why community social work ... why not community social service or community social care?' (474) (italics added).

Viewed from the standpoint of the politics of inter-constituency negotiation of these issues, Cypher's implied suggestion that the 'community approach' may be 'social services work' that is 'less complex' than professional social work is tactically problematic by making it more difficult at a later date to, in Callon and Latour's term, 'enrol' community social work as a part of professional social work. If, as Cypher fears, community social work does 'become the vogue' there may be advantages in moving to a definition that it is in fact of sufficient complexity to justify its incorporation into 'professional social work'. This difficulty also attends Pinker's implacable resistance against the idea that community social work may be or become a part of professional social work.

In Callon and Latour's sociology of translation collective social actors that wish to 'expand' (or at least, not be diminished

474 Ibid p.3-4
in size) have to find ways of 'consigning' threatening materials and
"Only thus can one 'grow'": (476). Cypher also makes a number of points
relating to issues that are dealt with later in the chapter. For
example he expresses doubt about 'the existence of informal caring
networks and the willingness of local government to back patch-based
teams': (477) and argues for 'increased professional autonomy' (478) in
the face of Barclay's 'anti-professional' (479) recommendations for
community social work.

As noted previously, Pinker's (480) response to community social
work is also highly critical. Hadley, a member of the Barclay
committee, published a minority report which argued for even greater
movement towards community social work than recommended in the main
report (481). Pinker, also a member of the Barclay committee, issued a
minority report that opposed both Hadley's and the main report's
recommendation for community social work: in Pinker's perspective that
'social work is professional casework' (482) he challenges "... the
report's emphasis upon what it calls 'social care planning' ... I put
far more importance on what the report calls 'counselling' and I call
social casework" (483) (italic added). Pinker is clear in his view that
casework is the '... distinctive method of social work' (484) (italic
added) and 'social work and ... casework are virtually synonymous'

476 Ibid
477 Cypher, J., (1983) op.cit p.4
478 Ibid
479 Ibid
480 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit
481 An account of the minority report is reproduced, with comment, in
op.cit pp.63-67
482 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit p.68
483 Ibid
484 Ibid
Pinker suggests the Barclay report was '... influenced by fashionable opinion in favour of egalitarian forms of community action and participation'\(^{(486)}\). 'Real' issues of specialised knowledge and professional skills are left unaddressed when "... intellectuals and activists who are largely middle-class condemn the elitist nature of professionalism and the status of 'esoteric' knowledge ..."\(^{(487)}\). In Pinker's view, support for community social work emanates from two opposed political ideological positions. The first is a 'quasi-political'\(^{(488)}\) socialist community work movement which Pinker says rests on a romantic left-wing delusion that has learned nothing from the recent history of the demise of '... community development projects and other neighbourhood-based initiatives'\(^{(489)}\). The second reflects a belief '... that community social work would increase the flow in informal care services to the extent that statutory funding could be reduced. This is an illusion of the unromantic right ...'\(^{(490)}\). Pinker proceeds to identify a range of specific problems in community social work, some of which have been examined earlier, others being items for analysis later in the chapter. These problems are said by Pinker to devolve around the issue of client confidentiality \(^{(491)}\), decline of 'specialist expertise'\(^{(492)}\) in professional casework, tension between community social work and

\(^{485}\) Ibid p.69  
\(^{486}\) Ibid p.74  
\(^{487}\) Ibid  
\(^{488}\) Ibid  
\(^{489}\) Ibid  
\(^{490}\) Ibid  
\(^{491}\) Ibid p.73  
\(^{492}\) Ibid p.71
statutory social work functions (493), a 'romantic illusion' (494) concerning the social structure of communities (495), and increased burdens placed upon women as informal carers (496). Another writer within the academic-professional constituency is Davies (497) who states (498) that his assessment of 'Barclay' community social work is in line with that of Pinker. Davies's account consists of a qualified rejection of Barclay. He begins his critique by suggesting the '... Barclay notion of social care planning is about right, and reflects the current shape of practice ...' (499) but also states Pinker's rejection of Barclay community social work is 'extremely persuasive' (500) and community social work is '... politically dangerous and likely to lead to widespread disquiet about and reaction against social work' (501). As briefly noted earlier, the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education (ATSWE) in its response (502) to Barclay in 1983 was not as strongly opposed to community social work as Pinker, nor as Davies or Cypher. The ATSWE response was cautious on the one hand stating it endorsed some aspects of community social work (503), and on the other, criticising Barclay's formulation of the concept. The ATSWE expressed doubts as to whether sufficient resources were likely to be available for supporting

493 Ibid p.70
494 Ibid
495 Ibid
496 Ibid p.71
498 Ibid p.29
499 Ibid p.28
500 Ibid p.29
501 Ibid p.30
503 Ibid p.13
informal care networks in the form suggested in Barclay (504); criticised Barclay's formulation of community social work on the grounds that it had not been clearly defined in the report (505) and also neglected the statutory element in social work (506); and suggested Barclay had under-emphasised the importance of a need for social work to have a firm 'professional' (507) identity. As already mentioned in the previous section of the chapter the ATSWE in 1986 in a joint working party report (508) endorsed the Barclay concept of social care planning as an integral part of social work and therefore as an element that should be included in training curricula for the new 'unified' qualification to be introduced in the early 1990's (509).

As well as the professional and academic-professional constituencies, various other social work groupings developed perspectives which in varying degrees were critical of 'Barclay' community social work. Responses from the radical welfare left in the 1980's are examined later in the chapter. Below, 'labourist' dimensions in responses to decentralisation and the negotiation of these responses amongst professional associations, unions, senior managements, and elected representatives are one of many indicators revealing support for, or resistance against, decentralisation rests on a wide variety of factors rather than laying in a single dimension.

504 Ibid p.4
505 Ibid p.10
506 Ibid
507 Ibid p.15
509 Ibid p.22, paras. 2.11 and 2.12
A description of the politics of decentralisation is provided in David's account of efforts by Labour councillors at Walsall to initiate a decentralised system of small local neighbourhood housing offices. The objectives of the decentralisation programme were to move the housing department out of the town hall and to create a network of estate neighbourhood offices each staffed by five to ten housing workers whose location 'in the community' was intended to foster more personalised relationships between housing officials and tenants and provide a localised way of responding to expressed needs with a minimum of bureaucratic delay. The decentralisation programme was opposed by the professional housing staff and senior management.

'To begin with communication broke down completely and the chief executive and leader of the council communicated by letter for weeks. However senior officers, faced with ... disciplinary action for failure to carry out councillors' instructions, soon demanded a truce ... For once the politicians were one step ahead ... within twelve months neighbourhood offices were open' (512)

David states at the early stages of the programme there had also been opposition from the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) and she describes a strike that had been called because staff were apprehensive about possible job losses and also had anxieties about moving from the town hall into small estate offices (513). The Walsall experience is not untypical of events elsewhere.

510 David, J., 'Walsall And Decentralization' Critical Social Policy, Issue 7 (Summer), 1983, pp.75-79
511 Ibid p.77
512 Ibid pp.76-77
513 Ibid p.78
Weinstein (514) comments on the 'irony' that relationships in the 1980's between the white-collar union NALGO and employers in left-wing socialist authorities seeking to introduce service-decentralisation have been

'... marked by a bitterness, fervor and relentlessness (on both the Council and union side) which seems to be missing from the negotiations with councils' run by the Conservatives or the more traditional, and right-wing, Labour groups' (515)

Beuret and Stoker (516) refer to Islington's decentralisation programme which involved housing, social services, and welfare rights services. The Islington programme generated conflict in the form of a strike in 1985 and further industrial action in 1986, the manual employees being primarily concerned about pay and white collar staff concerned about their physical security in small estate offices (517). Sheffield's decentralisation scheme was a factor in a four-month long strike by many of the council's NALGO workers and Hackney's decentralisation programme launched in 1982 had by 1986 been virtually halted by protracted NALGO opposition (518). A long strike at St. Helens over decentralisation proposals prompted the labour leader of the council to describe the role of NALGO as 'anti-socialist' (519) and the series of prolonged disputes over the Hackney decentralisation schemes were described by the Chair of the Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations in a statement which argued '... as socialists we must get

515 Ibid p.42
517 Ibid p.7
518 Ibid
519 Weinstein, J., (1986) op.cit p.42
rid of the syndrome that unions are always right''(520). Janet Boateng, in 1985 a Lambeth councillor and chair of the Social Services Committee challenged the professional competence of her staff; professional social work staff were said by Boateng to be out of touch with local grassroots neighbourhood perspectives and NALGO in representing social workers was accused of defending 'white collar racists ... (who) can't cope with a black woman in authority''(521). In a review of social services in inner city local authorities Murray(522) in 1985 noted that 'The increased politicisation of local government is making life more difficult for social workers in some authorities'(523). Murray reported a conference speech on this topic by David Jones, the British Association of Social Worker's general secretary-designate at the 1985 Annual General Meeting of the BASW

'Jones ... sees the origin of the present situation in the trend towards community politics in recent years ... Barclay, too, with its emphasis on community involvement and patch contributed to, or reflected, this growing trend ... a feeling that ... (social workers) ... are outsiders coming into communities who have not yet succeeded in reassuring those communities about their objectives and their effectiveness ... There is a challenge in this to social workers and to BASW to demonstrate the effectiveness of social work in a way that its political masters can understand ...' (524)

Here Jones is referring to structures of neighbourhood politics in the 1980's that are one expression of the contemporary phenomenon described in Abrams's(525) concept 'modern neighbourhoodism' (526). Jones suggests

520 Ibid
521 Ibid
522 Murray, W., 'Politicisation: The Pressure Of Politics' Community Care. 18 July 1985, pp.16-18
523 Ibid p.16
524 Ibid p.17
526 Ibid
social work is faced with a necessity to demonstrate its effectiveness to local residents and service-users, and to 'political masters'. Weinstein (527) accords greater significance to the latter as a factor in conflicts between social workers and councillors in attempts to implement decentralisation programmes in left-wing socialist authorities. He suggests these tensions arise through the grassroots community socialism of the new urban left consisting of 'socialist councillors, community and constituency activists and radicalized elements of local government professions ... (who reject) ... reliance upon the traditional base of labour politics - the trade union movement ...' (528). What this means in Weinstein's analysis is that the 'failure' of social services decentralisation (or at least, its impeded progress) in left-wing socialist authorities in the 1980's is associated with the development of a new tensionful relationship between the new urban left and traditional labourist structures. This does not mean conflict over decentralisation in these authorities is an ideologically free-floating confrontation unconnected to specific issues. In Beurot and Stoker's (529) account, it is argued decentralisation threatens 'established interests within local authorities, including senior officers ... (who) have correctly perceived the threat to their authority and monopoly of control over policy advice' (530). Decentralisation challenges entrenched professionalism (531) and in focussing on community need creates a climate '... in which distinctions between professional and manual

527 Weinstein, J., (1986) op. cit
528 Ibid p.41
529 Beuret, K., and Stoker, G., (1986) op. cit
530 Ibid pp.9-10
531 Ibid p.10
workers fade and the relationship between professional and client is fundamentally changed, breaking the monopoly control of the state professions' (532). A wide variety of factors has entered into these disputes including, as Beuret and Stoker note, staff worries about working conditions and physical amenities in small neighbourhood offices, longer opening hours, physical security, and the stress of sustained contact with the public in 'exposed' community-based locations (533). As noted in the reference to Small (534) at the end of chapter four, at least one of these issues, the social construction of 'violence-towards-social workers', has become one of a number of social work preoccupations in the mid-1980's. The modern decentralisation movement is, then, not simply an expression of conflicting political and professional ideologies and struggles to preserve (felt) interests at a macro-occupational level; it is partly this, but also a focus of practical problems and concerns held by social workers who try to express these concerns through a 'labourist' perspective. Nationally, there is, clearly, a much greater variability in the construction of labourist social work perspectives than in the examples referred to above in inner-city left wing socialist authorities. In other local authorities these and other dimensions of decentralisation have a significantly different context; it need hardly be said, for example, that Howe's earlier description of the Kent Community Care projects did not refer to an imposition by the new urban left upon professional social workers.

532 Ibid
533 Ibid
 Mention was made earlier of Davies's(535) contention that community social work is politically damaging (536) in the sense that it will provoke 'widespread' (537) public reaction against social work (538). The same point is made in Pearson's (539) rejection of the Barclay report emphasis upon community social work. Pearson's theoretical writing in the 1970's was associated with 'radical social work' and he comments

'... those forms of argument which myself and many others tried to develop in the 1970's in opposition to the excessive individualism of casework ideology - arguments which were looked upon somewhat disdainfully as symptoms of radical immaturity in their own time - are now the accepted truths of social work's new establishment. But ... I find myself in sharp disagreement with the ... (Barclay) ... report's central emphasis. Quite obviously, then, I have some explaining to do' (540)

Pearson cites three reasons for resisting the 'Barclay' emphasis upon community social work. One of these is that the reality of community structure does not 'fit' the community social work concept; this criticism is similar to Pinker's suggestion, earlier, that community social work rests on a 'romantic delusion' about the structure of community life. Pearson's comments on this will be returned to in the next part of the chapter which refers to neighbourhood structures. A second reason given for rejecting the Barclay report is that it will lead to a decline in standards of social work service to clients; this will be returned to shortly. Pearson's third reason for rejecting

535 Davies, M., (1983) op.cit
536 Ibid p.30
537 Ibid
538 Ibid
539 Pearson, G., (1983) op.cit
540 Ibid p.80
community social work is, as in Davies above, that it will severely
damage social work's public credibility. Pearson's objection is levied
against community social workers who become embroiled in community
politics that '.... stir up antagonisms between local people and the
employing agencies of the local state' (541). If community social
workers become involved in community politics this will damage social
work's public credibility (542) and be a failure to appreciate that
'social work is neither fitted nor designed for ... vanguard postures'
(543). It is possible that criticisms of this kind are based upon a
stereotypical image of community social workers as the proverbial 'wild
radicals' (544) of social work. Inspection of the career of this
concept ('wildness') in social work suggests it is invoked in different
times and contexts for different purposes. It was, for instance,
frequently called upon in the 1970's in the debate between 'casework
ideology versus community work' in which Pearson, earlier, noted his own
involvement. Some types of community work projects in the 1970's may
have included the role of 'wild' political activist. However the
Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work in a working
party report (545) in 1975 on the teaching of community work skills
warned against exaggerated images of community work

'A great deal of community work is ... concerned with tasks
of a relatively undramatic and routine nature in which great
issues of social justice are not overtly brought into question.
These tasks ... contribute to the very general aim of improving
the quality of social life and group relationships in localities

541 Ibid p.81
542 Ibid
543 Ibid
544 Butrym, Z., Stevenson, O., Harris, R.J., 'The Roles And Tasks Of
Social Workers' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.1, No.1
(Summer) 1981, p.14
545 CCETSW The Teaching Of Community Work Paper 8, London, Central
Council For Education And Training In Social Work, 1975
of varying size. They may involve the raising of funds and the stimulation of neighbourhood interest in particular projects such as the development of child-minding schemes, the establishment and running of social clubs and centres, and the procurement of welfare services for such groups as the handicapped or the old' (546)

This suggests imputations that 'Barclay' critiques of professional casework are somehow an endorsement of 'wildness', are of doubtful veracity. In community social work and 'patch' methods of working, strong emphasis is laid on the concept of 'interweaving' services and resources between formal and informal care sectors. This concept is generally used in a very practical way that does not appear to be especially politicised in the sense of 'radical'. A brief illustration of this point is the provision at Wakefield Social Services Department of services to the elderly, where the initial application of a 'patch' model to social workers was later extended to include home helps and street wardens. Whitehouse (547) in describing the scheme notes that street wardens had previously visited their elderly 'clients' on a seven-day-a-week basis. However many elderly people did not need and did not want to be visited with such frequency, so wardens were asked 'to cover an area rather than a fixed list of clients' (548).

On the old rota system many who needed help were not covered at all, and for those with special or severe need there were insufficient resources to provide extra or more lengthy visits. Through the construction of an information profile on the needs of the elderly living in the 'patch', knowledge of 'informal care' services from relatives, neighbours or friends was built into the street warden scheme. In this way 'where an old person received a regular visit from a daughter on a Tuesday, or from a home help or another agency on a

546 Ibid p.15
547 Whitehouse, A., 'Patch' Community Care 1 December 1983 pp.26-29
548 Ibid p.26
Thursday, they might not need the services of a warden over five days compared to their previous six-day week'. In the Wakefield system street wardens instead of implementing hierarchically planned or managed work schedules are encouraged to develop local knowledge about the changing pattern and frequency of care received by their clients so that help can be targeted when and where it is most needed.

The Wakefield illustration refers to a small area of work, though it indicates community social work in many of its forms is not of the 'wild' variety that Davies and Pearson imply; it is not clear why community social work schemes are said by them to be necessarily embroiled in community politics in a way that is damaging to social work's public credibility. Whether such schemes are an 'effective' form of service to clients is a separate question. Lack of effectiveness and lowering of standards of social work practice is one of the other two reasons stated by Pearson to be grounds for rejecting the Barclay community social work proposals. Pearson, like Pinker, is critical of the post-Seebohm generalist ('generic') approach in 'the mainstream of British social work', and in the form of the generalist perspective embodied in the Barclay report recommendation that 'social workers should be equipped to undertake social care planning and counselling for any client group in a competent but basic way'. As noted earlier, advocates of community social work are themselves divided on the generalist/specialist issue in the relationship of social care planning to counselling. Pearson does not examine this issue, other than to state 'generalism'...
removes the possibility of developing specialist expertise (553). In his conclusion Pearson suggests an element of 'community involvement' is appropriate but social workers should not abandon 'their conventional styles of work' (554) and it '... would be foolish and irresponsible to take social workers further down the deskillling avenue in the name of a misconceived egalitarianism' (555).

It seems clear that a wide variation in perspectives exist concerning the questions of whether community social work will damage the public credibility of social work, and lead to lower professional standards of practice with a corresponding deterioration in the effectiveness of services to clients. A profusion of claims and counter-claims exist with regard to these aspects of community social work. In contrast to Pearson's position, Bolt (556) in a paper titled 'Rejecting Colonial Care' reports on a community participation experiment in Handsworth where encouragement of 'user management' in facilities for the elderly, children, and young people is said to have increased service-user satisfaction and greater involvement in the planning of services (557). The question of public credibility is also addressed by Cooper and Denne (558) in their description of community social work and 'patch' methods at Wakefield. They argue it is not community social work but casework professionalism that damages the public credibility of social work and Cooper and Denne's claim is that 'A marked failure of social work with individual clients, is the lack of any measure of

553 Pearson, G., (1983) op.cit p.83
554 Ibid p.85
555 Ibid
556 Bolt, J., 'Rejecting Colonial Care' Community Care 4 October 1984 pp.21-22
557 Ibid
558 Cooper, M., and Denne, J., (1983) op.cit
effectiveness. This ... is the cause of public incredulity ...".(559)

COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK AND 'THE COMMUNITY'

The classic empirical community studies of the 1950's and early 1960's(560) were followed by a period in which British sociology showed little interest in this area of research. The recent resurgence(561) of empirical sociological interest in this field is reflected in the work of Abrams(562) in the late 1970's and a number of major texts in the mid-1980's including Wenger(563) Willmott(564) Bulmer(565) Willmott(566) and Cecil et.al.(567). Unlike the earlier social anthropological tradition a significant feature of recent work is its 'applied' perspective, and in particular, exploration of the relation between social networks and patterns of formal, informal, and neighbourhood

559 Ibid p.18
560 These are reviewed in Frankenberg, R., Communities In Britain Hardmondsworth, Penguin, 1966
561 Bulmer, M., (1985) op.cit p.430
565 Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit
care. This reorientation in empirical community studies in the 1980's is noted by Bulmer (568) who observes these studies lie 'on the boundaries between sociology and social policy' (569). Another characteristic of recent work is the shift away from abstract theoretical attempts to define 'community'. This shift involves abandonment of 'the metaphysical problem of community' (570) in favour of detailed empirical investigation of patterns of social relationships and networks of interaction and, as just noted, the relationship of these phenomenon to care systems. Bulmer (571) in his text of 1986, which is based largely upon his own data and those accumulated over a period of years in the work of Abrams and others at the University of Durham, reports a large body of data on formal and informal care and particularly neighbourhood-care projects which 'bridge' the concepts of formal and informal care (572). Earlier, in a paper published in 1985 Bulmer's (573) data review had indicated 'A variety of variables - social class, sex, age, stage of life cycle, mobility experience, type of neighbourhood - influence the actual patterns of neighbourly contact and involvement, but there is no evidence that neighbouring has ceased to be a significant relationship' (574). The data available in recent work suggests British sociology in the 1960's and 1970's, in reacting against 'romanticised' reflections about older patterns of community life, has through neglect of empirical inquiry gone 'too far the other way'. Bulmer quotes Shils's observation that

568 Bulmer, M., (1985) op. cit.
569 Ibid p.433
570 Ibid p.434
571 Bulmer, M., (1986) op. cit.
572 Ibid Chapter 12
573 Bulmer, M., (1985) op. cit.
574 Ibid p.434
sociology needs to pay closer empirical attention to the ordinary person's attachment '... to his mates, to his pub, to his family, to his petty vanities in his job, to his vulgar gratifications, to his concern for the improvement of his conditions of life'\(^{(575)}\).

Harris\(^{(576)}\), whose work was referred to earlier in examining Finch's analysis, suggests class rather than only gender is a factor in men's involvement in local networks and in 'neighbouring', and he rejects Finch's view that it is mainly women who are 'attached' to local place \(^{(577)}\). Harris argues the notion that where people work is more salient than where they live is a middle-class conception bound up with occupational and geographical mobility in the advancement of middle-class careers\(^{(578)}\). In Harris's conclusion, for working-class people 'Attachment to place is very powerful ... working class careers are quite different from ... (middle class) ... Promotion, if it occurs at all, is within a particular work place and involves little or no geographical mobility'\(^{(579)}\). The emphasis upon empirical method in Harris and other recent 'community' research has certain advantages. A largely theoretically-induced problem in earlier work was the previously mentioned tendency towards reification of the concept 'community' as though it were some particular settlement pattern or a geographical or structural entity. Bulmer's\(^{(580)}\) comment on theoretical, 'metaphysical' ways of thinking about the concept 'community' is

\begin{itemize}
  \item 575 Schils, E., quoted in \textit{Ibid} p.433
  \item 576 Harris, R., (1985) \textit{op.cit}
  \item 577 \textit{Ibid} p.119
  \item 578 \textit{Ibid}
  \item 579 \textit{Ibid}
  \item 580 Bulmer, M., (1985) \textit{op.cit}
\end{itemize}
'To be sure, the existence of ties between neighbours remains empirically problematical, and ... in certain settings, for certain sections of the population, ties between neighbours are slight or relatively unimportant. Ways of life indeed do not coincide with settlement patterns, but in studying neighbours one is not studying settlement patterns but social networks and the ways in which people construct their primary group relationships' (581)

The relationship of welfare systems to neighbourhood structures is a theme in community development literature that lies outside the recent community studies data just referred to and also largely outside, though is relevant to, the debate of 'Barclay' community social work. Earlier, reference was made to studies of 'organic' welfare projects. It was noted earlier studies in this tradition, as in, for example, Bernard's (582) study of community schemes demonstrate how 'pioneering' neighbourhood-based schemes sometimes identify a need for and exert demand for standardised, comprehensive and more fully resourced services of a kind that can be better provided by statutory welfare agencies. There is no guarantee the formal resources will be provided, but if they are the process here is the 'reverse' of the more familiar notion of proactive 'colonization' (583) of neighbourhood initiatives by the state apparatus. More recent work has also increased understanding of the mechanisms through which many community schemes are initiated: for example Butcher et al. (584) show some community self-help programmes and neighbourhood projects are initiated through discourse and action in 'non-official' ways, or else in quasi-official groupings involving local citizens,

581 Ibid p.434
583 Bulmer, M., (1985) op.cit p.441
584 Butcher, H., et.al (1980) op.cit
elected council representatives, and voluntary workers working alongside community-based social workers (585). Other studies in the mid-1980's suggest, as in the data examined in Lees and Mayo (586) and in Gibson (587), that some locally initiated community projects may have the effect of engendering a wide range of local participation and political activity extending beyond the original project objectives. Whether social workers involved in such schemes should continue their involvement, and if so what the extent of this involvement should be, is one of the controversies surrounding community social work. Though the 'wild radical' image may be stereotypical it is probable that at least a proportion of the schemes in which community social workers may become involved raise the question of professional involvement in 'community politics' that Pearson and Davies, earlier, regarded as a reason for rejection of the community social work model. Another fairly long-standing topic of debate in the community development movement is whether a 'neighbourhood approach' is likely to be effective in localities divided along the lines of class, race, and divisions between those who are in employment and those who are unemployed. One of the major empirical conclusions from most of the recent community studies referred to earlier is that locality-specific variables are significant in their effects upon the contexts and outcomes of neighbourhood schemes. There is, however, no evidence for a general conclusion that community development methods 'will not work' in socially divided neighbourhoods, and some evidence, as in Crenson

585 Ibid pp.247-256
and Jacobs (589) that community development is sometimes a significant mechanism of social improvement in the pattern of services and resources available in neighbourhoods divided on class or ethnic lines.

Many of the community studies data referred to earlier, on neighbouring, social networks, and patterns of care, were not published at the time the Barclay committee considered evidence on the nature and extent of neighbouring and of informal care. Though some of these data lend credence to a number of assumptions made by Barclay, these assumptions at the time they were made appear to have been relatively uninformed empirically and to some degree based upon an ideological predisposition towards 'the community approach' as a concept. Ideological predispositions towards a particular model of welfare also appear to be a factor in some professional rejections of Barclay. Although the Barclay 'community social work' recommendation in 1982 was largely uninformed empirically, a point correctly noted by the Association of Teachers in Social Work Education in response (590) to Barclay in 1983, this does not mean Pinker (591) was any better empirically informed in stating the 'neighbourhood' phenomena to which Barclay referred are an empirical 'illusion' (592). A similar point may be made in relation to Cypher of the British Association of Social Workers, referred to earlier. Cypher was correct to question 'the existence of informal caring networks ...' (593) but instead of

590 ATSWE (1983) op.cit p.13
591 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit
592 Ibid p.69
593 Cypher, J., (1983) op.cit p.4
recommending further empirical data be sought (pertaining both to community social work and the professional casework model) he simply concludes the 'vogue' of community social work should be halted. A broadly similar approach to Cypher is taken by Pinker in his assertion that Barclay social work rests on an assumption that '... there is a sizeable reserve army of volunteers prepared to give altruistic service in local communities' (594). Pinker's perspective leaves a number of issues unaddressed. First, the bulk of 'care' is in fact informal care mainly in the form of familial care, which also happens to be the form of care preferred by most care-receivers. Bulmer notes 'The ideal of domiciliary care proclaimed by the vast majority of those actually and prospectively in need of care is in effect a blunt preference for the family' (595). In describing the extent of informal care Bulmer observes

'Something like nine-tenths of the care given to those who in various ways cannot fend for themselves in our society is given by spouses, parents, children and other kin. If any policy for informal care is to be relevant to the actualities of need and provision it must begin with relations and the problems and possibilities of supporting the bonds of kinship' (596) (italics added).

Bulmer's reference to possibilities and problems is significant in drawing attention to the dangers of oversimplified solutions to problems of welfare, revealed in the tendency of the pro-Barclay lobby to generally give greater emphasis to 'possibilities' in supporting informal care networks, and of the critics of Barclay to emphasise only 'problems' in a way that implies the community social work concept of 'interweaving' formal and informal care rests on some kind of 'illusion' or 'romanticisation'. Whether some advocates of Barclay intend that statutory services should be replaced by informal care, or

594 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit p.70
595 Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit p.233
596 Ibid
whether this might arise as an unintended consequence of 'Barclay' welfare systems, is a point that is widely debated in terms of social and political theory; this is examined in the final part of the chapter. However the actual 'statement of intent' in the Barclay report is that some care-services can suitably be provided only by statutory services, and in circumstances where informal care networks can be supported this support is also ultimately a responsibility of statutory agencies.

'Some of the ideas about the capacity of the community to care are confused by a failure to distinguish types of care which can be provided by social networks from those which need to be provided either jointly or entirely by statutory agencies. We think it is vital that a social services department should retain the ultimate responsibility for seeing that social care networks are maintained' (597) (italics added)

It would seem, therefore, Pinker's statement that the Barclay report calls for 'an army of altruistic volunteers' has to be qualified, first, by the existence of data that indicates most care is informal care, and secondly, by the Barclay report's emphasis upon maintaining statutory agencies both to provide formal services and to take responsibility for supporting informal patterns of care. A second unaddressed issue in the 'Pinker' type of professional critique of Barclay community social work (and in the criticisms by Pearson, Davies and Cypher earlier) is the accumulation of recent community studies data suggesting neighbouring occurs to a far greater extent than supposed by Pinker; this was noted earlier with reference to Bulmer. A third problem in professional rejections of community social work in the form that these are developed by Pinker, Davies, and Pearson, concerns the role of decentralised neighbourhood-care schemes. In statutory-led 'Good Neighbour' schemes involving the services of paid

helpers, these schemes are often 'informal' in the sense of having a very loose 'organic' organisational pattern but they are patently not 'informal care' networks; nor, as Abrams and Bulmer\(^{(598)}\) have shown at some length, do they rely primarily or exclusively upon (though sometimes may include elements of) the principles of altruism, affectivity, and reciprocity that 'develop most strongly - some would say uniquely ...'\(^{(599)}\) in informal care. This is not to say neighbourhood care is a panacea. It is not intended nor equipped to replace informal care, nor to replace formal care where, for example, in the case of support for the elderly, neighbourhood care schemes imply provision of social and practical support that is the equivalent of '... (paid) ... good neighbours as nursing-aids ... but not as substitute nurses.'\(^{(600)}\). So far as voluntary work outside the informal care and neighbourhood-care sectors is concerned, Pinker's critical reference to an assumed 'sizeable reserve army of volunteers' is, on the evidence currently available, an unintended description of what empirically seems to be the case. One of the largest recent surveys on this topic is the SSRC funded national survey of 2,000 adults undertaken in 1981 by The Volunteer Centre in co-operation with Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR). This research is reported in Humble\(^{(601)}\). The research definition of voluntary action was specified as 'time spent, unpaid, in doing something that aimed to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, the volunteer and his or her immediate family.'\(^{(602)}\). The survey

\(^{598}\) Bulmer, M., (1986) \textit{op.cit}

\(^{599}\) Ibid p.233

\(^{600}\) Ibid pp.231-232


\(^{602}\) Ibid p.4
explored attitudes on whether 'volunteering' was necessary or desirable in a welfare state society. Respondents placed a high value on voluntary work with 87 percent endorsing the statement 'A society with voluntary workers is a caring society', and 77 percent supporting the proposition 'Voluntary workers offer something different that could never be provided by the state system'. Data on the extent of volunteering appears to indicate a significant proportion of the population is engaged in voluntary work.

'Almost one in five (18 per cent) of our sample had done some voluntary work during the week preceding the interview; more than one in four (27 per cent) volunteer at least once a month; and almost half (44 per cent) had done some voluntary work during the year preceding our survey'.

In a further report in 1983 Humble commented the two most unexpected findings in these data are, first, the survey finding that volunteering in Britain is so extensive, although not dissimilar to data on volunteering in America: and secondly, that almost as many men as women are engaged in volunteering. Humble notes that in most other respects the data confirmed findings from previous studies, in particular that '... organised volunteering is outweighed by relatively unorganised neighbouring.'

A difficulty in the previously described defences of professional casework through rejection of community social work is the tendency towards an oversimplified 'either-or' polarisation.

603 Ibid p.5
604 Ibid
605 Humble, S., 'Voluntary Action : No Poor Relation' Community Care, 19 May 1983, p.21
606 Ibid
607 Ibid
608 Ibid
of policy options, and a tendency not to address empirical data that have a bearing upon these issues. Part of the controversy in the social construction of the 'casework-versus-community social work' debate is centred on the socially 'divided' nature of particular neighbourhoods, a point noted earlier with reference to the community development movement. Pearson's (609) advocacy of professional casework and his rejection of community social work refers, like Pinker, to the socially heterogeneous nature of some neighbourhoods. However in criticising usages of the concept ('community') '... as a monolith' (610) Pearson seems to have in mind the older sociological reificationist ('metaphysical') use of the concept. According to Pearson

"What is forgotten is that communities are divided ... The distinction between the 'rough' and the 'respectable' working class ... has a high degree of relevance here. Flighty talk about 'informal caring networks' and volunteers will invariably mean recruitment from the respectable. Those whom they will be expected to care for will be more likely to be recruited from the 'rough' or lumpenproletariat. There is not a lot of love lost between these two sections of the working class' (611)

If in this statement Pearson is referring to 'informal care' per se it is not clear what point is being made viz-a-viz the 'roughs' and 'respectables' distinction. If, as is implied in the rest of his paper, Pearson is suggesting individualised professional casework by social workers, probation officers and others is the appropriate method of engaging in work with those said to be the 'roughs', it is not clear why this option cannot be retained for the 'roughs' and co-exist with community social work methods; whether or not casework for those referred to as 'roughs' is desirable is a separate

610 Ibid p.81
611 Ibid
question, and Jones (612) in arguing it is not suggests it is precisely the 'non-collectivist' welfare individualism of professional casework that divides the working class and is one of the major factors in the social reproduction of the 'respectable/rough' distinction (613). Additionally, if what Pearson has in mind are the services provided by patch social workers, or by neighbourhood-care workers, to the elderly, physically handicapped and other persons in need of domiciliary support there is no reason to suppose these receivers-of-care will primarily be members of the category described as 'roughs'.

The social construction of the 'casework versus community social work' debate, in so far as this debate relates to the social structure of neighbourhoods, has in the ways identified above tended to polarize into an over simple 'either-or' set of arguments. Abrams model for conceptualising relationships between the various systems of care (eg. formal, informal, and neighbourhood care) distinguished between co-existence, conflict, and colonization (614). Froland's (615) classification of the range of relations that may exist between different types of care system conceptualises these relationships in terms of conflict, competition, cooptation, coexistence, and collaboration (616). Sociology of social work is concerned with examination of theoretical and empirical data pertaining to 'the

612 Jones, C., State Social Work And the Working Class London and Basingstoke, Macmillan 1983
613 Ibid pp.73-74
614 Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit p.215
615 Froland, C., 'Formal And Informal Care: Discontinuities In A Continum' Social Service Review 54, 4, 1980, pp.572-87
616 Ibid pp.577-9, cited Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit p.215
issues' to which competitive social work actors address their attention, and with investigation of how these issues are constructed by the respective actors. In the relationship between professional and 'community social work' constituencies there has been a tendency to construct the relation between care sectors primarily in terms of, in Froland's classification, the dimensions of conflict and competition.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK AND STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

Statutory control or protective functions in social work may involve a local authority taking into care a child who is in moral or physical danger in the terms specified in the Child Care Act of 1980, or may entail compulsory hospital admittance under the Mental Health Amendment Act of 1983 if this is deemed necessary in the individual's own best interests or for the protection of others. In discharging such functions complex decisions have to be made in balancing the rights and needs of the individuals involved and of various others. The decision-making process in statutory social work occurs in a way which draws upon specialist professional expertise that is, however, bounded by legal and procedural ('bureaucratic') frameworks which specify general criteria that should be 'consistently' applied by individual professionals in their decision-making. Decisions affecting the liberty and freedom of movement of individuals are not left entirely at the discretion of individual professionals, nor to the personal predilections of local bureaucrats. For reasons noted by Blau (617) in his analysis of the relationship of democracy to bureaucracy (618) common, consistent application of criteria for curtailing the freedom and rights of individuals require that

618 Ibid p.15
professional decisions are 'framed' within a quasi-judicial, quasi-bureaucratic procedural framework. If a model of fully autonomous individual professionalism is not appropriate in statutory social work it can equally be argued that neither is a loose, flexible 'organic' structure appropriate; in this view the key decision-makers in statutory social work should not be informal carers, or paid neighbourhood helpers nor even 'community social workers'. This community dimension of statutory social work will be returned to shortly. The Brunel studies, in noting a fully professionally-autonomous model was not appropriate for the performance of statutory social work functions, observed that these functions are '... most readily undertaken within the framework of a hierarchically organized agency service; they fit uneasily in the voluntary relationship between the independent therapist and his self-appointed client' (619). On this view performance of statutory control and protective functions requires a legalistic framework for decision-making and a fusion of bureaucracy and professionalism in the form of bureau-professionalism (620). This, however, is a socially constructed concept and it is possible to give greater relative weighting to either the 'bureau' or the 'professional' element in statutory social work. Henkel (621), for example, gives more emphasis to the professional rather than 'bureau' element in arguing individual professional responsibility, and individual judgement and accountability is a key element in professional handling of '... the most vulnerable or

619 SSORU (1974) op.cit p.279
620 Parry, N., and Parry, J., (1979) op.cit p.43
621 Henkel, M., 'Cutting The Gordian Knot?' Issues In Social Work Education Vol.4, No.1 (Summer) 1984, pp.17-25
threatening members of society' (622).

Professional arguments that statutory responsibilities mean community social work is 'unworkable' tend in the main to centre upon the issues of professionalism, organisational structure, and accountability in the form just described: these issues are significant and will be returned to in a moment. A variation in this argument is Pinker's (623) contention that the community social work model will in the statutory child-care field produce a flood of reported suspicions of child abuse (presumably a form of citizen moral-panic) which in turn might produce massive over-reaction by social workers (a professional moral-panic) (624). If community social workers have close access to neighbourhood knowledge and are readily accessible to local residents who have suspicions of child-abuse to report, the consequences will be dire

"In the case of the professional social worker there is an important difference between learning about a suspected case of child abuse ... in the ordinary course of his duties and intentionally helping to create an informal network of information ... There is already considerable disquiet about the existence of 'at risk' registers in our present system. Imagination quails at the thought of their possible scope in a community-based model of social work" (625).

Precisely for the reasons noted by Pinker, his argument may (turn out to) be valid. The problem to which he refers is a theoretical possibility that indicates a necessity for comparative monitoring of numbers and patterns of child-abuse referrals, and responses to these, in local authorities that operate a community social work model and those which do not. However the alacrity with which Pinker turns a theoretical possibility into an empirical reality may be questioned on

622 Ibid p.24
623 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit
624 Ibid p.73
625 Ibid
two counts. First, he appears to ignore existing widespread professional and other exhortations that the public should instantly report to the authorities their slightest suspicions of child-abuse, if necessary using telephone 'hotlines' to report these suspicions to radio and television stations. Are people to 'report' or are they to not? Pinker is unclear about this, except to say one mechanism of reporting (community social work) is faulty. A difficulty in this part of Pinker's argument is that it is possible higher reporting rates occur through systems like hotlines that preserve anonymity than in situations where the accuser who whispers to the local neighbourhood worker knows that in making the accusation s(he) might 'become involved' in some personal way. Secondly, until there is further monitoring of the kind referred to above a possibility remains that Pinker may have exaggerated the extent to which lay 'over-diagnosis' of child abuse occurs. Relatedly, professionals too may 'over-diagnose', without having suspicions of child-abuse reported to them by local residents who Pinker says will be reporting '... hearsay, gossip and well-meaning but uninvited prying' (626). Though data interpretations are highly controversial in this field it is worth noting an American study, reported by Light (627) suggests up to three-quarters of parents suspected of abusing their children are incorrectly labelled. In Britain, it would be unsafe to ignore a possibility that professional 'moral-panics' may occur in a way that have nothing to do with the community social work model. The question of whether or not professional 'panic' about child-abuse does

626 Ibid
627 Light, R.J., 'Abused And Neglected Children In America' Harvard Educational Review Vol.43 (1973) p.571
occur became a hotly contested issue in the 1980's. Widespread beliefs that professional 'over-diagnosis' may take place are noted in Hildrew's (628) reportage in June 1987 of massive national media publicity, parliamentary questions, and public criticisms concerning a sudden substantial increase in the numbers of children medically diagnosed as cases of suspected sexual abuse and taken into care by the Cleveland Social Services Department (629). The topic of child-abuse and dispute regarding the 'real' size and scale of the problem has become in the 1980's a topic surrounded by claims and counter-claims, many of them anecdotal. However Pinker's idea that statutory child-care functions will become distorted by community social work's 'closeness to the community' is not empirically grounded, and is best regarded as a significant hypothesis that merits investigation.

As noted earlier, the more commonly cited grounds for arguing statutory tasks are incompatible with the community social work model are those relating to professionalism, organisational structure, and individual professional responsibility and accountability (630). Leaving aside the issue that some local authorities have already implemented decentralised community social work models, there is a central problem in the argument that professional social work's statutory tasks are a reason for not implementing the community social work model in social services departments. This problem arises from the fact that the bulk of the work undertaken in social services departments (SSD's) consists not of professional social work, but 'social services' work in the terms defined by, for example, the

628 Hildrew, P., 'Surprise Over Two Hundred Child Sex Abuse Cases' The Guardian 27 June 1987, p.2
629 Ibid
630 Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit. p.70
British Association of Social Workers\(^{631}\). The SSD's, as their title suggests, are departments of social services in which the majority of tasks undertaken take the form of what Billis \(\text{et.al}^{632}\) term 'basic services'\(^{633}\). These services are provided by staff who are generally not professionally trained social workers to a variety of client groups including mentally handicapped persons, the chronic sick and disabled, and the elderly\(^{634}\). Relatively little of this work is undertaken by social workers; in the case of the home help service, for example, one estimate is that something like ninety percent of clients in receipt of home help services are not known to social workers\(^{635}\). The Brunel researchers in 1980 pointed out there is an expanding need and demand for 'basic-services' and that expansion of these social services is likely to be a significant development that will have implications for the future structure of the SSD's\(^{636}\). In view of the very small proportion of social services tasks classifiable as 'statutory social work' it is not clear why these tasks are sometimes implied to be a 'necessary' reason for avoiding 'organic' decentralisation in the social services departments\(^{637}\). Each function and range of task-

\(\begin{align*}
632 & \text{Billis, D., \text{et.al} (1980) op.cit} \\
633 & \text{Ibid p.88} \\
634 & \text{Ibid p.87} \\
635 & \text{Ibid p.94} \\
636 & \text{Ibid p.87} \\
637 & \text{This appears to be the logic of, for example, Pinker's position in Pinker, R., (1983) op.cit. The Barclay Report did not suggest there would be no necessity for counselling. Pinker's argument is that the community social work model has no role in social work, irrespective of whether or not the social work task being carried out involves 'statutory' work.}
\end{align*}\)
performances may require a different organisational matrix appropriate to each type of task-performance, but it is not necessary to have a single matrix (eg. bureau-professionalism) to encompass them all. In the probation service a large proportion of the range of work undertaken is of a 'statutory' kind; but for the performance of some tasks (such as preventive work) located at the 'non-statutory' end of the work continuum a number of probation authorities are developing decentralised 'organic' community-based frameworks of service-delivery (638). In social services departments employing 'patch' systems of community social work the assignment of statutory social work tasks relates to the generalist/specialist dimension, examined earlier with reference to the relationship of counselling to social care planning roles. These roles are not performed by the same individual in the type of patch model exemplified in Cooper and Denne (639). Where these roles are combined, as in Bailey and MacGrath's (640) account of the generalist community social work model at Macclesfield, performance of 'statutory' tasks by non-specialist patch social workers is described as one of the more difficult combinations of role, but said not to be a major obstacle. Bailey and MacGrath describe a 'non-statutory' example of how 'social workers ... successfully ... cover both social planning and counselling' (641) and then state

'The need to remove a child into care may cause some problems, but experience in Macclesfield would suggest that this perhaps causes more concern within the agency than the community. Perhaps it is we who find the exercise of control functions difficult and painful' (642)

639 Cooper, M., and Denne, J., (1983) op.cit
640 Bailey, C., and MacGrath, M., (1984) op.cit
641 Ibid p.19
642 Ibid
In another account to which reference was briefly made earlier with regard to client confidentiality, Bennett (643) describes his involvement in a social services sub-office experimental project based upon a 'community' approach in an inner-city area. He reports that prior to the project "we were used to throwing out phrases like 'statutory work' ... as ... (one of) ... the reasons for our own poor performance and for our shortfall on preventive work" (644). The sub-office encouraged user-planned schemes which included community work projects run by 'young people subject to statutory orders' (645) and the workers developed a view that if social workers...

"... are going to fulfil their statutory obligations and remove people and children from their homes, then in addition to 'preventive casework' they have to be involved on a wider scale and encourage the development of community networks" (646). The workers attempted to ensure they were 'accessible' (647) to the local neighbourhood and Bennett writes 'we have had to be careful not to be pressurised by outside agencies and misuse the respect we have earned or to use our statutory authority to detrimental effect' (648).

Bennett reports that work 'with individuals and families continued and statutory obligations were fulfilled' (649) at the same time that the sub-office project moved more closely towards preventive community work based on the involvement of clients and local residents in the planning and provision of services. Commenting upon Bennett's work, Jordan (650) suggests in this instance a decentralised, community-based approach

643 Bennett, B., (1980) op.cit
644 Ibid p.161
645 Ibid p.168
646 Ibid p.172
647 Ibid p.180
648 Ibid
649 Ibid p.164
... has not precluded a commitment to good practice in statutory tasks; rather it has enabled more informed and coherent policies to be developed. And when a client's needs cannot be met within the community, the team are able to give a specific prescription of what specialist resources are required from a placement outside his home area' (651)

On the basis of the material examined here it is clear that the social construction of 'statutory social work' is highly variable and formulated in opposed ways by different sections of the social work community. Statutory social work, like a number of the other aspects of decentralisation explored in this chapter, has been cited by at least some professionals as a reason for rejecting decentralisation of services and the concepts of community social work and 'patch' associated with the decentralisation movement. Some of these rejections, as has been shown, appear not be be based upon appraisal of the broad range of theoretical argument and empirical data available for examining the relation of professional social work to the decentralisation movement. It is, however, easier to identify paucity in some of the criticisms formulated against community social work than it is to judge how successful, or otherwise, community social work and the decentralisation movement will be in tackling the various issues of decentralisation raised in this chapter. Though theoretical arguments as well as empirical data can be shown to lend support to some of the assumptions and working practices of community social work, it remains true that a large number of community social work schemes begun in the 1980's cannot yet be said to have been fully and systematically evaluated. The social construction of decentralisation within social work is not, though, only a question of the relationship of 'professionalism' to 'community social work'. As noted in the first part of the chapter, there is evidence to suggest many social workers

651 Ibid p.110
have a normative attachment to the principle of hierarchy - which is a bureaucratic or quasi-bureaucratic concept that stands in a tensionsful relationship to 'organic' concepts associated with 'patch' methods of organisation and with community social work as both a 'philosophy' and a form of practice. Also, a theme underlying many of the topics examined earlier is that philosophy and politics are as significant in the social construction of 'decentralisation' as the details of substantive topics raised by the theories and practices of decentralisation. In the remainder of the chapter the decentralisation movement is examined in terms of the social and political theories that underlie its social construction within (and outside) the social work community: in these broader terms, the debate about decentralisation is as much about what a practical expression of a welfare ideology might be said to consist of as about the contents of the ideologies themselves.

THEORIES AND POLITICS IN THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF 'DECENTRALISATION'

A noticeable characteristic in the social construction of the decentralisation movement is the tendency of theoretical protagonists to be as much (sometimes more) interested in argument as to whom (or which ideology) decentralisation 'belongs' to, as in the substantive concepts and practices of decentralisation and community social work. Reflecting the pro-decentralisation ethos prevalent amongst large sections of the Labour left Tony Benn writes 'In the light of our experience of state authorities in various forms, the democratic Left would want to emphasise self-management and the decentralisation of initiative and control to protect us from the
abuses of central power' (652). This left-labour perspective is noted in Beresford's (653) comment that one of the methods of decentralisation, patch social work, places emphasis upon a transfer of power to service-users and residents and this '... is one of the unstated reasons for objections raised against it from the right' (654) (italic added). In another paper with Croft a different emphasis is given by Beresford (655) who says one of the reasons the right is for 'patch' decentralisation practices is that these practices will lead towards the goal of further privatisation of services (656). So far as most of the leading welfare proponents of decentralisation are concerned, an increase in privatisation (or wholesale handing-over of services to the voluntary sector) is said to be no part of the decentralisation movement, and Hadley and McGrath (657) reject any suggestion that community social work '... is compatible with the proposals of politicians of the right to dismantle the statutory welfare services and hand them over to voluntary organisations and the market' (658).

In theories advocating welfare decentralisation the dominant ideological basis for these theories is welfare pluralism, based upon a concept of a 'mixed economy of welfare' which rejects state service monopolization and argues for a combination of state, voluntary,

652 Tony Benn, M.P., quoted in Murray, N., 'Decentralisation Is Here To Stay' Community Care 17 April 1983, p.12
653 Beresford, P., 'Patch: Power To The People' Community Care 23 November 1983, pp.18-21
654 Ibid p.18
656 Ibid p.31
658 Ibid p.15
informal, and (to a lesser extent) private care sectors. Hadley and Hatch’s (659) development of the welfare pluralist concept in their influential Social Welfare and the Failure of the State moved beyond academia after its publication in 1981 and their text gained endorsement by politicians belonging to the Conservative Party, the Labour left, and the Alliance parties (660). A recurring theme in modern welfare pluralism is not that there is no role for state services but that these services should be complemented by an increasing emphasis upon 'voluntary and community based alternatives' (661) and on processes of 'interweaving' (662) resources between formal, informal, and voluntary care sectors. In arguing for a mixed economy of welfare with a plurality of resources to complement state services, more emphasis is given to the formal, voluntary and informal sector and to 'interweaving' of services between these, than to the private ('commercial') sector. The last of these compared with other sectors is given relatively little attention in Hadley and Hatch who suggest the private sector provided it is 'subject to safeguards to maintain the quality of service and ... does not have a detrimental effect on other sources of welfare' (663) (italics added) has a role in the mixed economy of welfare. Hadley and Hatch appear to have doubts about whether an expanded private sector should have an enhanced role in welfare pluralism; they suggest there is an antithesis between the values and

661 Ibid p.21
662 Howe, D., (1983) op.cit p.82
objectives of social services, and the 'commercial sector'\(^{(664)}\). This perspective is taken further by some welfare pluralists, such as Gladstone\(^{(665)}\) who suggests the commercial sector has no place in a welfare pluralist model committed to social justice. Welfare pluralist rejection or ambivalence towards the private sector may be one reason for support for welfare pluralist concepts from the labour left, together with the pluralists' arguments for shifting power and resources from bureaucratic and professional forms of 'domination' and increasing the power and involvement of service-users and local residents. However Beresford and Croft\(^{(666)}\) suggest the 'respectability'\(^{(667)}\) of welfare pluralism which 'includes voluntary, community ... and statutory provision and the possibility of alliances between them'\(^{(668)}\) does not alter the probability that 'The welfare right is only interested in pluralism in so far as it means the profitable predominance of the market'\(^{(669)}\) (italic added). This leads Beresford and Croft to a critical interpretation that welfare pluralism, whatever the actual motives of its proponents, will have the effect of opening the door to the privatisation ideals of the 'new right'\(^{(670)}\). Whether this will happen is open to question. In another paper Beresford and Croft\(^{(671)}\) in endorsing aspects of welfare pluralism state 'There are

664 Ibid p.100  
665 Gladstone, F., cited in Beresford, P., and Croft, S., (1984) op. cit p.27  
666 Beresford, P., and Croft, S., (1984) op.cit  
667 Ibid p.31  
668 Ibid  
669 Ibid  
670 Ibid p.25  
671 Beresford, P., and Croft, S., 'A Solution Or Just Another Problem' Community Care 26 January 1984, p.21
already many critics on the right wing waiting on the sidelines to see community social work and patch fall on their face' (672). Nevertheless their view of the possible, if unintended, 'privatising' effects of welfare pluralist ideology are of some interest, not least following the election in 1987 of a Conservative government to a third term of office. In general terms, Beresford and Croft's prognosis is not supported by recent empirical data analyses of public perceptions of the welfare state. Earlier, in examining data analysed by Taylor-Gooby (673) on the legitimation crisis of the modern welfare state, it was noted these data suggest the long-term trend since the early 'fifties towards greater privatisation has been largely unaffected by Tory policies in the 1980's (674); that there is popular support for both public and private sectors, reasons for support of the latter including quantity and quality of service and user-responsiveness (675); that there is widespread public opposition against further cuts in valued state services (676); and that the principle of state services is widely supported, it being primarily the particular institutional frameworks of services and models of service-delivery that are rejected (677). It was noted earlier this last point is given special emphasis in Mishra's (678) analysis of data on the legitimation crisis: in Mishra's analysis it is not the 'idea' of state welfare that has been rejected by citizens and users but 'bureaucratic or professional imposition' (679) which many service-users have experienced as a

672 Ibid
673 Taylor-Gooby, P., (1986) op.cit
674 Ibid pp.228-9
675 Taylor-Gooby, P., (1986) op.cit
676 Ibid p.241
677 Mishra, R., (1986) op.cit
678 Ibid
679 Ibid p.9
'negative' (680) barrier against 'less bureaucratic and more self-managed and participatory services' (681). These data and the interpretations of them just referred to, qualify Beresford and Croft's largely unsubstantiated prognosis that 'welfare pluralists ... cannot escape opening wider the door to privatisation by the support for the commercial sector inherent in their advocacy of a plurality of sources of welfare' (682). As already noted, welfare pluralists do not advocate privatisation and are ambivalent in their attitudes towards the commercial sector. Their main emphasis is upon 'interweaving' properly resourced decentralised models of formal, informal, and voluntary care sectors: resourcing was emphasised in the Barclay report statement 'we cannot emphasise too strongly that a community approach is not cheap, though we believe it will give good value for money' (683). So far as public opinion is concerned, the data referred to above suggest by far the largest section of mass opinion is opposed in principle to further cuts in state services: this majority in Taylor-Gooby's data, depending upon which particular services are being looked at, are in round figures between 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the population (684). However like Mishra, Taylor-Gooby refers to empirical evidence showing strong dissatisfaction with state welfare resulting '... from the experience by clients of oppression by state professionals and bureaucrats' (685).

Hypotheses that an inevitable effect of welfare pluralism will be to

680 Ibid p.10
681 Ibid
682 Beresford, P., and Croft, S., (1983) op.cit p.25
685 Ibid p.243
open the door to privatisation, or produce public disaffection away from the principle of universal public social services in a way that permits future governments to impose large scale social expenditure cuts are, at the least, unproven. It could equally well be argued welfare pluralism may have some success in tackling what recent empirical analyses suggest may be one of the major underlying causes of the legitimation crisis of the modern welfare state. That is, these analyses suggest it is the experience of monolithic, controlling state services dominated by bureaucrats and professionals that has contributed to the long-term expansion of privatisation since the early 1950's; as Statham (686) notes, it may be that

'...paternalistic and elitist approaches...made privatisation easier. Services were devised and provided by experts for people, they were not negotiated, there was formal but not direct participation. The negative experience of this type of welfare accounts for the failure of the labour movement and local people to fight against cuts' (687)

It was mentioned earlier in the chapter that one objective in sociology of social work is to examine theoretical and empirical materials pertaining to the practical, organisational and moral-political issues which individual and collective social work actors focus their attention upon; and that another is to engage in analysis of the social construction of these issues by a range of social work actors, some of whom may be opposed to each other in a variety of ways. This chapter has focussed upon social worker attitudes to professionalism and bureaucracy, and the concept of an indetermination/technicality ratio; the legitimation crisis of state social services; 'organic' organisational concepts; and in particular,


*The Political Dimensions Of Social Work* Blackwell, 1983 in


687 Ibid p.127
the theories and practices of the decentralisation movement in the 1980's. In examining social work constructions of these issues they are interpreted sociologically in the general terms of the anti-reductionist theoretical framework developed in the second chapter. If individual or collective social actors have interests and perspectives which in some way shape their definitions of their and others' situations, or which shape their practices, these interests and perspectives are in varying degrees discursively formulated. They are sited within complex, shifting but empirically specifiable sets of circumstances ('conditions of action'). These exist partly at the middle-range level of social process and are not a 'necessary effect' of the macro-institutional or historical social order. In particular, actors' actions and perspectives are not the 'necessary effects' of 'objective' structurally 'given' interests. In concluding the chapter on this general theoretical note concerning the construction of social work issues a convenient empirical illustration is Clapham's analysis of the 'corporate planning' movement in the early 1970's. The point being made here is not that the corporate planning movement in local government in the early 1970's is structurally identical to the decentralisation movement of the 1980's; clearly, this is not the case. Rather, it is suggested the construction of responses to both movements was to a large extent shaped by middle-range processes at the level of occupations, organisations, and professions; these responses were not determinate expressions of historical or macro-institutional 'necessities'. Clapham describes processes through which the management technique 'corporate planning' was successfully resisted by

bureaucratic and professional interests within the local government system (689). He rejects Cockburn's (690) structural marxist interpretation that corporate planning functions in the interests of a particular class and in the interests of the capitalist state through the reproduction of labour (691). Clapham's critique of Cockburn suggests '... the power struggle surrounding local government is more complex than she allows. The local state is not just an agent of the capitalist class but is the focus ... (of) ... struggle between many social groups ...' (692). Corporate planning served the perspectives and interests of some members of local government organisations, particularly chief executive officers and their management staff. Equally, it was felt by other local authority officers, especially the professional heads of service departments (social services, education, planning etc) to be a management and planning strategy which eroded their traditional power and role as departmental heads who in their relationships with elected members were (with other departmental officers) closely involved in defining environmental needs, designing policies and monitoring outcomes (693). In some areas there was also resistance from local community groups against the 'technical' de-politicising assumptions enshrined in corporate planning techniques (694) and some opposition from left-wing councillors (695). Clapham's thesis is that it is simplistic to interpret the demise of corporate planning as a reflection of class struggle or of 'the interests of

689 Ibid p.27
690 Cockburn, C., The Local state London, Pluto, 1977
691 Clapham, D., (1985/86) op.cit pp.28-29
692 Ibid p.29
693 Ibid pp.35-39
694 Ibid p.36
695 Ibid p.39
capitalism'. Professional and bureaucratic interests and perspectives in local areas were a major factor and though in Clapham's view it is possible professional power may have some relation to the interests of the capitalist class '... at least some of this power is based on professional self-interest and is unrelated to class interest' (696). In his conclusion Clapham makes reference to the decentralisation movement in the 1980's; he observes it is too early to judge what the outcomes of decentralisation will be, but suggests these outcomes will not be wholly macro-institutionally determined and to a large extent will be shaped by the operation of occupational, professional and organisational interests and perspectives (697). Clapham suggests even if it is argued particular management structures and techniques are deliberately planned by 'the capitalists' to further the interests of 'their' class, organisational and professional interests will intervene.

'The independent nature of the power of the local government apparatus means that any attempt to adopt management structures and processes to further the interests of a particular class is certain to be difficult as the example of corporate planning shows. This is a lesson to be learnt ... (in) ... the recent experience of decentralisation ... It is much too early to judge its success, but the difficulties which many local governments have experienced in trying to implement decentralised organisational structures shows that it is dangerous to under estimate the power of the organisational interests involved. Implementing the organisational structures is difficult enough but changing organisational processes is even more difficult. Many local authorities implemented corporate management structures but very few implemented the processes. It is, therefore, dangerous to expect too much from ... techniques such as corporate planning or decentralisation ... This does not mean that no attempt should be made to change local government management but that any attempt to do so should take notice of the power structures involved and be aware of the difficulties which will be involved' (698)

The decentralisation movement gained a significant momentum in the early and mid-1980's. Whether further major decentralisation of the

696 Ibid p.40
697 Ibid p.41
698 Ibid
personal social services should occur, and if so what the outcomes of this are likely to be, is a debate that seems likely to continue into the 1990's. Cypher (699) of the British Association of Social Workers, discussed earlier, feared decentralisation will become 'the vogue' (700) and Pearson (701) that it may become part of the new social work 'establishment' (702). In the longer term, whether the actual turn of events will show these professional fears are justified is something that remains to be seen. Bearing in mind Clapham's analysis of what happened to the corporate planning movement in the 1970's it is possible Cypher was not entirely inaccurate in his observation that

'... the Barclay group did not fully appreciate how complexity will impede the introduction of their organisational model' (703).

700 Ibid p. 3
702 Ibid p. 80
703 Cypher, J., (1983) op. cit. p. 3
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The uncertainties and tensions examined in the previous chapters stand in sharp contrast to the mood of optimism felt in the early 1970's for developing a new 'Seebohm' professionalism in British social work. The contemporary climate of uncertainty has engendered amongst a large number of social workers a sense of belonging to a beleaguered profession that has become increasingly characterised by '... professionally and individually felt vulnerability' (1). Small (2) suggests social work's adaptation to uncertainty and to criticisms of professionalism has taken the form of a '... dominant response ... (which)... seeks to identify and promote a picture of the social worker as an expert and to emphasise professionalism and qualification' (3). However Small also observes

2 Small, N., (1987) op.cit
3 Ibid p.47
'Social work may seek to assert its professionalism, its esoteric knowledge, its importance as a force for public intervention in the private world of the family, but it does so in circumstances where its involvement in the public world is increasingly problematic' (4)

The notion that social work possesses a distinctive professional expertise has been severely challenged. This process began in the late 1970's, and became particularly visible in the 1980's. It was noted in the first chapter that a significant factor in the conflict between professionals and social services employers was the appointment of non-professional staff (i.e. 'social services' workers) to posts that had previously been defined as professional social work posts.

The professional constituency has also unsuccessfully resisted the appointment of non-professionals to senior management positions in some of the 'key' institutions of social work. This has occurred, for example, in the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work which in 1986 announced the appointment of a new Director and Chairperson neither of whom were professionally qualified or experienced social workers (5). This provoked objections by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) whose General Secretary, David Jones stated the appointment of a non-professional director would reduce the director's 'credibility' in dealing with social work matters and the practice of appointing non-qualified individuals to senior management social work posts also damaged 'the perceived career prospects of social workers' (6). Jones protested that the appointment of a director who was not a professional social worker was regarded by the BASW as '... a matter of fundamental concern to social workers'

4 Ibid p.49
5 MacLachlan, R., 'Changing The Guard At CCETSW' Community Care 9 October 1986, pp.15-17
6 Jones, D., quoted in Editorial 'BASW Re-States Concern Over New Directors' Qualifications' Community Care 20 October 1986, p.5
In the period since the late 1970's there have been a series of confrontations between the British Association of Social Workers and those local authorities who have appointed Directors of Social Services who are not professional social workers. Commenting on this trend Cypher the secretary of the BASW in 1984 stated 'I must register ... disappointment that social work qualifications are increasingly not seen as necessary'. Whitehouse made the point that 'Councils expect architects, engineers and directors of education to be ... (professionally) ... qualified ... so why should social work ... be any different?'. Also noted by Whitehouse is the possibility that bringing in 'outsiders' to top management posts may reduce openings to senior management positions for middle-management professional staff who after Seebohm '... worked their way up through their departments'. Jones in 1985 predicted increasing movement towards the appointment of directors of social services who will give greater emphasis to the management of service-delivery, and observed '... the local government climate is ready for it'. In Francis's view the appointment of senior management staff from outside social work will benefit social...

7 Ibid
8 Francis, W., 'Equipped To Climb The Ladder?' Community Care 11 July, 1985, pp.14-15
9 Cypher, J., quoted in News Item Community Care 6 December 1984, p.3
10 Whitehouse, A., 'No Professional Has A Monopoly Of Wisdom' Community Care 22 August 1985, pp.14-16
11 Ibid p.14
12 Ibid
13 Jones, A., quoted in Francis, W., (1985) op.cit. p.15
14 Ibid
15 Francis, W., (1985) op.cit.
work through the introduction of new ideas and '... the reality seems to be that there will be more and more cross fertilisation within social services management through the introduction of managers ... (and) ... ideas ... from outside the profession. Social work, surely, can only gain from that ... during the current upheavals ...'(16) (italic added).

Conflict surrounding the apparent erosion of professionalism through the appointment of 'non-professional' social services staff to basic grade social work posts, and the appointment of non-professionals to senior social work management posts, had by the mid-1980's become a predictable feature of news items, articles, and reports of social work conferences in the popular social work press. The fears and protests registered by BASW at the way this debate was developing, were understandable. The fact that a debate of this kind could occur at all was a demonstration that the professional constituency, despite its expanding power and influence in the post-Seebohm era of the early and mid-1970's, had failed to 'define' the social work community irreversibly. Analogously in a processual sense to the EDF in Callon and Latour's(17) case study examined in chapter two(18) the professional constituency had failed to irreversibly 'macro-structure' the reality of the social work community: the appointment of managers from industry or the civil service to the post of director of social services would have been unthinkable at the beginning of the 1970's, but once the

16 Ibid p.15
18 See Chapter 2, pp.185-191
idea-influencing assumptions of Seebohm's bureau-professionalism had been breached, the word, as Callon and Latour put it, 'was out' (19). A new line of reasoning began to be unfolded. Social actors in and around social work 'went back to the drawing board' and engaged in a process of fundamental re-examination of assumptions that had, by and large, held centre stage in the social construction of professional social work in the 1970's. This process of 'unfolding' previously dominant ('consigned') assumptions did not just happen 'out of the blue'. Although the process was complex the major factors involved are relatively easily summarised; they include the legitimation crisis of the welfare state, the inner-city disturbances of the 1980's, the theories and practices of the decentralisation movement, and a growing perception amongst employers that the services they were responsible for providing were becoming increasingly seen as based on an 'esoteric' professional casework model that bore little relation to the 'real' needs of clients and of communities served by the social services departments. The tensions associated with the unfolding of 'new' perceptions of professional social work in the 1980's are perhaps nowhere more clearly encapsulated than in Measures's (20) criticism of Harbert (21). Measures in his article in 1986 argues for an enhanced role for the BASW, for increased professional autonomy, and for a policy that only professionally qualified social workers be appointed to senior management posts in social services departments (22). Harbert's perspective as a director of social services who is highly

20 Measures, P., 'Professionalism' Community Care 17 April 1986, pp.16-17
21 Harbert, W., 'Status Professionalism' Community Care 10 October 1985, pp.14-15
22 Measures, P., (1986) op.cit p.17
critical of professionalism is rejected by Measures, who quotes Harbert's statement that consumer groups will '... demand more opportunities to control the services that are provided for them. The price mechanism and the cash nexus give consumers' immense power when they buy in the private market. They will demand the same level of power of public services' (23). Measures's response to this is 'Perhaps he is arguing for privatisation of social services - I doubt if he would find many buyers' (24). It is not clear why Measures should say this: in the article by Harbert (25) to which he refers the context of Harbert's reference to the commercial sector makes it clear that, far from endorsing privatisation of services, a concern is being expressed about expansion of the commercial sector becoming a 'reality' unless users perceive possibilities to influence services in accordance with their perceptions of their own needs. Harbert's analysis is criticised by Measures on the grounds that it contains a philosophy which Measures rejects as being a form of 'consumerism' (26). Though it cannot be assumed Measures's viewpoint is representative of all members of the professional social work constituency, it represents a viewpoint which many employers impute to professional social work. In terms of the analysis of cognitive indeterminacy in chapter five, professional social work in some perceptions has 'exceeded' Jamous and and Peloille's (27) '... indetermination/technicality ratio' (28). The

23 Ibid p.16
24 Ibid
25 Harbert, W., (1985) op.cit
26 Measures, P., (1986) op.cit p.16
28 Ibid p.113
empirical data analyses examined in chapter five on the legitimation crisis of the welfare state indicate a strong possibility that professional social work may indeed have exceeded this crucial 'ratio'. For the most part, mass public opinion endorses the principle of universal state social services but is critical of service-delivery frameworks and lack of user-involvement and of user responsiveness in the way these services are defined by 'experts'. If it is the case that professional social work has exceeded this ratio there is a sense in which professionalism has become self-negating, given the power and defining capacity of other groups (including consumers) to whom professionals have to relate in accounting for their actions and practices. As discussed in the previous chapter, Howe (29) argues for new strategies necessary for the survival of a social work service which might preserve social work creativity in a way that does not foster an intrusion by the 'dead hand of bureaucracy' (30). It can not be accurately claimed Howe's particular organisational model is the only or most appropriate one for every type of social work organisation, or for every social services department. It is possible, however, that at the present time his advocacy of abandonment of a form of professionalism centred on the professional casework model, and his prescriptions for a 'new' social work more closely allied to social care planning, point to a mechanism necessary to the survival of a social work service that does not replace the perceived 'failure' of professionalism by an administrative 'technicalist' ethos in the planning and delivery of social services. A mechanism along the lines suggested by Howe, and by advocates of decentralised 'organic' service-

30 Ibid p.77
delivery frameworks underpinned by the philosophies of welfare pluralism, is in some respects a mechanism indicated by the 'signals' provided in recent analyses of why there is a legitimation crisis in state social services.

Though professional social work is enmeshed in the legitimation crisis, and therefore has to look outside itself in order to fully grasp the social and political basis of its diminished role and influence in state social service provision, what professionalism 'says' to those outside itself is politically significant. For the reasons developed in Mishra's(31) analysis of the legitimation crisis, a 'fight the cuts' crusade designed to persuade service-users and others to accept the moral probity of the principle of universal state social services is misconceived because any such crusade would be a case of preaching to the already converted: the principle is well entrenched, it is the 'legitimacy' of the perspectives and service-delivery frameworks employed by those who provide services that are 'in crisis'. This is to say that looking outwards may not be helpful if social work looks in the 'wrong' directions, particularly if 'Thatcherism' is said to have constructed a false-consciousness in which 'the people' do not know where their true interests lie when they reject the form of services offered to them. Some sections of the professional constituency, in formulating social and political analyses of the problems of modern social work, have paid insufficient attention to these contextual factors. It can, for example, be argued Davies's(32) search for the source of social work's contemporary troubles has tended to emphasise only some of the factors

involved. Set against the background of the legitimation crisis there is not very much evidence that it is 'Marxist theory ...'(33) (italic added) and marxist sociology that will '... undermine or destroy social work'(34) (italic added). In terms of their impact upon professional practices and service-delivery frameworks marxist welfare and radical social work theories have proved to be singularly unthreatening. Indeed, it was noted in the previous chapter some radicals of the 1970's have, as in the case of Pearson(35), become converted to professional social work perspectives. Pearson in 1975 wrote '... professional socialisation puts the subject into a kind of professional daze ...'(36) and "... the wider programmes of 'social reform' and 'social improvement' ... have been ignored at the expense of developing technique, and specifically psychotherapeutic techniques"(37). Some years later, in criticising 'Barclay' concepts of community social work Pearson expressed concern that his earlier criticisms of the dominance of the profesional casework model had become part of the new social work 'establishment'(38). Pearson's implied reference to internal divisions within social work is a useful reminder that looking outwards in order to grasp the signals contained in the contemporary legitimation crisis of welfare services should not divert attention from the relation of these 'external' phenomena to internal forces which conflict sharply in their interpretations of where the

33 Davies, M., 'On Having Second Thoughts' Community Care 26 February 1981, p.16
34 Davies, M., in f.n.32, p.196
36 Ibid p.127
37 Ibid p.130
'solutions' to social work's problems lie. Sainsbury's overview of British social work in the mid-1980's leads him to observe

'CCETSW Paper 20 and the responses to Paper 20.1 exemplify seemingly intractable conflicts between a range of forces within a single profession, each claiming wisdom, each in some degree pursuing power. In terms of the integrity of social work, it can be argued the profession is more at risk from forces within itself than from the policies of the present administration' (40)

This statement may be taken as an indication of internal tensions in the relationship of different social work 'constituencies' who have opposed views as to how social work should respond to the wider legitimation crisis of which social work services are a part. The statement also serves to highlight a point developed in the first chapter and which has recurred in various contexts in most of the other chapters: this concerns the crucial role of social work education as an institutional arena which both reflects and influences developments in the wider social work community. Conflicts between the different segments of social work are channelled through social work education, which is a significant institution in the development of theory, knowledge and values to which new practitioners are exposed and also an institution in which they are evaluated as competent (or not, as the case may be) to practice their acquired professional knowledge in social work agencies.

Sainsbury implies a 'new' social work will need to develop a closer relationship with sociology; he writes '... if community social work is to be innovative and productive, then we need to know ... about current social needs, networks, resources ... (and) ... be able by sociological analysis to extrapolate from current data ...'

40 Ibid p.9
It is possible the re-orientation towards social policy in contemporary sociological community studies, examined in chapter five, may in the late 1980's and the following decade become an established part of the knowledge base of a new type of social work practitioner involved in social care planning and community social work. For example, Abrams's sociology of neighbourhoods, social networks, and interaction between care systems, has a significance for social work that is largely unexplored. Bulmer's text of 1986 is an illustration of how community studies have become 'a rich mixture' of social philosophy, sociology and social policy. If the knowledge-base of social work shifts markedly in this direction as part of the movement towards social care planning in both the design and implementation of decentralised services, there will be implications for the forms and structures of social work knowledge. Knowledge for social care planning does not have the 'esoteric', interpersonal indeterminacy of psychotherapeutic perspectives, and is more in the nature of an 'applied' social science that deals in knowledge of a more

41 Ibid p.7
42 See Chapter 5, pp.563-568
45 Ibid p.223
empirical kind. It has an indeterminacy not of the kind embodied in psychotherapeutic knowledge, but more in the sense of empirical complexity: one of the messages in Bulmer's text is the relative newness of the sociology of neighbourhood, social networks, and care system interactions, and the sense of moving into still largely unknown territory. To the extent development of this kind occurs there will be a shift in the form and structure of the knowledge that sociology of social work knowledge regards as its topic. Hardiker (46) has noted the predominance of tacit, unwritten practice-codes in social work practice, these being an element in the 'oral tradition' examined in the last part of chapter two. Knowledge for social care planning, compared with psychotherapeutic traditions or the 'process' orientation in social work education (47), is likely to have a more explicit, codified, and written form. Some of the conceptualisations developed in chapter four, particularly those to do with nomothetic/idiographic constructions of knowledge in social work and the transmission/translation of social work knowledge within and across sites through space and time, will require re-inspection if social work moves substantially towards new 'sociological' knowledge-forms. In the future scenario being (speculatively) described here it is also likely the form and content of the 'presentation' of the sociology of neighbourhood, social networks and care systems, will shift. Elements of knowledge from the new type of sociological/social policy community studies that are being developed in the 1980's have begun to seep into social work's 'mainstream' written communication-network, partly in the form of articles in the popular social work press (in particular, the weekly journal Community Care) describing 'patch' social work schemes.

46 See Chapter 1, f.n.20
in particular locations. However many, probably most, of these articles are, first, largely descriptive rather than analytic; and secondly, are produced through the 'patch' social work movement which (perhaps unusually, given the potential for a convergence of seemingly closely related perspectives) remains relatively distant from the sociological writings and data in recent community studies. Movement towards social care planning is likely to result in the production of more elaborate conceptual frameworks and typologies of 'theory-practice' developed within the academic-professional constituency, which may be considerably more theoretically abstract than those in recent descriptive accounts by patch social workers. Media for the transmission of new conceptual frameworks of this kind are already available in the form of academic social work journals, though it is possible in the early 1990's one or more new specialist academic journals will be produced in which 'new professional' concerns and perspectives are constructed in a way which refines definitions of theoretical and practice expertise in social planning and the relation of this expertise to community studies. As these conceptual frameworks develop they may become further refined in terms of an ordering of theoretical and practice task-complexity; if a 'new Brunel' emphasis upon vertical task-stratification models emerges, there may develop new internal tensions around these organisational models though it is difficult to predict their nature and outcomes because some of the parties involved will to some degree be different in terms of perspectives, qualifications and role-tasks to those currently involved. It is likely that some employers, and some consumer groups, will welcome a movement away from 'esoteric' casework. However the social construction of new forms of social work (or perhaps forms of activity under some other title) will not be an 'automatic' process. The forms of knowledge and skills involved in conducting what will
amount to applied social science research, development of monitoring
techniques and (probably) closer involvement both with formal and
informal groups in local neighbourhoods and in policy decisions
affecting relationships between social networks and interactions
between different types of care-system, are undoubtedly complex: if
they are made to appear too complex and abstract, further tensions may
develop around the 'theory-practice' problematic that in one form or
another has been a significant part of social work history since the
time of the Charity Organisation Society. Depending upon the extent to
which vertical task-stratification models are employed, an implication
arising from the concept of social work as social (care) planning is
greater practitioner autonomy than under the bureau-professional model:
this together with other issues to do with the relationship of social
care planning to counselling, and to 'statutory' social work tasks, is
likely to be a topic of controversy within some social services
departments.

These observations regarding the future shape of social work, are
evidently speculative. They rest largely upon a particular reading of
the nature of 'the legitimation crisis' based on a view that though
the principle of the welfare state is deeply entrenched, the crisis of
'legitimacy' in the form referred to earlier is equally entrenched and
likely to remain, perhaps in increasingly intensified form. These
speculations rest also upon certain assumptions about the internal
distribution of power between and within conflicting social work
constituencies who have different 'solutions' to the legitimation
crisis; and upon the momentum gained by the decentralisation movement
in the 1980's, a movement which (in most of its versions) rests upon an
ideology of welfare pluralism that is endorsed by a number of
politicians in all the major political parties. However the form and
extent of change in social work will be affected by a variety of contingent factors, including the decisions of governments, and the perspectives and strategies developed by collective social work actors in negotiating what Sainsbury, earlier, referred to as seemingly 'intractable conflicts'. Within social work, flux, variability, and the operation of unintended consequences which condition the range of options available to different social actors at different points in time, are likely for those reasons described, for example, in Callon and Latour (48) to affect the translative capacities of different actors and to affect what actors may want (or feel constrained) to do, or be prevented from doing, in particular sets of circumstances. It is, therefore, inevitable that predictions of the future shape of social work have an inescapable tentativeness. The complexity and empirical variability of social events is, as in Clapham's (49) analysis of corporate planning in the early 1970's, largely revealed at a middle-range level of social process: social work is not a surface (or 'secondary') reflection of a 'deep' ('primary') structural logic and is not the playing out of historical or structural 'necessities', even in those instances where institutionalised ('consigned') ideas and practices remain relatively constant for long periods of time (50). Subject to the qualifications just made there are indications, discussed above, that social work in the 1990's will move relatively closer to sociology, community studies, and 'social care planning' forms of knowledge. To the extent that a closer partnership

50 These general theoretical interpretations are developed in Chapter 2.
develops between sociology and social work it is possible fewer tensions will exist in this relationship than in the past. The expansion of professional casework after Seebohm, and the development in the 1970's of new professional training schools in the higher education sector, brought academic sociology and professional social work into a closer partnership than had existed previously. This occurred in a volatile period when sociology was developing marxist critiques of capitalist society and of the welfare state under capitalism. The partnership was, by and large, not productive. To some sociologists it appeared the intricacies of social and political theory were being neglected by the professional social work constituency. This was not helped by an elaborately expressed though (in retrospect) theoretically simplistic critical sociology which for a time stated (usually with the relative-autonomist qualification '... only in the last instance') that social workers and their institutions were 'part of the problem' because they were ultimately reproducing the alienative impact of the objective 'interests of capitalism' upon clients. However marxist sociology in the 1970's and its alliance with the 'radical social work' movement was in real terms not construed as a challenge against the professional casework model. If underlying problems were (said to be) produced by an assemblage of historically institutionalised 'necessities', the 'interests of capitalism', and taxonomic collectivities ('classes', 'society' and the like) it was understandable that professional casework should be 'allowed' by radical theorists to pursue its daily affairs rather than attempt to move a mountain of objective structural forces. Critical sociology and radical social work was essentially a theoretical radicalism. Although the cultural hegemony of capitalism was roundly condemned, and occasionally acted upon in the
difficult project of dialogical conscientisation\(^{(51)}\), the radical social work movement was not expressed in terms producing concrete organisational or practice shifts. The 'real' threat to professional practices that had seemed well established after Seebohm came in the 1980's, through the legitimation crisis, by which time employers and others had noticed warning 'signals' of discontent expressed by service users and voters, and through the decentralisation movement and the success of welfare pluralist ideology which was made to appear attractive to the major political parties each of whom has an interest in being seen to make the welfare state work efficiently and effectively for 'the people'. Despite the operation of these factors sociology was, and to some extent still is, seen as either a thorn in the professional side, or at the least, a discipline that tends to hinder more than help. Davies's views, noted earlier, are based on criticisms that it is sociology and 'marxists' that are large sources of professional troubles. These criticisms are not wholly representative of professional perceptions of sociology, but residual images of the theoretical encounter between critical sociology and professionalism in the 1970's still persist and 'The sociologist as a kind of nagging critic of the 'establishment' in the form of established institutions and professions is a not unfamiliar, if much unloved, figure in the eyes of many professionals' \(^{(52)}\). There are, then, images and perspectives in the recent history of the relationship of sociology to social work that may operate as a barrier to the development of the closer relationship described earlier. Equally, there are some indications that point in the

51 This is discussed in Chapter 4, in the section on epistemology, (pp.405-414)

opposite direction. In mainstream sociological theory many of the assumptions of structural marxism have 'had their day'. The social world now appears to many sociologists to be a far more complex place than had been thought in the 1970's. There are now theoretical obstacles standing in the way of statements of the kind that welfare and social work is '... a strategy to hoodwink the proletariat with personal blandishments' (53). Also, the sociology of neighbourhood and of welfare towards which social work is likely to become more closely oriented is more heavily committed to empirical method than to abstract philosophical or political critique; this is evident in, for example, Abrams (54) Bulmer (55) Willmott (56) and Cecil et al (57). There is, too, sign of a climate of critical self-appraisal within professional social work, perhaps to a greater degree than in the professional expansionist era of the 1970's. An example of this in the academic-professional constituency is the journal Issues In Social Work Education which shows a commitment to publishing papers which reflect a diversity of perspectives: some of these papers contain highly critical analyses of established social work practices and organisational structures. For a variety of reasons, therefore, it can be argued factors leading social work towards a greater emphasis on social planning, an emphasis which suggests a closer relationship between sociology and social work may be required, will not necessarily fall foul of earlier problems in this relationship. If a long-enough historical

54 See f.n.43
55 Bulmer, M., (1986) op.cit
perspective is taken to include the role of Spencerian sociology in the early development of professional casework by the Charity Organisation Society, as well as some versions of marxist sociology in the 1970's, there is perhaps some justification for Webb and Evans's interpretation that sociology's historical role in social work has alternated between that of technical annexe and arrogant sniper. However not every encounter between sociology in social work corresponds to this formulation, nor are either of these roles theoretically or methodologically necessary, nor ethically appropriate, in sociology of social work. In reality, it is possible some sociologists involved with social work feel ambivalence regarding the 'for' and 'of' distinction. On the one hand, knowledge does not have to be applied before it can be said to be worth knowing. On the other, it is probable that many sociologists involved in theoretical analysis of welfare are, by the very nature of their topic of enquiry, never wholly removed from Bryant's conception of sociology in which 'Those who believe in the social and political significance of their work might at least ask themselves in all seriousness ... (if it has any) ... practical effect' 

59 Ibid p.2
61 Ibid p.347.
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