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Errata

Page 20, first paragraph, first line: 'While these are levels of social integration…' should read 'While these levels of social integration…'

Pages 40-41, the paragraphs in the Introduction of Chapter One on pages 40-41, up to and including the question: 'What are we to make of a politics that is defined simultaneously by its commitment to opportunity, responsibility and community, and its support for high-altitude bombing campaigns?' should be deleted. The first sentence of the chapter should read: 'Does the Third Way stand for anything more substantive than woolly ethical sentiments, which can be applied or discarded at will?'

Page 122, first paragraph, first line: 'However Rose's dismissal of such accounts is somewhat of target…' should read 'However Rose's dismissal of such accounts is somewhat off target…'

Page 142, third paragraph, seventh line: '… although in rough terms it can be said that are characterised by …' should read '… although in rough terms it can be said that abstract forms of the social are characterised by …'

Page 171, first paragraph, twelfth line: '…(meta-)ideological character' ought to read '…(meta-)ideological character'

Page 231, first paragraph, sixth line: 'The object of this chapter…' should read 'The objective of this chapter…'

Addendum

1. Why is the Arena theory superior to its competitors in general, e.g. more traditional Marxism, the Frankfurt School of critical theory or more traditional forms of social theory? Indicate the possible limitations of the theory or where it may not be applicable.
2. Why does the Arena theory offer the most promising way of criticising the Third Way social theory in particular, as opposed to, for example, an internal critique or rational reconstruction?

   The following paragraphs come after the sentence reading "It is thus not a question of the transformation of social life via technology per se, so much as the generalisation of abstract-extended social relations of intellectuals through their 'fusion' with the abstract social relations of the commodity form that is at the core of the reconstitution of society" at the end of Section Two of the Introduction on page 25.

While drawing on the Marxist tradition, the present approach has been adopted rather than standard versions of Marxism because the central analytical categories of Marxism tend to be inadequate to developing an understanding of issues of social integration and community. Orthodox Marxism, and to a lesser extent neo-Marxism, tend towards a rather mechanistic approach to community and matters of social integration particularly insofar as they privilege the mode of production and reduce community were little more than an artifice of underlying economic forces. The limitations of this approach are readily evident in conventional Marxist critiques of the Third Way, such as that advanced in Alex Callinicos's book *Against the Third Way*, explored in greater detail below.[1] In Callinicos's account, the Third-Way concern with community is reduced to a smokescreen for neo-liberalism. Cammack offers a similar account, arguing that community as defined by Giddens means enterprise, which is part of a wider strategy of 'semantic engineering' through which the language of social democracy is used to make neo-liberalism sound more palatable.[2] Such may politically be the case, and it is no doubt that Third Way writings can be all too easily assimilated by neoliberals, but such critiques are too cursory in their treatment of the Third Way to offer a fuller explanation of its social grounding. Moreover, in their emphasis on the political-economic dimension of the Third Way, critical discussions of how the Third Way handles questions of community and social integration more generally are relegated to the background. There is simply not enough discussion of those themes to help us anyway. The advantage of the 'levels approach' outlined by the Arena group is that the critical edge of Marxist approaches is retained, while some of the core analytical categories and insights of Marxist thought — the commodity form and the

process of commodity abstraction, for example — are expanded and re-worked in a sufficiently general way as to permit an understanding of processes of community formation and integration in their own right, rather than as manifestations of underlying economic processes.

In this respect, the Arena theory is closer to the concerns of the Frankfurt School than it is to more traditional forms of Marxism. While a thorough exposition of the points of overlap and difference between the Frankfurt School and the Arena approach would require a separate volume, particularly given the heterogeneity of the Frankfurt School, a number of thematic and analytic concerns can, at the risk of simplifying both approaches, be flagged. Firstly, the Arena approach shares with the Frankfurt School a critique of techno-scientific rationality, and the attendant ideology critique. However, whereas the contributors to the Frankfurt School's critique tends to be framed in terms of political-epistemological considerations, focusing on the conditions under which the social world is known, the approach adopted here emphasises the different ways of 'being in the world'. Particular attention is given to the distinctive social form of those groupings that produce knowledge and the impact that this, in combination with the commodity form, has on the reconstitution of social life. Since the concern of this thesis is to examine the ways in which community is constituted and grounded, and the manner in which intellectuals contribute to the constitution and reconstitution of social life, an ontological approach is more appropriate to the subject matter of this thesis.

Secondly, the account of socio-material abstraction that is central to this approach, outlined in the preceding discussion, is informed by the work of Alfred Sohn-Rethel, a member of the Frankfurt School.[3] The strength of the Arena theory is that it expands and systematises this notion of abstraction, integrating it within an overarching methodological and theoretical framework through which it is possible to analytically distinguish different ways of being and relating to others, and the manner in which social life is constituted and lived.

Thirdly, and following on from the distinction of different ontological levels of abstraction the Arena approach shares the Frankfurt School's normative concern with what might be thought of as the subsumption of the particularity of social life through instrumentally rational forms of social life. In the Arena theory, this is expressed in terms of the reconstitution of the particularity of social life through more socially abstract forms of being and relating to others. This normative concern arises from the tendency to collapse different ways of living and relating to others within a single form of social life. In drawing an analytical distinction between different forms of social life, this approach highlights the particularity of more abstracted forms of social life, rather than taking this form to be universal and natural — a point with particular saliency in the context of the Third Way.

In noting these points of overlap between the two positions, the argument is not that the Arena approach presents a superior approach to that of the Frankfurt School in any absolute sense. Rather, the point is that the methodological coherence of the Arena approach makes it better suited and thus more useful to the particular aim of this thesis, namely critically inquiring into the Third Way. Furthermore, a critical-theoretical approach is preferable to more traditional forms of social theory given that the Third Way is not a disinterested account of social and political life. It is an intervention into how social life is understood and constituted, with the intention of changing the societies to which it has been advanced in quite specific ways. More traditional forms of social theory which fail to acknowledge the interested nature of knowledge and its role in the material constitution of social affairs risk naïvely accepting the Third Way as a dispassionate account of social and political life. In this regard, the Arena theory offers the most promising approach to critiquing the Third Way's politics of community for the aforementioned reason that it carries an account of the social form underlying intellectual practice. In doing so, some distance is placed between the

conditions of social practice which enable one to speak in theoretical terms about community integration and community itself. This is particularly significant given that the Third Way is almost exclusively a product of intellectuals (professional social scientists and academics) and the intellectually trained (policymakers, journalists and commentators). While such people have always played an important role in the elaboration of social practices, these were to a degree grounded within, and expressive of a more widely shared form of life. In contrast, Third Way accounts of community are justified by appeal to a world that is being actively transformed by processes that have their origins in intellectual practice itself. The increasingly central role played by expert knowledges in production, social organisation and the construction of subjectivity is an example of these processes.

However, the proponents of the Third Way do not advance an adequate account of the distinctive form of social life — abstract extended forms of sociality — that is the condition of possibility for such accounts of the social. There is therefore a tendency on the part of the proponents of the Third Way to speak about community as if there were a one-to-one correspondence between social theoretical descriptions of community and community itself. For example, and as argued in greater length in Chapter Five, the notion of 'social capital', which is a way of speaking about the nature of informal social bonds of trust, co-operation and reciprocity is taken as if it were synonymous with community itself. Without such an account of the specific form of social life of which intellectuals are engaged in and are central to their practice *as* intellectuals, such abstract accounts of community are naturalised. Critical approaches that do not address the underlying social form of the Third Way and its proponents are, in themselves, inadequate as a means of critically investigating the Third Way — although this does not mean that they are entirely absent from the critique advanced here. For example, in Chapter Five, an immanent critique of the Third Way is developed through a consideration of Giddens' larger theoretical framework, of which the politics of the Third Way can be seen as an attempt to apply in practice. This is developed from a close reading of Giddens' earlier work, *The Constitution of Society*. In a key passage of this book, Giddens claims that in the course of describing and interpreting the world, social scientists help to constitute and reconstituted it.[4] This insight is applied to Giddens and other writers associated with the Third Way more generally. The method here, then, is to draw on one of the central insights of the larger theoretical frame that informs what is the most theoretically sophisticated account of the Third Way, to inquire into how the proponents of Third Way themselves contribute to the constitution and reconstitution of community.

There are however, some limits to this approach that ought to be flagged at the outset. The first is that there is an unintentional tendency to speak about the dominance of more abstract forms of the social in epochal terms, which can be interpreted as saying that we have moved from a situation in which one level of social integration has disappeared and been replaced by more abstract forms of social life. The argument being made here is that the dominance of more abstract forms of social integration is always relative to other ways of constituting society, which co-exist with more abstract modes of life. It is not the case that at some recent point in the past more abstract forms of life which previously had not existed, came into being, replacing other, less abstract forms of social integration. The claim here, rather, is that less abstract forms of the social continue to exist alongside more abstract forms, albeit in a reconstituted form.

A further limit of this approach is that there is a sometimes lack of clarity about how terms like 'interaction' and 'interchange' are used. In some instances, the term 'interchange' is used in a highly specific way to refer only to the most highly abstract forms of social integration, whereas 'interaction' refers only to those forms that are structured through face-to-face relations to the other. In other contexts, interchange is used in a more general sense, as more or

less identical with interaction. For the purposes of this thesis, no significant distinction is drawn between interaction and interchange since in practice it is possible for interchange to be structured around more or less abstract forms of the social.

A similar terminological slippage occurs around the terms 'abstraction' and 'extension', the notion of extension sometimes being conflated with that abstraction.[5] However, all social relations are, to varying degrees, extended in space and time. It is therefore possible to make distinctions about how extension is structured and constituted. In the approach taken here, then, distinctions are drawn between embodied-extension (extension that is structured through categories of embodiment) and abstract-extension (extension that is structured in such a way that, to a significant degree, categories of embodiment are reconstituted).

A further limit to the approach outlined here is the assumption that social and ethical relations conducted in face-to-face interaction are in some sense ontologically foundational, in the sense that more abstract forms of social integration draw on, and refer back to this mode of social integration, even in the process of reconstituting them. The face-to-face is thus assumed to offer the basic referent point, the grounding from which more abstracted forms of the social are developed. Abstract ethical relations, for example, are assumed to based upon the settings of face-to-face interaction within which they first arise. This assumption is open to the charge that an ethical regard for an Other might just as easily be developed in internet chatrooms as joining a voluntary community organisation. It might therefore be argued that the approach outlined here is underpinned by a romanticised and nostalgic yearning for face-to-face over and against more abstract forms of the social.

In defence of this position, it can be claimed that in historical terms, face-to-face relations have played an integral in the development of such relationships. Furthermore, other thinkers have sought to foreground the role of the face-to-face as foundational to other forms of the social. As Simon Cooper notes, while they use different terms, Heidegger and Benjamin can be read as giving ontological precedence to the face-to-face in their own distinctive ways.[6] Moreover, an indirect case is made for this view throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapters Five and Six, insofar as it is argued that more abstract forms of the social tend to offer less demanding forms of the ethical. It is argued that when relations of reciprocity and co-operation are made over into the abstract, they tend to lose much of their texture, if not their coherence insofar as they can be rendered compatible with ways of acting which hitherto they have been regarded as in tension, if not outright opposition. In saying this, the intention is not to defend the least abstract, or to demonise more abstract forms of social integration. Rather, it is to simply advocate both as integral to community.

A final limit that can be flagged is that this approach has been developed primarily around issues of the commodity, intellectual practice, the changing nature of the economy and technology.[7] Where research has been done into the nature of community, this has focused on specific forms of community, namely the 'abstract community' of the nation and the technologically mediated communities of the internet.[8] While all of this research overlaps with and has implications for the nature of community in the present, none focuses on community more generally a subject of research in its own right. This thesis seeks to go some way towards rectifying this gap, extending the general methodology to community in itself. In doing so, the aim is to present a more general analysis of the way in which, within contemporary political settings, community has been taken hold of, constituted and reconstituted.

3. Why does the Arena theory provide the most promising way of reconceptualising community, along the lines of the 'frictional community'? Show why this concept is a better way of understanding or explaining the world and what may this

mean for political practice. Further, the account needs to distinguish its function both as a way of understanding the world *and* in providing a normative concept or 'framework' for changing the world.

The following paragraphs follow immediately from the sentence which reads 'In contrast to the 'frictionless' community of the Third Way, a frictional politics of community seeks to realise community as constituted through the intersection of different ways of living and being" in the Introduction to Chapter Seven on page 231.

The basis for the critical retrieval of the different dimensions of community and the development of the notion of 'frictional community' draws upon the same analytical framework outlined in Chapter Four. The strength of this is approach for reconceptualising community is its analytical clarity, comprehensiveness and potentially wide application. Specifically, this approach provides a systematic means of incorporating and clarifying the different accounts of community advanced by both the proponents of the Third Way and their critics, while pinpointing what is at stake in each vision of community. In doing so, the possibility is opened for short-circuiting otherwise intractable debates between different ways of thinking about and constituting community. Whereas the Third Way account of community concedes too much to dominant social structures, the answer is not necessarily to be found in with a simple return to traditional social democratic understandings of community, or by seeking to transcend these through ever more abstracted forms of community, marked by greater mobility and fluidity.

The analysis of social life in terms of different levels of abstraction acknowledges multiple ways of constituting community, thereby avoiding the temptation to reduce community to any one of its dimensions. Proceeding in this way also allows for a more comprehensive understanding of community, one that acknowledges the integrative functions of place, ethics, and the meta-ethical to developing community in a way that holds these as having equal significance to community. It is therefore possible to advance an account that retains the 'untidiness' of community thereby resisting reductive accounts, enabling a productive dialogue between different and competing ways of constituting community and the political priorities that are implicit to them.

In this regard, the notion of frictional community that is developed from this approach is arguably better placed to accommodate a wider range of experiences of community. For example, community is constituted through place, ethics and meta-ethics. Such a view is evident from Connell's work on community and social cohesion in Canada. As part of his research, Connell asked respondents "If you and all your family and friends, all those who make up your community, were moved to another, similar area, would that be your community?" One elderly man unhesitatingly responded "No, it has to be here".[9] Such a response indicates that community is subjectively experienced as bound up with attachment to place as well. Insofar as it acknowledges the interconnectedness of different ways of living community, the notion of frictional community is well positioned to understand other ways of being in and constituting community, such as those of Indigenous people, where the ecological, ethical and aesthetics dimensions of community are inseparable. How far, and to what extent this would prove to be the case would provide further analysis and research which is beyond the scope of current concerns. However, insofar as it acknowledges and seeks to maintain the integrity of different ways of community, rather than seeking to reconstruct, collapse or synthesise these with other ways of being and living, the framework outlined here offers an approach that is sufficiently to flexible to incorporate alternative ways of thinking about community than those presented within the relatively narrow confines of the Third Way.

The following paragraphs come after paragraph ending 'A frictional politics community argues for community constituted through the intersection of ethics, ecology and the aesthetics structured and lived across layers of sociality, against the flattening of community to a single one of its dimensions, constituted within a single form of social life.' in Section Five, Chapter Seven on page 247.

There are a number of implications for political practice that flow from this understanding of frictional community. Firstly, if ethical bonds and tangible settings are taken to be integral to a politics of community, the notion of frictional community entails that the relations of community are to some extent at least, a constraint on more abstract forms of social relations, such as the market and the commodity form. In one sense, this is to advocate the re-politicisation of the economy, rather than taking the social form of the commodity as the natural model around which community is to be reconstructed. In concrete terms, this would entail rolling back the market and its social logic from the currently pervasive status it occupies within public policy around community. This does not necessarily preclude business involvement in community. With regard to the education, for example, business involvement is acceptable provided it remains totally separate from the day-to-day operations of schools and matters such as curriculum development and design. This could be achieved by establishing a central pool to which community-minded organisations might contribute that can then be distributed to areas where it is most needed. Firms would be permitted to advertise how much they had contributed to this pool as part of their promotional activities. If such commercial entities are serious about developing community, then it ought not to come with marketing baubles attached. Let community patrons be known by their good works, not slick logos and marketing blurbs plastered all through classrooms and distorting curriculum materials. Furthermore, such funding should be viewed as a supplement rather than a substitute for ongoing funding, properly trained staff and other necessary resources.

Correspondingly, frictional community entails wariness towards understanding community in terms of calculable indicators, evident, for example, in the current search for measures of social capital.[10] While such measures may have some used, it is important to note that they are not necessarily neutral. The dominance of this 'audit approach' to community, with its bias towards enhancing the efficiency and productive capacities of a society, risks the danger of communities distorting and limiting their activities in ways that meet performance measures, rather than responding to the needs that arise out of communities they serve. Furthermore, the enthusiasm for such measures suggests a trajectory towards ever more intense forms of micro-management of community life, rather than a genuine concern with the wellbeing of community. To move away from such abstract constructions of community, entails moving towards a politics of community focused on process — processes of community building and sustainability, for example — as opposed to measurable outcomes. This is to concede the fact that many of the benefits and positive aspects of community escape quantitative measurement or are easily distorted by an over-emphasis on measurement indicators.

Furthermore, given that there is little that governments can do to *directly* foster the kinds of affective social bonds commonly associated with community — governments cannot legislate an increase in social trust or community cohesion — efforts ought to be targeted at cultivating the social ecology in which people can develop such bonds, providing adequate and appropriate services, building infrastructure, and intelligently designed public space, for example. Where financial support is given to activities which aim to generate trust and social cohesion, such as through community arts and events, this should be long-term and ongoing in nature. There is nothing more disruptive or divisive to the social cohesion of communities than constantly changing funding priorities, restructuring and reorganising schemes and personnel. Anecdotal evidence from people working for community organisation suggests that much time and energy are expended chasing funding dollars, often for sums that are relatively small (such that they barely cover the costs of the proposed project).[11] This is to do no more than put in to practice the principle of subsidiarity — the principle that power ought to be devolved to the level of organisation best able to

carry out a particular function — often espoused by advocates of the Third Way. It is, in short, to support and trust communities to chart their own destinies.

In terms of the aesthetic dimension of community, the political implication of frictional community is that space to be given to different and competing voices and ways of living. Governments could do much to foster a relational ethics. To take a current Australian example, the Federal Government recently flagged changes to the legal definition of charities. In proposed changes to the legislation governing charities, an organisation could have its charitable status revoked if it was found to be 'attempting to change the law or government policy; if it is, either on its own or when taken together with one or both of the other of these purposes, more than ancillary or incidental to the other purposes of the entity concerned'. The effect of this proposed change has been widely interpreted as a threat to muzzle the right of organisations with charitable status from criticising or lobbying government. As Ray Cassin commented in the *Age*:

> A lot can be made to hang on those words "ancillary" and "incidental" when they are qualified with "more than". Who is to define when a charity has crossed the imaginary line separating its supposed primary purpose from outright political advocacy?
>
> The reality is that charities which take up an advocacy role do so because it flows from their involvement with the sick and the poor. There is nothing neatly "ancillary or incidental" about it.[12]

It is quite possible that the proposed changes will not have the dire consequences that have been predicted, but the flagging of such changes is a clear shot across the bow of charitable and non-profit organisations that seek to contest and expand debate on existing policies. The message to such groups is unmistakable: remain politically passive or forfeit the tax benefits that come with charitable status. The broader message is that community is fine, so long as it remains politically passive. A frictional community would, by contrast, uphold such benefits to non-profit organisations insofar as these play a valued role in contesting and expanding taken for granted ways of living and being. Moreover, given that non-profit and community organisation are increasingly be invited to take a more active role in governmental processes, such as service delivery agents, for example, their critique ought to be welcomed as an informed commentary on governmental processes and strategies.

Endnotes

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[1] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2001).

[2] Paul Cammack, 'Giddens' "Third Way" as Semantic Engineering — Selling Neoliberalism as Social Democracy'. *The Third Way and Beyond*, University of Sussex, 2000. URL:<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/CST/for/3rdway/semeng.rtf> Accessed 11 November 2003.

[3] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

[4] Anthony Giddens. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984), 348-355.

[5] Geoff Sharp. 'Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice'. Arena, no. 99/100, 1992: 188-216; Geoff Sharp, 'Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation'. Arena Journal, no. 1, 1993: 221-237.

[6] Simon Cooper, *Technoculture and Critical Theory: In the Service of the Machine*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

[7] See Geoff Sharp. 'Intellectuals in Transition'. *Arena*, no. 65, 1983, 84-95; Geoff Sharp. 'Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice'. *Arena*, no. 70, 1985, 48-82; Geoff Sharp. 'Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice'. *Arena*, no. 99/100, 1992, 188-216; John Hinkson. 'Postmodern Economy: Self-Formation, Value and Intellectual Practice'. *Arena Journal*, no. 1, 1993: 23-44; John Hinkson. 'The Postmodern Market'. *Arena*

Journal New Series, no. 9, 1997: 77-94; Simon Cooper, *Technoculture and Critical Theory: In the Service of the Machine.*

[8] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, (London: Sage Publications 1996); Michele Willson, Technically Together: The Implications of Using Communications Technologies for our Understandings and Experiences of Community, Unpublished PhD Manuscript, Monash University, Melbourne, 2001.

[9] David J. Connell. 'Searching For Meaning in the Landscapes of Community'. *Space and Community: Mapping Social Worlds*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2003.

[10] See, for example, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'The Australian Bureau of Statistics Social Capital Theme Page', 2000, http://www.abs.gov.au/CA25670D007E9EA1/0/3AF45BBD431A127BCA256C22007D75BA?Open Accessed: 10 November 2003; World Bank Group, 'Social Capital for Development', 2003 URL:<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/> Accessed: 10 November 2003; UK Office of National Statistics, 'Social Capital', URL:< http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital/default.asp> Accessed: 10 November 2003.

[11] The frustration with short-term and inadequate funding has been a common theme running through discussions with community organisations that I have conducted as part of ongoing research into the relationship between community arts and health.

[12] Ray Cassin, 'Will Charities Give Away Free Speech?', *Age*, 3 August 2003, URL:<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/08/02/1059480599686.html> Accessed 11 November 2003.

The Network Community

Governance, Ideology and the Third Way in Politics

Christopher Scanlon

The Network Community
Governance, Ideology and the Third Way in Politics

by Christopher Scanlon

Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy through the

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CONTENTS

Abstract

This thesis is a critical contribution to contemporary debates about governance and community, focusing primarily on the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States.

Specifically, this thesis focuses on the appropriation of community as a vehicle of governance by what is known as the Third Way in politics. Emerging in the mid-1990s from centre-left social democratic parties around the world, the aim of the Third Way was to 'renew' or 'modernise' social democracy to more adequately address the social, economic and political changes wrought by processes of globalisation, rapid technological change and the rise of the informational economy. Supporters of the Third Way claimed to offer a 'new politics', which went beyond both the market-centred approaches to governance championed by neo-liberals, and the bureaucratic approaches associated with traditional social democrats. According to the proponents of the Third Way, people could be better governed through the informal bonds of community.

While a concern with community is a cliché of political discourse, this thesis argues that the Third Way is distinctive, in large part, because of the way in which its advocates have sought to redefine community. For the proponents of the Third Way, 'community' is primarily a complex web of ethical relations. Significantly, these relations are not assumed to be embedded within any particular place or temporal context. The natural model for the community of the Third Way is, I argue, a spatially and temporally extended network.

The main argument of this thesis is that the network community is both an expression and an ideological legitimation of a more general cultural shift. This shift is understood in terms of the reconstruction and reconstitution of basic social bonds grounded in, and structured through face-to-face social relations, by more abstract forms of social practice. This shift is traced back to such processes as the increasing emphasis on intellectual practices within the production process.

While the proponents of the Third Way acknowledge something of this shift, they overlook the underlying social form on which it is based. Their response thus contributes to the reconstruction of community around abstract forms of social life, as

seen in the network community. In critically assessing the Third Way, it is argued that its supporters undermine the very social bonds through which they seek to govern. In contrast to the Third Way this thesis advances an alternative politics of community called 'frictional community'. This sees community as constituted through the intersection and tension of different ways of living and relating to others.

The material submitted in this thesis is based on my own research, unless otherwise acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted in whole or in part, for a degree at this or at any other university.

Signed: [redacted]

Dated: 1/11/02

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Material from this thesis has appeared in the following published works:

Refereed articles

'A Step to the Left, or Just a Jump to the Right? Making Sense of the Third Way in Government and Governance', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 36, no. 3: 481-498.

'The Network of Moral Sentiments: The Third Way and Community', *Arena Journal*, no. 15, 2000: 57-79.

Non-refereed articles

'Debating the Knowledge Nation Forum: Reframing the Debate', *Arena Magazine*, no. 49, October-November 2000, 39-40.

'Kneading Identity: Class Politics', *Arena Magazine*, no. 48, August-September 2000, 10-12.

'The Schlock of the New', *Arena Magazine*, no. 46, April-May 2000, 52-54.

'Courting the Wired Worker or Taking a Less Glamorous View of Class', *Arena Magazine*, no. 43, October-November 1999, 16-18.

'Wrong Way Go Back: The Limitations of Third Way Politics', *Arena Magazine*, no. 41, June-July 1999, 62-66.

INTRODUCTION

In Andrew Martin's 1998 satirical novel *Bilton*, British Prime Minister Philip Lazenby proudly announces a daring new policy initiative called 'Social Dynamics'. The precise details of 'Social Dynamics' are vague, the main policy to come of it being a tax incentive scheme to encourage individuals and groups to engage in 'socially useful' activities. A socially useful activity, it is explained, is one that promotes 'individual responsibility; a spirit of community; an increase in generative capacity or a reduction in public spending'. When an act fulfils these three criteria, it is deemed to be 'Socially Dynamic'.[1]

In spite of the obvious circularity of this explanation, the supporters of Social Dynamics insist that it is 'bold and radical', transcending the traditional political categories of Left and Right. Its critics, however, claim that Social Dynamics is vague and fraught with contradiction: 'Was it left wing or right wing?', ponders the book's central character, Adrian Day. 'Lazenby himself proudly announced, with the alienating gleam of the pioneering zealot, that it was "both, either or neither"'.[2]

> On the one hand, there was the word 'community', pietistically repeated at every turn, which seemed to imply egalitarian intent. Yet, on the other hand, the profit motive appeared to be at the heart of Social Dynamics. It was, you might say, like one of those trick drawings of a staircase which at first glance looks plausible enough, but which then takes on the appearance of something quite unclimbable.[3]

Philip Lazenby is immediately recognisable as British Prime Minister Tony Blair while 'Social Dynamics' is a deft parody of Blair's attempt to develop a distinctive political philosophy under the banner of a so-called 'Third Way' in politics.

Known variously as 'the new middle', 'the new communitarianism', the 'radical' or 'vital centre', the Third Way has, since the middle of the 1990s emerged as the 'big political idea' for liberal-centre-left parties and politicians around the world. In Germany, where it is known as 'the new middle' ('Die Neue Mitte'), it has gained support from the governing Social Democratic Party led by Gerhard Schröeder while in Italy the former Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema projected himself as a Third Way leader.[4] Outside of Europe, the Third Way was associated with the Clinton Administration in the United

States, while in Australia, the federal Labor MP Mark Latham has urged his party to follow the lead of Blair and Clinton.[5]

A number of prominent academics, social commentators and journalists have also lent their support to the Third Way.[6] Most notably, the British social theorist Anthony Giddens has been a vocal supporter of the Blair New Labour government, publishing three books, an edited collection of essays and a host of magazine articles elaborating and defending the Third Way. For his efforts, Giddens has earned himself the moniker 'Tony Blair's favourite intellectual'.[7] Across the Atlantic, the ideas of communitarian writer Amitai Etzioni were said to have influenced on the policies of the Clinton White House.[8] Etzioni has since written in support of New Labour.[9] Numerous think-tanks and policy institutes have also had a hand in fostering and developing Third Way ideas. These include the virtual think-tank Nexus, the influential British think-tank Demos, the Fabian Societies in both Britain and Australia, and, in the US, the Democratic Leadership Council and the Progressive Policy Institute.[10]

Like Social Dynamics, the exact content and political hue of the Third Way are notoriously difficult to pin down. Its supporters speak enthusiastically of 'reinventing', 'modernising' or 'renewing' social democratic politics to more adequately reflect and address contemporary social, political and economic realities.[11] According to its supporters, the Third Way offers a 'new politics' that forgoes the neat ideological verities of the Left and the Right in preference to a pragmatic concern with 'what works'.[12]

More sober assessments have highlighted the Third Way's frequent descent into hyperbole, self-contradiction and circular reasoning, well illustrated by Tony Blair's attempt to summarise Third Way politics at a round-table discussion of like-minded leaders in 1999. Bordering on self-parody, Blair explained that the Third Way is

> an agenda of values and principles that ends up with practical policies that make a difference to the people whose lives we're looking after and trying to help. The policy content is driven by these ideas and values. In the end what is important is to give a sense of vision in which the values, the principles, and the policies form one seamless line.[13]

Other advocates of the Third Way have given the impression, perhaps unintentionally, that it is nothing more than clever marketing. For example, Al From, the founder and chief

executive officer of the Democratic Leadership Council described the Third Way as 'the worldwide brand name for progressive politics for the Information Age', which would seem to suggest that it is the political equivalent of a Starbucks franchise, complete with uplifting rhetoric about community building and grass roots participation.[14] In practical political terms, however, words such as 'progressive', 'reinvention', 'modernisation' and 'renewal' have, more often than not, meant little more than a retreat from the state-centred approaches to governance, in preference to the corporatisation, outsourcing and/or privatisation of public services.

In response to such criticisms, the proponents of the Third Way have sought to distinguish their own politics by emphasising the significance of ethical relationships to practices of governance. The policy prescriptions and position statements of the Third Way are littered with ethical and quasi-ethical exhortations, urging 'moral dialogues', creating virtuous circles of 'social capital', rebuilding social trust, calling for 'mutual obligation' in the relations between states and their citizenry and between citizens themselves, while balancing rights and responsibilities.[15] These concerns are held together by the overarching concept of 'community'. By tapping into the ethical bonds of community, it is claimed that people can be governed more effectively and efficiently. This thesis offers a critical analysis of the attempt by the proponents of the Third Way to utilise community as a vehicle of governance. In particular, this thesis critically interrogates the attempt by the proponents of the Third Way to position community as a site of social integration and a vehicle of governance. This is the core theme of everything that follows.

1. Community, Ethics and Governance

The term 'community' raises a number of difficulties, not least of which is the fact that in political discourse the term is overused and its meaning is notoriously vague. What politician and political party does not pay lip-service to community as an unquestionable good? As Raymond Williams observed in *Keywords*, community can be both

> the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization

> (*state, nation, society*, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term.[16]

The proponents of the Third Way use the term in the second sense identified by Williams, to 'describe an alternative set of relationships' to those that exist. Beyond this, though, the term is rarely defined with any greater precision. Some advocates of the Third Way use the term 'community' as if it were interchangeable with 'civil society'.[17] Others, cognisant of the distinctions between 'civil society' and 'community' have sought to shift the emphasis away from community altogether — and all the difficulties that it entails both conceptually as well as in practical political terms — to the apparently less troublesome concept 'civil society'. Anthony Giddens, for example, claims 'it is to civil society more generally, rather than to "the community", that we should turn as an essential element of third way politics'.[18] While this shift is problematic for a number of reasons relating to Giddens' other claims, which are explored in detail in Chapter Three, he says little more to distinguish civil society from 'community'. In Giddens' hands, then, 'civil society' does not seem to denote anything significantly different from what other proponents of the Third Way mean when they speak of 'community'.

To muddy the waters further, conservative opponents of the centre-left advocates of the Third Way have appropriated the rhetoric of community and the quasi-ethical language that accompanies it. In Australia, for example, the conservative Liberal government led by Prime Minister John Howard has drawn inspiration from the reforms undertaken by Blair's New Labour government, floating the idea of a 'social coalition' in which businesses and community groups join with government to tackle pressing social problems.[19] Perhaps the most tangible manifestation of the social coalition in policy has been in the area of welfare reform with the partial outsourcing of the publicly owned job placement agency to private job search agencies as well as community and faith-based organisations. Explaining this policy, the Federal Minister responsible for overseeing the reforms, Tony Abbott, explained

> we are trying to empower local communities. We've been putting the Third Way into practice ... we're creating a social market in the sense that it's been created by government, and it's going to build social capital in the sense that at the end of this, we're going to have more connected individuals and stronger communities.[20]

Similarly, in the 2000 US Presidential electoral race, George W. Bush was able to outmanoeuvre the Gore Campaign, to some extent at least, by appropriating the rhetoric of

community associated with the Clinton White House using the slogan of 'compassionate conservatism'. While it is debatable as to whether this emphasis on the ethical has the same meaning for conservatives as their social democratic opponents, the point to be made here is that the Centre-Left and Right now routinely invoke the ethical relationships of community as central to 'good government'.[21]

These considerations prompt the question: does community refer to anything within the Third Way debates? Or is the term devoid of content, a creation of spin-doctors and focus groups, able to be manipulated by either side of the political spectrum to assuage the concerns of anxious voters by slick political machines, and therefore hardly worth serious attention beyond this?

There are two parts to my response to this question, which are central arguments of this thesis. The first point to be made is that, in spite of the slipperiness of the term 'community', it is possible to piece together a relatively clear and consistent use of the concept within the Third Way debates. This is possible, in part, because although many advocates of the Third Way are unclear as to what they mean when they refer to community, they are quite clear about what they do *not* mean. Specifically, they have been highly critical of the notions of 'community' advanced by other political traditions that focus on community as a vehicle of governance, such as the ethical socialist and traditional communitarian traditions. According to the proponents of the Third Way, these traditions tend to emphasise the collective interests of community over individual rights and autonomy. Community, here, is seen as stabilising force, which is defined in terms of settled ways of living which limit individual mobility and foreground the reproduction of patterns of social life. For the proponents of the Third Way, this gives rise to inward-looking and parochial conceptions of community which offer fertile seedbeds for intolerance, authoritarianism and various forms of repression. Moreover, they are deemed to be outdated in an age of globalisation in which people, capital and production are mobile, and ill-suited to modern, multicultural societies in which individuals experience and seek to actively construct their lives and identities across a variety of different social and cultural contexts. To the extent that such communities emphasise stability and settled ways of living, they are seen as sclerotic and thus a barrier to social, economic and political innovation.[22]

The proponents of the Third Way also distance themselves from traditional social democratic conceptions of community. These are charged with having what might be thought of as a 'bricks and mortar' conception of community. From this point of view, community is seen as simply a collection of buildings, roads and services, maintained and delivered by a centralised bureaucracy, while the social relations, attitudes and cultures of the people who inhabit and use such infrastructure are overlooked. In neglecting the relations among people within community, the proponents of the Third Way claim that bureaucratic rules and regulations crowd out the flexibility, energy and innovation of less formal community-based approaches to social and economic governance.[23]

What then, do the proponents of the Third Way mean by community? I argue that the proponents of the Third Way define community primarily in terms of ethical relationships. In contrast to other conceptions of community, such as those associated with the ethical and Christian socialist tradition, these ethical relationships are not understood as referring to stable, ongoing connections with others embedded within specific places. Community is defined simply in terms of shared connection to a network of others. As Etzioni explains:

> Community is defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden characteristics among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (rather than merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships) and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity — in short, to a particular culture.[24]

What is important, to note in Etzioni's definition is that the concrete spatial and temporal contexts within which these relations are grounded are not seen to be essential to community. Neither is it about the reproduction of particular patterns of social relations. Community exists where people exhibit a propensity to trust one another, to co-operate in common projects and that such commitments are shared and reciprocated. Significantly, such relations need not be conducted in the settings of face-to-face social interaction. The relations that make up the community are free-floating, fluid webs of connections that may be temporary and mobile. The notion of community advocated by the proponents of the Third Way is thus sufficiently expansive to encompass virtual communities, the members of which may never meet each other in person and may not have an abiding connection to one another.

As a way of distinguishing this notion of 'community' from more established ones, I refer to the community of the Third Way as the 'network community'. In the same way that some contemporary social theorists describe relations of production, exchange and communication in terms of mobile, globally integrated mobile networks of suppliers, producers, consumers and users, the network community advanced by the proponents of the Third Way is constructed in similar terms.[25] What distinguishes the network community from these other networks, however, is that it is composed of ethical relations. Advocates of the Third Way place particular emphasis on relations of trust, mutual obligation and co-operation as central to community. Community thus appears as a deterritorialised network of ethical relations, whose structure emerges out of the complex interplay and intersection of relations of trust and co-operation.

For the proponents of the Third Way, the network community resolves the contradictions that were a characteristic feature of older form of community. For example, tensions between the desire for individual autonomy and collective interests, competition within the market and social co-operation and cohesion can be successfully reconciled through the social form of the network, allowing for both individual mobility, while helping to generate social relations of trust and co-operation. Self-interested behaviour is thus claimed to contribute to social cohesion.

This brings us to the second reason why the Third Way's politics of community is worthy of further attention, and to the underpinning argument of this thesis. I argue throughout this thesis that when proponents of the Third Way criticise older forms of community as unworkable, and claim that it can be reconstructed in terms of a network of 'affect-laden' relationships, they lend support to a more general transformation of social life. Underlying the network community is a conception of social life loosed from its moorings in relations of face-to-face interaction grounded within particular places and time and reconstructed around disembodied, deterritorialised social relations. Social life is here reconstituted and structured through more 'abstract' forms of social relationships and processes.[26] In advocating the network community, I argue that the proponents of the Third Way offer an ideological naturalisation of a more general cultural and social shift, characterised by the relative displacement of social relations structured and organised through ongoing relations of mutual presence with others, structured predominantly around abstract forms of social integration. Where this conception of the social forms the basis of practices of government and policy,

moreover, the consequence is to contribute to the material reconstitution of social relations themselves.

This is to put the argument in its simplest terms. In order to carry this argument forward, something more needs to be said about the theoretical framework and conceptual distinctions that are central to my argument.

2. The Reconstitution of Community

The theoretical framework that informs this thesis draws heavily on the work of the Arena group of writers, particularly the work of Geoff Sharp, Paul James and John Hinkson.[27] Paul James has referred to the Arena approach as the 'constitutive abstraction argument'.[28] Thematically and analytically, this is continuous with certain streams within the Marxist critical theory tradition, although it is by no means bound by this inheritance. This approach offers what might be described as an *ontological-ethical* reading of Marx, in contrast to a narrower political-economic reading. The meaning of the term 'ontology' as it is used here is quite distinctive. In ordinary usage, ontology is used in connection with metaphysics to specify a form of philosophical or theoretical inquiry that seeks to transcend historical, social and cultural contingency to disclose/discover universal and timeless principles of Being. In the present context, the term is used in a much more modest, even mundane, sociological sense, to specify basic categories within which social being has historically been constituted. These are not understood as transcending the material structures of culture or history, but have in historical terms been central to social life. Ontology in this sense refers to

> the forms of culturally grounded conditions, historically constituted in the structures (recurrent practices) of human inter-relations ... [T]he concept does not fall back upon a sense of the "human essence" except in so far as the changing nature of being human is always taken to be historically constituted.[29]

In the present context, place and tradition can be thought of as ontological categories insofar as both have, in long-run historical terms, been integral to how community has been structured and experienced.

As the above definition suggests, the ways in which ontological categories such as place and tradition are constituted and structured varies historically. Different ways of

structuring such categories can be described and analysed through the organisation and configuration of what Paul James, drawing upon the work of Geoff Sharp, refers to as different 'integrative levels'. The notion of levels here is an ontological category in the sense described above. Different integrative levels can be distinguished from one another by way in which the social relations that constitute them are enacted. Some are constituted in concrete ways, while others are constituted in more abstract ways. The word 'abstract' has a quite specific meaning in this context that is liable to misunderstanding. In ordinary usage, the 'abstract' is typically thought of as separate from, or in opposition to the 'material'; the abstract refers to the conceptual as distinct from the concrete, theory as distinct from practice. The notion of abstraction as it is used here, is based on a *materialist* account of abstraction.

Lest this be dismissed out of hand as a contradiction in terms, an example might be offered. According to Sharp, a materialist account of abstraction is central to Marx's analysis of commodity abstraction. In Marx's analysis of the process of commodity abstraction, the value of an object is no longer linked to the properties that make it useful, but to its role in relations of exchange. The transformation from 'use-value' to 'exchange-value' that Marx argued was central to commodity exchange is more than simply a change in the way that that object is conceived. It is a *material* process that has consequences for the manner in which the object functions in social relations of exchange.[30] In other words, in the process of commodity abstraction, an object is *materially reconstituted* in the more abstract form of the commodity. As Sharp notes, commodities 'have an *actual* existence as exchange-values; they are constitutively abstract, abstract in fact and not simply in thought'.[31]

For Sharp, the process of commodity abstraction is but one expression of a more general social relational form in which social life is materially constituted in more abstract ways. He argues that the analysis of material abstraction can be extended from commodities and relations of commodity exchange to social relations more generally.[32] To distinguish this from a more orthodox reading of Marx, his analysis of the commodity and capitalism is understood, not as revealing certain universal laws of capitalist production and exploitation so much as an analysis and critique of a historically specific social form, namely more 'constitutively abstract' forms of the social. While the commodity is perhaps the clearest example of this more constitutively abstract form of social relation, the argument of the Arena writers and Sharp

specifically, is that it is an instance of a more general social form. What is distinctive about constitutively more abstract social relations is that they break free of the limits of face-to-face relations and can be thought of as 'extended in space and time'.[33] Social relations that are mediated by telecommunications are perhaps the clearest contemporary examples of abstract forms of sociality, although such forms are not confined to the era of telecommunications. Myths and religion, for instance, are examples of constitutively abstract forms of sociality that predate the invention of telecommunications.[34]

For the purposes of this thesis, three levels of social integration are distinguished: embodied-extended social integration, object-extended social integration and abstract-extended social integration. At the level of embodied-extended social integration, social relations are structured through embodied categories such as those based around corporeality, or extending the notion of embodiment slightly, place. Face-to-face relations are a good example. Object-extended social integration, by contrast, refers to a form of social integration in which social relations are carried/mediated via particular objects — money, for example — or are 'objectified' or 'reified', as in the case of institutions. This is a more constitutively abstract form of social integration, since social relations no longer depend on the presence of an Other or on ongoing attachments to particular Others. Relative to the embodied-extended level, social relations are depersonalised, 'lifted out' of particular settings or personal bonds. At the level of abstract-extended social integration, the presence of others is dispensed with altogether. Social relations of this kind are disembedded, disembodied and de-territorialised from particular spatial and temporal settings. The social relations carried by the telecommunication are the archetypal example of the abstract-extended social relations.[35]

While these are level of social integration are not the only ones that could be identified, they provide a workable framework for understanding how social life is enacted and experienced through ontological categories structured via different ways of relating to others. It is important to note that these different levels of social integration are understood as co-existing with one another. The existence of myths does not preclude face-to-face social interaction, any more than the proliferation of telecommunications will bring to an end face-to-face meetings. *Social life is always lived across different levels of social abstraction.* This last point is methodologically significant because it moves beyond

linear approaches to analysing and explaining social change. It is not a matter of the withering away of one form of society, defined by a particular level of social integration, and its replacement by another, based on a wholly different form of social integration, but a shift in the configuration of different levels of integration with regard to one another. This avoids empirically and analytically problematic claims about the move from, say, pre-industrial societies to post-industrial or information society, as some proponents of the Third Way claim, and calls attention to the way in which social life is always structured and integrated through the intersection of different levels of social abstraction.[36]

At the same time, however, while differently constituted integrative levels can be said to co-exist, they do not stand in relations of equivalence to one another. One level of social integration stands in a position of relative dominance to others and structures the other, subordinate levels.[37] For example, abstract-extended forms of social integration have, in historical terms, stood in a relatively subordinate position to social relations structured through embodied co-presence. While myths, as an expression of a more constitutively abstract form of the social, play an important role in social integration in tribal, as well as many other societies, they have not been the dominant integrative level. Rather, they have been framed and constituted within the terms of embodied co-presence.

The core theoretical claim of the Arena writers, however, is that the contemporary period is marked by a historic transformation of the position of the more embodied and the more abstract forms of sociality, such that social integration structured through embodied categories have been actively reframed or reconstituted by more abstract forms. In the terms outlined here, social life is increasingly structured through abstract-extended forms of social integration. To reiterate the point made above, this is not to say that embodied-extended social relations — face-to-face interaction, for example — have disappeared altogether, or are residual to the way in which contemporary societies are constituted. Such a claim is patently wrong. People still engage in a whole range of social relations which would not be possible without the embodied co-presence of the participants, from meeting from walking in the street among strangers to intimate relations with one's significant other. The claim, rather, is that abstract forms of social integration have come to 'overlay' and, increasingly, structure prior levels of sociality.[38] This can be seen in the way in which technology now structures and mediates much of social life. Even the most basic and intimate aspects of social life, from farming to

giving birth, are being increasingly restructured via abstract processes — genetic modification and *in vitro* fertilisation being two obvious examples.

We should be wary of focusing too heavily on the role of technology in this shift, thereby implicitly conferring on it a degree of autonomy that it does not in fact possess. Of deeper import is the more general social form of which technology is an expression and gives rise. The emphasis of Sharp's argument in understanding the dominance of constitutively abstract social relations in structuring other layers of social life, for example is not technology but the social relations of intellectuals and those with intellectual training. For Sharp the social relations of intellectuals are distinctive to those of other social actors in that they are structured through abstract webs of social relations. Their social relations are structured through mediated networks of writing, print and more recently telecommunications, to cite three examples. Such relations are abstract in the sense that they are extended in space and time. As such, the presence of an embodied Other is not necessary for them to be effective. To the extent that intellectual practices have become central to the production and reproduction of societies — indicated, at least descriptively, through the ubiquitousness of such phrases as 'the information society' — they tend to remake social life in their own image. For Sharp, then, the reconstitution of society is a consequence of the central role that intellectual practices have come to play in processes of production. It is thus not a question of the transformation of social life via technology *per se*, so much as the generalisation of abstract-extended social relations of intellectuals through their 'fusion' with the abstract social relations of the commodity form that is at the core of the reconstitution of society.[39]

3. Community as an Ideology of the Abstract Society

To draw this discussion back to the Third Way, the central argument of this thesis is that the network community is an ideological naturalisation of this transition in the dominant level of social integration. With the network community, the proponents of the Third Way claim that pre-existing forms of community structured through ongoing, face-to-face social relations with embodied others and grounded within the lineaments of place and tradition can be dissolved and reconstructed in the form of disembodied and deterritorialised ethical relations.

Communal life is here 'lifted out' of particular contexts, and reconstructed and restabilised around shared ethical relations realised through abstract-extended relations. While claiming to restore the importance of ethical relations of community in government, then, the proponents of the Third Way simultaneously reconstitute them in more abstract ways; more concrete forms of trust and co-operation are reframed by abstract practices.

Central to this process of reconstitution is the role of intellectual practices to the production and reproduction of social life more generally. A core theme of this thesis, then, is the political uses of social theory. This is to highlight the way in which social theory intervenes in the way social life is structured and organised in circumstances where other frameworks, other narratives of social and cultural meaning have, at least in relative terms, been displaced and rendered subordinate to intellectual practices and techniques. In such circumstances, intellectual practices and techniques themselves become an authentic source of social and cultural meaning, one of the effects of which is to restructure social relations in more abstract terms. Although the proponents of the Third Way use the language of community and ethics, and the connotations that these have with grass-roots participation and face-to-face community, the substantive justification for their politics is derived from social theoretical claims about the world.[40] The revival of community is predicated on the decentralised organisation that are claimed to be characteristic of 'post-industrial, information societies'. Alternatively, community is seen as the natural level of politics because of the emergence of a 'self-organising' society in which life is constructed around the claims of experts.[41] In framing community in this way, I argue that the proponents the Third Way take for granted the way in which social life has been comprehensively remade in the image of the abstract social relations of intellectual practice. Moreover, in taking this as their starting point for thinking about policy and governance, they actively contribute to such processes of reconstitution.

The Third Way thus provides an ideological legitimation of this process of reconstitution. We should be clear about how this ideology works. In particular, it might be noted that the argument outlined here is somewhat broader than other critiques of the Third Way, particularly those from the Left that have sought to portray the emphasis on community and ethical renewal as a kind of twee ideological furnishing for neo-liberalism. In his critical survey of Third Way politics, for example, Alex Callinicos claims that

> [i]t is tempting to see all invocations of 'community' and affirmations of 'values' as a kind of kitsch, a 'caring' veneer pasted over the relentless commodification of the world that is the inner truth of the Third Way.[42]

Towards the end of his analysis, Callinicos discards the qualification that prefaces this statement, concluding 'the Third Way is but an ideological façade behind which capitalism continues on its brutal and destructive way'.[43] For Callinicos, then, the Third Way marks the final capitulation of the last remnants of the social democratic Left to the neo-liberal Right, while invoking the term 'community' so as to give the appearance of some link to the socialist ethic. On this account, then, the concern with community is claimed to be a cover for the true political character of the Third Way which is the continued extension of the market and its social logic into ever more spheres of social and political life.

Given the inherent conservatism of the Third Way governments, which is explored in detail in Chapter One, and the ease with which the rhetoric of community has been appropriated by their conservative opponents, such an analysis would seem to have much to recommend it. The Third Way poses no serious challenge to the central tenets or policies of neo-liberal economics and, as some commentators have noted, it has a strong socially authoritarian component.[44] Nevertheless, the kind of analysis exemplified here by Callinicos faces two difficulties. In Callinicos' approach the Third Way's politics of community is analysed in terms of its explicit policy content, with particular emphasis on economic issues. In discussing the notion of 'community', for example, Callinicos' analysis is dominated by considerations of economic equality. The Third Way's politics of community is thus understood within the framework of Marxist political economy, and therefore it is essentially an economic phenomenon. While any meaningful discussion of the Third Way and community must look at such policies, focusing simply on policy prescriptions potentially risks mistaking a symptom for the disease itself. In other words, it misses the broader social form of which Third Way politics is both an expression and an ideological naturalisation. While the contemporary market is a potent agent and expression of the reconstitution of contemporary in more abstract terms, an understanding of this transformation can not be contained within a critique of neo-liberalism. The network community of the Third Way is an expression of a transformation that cuts deeper than simply this or that policy, and points to the naturalisation of abstract social relations as the dominant level of social integration. It is at this deeper level — at the level of social form — that the Third Way's ideology functions.

This leads on to a second distinction between the approach outlined here and the standard left critique of the Third Way illustrated by Callinicos. This concerns the meaning and nature of ideology with respect to the Third Way. In Callinicos' hands ideology refers to a process of concealment that hides the true nature of how things really are. For him, calls for 'reinventing community' and 'ethical renewal' are euphemisms for socially authoritarian policies deemed necessary to keep subject populations in line, while ensuring that the neo-liberal project of extending the logic of the market to all spheres of social life continues on unabated and unchecked. The implication here is that the proponents of the Third Way have sought to conceal their true intentions behind high-sounding rhetoric about reclaiming politics and governance as an ethical enterprise.

The problem with such an analysis is that it simply does not accord with the full range of facts. While the proponents of the Third Way have proved themselves adept in the arts of hyperbole and rhetoric, they have been quite explicit and open about their enthusiastic support for the market and are unapologetic about their support for punitive forms of social control. As Callinicos himself notes, the proponents of the Third Way are amongst the most vocal and uncritical 'boosters' of globalisation.[45] Moreover, the governments of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton have revelled in their newfound illiberalism, introducing curfews for the young, eliminating or reducing judicial discretion through the introduction of 'three strikes' mandatory sentencing policies and flirting with 'zero-tolerance' policing strategies.[46] If the Third Way's focus on community is an ideological façade designed to conceal such policies, it is very thin indeed.

In substantially qualifying Callinicos's account of the ideological character of the Third Way, I should not be taken to imply that the Third Way is beyond politics. To reiterate, my argument is that the Third Way *is* intensely ideological, but we need to be clear about what ideology means and how it functions in the context of the Third Way. The argument of this thesis is that the Third Way ideology of community works at the level of social form. It functions not through a process of concealment or obfuscation but by making that which exists appear normal and natural. Terry Eagleton notes that ideology in this sense functions by presenting certain ideas and ways of living as 'natural and self-evident — to identify them with the "common sense" of a society so that nobody could imagine how they might ever be different'.

> This process ... involves the ideology in creating as tight a fit as possible between itself and social reality, thereby closing the gap into which the leverage of critique could be inserted. Social reality is redefined by the ideology to become coextensive with itself, in a way which occludes the truth that the reality in fact generated the ideology. Instead, the two appear to be spontaneously bred together, as indissociable as a sleeve and its lining.[47]

This notion of ideology can be distinguished further by what can be referred to as a 'meta-ideology'. According to Geoff Sharp, from whom the idea of meta-ideology is drawn, unlike '[p]articular ideologies [which] express divisions within a particular framework of *practice* ... a meta-ideology defines itself in expressing the drive to displace a currently dominant framework as such'.[48] In displacing existing ideological categories, meta-ideologies appear as universal and natural, while other ways of thinking and acting seem particularistic and bound to special interests.

The Third Way assumes the character of meta-ideology insofar as its proponents have sought to supplant established ideological categories through community. This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the frequent claim by the proponents of the Third Way to be 'beyond Left and Right'.[49] In relation to community, the proponents of the Third Way claim that tensions and contradictions of values and principles that were a feature of pre-existing political divisions can be resolved and reconciled through the 'network community'. A co-operative ethos of community is thus reconcilable with the commercial spirit of the market. I argue that the reason why this fusion of hitherto incompatible social relations appears workable can be traced back to the abstract form that community takes. The proponents of the Third Way offer a community in which the meanings and forms of social relations that mark it of as a distinctive form of social life are fused with, and thus made radically continuous with the dominant structures of production, exchange and communication. In the same way that the dominant structures of production, exchange and communication are increasingly organised around de-territorialised, disembodied, globally integrated networks of capital and goods, images and information, so the proponents hold out a vision of community in which life is reconstructed and re-integrated around abstracted forms of social relations. Where community has been comprehensively reconstructed around abstract social relations, the basic groundings within which such contradictions arose and were maintained slide out of view. Where a sense of community is detached from embodied relations among Others grounded in attachment to place, and is reconstructed simply

through commitment to shared ethics, deep set differences and contradictions which often accompany such commitments can be safely defined away.

In the process, I argue that the proponents of the Third Way divest community of its complexity. Community is hollowed out to be an instrumentally useful tool of governance. In doing so, ethical relations are flattened out to the point where they are compatible with (almost) any set of practices. Relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity are so undemanding as to be upheld simply by engaging in common projects with other people, no matter how ephemeral that association might be. The consequence of this is that the community of the Third Way is without political significance — political here being understood in terms of offering some opposition to existing structures of power. Because ethical principles such as co-operation have been diluted, they are compatible with almost any state of affairs, and thus do not point to any significant change in the structures of power. Community is thus realised in a form that is compatible with the dominant structures of society and economy.

4. Setting up the Approach

This argument is developed in three sections. Section One explores the empirical-theoretical basis of the Third Way politics of community; Section Two offers a theoretical-critical approach to understanding the network community; and Section Three engages in a critical-philosophical discussion of an alternative to the Third Way. Each section thus approaches the Third Way and the question of community with a different emphasis, moving from descriptive analysis of policy and claims of the proponents of the Third Way, to the way in which these are theoretically justified, to more philosophical questions about how community is constituted and might be reconstituted in the present. These sections are not intended as sharply demarcated from one another, but are seen as complementing and informing one another.

The empirical-theoretical section is the most concrete of the three sections. This focuses on the Third Way as it has developed and been practiced in Britain, with supporting material from the United States, as well as the debate in Australia. Why limit the focus to these three countries, when, as noted above, governments advocating the Third Way

have emerged in a number of countries around the world? The main reason for focusing on Britain is that, arguably, it has perhaps the strongest example of the Third Way in both theory and practice. The inclusion of the United States and Australia is warranted because of the close ties between the British and Australian Labor parties and the influence of the 'New Democrats' on New Labour. Although there is a danger of overstating these connections, Britain's New Labour government is in many respects closer to the ALP and the US Democrats than its social democratic cousins in Europe. If New Labour has learnt media management skills from the Clinton Democrats, many of its policy initiatives have been drawn from Australian Labor. Tony Blair, for example, is on record as expressing his admiration for many of the reforms implemented by the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments, both in terms of policy and in regard to internal party reform.[50] This thesis thus focuses on what can be loosely described as an Anglo-American version of the Third Way. In some respects defining the contours of the Third Way is an arbitrary judgment, but I hope to show that there is a unity of ideas amongst these governments in relation to questions of community and its role in governance.

In developing these ideas, this section examines the policy prescriptions and position statements of the Third Way governments and their supporters. A variety of documents have been utilised, including official policy documents, attempts to elaborate and popularise the Third Way through books and pamphlets, publications from various think-tanks allied with the Third Way project as well as speeches, magazine and newspaper articles. In order to provide some coherence to these documents, the analysis is driven by the concept of 'community', examining how community and associated terms, such as 'social capital' and 'social entrepreneurs' provide some coherence to the Third Way. These are used to pull together an overall picture of the Third Way.

Deciding who is and who is not an advocate of the Third Way is not always a straightforward matter. For example, some writers have influenced the Third Way, but do not identify themselves as such. Others, who seemed to play a significant role at its outset, have since distanced themselves from it as the debate evolved and ideas crystallised into policy. Two examples of such writers are Robert Reich, the Secretary for Labor in the first term of the Clinton Administration, and Will Hutton, a British journalist with the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers. Hutton's ideas, outlined in his books *The State We're In* and *The State to Come*, offered a trenchant neo-Keynesian

critique of Thatcherism and a thoroughgoing program of constitutional change in Britain, seemed to be influences on New Labour in the lead up to it victory in 1997. In particular, Hutton's idea of a 'stakeholder' society, which suggested a European-style communitarian approach to social democracy, seemed to be embraced by Blair but was soon dropped in response to criticism from business interests. Hutton is also sceptical of the claims made by proponents of the Third Way (and others) about the extent of social and economic change brought about by technological change and processes of globalisation. While he concedes that there has been enormous social and economic change, he argues that markets economies continue to be marked by exploitative relations and poverty, and therefore the case for economic regulation by the state is as strong as ever. The proponents of the Third Way reject such policies, viewing the market as a vehicle of innovation. Both Hutton and Reich have thus adopted a more critical stance with regard to the Third Way.[51] For this reason, they are not treated as proponents of the Third Way.

Section Two shifts the focus away from a descriptive account of the Third Way, to developing a theoretical interpretation of the network community. Specifically, this section develops and defends the central argument of this thesis, namely the way in which the Third Way legitimates the reconstruction of social relations of community in more abstract ways. While this discussion is mostly of a theoretical nature, concrete examples from the Third Way debates as well as policy prescriptions are called upon to substantiate the argument. In particular, the interrelated Third Way ideas of 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurs' and 'social inclusion', and the way in which these inform and are instituted in policy are drawn on to illustrate how abstract forms of sociality have come to be naturalised as common sense. This section draws out the ways in which social theoretical descriptions of the world help to structure and reconstitute the social world itself.

Throughout Sections One and Two, particular attention is given to the work of Anthony Giddens, perhaps more so than any other proponent of the Third Way. The reason for this is that Giddens has advanced what is the most theoretically developed version of the Third Way. In many respects the politics of the Third Way is the culmination of a theoretical enterprise that Giddens has been involved with for three decades. Key concerns of Giddens, such as questions about the duality between social agents and social structure, social reflexivity, the nature of risk and globalisation all find

expression and elaboration in Third Way politics. However, there is a problem here because, as noted above, Giddens has explicitly rejected community in favour of civil society as central to community. This is less of a problem than it might at first appear, for the simple reason that Giddens' notion of 'civil society' does not differ significantly from what other advocates of the Third Way mean by 'community'. It is simply a network-like structure of loose-knot relations of trust and mutuality. The term 'community' — or more precisely, the 'network community' — is thus used throughout this thesis as a general term for describing such relations.

The final section is more philosophical in its focus. The aim here is to advance principles for an alternative politics of community, cognisant of the problems raised in the previous chapters. In doing so, I try to rework the core assumptions of the Third Way as well as alternative and opposing views of community. The aim of this section is to start to think about how community might be structured in present conditions across layers of social integration in tension with one another. In particular, this is to look at how ethical relations are grounded in the particular relations between people embedded within particular places and times, balancing these with other ways of constituting community that emphasise autonomy, freedom and invention. This discussion is somewhat more philosophical in nature than the previous two sections, although, where possible, an attempt is made to link these principles to concrete examples. The focus of this section, then, is to set up principles for an alternative form of community beyond the Third Way and some existing alternatives.

5. Chapter Outline

Chapter One provides an introductory overview of the Third Way in government, focusing on the Clinton administration and the Blair government. There are two main aims of this chapter. The first is simply to delineate the Third Way as a distinctive object of analysis, while trying to make sense of the Third Way through the concrete attempts that have been made to put it into practice. The second aim is to situate the Third Way on the spectrum of political ideas. Focussing on the administrative reform agendas instituted by the Clinton administration and the Blair government, the argument of this chapter is that the Third Way does not, as its proponents sometimes claim, offer a 'new

politics'. Rather, it is continuous with the approach to governance developed by their predecessors. Nevertheless, we should avoid rushing to the conclusion of some critics of the Third Way who see it as little more than a continuation of neo-liberalism, in a different guise. While the proponents of the Third Way have adopted many of the policy presumptions and assessments of their neo-liberal predecessors — namely the Reagan/Bush Snr administrations and the Thatcher/Major governments — they have also sought to distinguish themselves from their predecessors by developing role of ethical relationships in government under the banner of community.

Of course, to say that community is the defining feature of Third Way governance is, by itself, hardly sufficient as a way of delineating it as an approach to governance. Chapter Two attempts to flesh out what this notoriously vague term means in the specific context of Third Way politics and to explore how its proponents see community as contributing to the actual practice of governance. The argument of this chapter is that the proponents of the Third Way understand community as a moral-regulative domain structured through abstract ethical relations. In this regard, the proponents of the Third Way offer what Nikolas Rose refers to as 'ethico-political' conception of community.[52] On this conception, individuals are to be governed through being drawn into the ethical relations that are distinctive of community. While such communities are obviously located in place, for the proponents of the Third Way place, as well as traditions are secondary to what community is. Communities are constituted primarily through social networks of trust, co-operation, reciprocity and mutuality. It is argued here that the morphology of the network has, for the proponents of the Third Way, become a generalised model of social life. As such, this chapter provides a critical analysis of the network as a model for community. Furthermore, the role of the network community in relation to governance is examined through the related ideas of social capital, social entrepreneurs and social inclusion.

Chapter Three shifts the empirical focus of Chapter One and Two to a critical survey of the theoretical frameworks which inform this conception of community. Some space is also given to critical overview of various respondents to the Third Way's politics of community. This chapter thus takes the form of a critical commentary on the dialogue between the supporters and critics of the Third Way. For their part, the supporters of the Third Way present the renewed focus on community as either a straightforward renewal of traditional communitarian politics, a response to the emergent structures of

'post-industrial' society and economy or, in the case of Anthony Giddens, a response to a more fundamental transformation of socio-ontological categories of space and time in the transition from modern to 'late-modern' society. For its critics, the Third Way is claimed to be a socially authoritarian weapon of specific class interests or as a new phase in the development of liberal practices of government which focuses ever more intensely on the formation of particular kinds of subjects. The core problem with these various attempts to justify or explain the Third Way's politics of community is that neither its proponents nor its critics offer an adequate social theoretical framework within which to understand the specific cultural transformation to which Third Way politics is both a response and an expression.

Chapter Four attempts to advance and defend an alternative and more encompassing theoretical framework for understanding the politics of community of the Third Way, drawing on the theoretical framework of the 'levels approach' and the associated notion of constitutive abstraction briefly outlined above. As noted above, three integrative levels are defined and given some theoretical precision: the 'embodied-extended', the 'object-extended' and the 'abstract-extended'. The claim that is made here is that contemporary societies are characterised by a relative shift in the relative dominance of integrative levels, such that abstract-extended forms of social integration have come to be the dominant level of social integration. In other words, social relations are increasingly constituted through practices that transcend the embodied. In discussing this transition in levels, particular attention is given to the central role of intellectuals and intellectual practices in restructuring contemporary societies.

Drawing on the analysis of the transition in integrative levels, Chapter Five argues that the politics of community offered by the proponents of the Third Way can be seen as a meta-ideology of abstract forms of the social. It is argued here that the Third Way's politics of community is an expression of the reconstitution of social relations in a more abstract form; the social remade in the image of the social forms that are distinctive to intellectual practices. This is illustrated by drawing back into the notions of 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurship' and 'social inclusion', which are explored in Chapter Two. The point here is to show how each of these offers a common-sense approach to governance, while simultaneously naturalising abstract forms of social life.

Chapter Six develops a broader critique of this process of reconstruction of the most basic bonds of social life. Three interrelated criticisms are developed. The first line of critique is that the attempt to naturalise abstract forms of sociality over more grounded ways of constituting community is inherently contradictory; the attempt to reconstitute social relations through abstract-extended relationships undermines the very social relations that are claimed as central to Third Way approaches to governance. The second line of critique is that the proponents of the Third Way divest the relations of community of their potential ethical significance. Reconstituted simply in abstract terms, ethics becomes so undemanding and so inclusive as to be devoid of any content. Thus, terms such as 'co-operation' and 'mutual obligation' are watered down to the point that they lack any substance. In doing so, it is argued that the proponents of the Third Way divest community of its potential political significance. This is the third line of argument. The claim here is that the network community is so flexible as to be compatible with the dominant structures of social and economic life. In the Third Way, then, the reassertion of the ethical in government achieves little more than the smooth administration of social life.

Learning from the shortcomings of the Third Way, an attempt is made in Chapter Seven to develop principles for an alternative politics of community. This chapter explores two quite different proposals for an alternative politics of community to that proposed by the Third Way. The first can be referred to as an embodied-ecological conception of community. Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson advance such a conception of community in their critique of the Third Way, *The Age of Insecurity*, which is examined in Chapter Two. Elliott and Atkinson stress the importance of local infrastructure, local jobs and the production of tangible goods, as opposed to more abstract forms of production such as information, as underpinning community. They refer to these tangible aspects of community as 'human ecology'.[53] For Elliott and Atkinson, human ecology is central to underpinning the face-to-face relations that, in their view, is the basis of community. Thus, community is constituted through embodied relations with others, grounded in concrete spaces.

The second alternative to the Third Way's politics of community is almost the complete opposite of Elliott and Atkinson's proposal. This can be thought of as a meta-ethical or an aesthetic conception of community. Community is understood here, not as a domain for moral integration as the proponents of the Third Way would have it, but a radically

open domain of experimentation, in which individuals explore novel social forms, subjectivity and self-invention. Such a politics of community is outlined by Nikolas Rose as an alternative to the Third Way in his book *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. This conception of community is more abstract in form to that envisaged by the proponents of the Third Way; it is a heterogenous, multicultural conception of community, based on a celebration of mobility, difference and openness.

In exploring these different conceptions of community, the intention is not to embrace any single one. On the contrary, I reject all of them in the unqualified way in which they are advanced. All see community as constituted within a single integrative level: the proponents of the Third Way see community as constituted in 'abstract-ethical' terms; Elliott and Atkinson, as representative of the traditional social democrats, see community as constituted through 'embodied-ecological' terms, while Rose's vision of community offers community as an 'abstract-aesthetic' social formation. Nevertheless, each conception of community is useful in the way that it emphasises different principles of community: the network community of the Third Way emphasises principles of ethical relationships; Elliott and Atkinson's 'bricks and mortar' conception of community stresses principles of embodied solidarity and collective provision; while the aesthetic conception of community foregrounds principles of difference, freedom and creativity. I argue that all of these are important to community, as in tension and qualifying one another. The aim of this chapter then, is to advocate the 'critical retrieval' of these principles as qualified and as qualifying one another. This is not to argue for a synthesis of these principles, but rather a different conception of community based on the integrity and irreducibility of these principles. I call this 'frictional community', because each of these dimensions of community of community are seen as placing limits on the other, without ruing them out altogether. The aim of frictional community, then, is to move beyond the notion of community as constituted within a single integrative level, but as constituted through the intersection of different ways of living, constituted across different levels of the social from the least to the most abstract.

ENDNOTES

[1] Andrew Martin, *Bilton* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 15.

[2] Andrew Martin, *Bilton*, 16.

[3] Andrew Martin, *Bilton*, 16.

[4] See, for example, "Turning Ideas into Action: A Conversation Among Five World Leaders on the Third Way," *The New Democrat* 11, no. 3 May/June 1999, 14-19.

[5] See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998); Mark Latham, "Marxism, Social-ism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker," *Arena Magazine*, August/September 1999, 9-10; Peter Botsman and Mark Latham, ed., *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2001); and Third Way Australia URL: <http://www.thirdway-aust.com> Consulted 28 April 2002.

[6] See for example Paul Kelly, *Paradise Divided: The Changes, The Challenges, The Choices for Australia* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 23-27 and 280.

[7] See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), Anthony Giddens, ed., *The Global Third Way Debate* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) and Anthony Giddens, *Where Now for New Labour?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002).

[8] Bruce Frohnen, *The New Communitarians and the Crisis of Modern Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 8-20.

[9] Amitai Etzioni, "The Third Way is a Triumph," *New Statesman*, 25 June 2001, 25-27.

[10] See: Nexus: The Policy and Ideas Network, URL: <http://www.netnexus.org> Consulted 28 April 2002; Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie, eds., *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond* (London: Demos, 1998); New Democrats Online: The Democratic Leadership Council's Online Community, URL: <http//www.ndol.org> Consulted 28 April, 2002 and the Progressive Policy Institute: Defining the Third Way URL: <http://wwwppionline.org/index.cfm> Consulted 28 April 2002.

[11] See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* and Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century* (London: The Fabian Society, 1998).

[12] See Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*, 4.

[13] Tony Blair quoted in "Turning Ideas into Action: A Conversation Among Five World Leaders on the Third Way," *The New Democrat*, 15.

[14] Al From quoted in Jeff Faux, "Lost on the Third Way," *Dissent* Spring (1999), 67. The reference to Starbucks here is not completely satirical. Much of the Third Way's community rhetoric echoes that of corporations seeking to align themselves with the supposed moral and civic virtues of community. Companies such as Starbucks make much of their community involvement. A program to fund and build parks in the Seattle area, for example, is explained in the following terms: 'A Starbucks coffeehouse is a gathering place for the community. We look at a park as being the same thing — a place that mirrors the community; a place where people can reflect, re-energize, or socialize; a place where everyone is welcome; and a place that builds community. Just as parks are woven into the fabric of Seattle's neighborhoods, so is Starbucks through our coffeehouses and our partners (employees).' As we shall see in Chapter Five, Third Way approaches to governance coalesce neatly with corporate strategies which seek to align

marketing with the putative benefits of democratic and civic virtues. See Starbucks, "Local Support", (2002) URL: <http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/localsupport.asp> Consulted 14 April 2002.

[15] See for example Mark Latham, "The Moral Foundations of Government," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, eds. Peter Botsman and mark Latham (Annandale: Pluto, 2001), 234 and 241.

[16] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised and expanded ed. (London: Flamingo, 1983), 76.

[17] Confusions about the differences between community and civil society run throughout the Third Way debates. For example Mark Latham, like many other proponents of the Third Way, uses the nebulous concept of 'social capital' to refer to both civil society and community, effectively blurring the distinction between the two. See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, Part 5.

[18] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, 64.

[19] See John Howard, 'Time to Build on Bold Ideas', *Weekend Australian*, 8 May 1999.

[20] Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "It's the Left, Jim — But Not as We Know It," *Background Briefing*, Radio National, 13 August 2000 URL: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/s164552.htm> Consulted 20 August 2000.

[21] The Australian Labor MP Mark Latham who supports the Third Way, for example, has questioned Abbott's welfare policies. However, the differences, if any, between his own suggestions for reform, which emphasise individual self-reliance such as government assistance to enable people on low incomes to buy into equity markets and individual welfare accounts funded by both governments and low income earners themselves, and those implemented by the Liberal Government would seem to be one of emphasis, rather than fundamental philosophical difference. See Mark Latham, 'Help Poor Save Themselves', *Australian Financial Review*, 30 May 2001, 54.

[22] See for example Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Right and Responsibilities", in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, ed. Amitai Etzioni. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield 1998), ix-xxiv; Jack Straw, "Building Social Cohesion, Order and Inclusion in a Market Economy" (Paper presented at the From Principles to Policies: Mapping Out the Third Way conference, July 3, 1998) URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/thirdway> Consulted 23 April 1999; and McKenzie Wark, *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World*, (Smithfield: Pluto Press, 1999), 269.

[23] See for example Andrew Mawson, "Making Dinosaurs Dance: Social Entrepreneurship and Civic Action," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*.

[24] Amitai Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 127.

[25] See for example Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, vol. 1, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) and Scott Lash, *Critique of Information* (London: Sage, 2002).

[26] 'Abstract' here refers to socio-material abstraction. See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 70 (1985), 48-82.

[27] Arena is a Melbourne-based community of writers and intellectuals. Since the mid-1960s, those associated with Arena have developed a distinctive theoretical and practice within the Marxist tradition, based around principles of co-operation and reciprocity. This has been developed in the journal *Arena* issues 1-99/100 and its successors *Arena Journal* and *Arena Magazine*. For detailed discussions of this approach and its application, see: Geoff Sharp, 'Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice', *Arena*: 48-82; Geoff Sharp, "Intellectuals in Transition," *Arena*, no. 65 (1983): 84-95; Geoff Sharp, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 99/100 (1992): 188-216; Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993): 221-237; John Hinkson, *Postmodernity: State and Education* (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1991); John Hinkson, "Postmodern Economy: Self-Formation, Value and Intellectual Practice," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993): 23-44; John Hinkson, "The Postmodern Market," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 9 (1997): 77-94; John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 13 (1999): 101-123; Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?," *Arena* Spring, no. 99/100 (1992): 66-85; Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

[28] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, xi footnote 1.

[29] See Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, xii. See also Paul James, "Reconstituting Work: Towards an Alternative Ethic of Social Reproduction," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 10 (1998): 85-111.

[30] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 54.

[31] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 57.

[32] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 57-58

[33] See Geoff Sharp, "Intellectuals in Transition," *Arena*, 84-95 and Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena*, 221-237.

[34] See Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?" *Arena*, 71-73.

[35] The formulation and discussion of these levels of integration draw heavily on the work of the Paul James. James delineates three levels of social integration, face-to-face, agency-extended and disembodied-extended. See Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 23-37.

[36] See Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?" *Arena*, 66-85.

[37] See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 64-68.

[38] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 22.

[39] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 64-68.

[40] Finlayson has made a similar observation, although he does not see it as a more general process of the reconstitution of the social. See Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1999): 271-279.

[41] See Mark Latham, "Civil Society, Markets and Governments" (paper presented at the Mutualism - A Third Way for Australia Conference, Melbourne, Australia, November 19-20 1999) URL: <http://www.thirdway-aust.com/index2.html> Consulted 7 February 2000; The Progressive Foundation, "The New Progressive Declaration: A Political Philosophy for the Information Age," (Washington: The Progressive Foundation, 1996). URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/adobe/declare.pdf> Consulted 22 September 1999; and Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 80.

[42] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 65.

[43] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 120.

[44] Ralf Dahrendorf, "The Third Way and Liberty: An Authoritarian Streak in Europe's New Center," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (1999): 13-17.

[45] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 15-43.

[46] See Nick Cohen, *Cruel Britannia: Reports on the Sinister and Preposterous* (London: Verso, 1999), 1-3 and 112-122.

[47] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 58.

[48] Geoff Sharp, "Social Form and Discourse Theory: Foucault and the Hidden Sociology of Post-Structuralism," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 5 (1995), 134.

[49] See Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*, Mark Latham, "Marxism, Socialism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker," *Arena Magazine* and Mark Latham, "The New Economy and the New Politics," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*.

[50] Indeed, many of those familiar with the Third Way debates in Australia have been somewhat bemused by the turn taken by Blair's New Labour, precisely because many of his reforms have closely mirrored those adopted by the Australian Labor Party in the 1980s. For a detailed account of these links, see Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labour Parties* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2000).

[51] For more on the differences between Hutton and some of the core ideas that underpin the Third Way, see Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens, "Anthony Giddens and Will Hutton In Conversation," in *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, ed. Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000). See also Will Hutton, *The State We're In*, Fully rev. ed. (London: Vintage, 1996) and *The State to Come* (London: Vintage, 1997). More critical accounts by Hutton can be found in Will Hutton, *The Stakeholding Society: Writings on Politics and Economics*, ed. David Goldblatt (Cornwall: Polity Press, 1999). See especially 'Tony and the Tories: This is what We Mean" (written with Frank Field, John Kay, David Marquand and John Gray), 88-92, "Healing Community Requires Reform Rather than Rhetoric", 92-95 and "Afterword", 267-274. See also Robert B. Reich, "We Are All Third Wayers Now," *The American Prospect*, March-April 1999. URL:<http://epn.org/prospect/43/43reich.html> Consulted 14 May 1999.

[52] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 170-173.

[53] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity* (London: Verso, 1999), 280.

SECTION ONE

MAPPING THE THIRD WAY

CHAPTER ONE

The Tributaries of the Third Way

It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is.

Bill Clinton[1]

Introduction

On Sunday 25 April 1999, at the conclusion of a three-day conference marking the fiftieth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treat Organisation, five leaders of NATO countries met at the National Press Club in Washington DC for a public forum. Chaired by the then US President Bill Clinton and attended by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröeder, then Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, and then Netherlands Prime Minister Wim Kok, the topic of the forum was the future of progressive politics in the 'information age'. The issues raised in the forum included globalisation and technological change, social cohesion, welfare and education reform, law enforcement and crime, administrative and bureaucratic reform and the relationships between family life and work. Unsurprisingly, given the public nature of the event, the comments by participants tended more towards mutual admiration and self-congratulation than a serious or critical attempt to work through these issues. Nevertheless, the discussion returned to three core themes which, while vague, were claimed to define a 'Third Way' philosophy of governance: opportunity, responsibility, and community.[2]

At the same time as the forum was taking place, NATO forces were conducting a campaign of high-altitude bombing over Belgrade and Kosovo. Although only mentioned in passing in the course of the discussion, the participants and their supporters were keen to portray the bombing campaign as an expression a new political sensibility of the liberal-Left. Indeed, the bombing campaign was embraced as marking a new and positive phase in the development of progressive politics pioneered by liberal-Left politicians who rejected in equal measure the

paralysis engendered by pacifism traditionally associated with progressives, as well as foreign adventurism associated with the Right. The military intervention was portrayed as a defence of human rights. One sympathetic commentator remarked that the public forum

> showcased a new generation of center-left leaders who have abandoned the left's traditional reluctance to use force and are determined to meet the challenges of economic globalization and regional turmoil.[3]

Indeed, NATO's intervention was claimed to mark 'the emergence of a third-way approach to foreign policy that accepts responsibility for maintaining order and for redefining NATO's mission'.[4]

What are we to make of a politics that is defined simultaneously by its commitment to opportunity, responsibility and community, and its support for high-altitude bombing campaigns? Does the Third Way stand for anything more substantive than woolly ethical sentiments, which can be applied or discarded at will? The term 'the Third Way' itself provides few clues as to how one might answer such questions. Beyond suggesting a departure from existing frameworks that in some way resolves, reconciles or transcends a current impasse, neither its referent nor its meaning are immediately apparent. Matters are not helped by the fact that, historically, the term has been associated with a variety of often contradictory positions in a diverse range of disciplines from economics to theology. In political discourse and practice, the term has no obvious correlate or genealogy. It has been used at different times to describe quite incompatible positions, including fascism, socialist alternatives to Soviet-style communism, and the politics of new social movements, such as the green movement. It has also been used in past attempts to recast social democratic politics.[5]

In current debates about the future of social democracy, beyond a consensus on common values and broad principles, there is little in the way of a definitive statement of what the so-called Third Way in government actually involves. As Faux comments:

> At a recent conference, one of the co-authors of the original New Democrat manifesto that denounced liberal fundamentalism called for a discussion among Democrats to fill in the meaning of the third way, which he acknowledged was still somewhat of a 'marketing concept.' Another third-way sympathizer defined it as occupying the political space between 'armed revolution and complete laissez-faire capitalism.' Which is to say: the third way has become so wide that it is more like a political parking lot than a highway to anywhere in particular.[6]

For some of its advocates, this conceptual vagueness is offered as evidence of the term's utility, in that it permits a degree of flexibility that a more categorical definition would deny. For example, one supporter of the Third Way concedes that the concept of the Third Way is vague, but then goes on to claim that such conceptual opaqueness 'is intended to signify the reach of its political appeal and the [Blair] government's ideological promiscuity'.

> The result is a political philosophy which bulges untidily at the seams, but whose inclusiveness offers multiple points of entry. The Third Way aims to bring the widest possible political coalition to focus upon the issues of the highest priority and the deepest intractability, such as the reform of the welfare state, the revival of British public education and the assault upon social exclusion.[7]

As if to suggest that such conceptual indeterminacy is deliberate, borne of a wariness of being hamstrung by labels or overt definitions, Tony Blair has claimed that beyond general statements of values, 'a large measure of pragmatism is essential' to giving the Third Way practical effect.[8] The problem with such indeterminacy is that just what is being given practical effect, remains unclear. The political philosophy and practice of the Third Way can be made to mean anything and thus nothing, the term having such infinite malleability that it is whatever the supporters of the Third Way say it is. Similarly to Bill Clinton's musings on the meaning of 'is' in his Grand Jury testimony, the meaning of the Third Way is more often than not a matter of emphasis and context.

As a preliminary to a more detailed discussion of the Third Way, then, it is first necessary to explore the social and political context within which it has emerged. To this end, this chapter seeks to identify the tributaries of the Third Way — social, political and intellectual. The metaphor of tributaries is apposite, reflecting the many, intertwined streams from which the Third Way has emerged. As I will show, the Third Way is as much a product of what preceded it, as an attempt to respond to future challenges.

The difficulty in attempting to simultaneously deal with the influences on the Third Way while also identifying its specificity is that subtle, yet significant, distinctions are liable to be lost. The challenge of this chapter, then, is to preserve the complexity of the Third Way's relationship with its inheritance, while also drawing its specificity as an approach to governance. In doing so, I have limited this discussion to the immediate predecessors of the Third Way. As such, this chapter is not intended to offer an exhaustive account

of the long-run historical developments that have produced the Third Way.[9] Its focus instead is on the policy reform programs and ideas of the Thatcher and Major governments in the United Kingdom, the Reagan and Bush Administrations in the United States and the Hawke and Keating Governments in Australia. These are employed to draw out, clarify and demarcate the concerns of the Third Way as it has emerged in these countries.

The argument of this chapter is that, although governments proclaiming the Third Way echo the policy agendas of their conservative predecessors, the underlying conception of government that underpins the Third Way is somewhat different. It is this underlying conception of government that distinguishes the Third Way as an approach to governance. Section One focuses on the respective reform agendas of the Clinton Administration in the United States and the Blair New Labour government in Britain. Both governments have claimed that their programmes of reform are examples of the so-called Third Way in government, marking a 'new politics'. These claims are assessed in Section Two in light of previous reform efforts by both governments' conservative predecessors: the Reagan administration in the United States and the Thatcher government in the United Kingdom. In both cases, clear precedents to many so-called Third Way policy initiatives can be found in the policy directions taken by their conservative predecessors.

While this continuity is apparent in terms of the policy agenda and, in many cases, the content of policy, it is argued that the governments that proclaim a Third Way have also sought to develop different approaches to governance. An understanding of this is developed through a distinction between two different conceptions of government. The first conception, explored in Section Three of this chapter, focuses on the *institutions* of government — that is the institutions through which one governs. Cast somewhat misleadingly in terms of a choice between 'big government' and 'small government', this conception of government is less about the actual size of government than it is about the moral legitimacy of certain institutions to govern — namely the state and the bureaucracy. The Reagan and Bush (Snr) administrations in the United States and the Thatcher and Major governments in the United Kingdom exemplify this approach most clearly. Throughout the 1980s these governments disparaged the capacity of the state and bureaucracy to govern and advocated the market and the mechanisms of the

market, not only as more effective instruments of government but consistent with the extension of the individual's right to freedom and self-government.

The second way of thinking about government is in terms of government as a *practice*. This is to focus on what government actually does, and its effectiveness in achieving certain outcomes, with a relative lack of concern with the institutions through which such outcomes are achieved. This conception of government, explored in the fourth section of this chapter under the heading of 'Overloaded Government', underlay the Hawke and Keating governments in Australia during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Driven by the idea that government had over-extended itself in taking on new responsibilities, and was thus unable to perform basic functions, successive Australian Labor governments pursued a limited approach to government that focused on the achievement of specific results and measurable outcomes. While in practice this involved giving a greater role to the market and the mechanisms of the market in government, this was borne not out of moral arguments about the consequences of increasing the size of the bureaucracy, but from an argument about cultural and technological changes undermining effective government. Unlike their US and UK counterparts, then, the Hawke and Keating ALP governments pursued limited government not as a morally desirous end unto itself, but as necessary for government to function effectively.

Drawing on this distinction, it is argued that while the Third Way governments in the US and UK have taken on the policy agenda and much of the policy content that emerged from the big government/small government model, their assessment of the problems of government is informed by the notion of overloaded government. The proponents of the Third Way shift between these arguments, sometimes adopting a moralistic critique of the state, while at others advancing arguments about cultural change and government.[10] While this shift is one of emphasis, since in practice questions of governance are inseparable from the institutions through which one governs, the significance of the second way of thinking about governments is that is has allowed the proponents of the Third Way to frame questions of government in a different way from their predecessors. Specifically it permits one to question how government might proceed irrespective of the institutions through which one governs. The proponents of the Third Way thereby shift from a focus on *government*, meaning the institutions through which one governs, to *governance*, referring to government as a practice. In doing so,

advocates of the Third Way have championed other vehicles through which government might proceed outside of the state–market dichotomy. Significantly, they have attached great importance to community as a tool of governance.

1. State and Government in Transition

In their unlikely although highly influential 1993 bestseller about public-sector reform in the United States, Ted Gaebler and David Osborne argued that most US political leaders had failed to meet the public's expectations of government.[11]

> Most of our leaders still tell us that there are only two ways out of our repeated public crises: we can raise taxes, or we can cut spending. For almost two decades, we have asked for a third choice ... Our fundamental problem is that we have *the wrong kind of government*. We do not need more or less government, we need *better* government. To be precise we need better *governance*.[12]

Osborne and Gaebler claimed to have found the 'third choice' in government that their fellow citizens had apparently been looking for. The bi-partisan support that greeted *Reinventing Government* seemed to suggest that the authors had indeed found a third choice — at least to the extent of offering a reform agenda that both Republican and Democrats could endorse. Democrat mayors and senators vouched for the book's findings, while a deputy assistant to the outgoing President Bush (Snr.) claimed that Osborne and Gaebler had 'done more original thinking about government than anyone' he knew.[13] The authors christened their third choice 'entrepreneurial government'.

While at pains to avoid an overly narrow definition of entrepreneurialism, explicitly disavowing one narrowly framed in terms of business activities,[14] the influence of organisational techniques and concepts drawn from private-sector management is evident throughout Osborne and Gaebler's prescriptions for reform.[15] The authors suggest that entrepreneurial governments focus on the core business of government — policy formulation and decision-making — separating these from service delivery, which in their eyes is better handled by either the private sector or government agencies competing with private-sector service providers.[16]

Entrepreneurial government is defined as limited government that is focused on the achievement of specific, measurable outcomes, or clearly articulated missions, with a

preference for 'market fixes' over bureaucratic solutions. In terms of structure, entrepreneurial government is marked by a flexible, decentralised organisational form that is intended to give individual employees greater autonomy in decision-making processes. By shifting away from structures where control is centralised, the model of entrepreneurial government is intended to promote employee innovation and competition, thereby enhancing the choices of citizens-as-consumers. Such structural changes are intended, moreover, to promote a deeper shift in the culture of government, promoting innovation by placing government on an explicitly commercial footing.[17]

Inspired by Osborne and Gaebler's account, with its abundance of anecdotal evidence of successful government reform from across the United States, the newly elected Clinton Administration began an overhaul of the US federal government. The reform was to be carried out under the auspices of the National Performance Review (later renamed the National Partnership for Reinventing Government), which was established in 1993 with David Osborne was appointed as a key adviser. The Partnership's objective was to reform the US Federal Government along lines of a consumerist model. In the same tone as *Reinventing Government*, the Preface to the then National Performance Review's first annual report announced that the

> Clinton Administration believes it is time for a new customer service contract with the American people, a new guarantee of effective, efficient and responsive government.[18]

Accordingly, four key areas for 'reinvention' identified in the report[19] set the pattern for the reform agenda that the National Partnership would pursue. These were, firstly, improving customer-service delivery through a greater focus on the achievement of measurable results (as opposed to inputs), as well as incorporating business best-practice and service standards into the US federal bureaucracy;[20] secondly, reforming the structure and organisation of the bureaucracy and the tasks of federal employees to empower 'front-line' workers, granting them greater flexibility and the authority to make decisions while also eliminating layers of management;[21] thirdly, streamlining administrative procedures by cutting internal rules and regulations;[22] and, fourthly, reducing government spending.

By March 1998, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government could claim responsibility for cutting 351,000 positions from the US federal civilian workforce,

generating estimated savings of about $31 billion, eliminating over 600,000 pages of internal rules and around 16,000 pages of government regulations, and creating over 4,000 customer service standards. These results, it claimed, had helped to double the reported job satisfaction of Federal Government employees in agencies affected by the reforms and had contributed to halting a thirty-year decline of public trust in government.[23] As if to underline the US federal bureaucracy's new 'can-do' style, the National Performance Review's first annual report became a commercial success in its own right, entering the *New York Times'* bestseller list soon after its release. A pop-management guru went so far as to claim that the report was 'the best book on management available in America'.[24]

In March 1999 the New Labour government in Britain released the *Modernising Government* White Paper, outlining its own raft of public-sector reforms. Although not achieving the same level of commercial success as the Clinton Administration's publication, it echoed both the tone and content of the US reform blueprint. The *Modernising Government* White Paper thus detailed plans to separate policy-making and service-delivery functions, and the creation of a private/public-sector partnerships, (a supposedly more pragmatic approach to privatisation) to deliver government services.[25] In flagging his government's approach to health-care reform, Blair claimed, in line with the principles of reinventing government 'we favour partnerships at local level, with investment tied to targets and measured outcomes, with national standards but local freedom to manage and innovate'.[26]

Such changes were advanced within a broader context of public-sector reform, incorporating commercial management practices into the civil service through a newly established Centre for Management and Policy Studies, to train both ministers and civil service staff in 'the latest ideas and thinking on management and leadership.'[27] The intention of such initiatives was to decentralise authority and break up monolithic bureaucratic structures in order to cultivate an enterprise culture in government,[28] while retaining overall co-ordination.[29]

Furthermore, the *Modernising Government* White Paper outlined a general re-orientation of government services and operations to a consumerist logic, including the introduction of a new customer service charter programme. Government departments and agencies were to publish charters detailing the services and service standards that 'consumers', (a

vague category that includes welfare recipients, road users, and victims of crime), can expect when accessing government services.[30]

Introducing New Labour's programme of reform, Tony Blair claimed that the White Paper marked a new departure in thinking about government, demonstrating once and for all that the 'old arguments about government are now outdated — big government against small government, interventionism against laissez-faire'.[31] Blair's words echoed those of President Clinton a year earlier in his 1998 State of the Union address. As if replying to Osborne and Gaebler's call for a 'third choice' in government, Clinton proclaimed that with his administration the US had

> moved past the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say government is the answer. My fellow Americans, we have found a third way.[32]

To what extent, however, can the claim to a Third Way in government be given empirical support? Notwithstanding the rhetoric of both Blair and Clinton, a closer inspection reveals that much of what the Third Way claims for itself is either the direct culmination of, or at least in continuity with, longer-term currents in thinking about governmental reform. For example, the management writer Peter Drucker, who Osborne and Gaebler cite as the main influence for the insights offered in *Reinventing Government*, has estimated that 'a good many, perhaps a majority' of the 384 recommendations for reforms contained in the National Partnership's initial report can be traced to recommendations made by the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (or, as it is less formally known, the Grace Commission) published in 1982 during the Reagan Administration. Drucker further claimed that some of the recommendations could even be traced back to the Eisenhower administration.[33]

Although arising out of different social, economic, administrative and political-cultural contexts, and more importantly, from different political motivations and philosophical orientations, previous attempts to rethink the role of government and nature of governance in the UK, the US and Australia suggest a number of common themes relevant to the Third Way. These themes can be considered in the following three areas: a shift in the *model* of governance and *sources* of governmental authority, most notably from public sector employees to advisers drawn from the private sector; a concomitant change in the *structure* and *organisation* of the bureaucracy; and thirdly a change in both

the *culture* and general *orientation* of government. These themes are explored in the next section.

2. Administrative Reform in the 1980s

Throughout the 1980s, governmental reformers in the UK and US as well as in Australia claimed that within limits (varying from writer to writer and country to country) the business of government could be conceptualised, organised and carried out in ways similar to any other large-scale provider of goods and services. The Reagan administration's major reform effort, the previously mentioned Grace Commission, was thus given a mandate

> to review the operations of the entire Executive Branch of Government and to bring the experience and expertise of the private sector to bear on the management practices of the Federal Government ... with the same degree of detail and consideration with which a private company would consider a new acquisition.[34]

By importing and incorporating organisational principles and management practices of private business, it was believed that government would become more efficient and effective. Accordingly, priority was given to the authority of private-sector management experts over more traditional sources of administrative expertise from within the bureaucracy. The Executive Committee of the Grace Commission was, for example, composed of representatives from private-sector companies, including members of *Fortune* magazine's top 100 companies, commercial bankers, heads of insurance, financial services and firms, top retailers and personnel from large advertising agencies.[35]

Similarly, the Thatcher Government recruited business people to lead administrative reform in the British civil service. Sir Derek Rayner, a joint managing director of the Marks & Spencer retail chain, was appointed the Prime Minister's 'efficiency adviser' and given the task of establishing an efficiency unit to implement reforms along commercial lines.[36] Similarly, merchant bankers and management consultants headed the Australian equivalent of Britain's Efficiency Unit.[37]

The advice of business leaders was translated into structural changes in the bureaucracy intended to create a smaller, decentralised bureaucracy characterised by a shift away from hierarchical management structures toward 'institutional fragmentation'.[38]

Government departments and agencies were encouraged to develop individual programs with clearly articulated objectives and performance measures with explicitly demarcated lines of managerial responsibility.[39] Accordingly, greater responsibility was devolved to employees operating within a framework of guidelines established by a central 'core'. This remodelled government structure was perhaps best summed up as involving a shift from perceiving the state 'as one huge employer' to 'a large number of small businesses', either on the road to full privatisation, or the out-sourcing of some functions, especially those relating to service delivery to independent private operators.[40]

The aim of such structural reorganisation was to effect a change in the culture of government. By devolving and flattening the structure of the bureaucracy, it was claimed that the new organisation would grant managers greater autonomy in decision-making processes, (especially in deciding personnel numbers and in the allocation of financial resources,) rather than awaiting decisions made by a centralised co-ordinating agency.[41] In managerial palaver, this reorganisation of bureaucracy would permit 'the managers to manage'.[42] As in the case of both the *Reinventing Government* and *Modernising Government* reforms, the explicit intention behind such structural change was to engender an enterprise culture, orientated to the achievement of results and less concerned with procedure.[43]

Corresponding to these efforts to make bureaucracy function as a number of small businesses with an enterprise culture, was a more consumer-oriented style of government. Bureaucratic agencies were to re-conceive their activities and their clients within a consumerist logic. In a clear precedent to the charter programme outlined in the *Modernising Government* White Paper, New Labour's Conservative predecessors had almost ten years previously unveiled their own plan to implement detailed consumer standards for government services in the form of *The Citizen's Charter: Raising the Standard* White Paper. Arising out of the Thatcher Government's *Next Steps* report on government reform, the *Charter* reveals in quite explicit terms the infusion of consumer values and culture that its implementation was intended to instil within the civil service. The Introduction to the *Charter* claimed that the creation of consumer standards into government would extend

> the benefits of choice, competition, and commitment to service more widely. The Citizen's Charter is the most comprehensive programme ever to raise quality, increase choice, secure better value, and extend accountability.[44]

The Charters provided citizens or, more accurately, customers with a range of detailed information including the objectives and services provided by the department, the standards and levels of services that could be expected, as well as information about seeking redress for lax service delivery. Government was thus to be made more responsive to the needs and demands of the citizen-as-customer.[45]

Given these similarities between the Third Way and previous reform efforts, what significance can be attached to the claims of both Blair and Clinton to have found a Third Way in government? While there are obvious parallels between both the Third Way and what went before, it is overly simplistic to suggest that the former simply takes over where the latter left off. In order to gain a deeper understanding of how the past bears upon and has shaped the Third Way, two distinct streams of thinking about the role of the state and the nature of government need to be clarified.

The first of these concerns a challenge to the legitimacy of the state to govern, especially in the case of institutions of the welfare state. This has already been alluded to in the foregoing statements of Blair and Clinton in terms of a debate over 'big government versus small government'. The second has a somewhat different focus. It is concerned less with the legitimacy of a particular *institution* or set of institutions, namely the institutions of the welfare state, to govern, and more with the *practice* of government itself — governance — under changed social conditions. The concerns of this second stream can be grouped under the general heading of 'overloaded government'.

3. Big Government/Small Government: Setting the Agenda

The 'big government versus small government' conception of government underlay governmental reform in Britain and the United States from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s. Successive conservative governments fuelled by the tenets of neo-liberal economics and informed by a highly individualistic political philosophy and ideology dominated the political landscapes of these countries. In doing so they transformed the political landscape that their political opponents, historically located on the social democratic Left and now advocating the Third Way, would inherit and have to operate within.

The Reagan and Bush Administrations in the US, and the Thatcher and Major Governments in Britain, based their respective reform agendas on a challenge to the very legitimacy of state intervention in the economy and society. Both Thatcher and Reagan invoked the ideas of conservative theorists such as Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek as the intellectual inspiration and philosophical foundation for their approach to government. Such theorists opposed the role of the state in government, believing that it was a totalitarian threat to individual liberty.

President Reagan, for example, made frequent reference to government as the source of social and economic ills, famously calling upon the electorate to help him 'get the government "off their backs"'.[46] Reagan portrayed the success of his administration and that of the Thatcher government in the UK, as spelling the demise of 'the cult of the state', expressing the hope that its advocates would be 'remembered only for their role in a sad, rather bizarre chapter in human history'.[47]

Reagan's call was less a protest against government *per se*, as a critique of the right of the state, beyond the performance of very basic functions, to govern. This challenge to the legitimacy of the state to govern was taken up on two fronts: one practical, one ethical. Under successive social democratic governments in the post-war era, the state had, especially through the instruments of the welfare state, expanded both the scope and reach of its influence. As a practical consideration, however, it was claimed that the expansion and extension of the state's responsibilities had proved ineffective. Social ills that it was intended to combat such as unemployment and poverty had remained and, in some cases, appeared to have worsened.

The state's failure to combat and cure social ills made it a target for a more comprehensive critique. The expansion of the state into an increasing number of areas of life had, it was claimed, taken over areas of public provision, effectively undermining and stifling initiative and enterprise and crowding out non-state actors including, most importantly, individuals. A culture of dependency was the seemingly inevitable result. Not only was the state ineffective, it was argued that it contributed to the very social problems its intervention was intended to resolve.

To remedy this situation, greater responsibility was to be returned — via the market — to the individual to provide for him or herself. The enthusiasm for market mechanisms

and disciplines in government, combined with reductions in public spending, stripping back government regulation of the economy especially in the areas of finance, tax and labour, that were the hallmarks of both the Reagan and Thatcher governments were thus intended as a cure for this 'culture of dependency'. In its place, an 'enterprise culture' was to be cultivated, within which individuals were to be made responsible for their own material well-being.

The significance of this analysis to Third Way governments is that it set the policy agenda to which they would have to respond. To some extent, then, the Clinton Administration and New Labour have simply taken over this same policy agenda, in some instances pursuing the same policy prescriptions of their neo-conservative predecessors in a more intensive fashion. This has been prompted by a desire to occupy the same political ground that has proved so successful for their opponents.

Based on the similarities between the Third Way and their neo-conservative predecessors, it can be seen that critics, such as Alex Callinicos, are correct in claiming that the Blair and Clinton governments have simply adopted the neo-liberal agenda of their predecessors.[48] This is particularly evident in these government's adoption of a policy outlook underscored by an ethic of heightened individual self-interest, combined with an acceptance of the limits of the institutions of state to govern effectively, and an embrace of the role of the market in the practice of government. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this shift was the British Labour Party's decision to revise Clause Four of its constitution. Adopted at its 1918 conference, Clause Four committed the Party to the pursuit of state socialism, obtaining

> for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.[49]

At the instigation of Tony Blair and other self-described 'modernisers' within the Party, Clause Four was revised in 1995 to commit New Labour to 'the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition', balanced by the public interest and 'the forces of partnership and co-operation', as a means to wealth, employment and opportunity. On the question of ownership, the revised Clause Four is equivocal, committing New Labour to the modest goal

of providing 'high quality public services ... either owned by the public or accountable to them'.[50]

In more practical terms, the embrace of the market by both the Clinton and Blair governments has been demonstrated by their vigorous pursuit of free trade and more flexible industrial relations policies.[51] New Labour, for example, vowed to retain key elements of the Conservatives' industrial relations legislation limiting the activities of unions. As part of the 'modernisation of the British Labour Party (as the programme of internal party reform is referred to), they have also made changes to the Party's voting system that effectively reduces the influence of trade unions in policy-making.[52]

Both the Clinton and Blair governments also adopted tight spending policies, particularly social spending in order to reduce the tax burden on individuals. For example, New Labour's 1997 election manifesto committed the Party to a freeze on government spending, pledging the Blair government to stay within the limits and allocations set by their Conservative predecessors for the first two years of government, and set out strict rules on government borrowing. The Clinton Democrats took a more strident approach to economic management; in 1993 implementing a five-year deficit-reduction programme under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. Both governments made these changes in an attempt to distance themselves from the 'tax-and-spend' approach to government taken by their parties in the past. Consequently New Labour also vowed to maintain the top rates of income tax set by the Tories — at least for the first term in office — and to maintain low inflation.[53]

Both Third Way governments also pursued policies that emphasise individual responsibility and accountability, most prominently welfare reforms which place greater onus on the individual to safeguard against redundancy. Promising to 'end welfare as we know it' the Clinton Administration set in place limits to welfare support, restricting access to welfare to a maximum of five years of an individual's lifetime.[54] Similarly, the Blair Government has pushed work schemes for welfare recipients, arguing that there is a need to ensure that such individuals fulfil certain responsibilities in return for basic rights.[55]

This new-found concern with individual responsibility and accountability has also seen both governments show greater readiness to adopt punitive approaches to social

problems such as crime, employing the same 'law and order' rhetoric and tactics that, at least in the recent past, was the almost exclusive preserve of their conservative opponents. Tony Blair has emphasised the need to address crime as 'critical to the Third Way':

> It was essential for Labour to break free from the view that social considerations weakened personal responsibility for crime and disorder. Hence my call for a government that was 'tough on crime and the causes of crime'.[56]

Such sentiments are consistent with New Labour's 1997 election Manifesto, which proudly proclaimed Labour 'as the party of law and order in Britain today'. In government, the party has flirted with radical law-enforcement strategies imported from the United States, such as 'zero tolerance', marking a significant departure from the Party's past approach to issues of crime and punishment as caused by social, rather than individual pathologies.[57] Internally, the Party has also sought to discipline members suspected of associating with militant groups or engaging in campaigns of civil disobedience.[58]

To the extent, then, that New Labour and the Clinton Administration have accepted the broad policy agenda and, in some cases the policy prescriptions of their conservative predecessors, the Third Way simply continues along the same path that was already established.[59] Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to claim that the Third Way is completely bound by its inheritance. They have also attempted to distinguish themselves from their conservative predecessors. The basis for this distinction can be developed from an examination of the underlying analysis driving governmental reform. Both the *Reinventing* and *Modernising Government* reform programmes cite changed social and cultural circumstances as necessitating governmental reform. In doing so, the proponents of the Third Way exhibit a marked similarity to another stream of thinking about the nature of government. In contrast to the 'big government/small government' dichotomy of their neo-conservative predecessors, this frames the question of government more generally, not simply in terms of the legitimacy of this or that institution to govern, but in terms of the practice of government itself. In doing so, this stream of governmental thought seeks to address the perceived problem of governmental 'overload'.

4. Overloaded Government: Blueprint for the Third Way

'Overloaded government' refers to a situation in which the state becomes weighed down with new and extra responsibilities without a concomitant increase in the resources required to fulfil these responsibilities. In administrative terms, the symptoms of overload are claimed to include poor or delayed service delivery, delays in decision-making processes, poor performance in basic tasks such as revenue collection, and a relative ineffectiveness in achieving public compliance with government regulations.[60]

The concern with governmental overload, or as it was called in the public policy literature, 'administrative overload', was a theme of public-sector management literature in Australia throughout the 1980s. Societal, technological and economic changes, it was argued, had combined to create new pressures and demands on government, which, if it were to respond effectively, would require greater input and public support. It was argued, however, that public support for government had decreased owing to a variety of factors, including an overall decline in an ethic of communal responsibility and the emergence of an individualistic culture marked by anti-authoritarian attitudes.[61] The effectiveness of government could thus be expected to decline until the sources of overload were addressed.

Influenced by this assessment, successive Labor governments in Australia, under the leadership of Bob Hawke in the 1980s and Paul Keating in the early 1990s, pursued a limited, managerialist model of government. This attempted to achieve social objectives through corporatist-style planning, characterised by policy-making and decision-making processes based upon a consensus of business, unions and government. At the same time, they pursued market-led reforms to restructure the national economy and expose it to greater international competition.[62] These factors contributed to the emergence of a more limited, 'technocratic'[63] conception of governance, restricted in its scope to the achievement of clearly defined performance targets and measurable outcomes, with relatively less emphasis on explicit 'value' considerations. These more substantive and explicitly political concerns were re-conceptualised and re-calibrated to fit an ostensibly 'non-political,' pragmatic and instrumentally focused approach to government-as-administration.

In his contribution to the development of the Third Way in Australia, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, the Federal Labor MP Mark Latham revives the arguments and ideas outlined in the 'administrative overload' literature from the Hawke and Keating era as justification for further reform. In Latham's analysis, governmental overload stems from a history of 'policy incrementalism' whereby successive governments, motivated by social democratic objectives for a just and equal society, steadily added tiers of responsibility to the state without adequately addressing how these would be funded.[64]

Latham offers a three-tiered analysis of policy incrementalism. Firstly, the state took greater responsibility for the provision of 'primary goods' such as housing. Next, the state began to provide education and health-care services and got involved in the promotion of the arts. More recently, according to Latham, a third tier has been added, encompassing a whole range of concerns relating to matters of collective and personal identity, including sexuality and gender, culture and language as well as race and nationality.[65]

According to Latham, simply increasing the responsibilities of the state has proved an ineffective, counterproductive and ultimately unsustainable basis for government. He argues that adding tiers of responsibility to the state creates 'zero-sum choices' between different ideas of equality and resentment toward social groupings that are seen as having benefited from them disproportionately to the rest of the population.[66] Moreover, in an increasingly diverse society, Latham argues that government needs to be 'customised' to the needs of the individual, rather than be slotted in to what he refers to as 'monolithic programs'. Latham's advocacy of a Third Way is thus predicated on the need for a sustainable approach to government that emphasises individual choice and autonomy, while limiting state action to the provision of basic, and perhaps more importantly, *measurable* material needs, rather than relatively more amorphous and subjectively defined concerns of identity, culture and sexuality and gender.[67] For Latham, this does 'not signify an end to state activism but rather, a recognition of its limits'.[68] Rather than imposing solutions to social problems in a top-down fashion, Latham argues that the state should act to build, 'through policies of devolution, the strength of social capital and public mutuality, thereby enhancing the viability of non-state solutions to public issues'.[69]

While there are clearly differences between the New Labour government in Britain, the Clinton White House and the reform agenda pursued by successive Labor governments in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, the policy directions taken by the ALP during this period offer a first approximation of the Third Way.[70] In the case of Britain, the links between Australian Labor and New Labour's adoption of the Third Way are particularly clear. In his comparative history of the ALP and the British Labour parties, for example, Andrew Scott demonstrates that many of the policy reforms implemented by the New Labour Government, including schemes to assist unemployed single parents into work, fees for university education as well as occupational-based superannuation, were pioneered by the ALP throughout the Hawke and Keating years.[71] Scott notes that the interest shown by British Labour in their antipodean colleagues was prompted by the desire to learn 'how interventionist should a modern social democratic party be' in order to avoid the electorally damaging perception of British Labour 'as the "tax and spend" party'.[72] He further notes that a number of senior members of the New Labour government in Britain have long-standing personal and professional ties with senior figures in the ALP at both state and federal levels. In 1990, for example, a delegation of shadow ministers, including Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, visited Australia to learn about the ALP's reforms. Blair returned to Australia twice in 1995 as leader of British Labour, meeting with then Prime Minister Paul Keating and senior ALP figures for discussions on policy and internal party reform.[73] Furthermore, Peter Mandelson, described by Scott as 'the principal background architect of Blair's overhaul of British Labour', is said to have been particularly

> impressed by the ALP's 'very tough economic and taxation policies', and 'close but nonetheless disciplined ... [and] carefully presented relationship with the trade unions' in the 1980s.[74]

While there are no links of a comparable nature between the ALP and the Clinton Democrats, and although it is not named as such, the 'overloaded government' thesis has informed the case for a Third Way in the US. The National Partnership for Reinventing Government, for example, cites increasing social demands arising out of changes in technology and economic conditions as necessitating a new approach to government. Unlike private-sector businesses disciplined by competition within the market, the National Partnership claimed that government had not been forced to adapt to the realities of the 'information age'. It claimed the machinery of government was operating on an outdated hierarchical, command-control 'producer model' of organisation, reminiscent of a 1950s'

corporation. This no longer provided an appropriate model for either business or government. The US had moved from 'a *producer* economy to a *consumer* economy ... the Industrial Age to the Information Age'. In a consumer society awash with information, people are supposedly better informed and accustomed to choice. The effectiveness of government had thus declined, and with it, the faith and trust of those it served and represented. If public trust was to be restored and the challenges of the changed society met, then the nature of government would have to adapt accordingly, focusing on the achievement of particular outcomes and offering greater choice in service.[75]

While claims about the moral status of the state are not absent from the Third Way, the substantive basis for calls for reform rests on arguments about the changed structure and nature of contemporary society. Proponents of the Third Way thus portray alternative approaches to government, whether privileging the centrality of the market or the state, as informed by a flawed understanding of the structure and therefore the nature of contemporary societies. These models of government are claimed to be wedded to obsolete structures of mass industrial society — large industry in the case of the Right, industrial labour in the case of the Left. In the settings of the so-called 'post-industrial society', these approaches are deemed to be in conflict with the desires and aspirations of the majority of individuals, who have no particular allegiance to either.[76]

The underlying arguments for such claims are explored and assessed in more detail in Chapter Three. What is important to note here is that the Third Way's advocacy of the market, private-sector managerialism and consumerist logic is intended, not as a means of reducing the role of the state in government *per se*, but as a way of imposing sustainable limits on the scope of state action. Where the conservative critique of government centred on the legitimacy of the state and its institutional outposts to govern, and promoted the market as a general solution to good government, the proponents of the Third Way have sought to broaden this focus, examining the nature and practice of *governance* itself under changed social and cultural conditions.[77] The significance of this is considered in the next and final section of this chapter.

5. From Government to Governance: The Role of Community

By grounding their arguments for government reform on changing social and cultural conditions, the proponents of the Third Way reframe the question of government, not in terms of the *institutions* through which government takes place, but in terms of the *practice of governance* itself. Anthony Giddens expresses this difference in his claim that, for the proponents of the Third Way, '"[g]overnment" becomes less identified with "the" government — national government — and more wide-ranging. "Governance" becomes a more relevant concept to refer to some forms of administrative or regulatory capacities'.[78]

This distinction may seem overly abstract since, in the day-to-day machinations of government, questions about the practice of government are inseparable from questions about the institutions through which one governs.[79] The deeper import of the analysis of overloaded government is in opening the possibility of thinking about alternative avenues through which government might proceed. In particular, the proponents of the Third Way have sought to foreground the role of community in governance. As Tony Blair claimed at the 1999 gathering of Third Way leaders with which this chapter began, 'what is different about this political approach is the idea that ... [social] problems can best be addressed and governed through a concept of active community'.[80] For the proponents of the Third Way, the 'third choice' in government is community, beyond the binary of market and state.

The focus on community as a concern of government is of course not new. Community in general, as well as specific communities, have long been targets for state intervention. Even the conservative predecessors of the Third Way invoked community as a central element of government. In the late 1980s, for example, ministers of the Thatcher Government in Britain engaged in a short-lived discussion of the idea of the 'active citizen'. Active citizenship was promoted as 'a third force' of 'talent and energy' mobilised into voluntary activity 'outside [of] both the public and private sectors' which included anyone who makes 'more than a solely economic contribution to his or her community'.[81] Its advocates claimed that the idea of active citizenship simply extended the idea of community involvement, through organisations such as neighbourhood watch, tenant co-operatives and housing associations and school boards.[82] In assessing these sorts of initiatives, Hargreaves has noted that while Thatcherism

> created space for the third sector by ordering the state to retreat from key functions and to concentrate upon purchase rather than service provision, [it] lacked a positive strategy for the country's wider social well-being.[83]

In attempting to distinguish themselves from the conservative appropriation of community, the proponents of the Third Way have sought to provide something approaching this 'positive strategy'. In doing so, they have sought to comprehensively reposition community as a *vehicle for governing* in its own right and not simply as a *target for intervention* controlled and directed by the state and/or the market. The founder and former director of the influential British think-tank Demos and now a member of Tony Blair's Downing Street policy unit, Geoff Mulgan expresses this kind of view in arguing for community-based approaches to government underscored by principles of voluntarism rather than top-down compulsion. In Mulgan's view, the shift to community-based approaches to government entails that segmented bureaucratic government

> recreate itself as a web of personal relationships in which the front-line staff [of state agencies and departments such as teachers, probation officers, and social workers] are no longer there just to deliver centrally defined products, but rather to use their discretion in order to consider particular circumstances, and even moral issues, within an overarching universal framework.[84]

It is this emphasis on community as a generalised solution to a whole range of social ills, that distinguishes the Third Way as an approach to governance. Individuals, it is claimed, can be governed more effectively by tapping into the informal bonds of trust, co-operation and mutual obligation into which individuals are bound by virtue of their membership of a particular community. By utilising such bonds, the proponents of the Third Way argue that literacy, numeracy and general educational outcomes can be improved, the mental and physical of health of individuals can be improved, crime can be brought down and the sources of unemployment addressed, while increasing overall economic efficiency. The means by which such policy outcomes are achieved and the meaning of community in this context are explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide an overview of the political, social and intellectual contexts from which the Third Way in government has emerged in the US, the UK and Australia. I have tried not only to identify what I take to be the most significant influences on

the Third Way, but also to untangle these from one another — to show the complex of influences on the Third Way. I have also sought to provide a taste of the broad policy directions of the New Labour government and the Clinton Administration, and where possible, specific policy undertakings that illustrate concrete links between these governments and their forerunners.

It was argued that whereas conservative governments in Britain and the United States questioned the moral legitimacy of the institutions of state to govern, and valorised individual action within the market unobstructed by the state as the key to sound government, the governments of the Third Way have sought to reframe the question of government, emphasising the limits of the state to govern. While certainly not wishing a return to state-driven solutions to government, proponents of the Third Way have concerned themselves less with the moral legitimacy of the institutions of government, and more with the need to limit the scope of governmental action in response to changed political and social conditions. In this respect the New Labour government and the Clinton Administration are closer in nature to the Labor governments in Australia during the 1980s and early 1990s, than the conservative governments that they have replaced. The Australian experience — and more specifically, the idea of overloaded government which informed governmental reform in Australia — might be thus thought of as providing a first approximation of the Third Way.

While this break with the past might first appear to be of little consequences, the final sections of this chapter sought to draw out its significance in terms of a shift from a focus on government to a focus on governance. Specifically, the proponents of the Third Way have attempted to re-think how and through what avenues government might proceed differently. In particular, the Third Way has sought to grant community a central role in the practice of government. This emphasis on community was no more than alluded to in the last stages of this chapter. The next chapter focuses on what community means in the context of the Third Way and how it is seen as a general solution to the problems of governance.

ENDNOTES

[1] Bill Clinton's Grand Jury testimony, quoted in "Referral to the United States House of Representatives, Pursuant to Title 28, United States Code § 595(c)," (Washington: Office of the Independent Counsel, 1998) 95. URL: <http://www.house.gov/judiciary/icreport.pdf> Consulted 24 May 2000.

[2] See "Turning Ideas into Action: A Conversation Among Five World Leaders on the Third Way," *The New Democrat* 11, no. 3 May/June 1999, 14-19 and 'The Third Way: Progressive Governance for the 21st Century', National Press Club, Washington, DC, 25 April 1999, URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/conferences/thirdway/transcript.htm> Consulted 6 May 1999.

[3] "NATO's New Role," *The New Democrat* 11, no. 3 May/June 1999, 7-8.

[4] Will Marshall, executive director of the Progressive Policy Institute, a political think-tank closely aligned with the Clinton New Democrats, quoted in Ronald Brownstein, "NATO's 'Third-Way' Leadership Faces Foreign Policy Test in Kosovo," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 April 1999. URL: <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/brownstein/19990426/t000037469.html> Consulted April 6 2000.

[5] Steven Lukes, "Left Down the Middle: The Radical Implications of Anthony Giddens's Route Map for the Third Way," *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 September 1998, 3-4.

[6] Jeff Faux, "Lost on the Third Way," *Dissent* Spring (1999), 75.

[7] Ian Hargreaves, *In From the Cold: The Co-operative Revival and Social Exclusion, New Mutualism* (London: The Co-operative Party, 1999) URL: <http://new-mutualism.poptel.org.uk/mutual3.pdf> Consulted 23 August 2000, 10.

[8] Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century* (London: The Fabian Society, 1998), 4.

[9] For such an account of this process in the British and Australian Labour parties, see Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2000).

[10] For examples of this shift, see selections in Peter Botsman and Mark Latham, ed., *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2001).

[11] The influence of Osborne and Gaebler's book has been cited as a blueprint for governmental reform by the Clinton Administration to state governments in Australia. See John Alford and Deidre O'Neill, ed., *The Contract State: Public Management and the Kennett Government* (Geelong: Centre for Applied Social Research, Deakin University, 1994).

[12] David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (New York: Plume, 1993), 22 and 23-24.

[13] David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector.*

[14] David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, xix.

[15] The authors cite management gurus Peter Drucker and Tom Peters, as well as the futurist/post-industrial theorist Alvin Toffler as key influences on their thinking. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, xi.

[16] David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, 35.

[17] David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, 19-20.

[18] Al Gore, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less. Report of the National Performance Review* (Washington: Time Books, 1993), i.

[19] See Al Gore, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less. Report of the National Performance Review*, 6-8.

[20] See "Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less: Report of the National Performance Review," (Washington: National Performance Review, 1994) 4, as well as "Businesslike Government: Lessons Learned from America's Best Companies," (Washington: National Performance Review, 1997).

[21] For example, see "Creating a Government that Works Better & Costs Less: Report of the National Performance Review," 37-47.

[22] See, for example, "The Best Kept Secrets In Government," (Washington: National Performance Review, 1996), 12-17.

[23] John Kamensky, "National Partnership for Reinventing Government (formerly the National Performance Review): A Brief History," (Washington: National Partnership for Reinventing Government, 1999). URL: <http://www.npr.gov/whoweare/history2.html> Consulted 9 September 1999.

[24] Max DePree cited in "Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less: Report of the National Performance Review," 7.

[25] "Modernising Government," (The Stationery Office, 1999), chapter 4, paragraph 5. URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[26] Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, 15.

[27] See "Modernising Government," Chapter 6. URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[28] Perhaps the most significant and 'visible' result of the process of devolution set in train by the modernisation programme was the establishment of administrative structures in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. As the White Paper makes clear, 'Devolution is a crucial part of the Government's modernisation programme. It is a stimulus to fresh thinking about the business of government. ... We are setting up three new devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We will also, in time, move towards elected regional assemblies in England.' "Modernising Government," paragraph 13, chapter 1. URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[29] See "Modernising Government," paragraphs 6-8, chapter 4. URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[30] See "Modernising Government," paragraph 16, chapter 3. URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999. For examples of some of the service charters, see "Major National Charters available on

the Internet" URL: <http://www.servicefirst.gov.uk/index/list.htm> Consulted 11 August 1999.

31 Tony Blair, "Foreword." In "Modernising Government," URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

32 Bill Clinton, "State of the Union Address," (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 1998). URL: < http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/SOTU98/address.html> Consulted 10 July 2000.

33 Peter F. Drucker, "Really Reinventing Government," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1995, 51.

34 J. Peter Grace, *War on Waste: President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), 347.

35 As the Grace Commission's report makes clear 'About 80 percent [of the Executive Committee's members] are either chairmen, presidents, chief executive officers or chief operating officers of the Nations' [the United States] leading corporations.' J. Peter Grace, *War on Waste: President's Private Sector Survey on Costs Control*, 345. See also 345-346. In reference to the Grace Commission's reliance on private sector advisors, Pollitt notes that 'Congressional committees held hearings ... at which outstanding private-sector managers were paraded in front of attentive senators and pressed to reveal the [often conflicting] secrets of their art.' See Christopher Pollitt, *Managerialism and the Public Service: The Anglo-American Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 91.

36 Rayner was succeeded as director of the Efficiency Unit in 1983 by Sir Robin Ibbs, the chief executive of ICI. Grant Jordan and Barry J. O'Toole, "The Next Steps: Origins and Destinations". In Barry J. O'Toole and Grant Jordan, ed., *Next Steps: Improving Management in Government?* (Hants: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1995), 3 and 10.

37 Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994), 24.

38 Chris Painter, 'The Next Steps and Current Orthodoxies'. In Barry J. O'Toole and Grant Jordan, ed., *Next Steps: Improving Management in Government?*, 19.

39 Grant Jordan and Barry J. O'Toole, "The Next Steps: Origins and Destinations", 4. Zifkac notes that 'The approach embodied in these principles differed markedly from traditional management within the public service. This had been characterized by methods of organization in which managers were encouraged to concentrate almost exclusively on the quality that they were providing; to be relatively indifferent to the costs of providing that service; and to spend little time on weighing costs against results.' and Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*, 28.

40 Cited in Chris Painter, 'The Next Steps and Current Orthodoxies', 29.

41 Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*, 25.

42 In Britain, this hands-on approach extended to increasing the role and responsibility of government ministers in the management of their departments. See Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*, 35 and 93.

43 Michael Keating, "Managing for Results in the Public Interest," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 49, no. 4 (1990), 387. Effecting such a shift was the explicit intention behind the British government's Efficiency Unit 1988 report *Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps*. The *Next Steps* report envisaged a separation of policy formulation processes, performed

by a reduced 'core' bureaucracy, while service delivery functions were to be performed by smaller institutional units functioning along commercial lines. In this regard, *Next Steps* was influenced by '[n]ewly emergent managerial literature [which] emphasized the importance of "loose-tight" properties – the co-existence of firm central direction with maximum subdivisional autonomy — to managerial success. Establish a small central core of personnel whose task it is to set policy and establish guidelines for the delivery of services, enter contracts with service suppliers to meet sales and service targets and then just watch how well the system runs, was the simple but cogent message which came from business analysts.' Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*, 74.

44 From the Introduction to the Conservative Party's 1991 *The Citizen's Charter*, cited in Dawn Oliver and Derek Heater, *The Foundations of Citizenship* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 47.

45 Commenting on this shift from interpellating individuals as citizens to consumers, Oliver and Heater note that 'for all its use of the word, the White Paper [the Charter] is not really about citizenship in the proper sense at all. Citizenship is about a sense of community, about citizens acting in harmony. Yet even the very title of the document refers to the citizen in singular, implying individual rather than collective action. Very few of the rights are enforceable in court. There is not a word about political rights. The passages relating to civil rights are confined to improvements to the machinery of justice, not the constitutional entrenchment of such rights ... The *Citizen's Charter* is a set of proposals to advance the interests of the individual in accordance not so much with the principles of liberal citizenship as with those of liberal economics. There is much emphasis on market values ... The message is that public services must be operated as free-market systems. There are, indeed, a number of places in the text where this real purpose of the initiative is made plain by the use of the words "customer" and "client" instead of a "citizen".' Derek Heater and Dawn Oliver, *The Foundations of Citizenship*, 48-49.

46 Cited by Peter Grace as the guiding inspiration for the Grace Commission into waste and reform of the US federal government during the Reagan Administration. See J. Peter Grace, *War on Waste: President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control*, v.

47 Expanding on these themes, Reagan claimed that 'We must remove government's smothering hand from where it does harm; we must seek to revitalize the proper function of government. But we do these things to set the loose again the energy and ingenuity of the American people. We do these things to reinvigorate those social and economic institutions which serve as a buffer and bridge between the individual and the state — and which remain the real source of our progress as a people.' Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference," in *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 98.

48 Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001). For a similar critique, see also Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity* (London: Verso, 1999).

49 Cited in Geoffrey Wheatcroft, "The Paradoxical Case of Tony Blair," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1996, 22-40. URL: < http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96jun/blair/blair.htm> Consulted 10 September 1999.

50 Quoted in Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties*, 95. Explaining the significance of the changes, New Labour's Home Secretary, Jack Straw claimed that 'the new Clause 4 is the Third Way — a clear, coherent route between the Right (especially the nineteenth century Liberal New Right) and the old, neo-Marxist Left.' Jack Straw, "Building Social Cohesion, Order and Inclusion in a Market Economy" (paper

presented at the From Principles to Policies: Mapping Out the Third Way conference, 3 July 1998.) URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/thirdway> Consulted 23 April 1999.

[51] For example, prior to his election to the Presidency in 1992, Bill Clinton expressed support for and, in power enacted the North American Free Trade Agreement. See Robert B. Reich, "We Are All Third Wayers Now," The American Prospect, March–April 1999. URL: <http://epn.org/prospect/43/43reich.html> Consulted 14 May 1999.

[52] See Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 69

[53] From the Labour Party Manifesto. URL: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/election97/framedir/partiesframe.htm> Consulted 7 September 1999.

[54] See Robert B. Reich, "We Are All Third Wayers Now".

[55] See Ruth Lister, "To Rio Via the Third Way: New Labour's 'Welfare' Reform Agenda," *Renewal* 8, no. 4 (2000) URL: <http://www.renewal.org.uk/issues/2000/autumn/feature1.htm> Consulted 20 January 2002. See also URL: <http://www.newdeal.gov.uk/> Consulted 20 January 2002.

[56] Tony Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*, 12-14.

[57] See The Labour Party's 1997 Manifesto. URL: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/election97/framedir/partiesframe.htm> Consulted 7 September, 1999 and Nick Cohen, *Cruel Britannia: Reports on the Sinister and Preposterous* (London: Verso, 1999).

[58] This was part of the Party's programme of internal party reform, or 'modernisation'. Pilger cites estimates that suggest more than 80 Labour constituencies were subject to such scrutiny, which, in some cases resulted in the suspension of hundreds of party members – some of them life-time supporters of the party – often with little regard for considerations of natural justice. These efforts did not go unnoticed by the then Tory Government. The Conservative Home Secretary Kenneth Clark is reported to have observed that 'Blair is the best opponent I've had. We're trying hard to find differences on law and order.' John Pilger, *Distant Voices* (London: Vintage, 1994) 114. See also 102-106 and 113-116.

[59] In reference to the new Right, represented by the Reagan and Thatcher Governments, Blair argues that 'it got certain things right – a greater emphasis on enterprise; rewarding not penalising success; breaking up some of the vested interests associated with the state bureaucracy. In that sense Mrs Thatcher was a radical Tory. But I want to suggest that in the end it was a project more successful at taking on and destroying some outdated attitudes and prescriptions than it was at building and creating.' Tony Blair, *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 206.

[60] Peter Self, "Administrative Overload and the Role of Government," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* XLIII, no. 1 (1984), 12-13.

[61] Peter Self, "Administrative Overload and the Role of Government", 12. See also Michael Keating "Managing for Results in the Public Interest," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 49, no. 4 (1990), 389-390.

[62] The administrative concern with overloaded government coincided with political developments favourable to a more technically oriented, managerialist approach to

government. The Hawke ALP victory in 1983 saw a return to power of a party keen to prove its competence as a sober manager of both state and economy, emphasising political consensus and corporatist planning. The previous Labor government had been destabilised and eventually dismissed partly for administrative and financial mismanagement – both real and perceived. In this vein, Wilenski notes that 'the problems of implementation of social reform, during the 1972-75 Whitlam government, had left alive among parliamentarians a concern about administration; they were also well aware of the importance of the public sector in delivering Labor's programs. As a result they were anxious to improve public management and demonstrate that the public sector was as effective as the private.' See Peter Wilenski, "Administrative Reform — General Principles and the Australian Experience," *Public Administration* 64 (1986), 269. See also Francis G. Castles and Christopher Pierson, "A New Convergence? Recent Policy Developments in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand," *Policy and Politics* 24, no. 3 (1996), 238.

63 Drawing out this basic difference between the Australian experience of public sector reform and those of conservative government's in Britain, Zifkac observes that 'whereas the Thatcher reform programme' and here we might add the Reagan Administration's reforms 'was driven principally by an ideological commitment to reducing the size of the state, the Hawke government's agenda, at least in the first three years of the administration, was informed by a technocratic concern for more effective administration'. Spencer Zifkac, *New Managerialism: Administrative Reform in Whitehall and Canberra*, 19. Pusey's survey of the dominant attitudes among the senior echelons of the Australian public service notes a similar "technocratic" tendency. Senior staff and managers tended to identify and endorse the kinds of attitudes commonly associated with technocrats, while simultaneously disavowing the "technocrat" label itself on the grounds that the 'intellectual breadth and ... broader analytic skills' required to perform their roles distinguishes public servants 'from the "technocrats", whoever they may be.' Pusey suggests that this disjunction between the technocratic attitudes that senior public sector managers identify with, on the one hand, and their dislike of the technocrat label on the other, may be attributable to the 'faintly pejorative' connotations of the term. See Michael Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-Building State Changes its Mind* (Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 71 and 68. See also 67-73.

64 See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 163-165.

65 See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 164-165.

66 Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 163-67.

67 Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 168-181.

68 Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 320.

69 Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 320.

70 This is perhaps not surprising, considering that all these examples are parties that historically have social democratic origins. Having started from relatively similar starting points, they have all arrived at relatively similar destinations. McKenzie Wark makes a similar observation in his contribution to the Third Way debate, *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World*. Wark, however, does not develop the connections, simply observing that, in his view, the Hawke and Keating governments were 'an incomplete go at the third [way].' He thus portrays Mark Latham, the Federal Labor MP who advocates a Third Way for Australia as having 'a second go at the third way, framed not in terms of nostalgia and principle, but in terms of a pragmatic desire to learn from experience.' See McKenzie Wark, *Celebrities, Culture*

and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World (Smithfield: Pluto Press, 1999), 327. See also 14. Other commentators have also remarked upon the influence of the Australian Labor Party under Bob Hawke and Paul Keating on New Labour, both in terms of the 'modernisation' or reform program led by Tony Blair, as well as in relation to its policy agenda, pursued under the label of the Third Way. See Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 23-24 and Will Hutton, "Stake That Claim," in *The Stakeholding Society: Writings on Politics and Economics*, ed. David Goldblatt (Cornwall: Polity, 1999), 82.

71 Scott argues that the reforms cited here were the outcomes of the British Labour Party's Commission on Social Justice, established in 1992 by then leader John Smith. The Commission, in turn, drew heavily on the ALP's Social Security Review between 1986 and 1990. In this regard, Scott notes that 'Introductory material about the Social Security Review conducted in Australia from 1986-90 under Brian Howe as minister for social security was provided to [British Labour leader John Smith's Chief of staff Murray] Elder during his Australian visit. A full set of papers from this review was later forwarded from Howe's office to the Institute for Public Policy Research in London, where the Commission on Social Justice was based. In its final report the commission advocated the implementation in Britain of several major initiatives which had taken by the ALP since 1983.' Quoted in Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties*, 105-106.

72 Murray Elders, chief of staff to former British Labour leader John Smith, in a letter to the national secretary of the ALP Gary Gray, quoted in Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties*, 105.

73 This is not to discount the considerable cross-fertilisation between the Clinton Administration, especially in its early stages and the emergence of New Labour. Sopel notes that in the first years of the Clinton presidency, 'the Labour Party built up an extensive network of contacts with the Democrats as the Modernisers [referring to Blair and his supporters] sought to establish a direct line to the key people at the heart of the Clinton Administration. The links were at all levels: researcher to researcher, press officer to press officer, and needless to say politician to politician.' Jon Sopel, *Tony Blair: The Modernisers* (London: Bantam, 1995), 142. Rentoul claims that 'Some of the lessons from America were similar to those Blair and [Gordon] Brown had learnt on their trip to Australia two years before [the Clinton victory in 1990]'. John Rentoul, *Tony Blair* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 279. This would suggest then, that much of what was learnt from the United States reinforced and developed many of the reform ideas that had already come from the Hawke and Keating Labor governments in Australia.

74 Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties*, 4.

75 See "Common Sense Government Works Better and Costs Less," (Washington: National Performance Review, 1995), 15-21. In a similar vein, New Labour's *Modernising Government* White Paper cites the emergence of an information-based consumer culture as the cause for government reform. See "Modernising Government", Chapter 4, Paragraph 1 URL: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/1999/whitepaper/whitepaper_pdf.htm> Consulted 22 September 1999.

76 See Mark Latham, "The New Economy and the New Politics," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, ed. Peter Botsman and Mark Latham (Annandale: Pluto, 2001).

77 The National Performance review expresses this kind of view in its assessment of why previous attempts to reform the US federal government had failed. It claimed that these were underpinned by a belief that:

> the way to fix government is just to eliminate as much of it as possible. That might help bring the budget into line — or it might do no more than shift around a lot of organizational 'boxes'. Much of the government would then simply continue operating as it always had.
>
> The main problem with taking an axe to the federal government is that it won't fix what remains. Government [the state] would be smaller, but it would still be as inflexible and bureaucratic. Cutting may treat a couple of symptoms, but it won't cure the disease.

By contrast, the National Partnership claims to focus on the practice of government itself, with its catchery that the US 'federal government is filled with good people trapped in bad systems'. See National Performance Review, "Common Sense Government Works Better and Costs Less", 2 and Al Gore, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better & Costs Less. Report of the National Perfomance Review*, 2.

78 Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 32-33.

79 To go back to the example of the ALP, although it can be said that the reform agendas of the Hawke and Keating governments were informed by the idea of overloaded government, in some senses they were more antipathetic towards the state (at least as measured by levels of public spending) than their conservative contemporaries in the United States and Britain. Scott, for example, argues that 'in spite of the rhetoric which Thatcher and Reagan propounded' about the evils of big government, Australian 'Labor cut public spending to a greater extent than both Thatcher in Britain and Reagan in America actually did'. In the same context, Scott argues that the Hawke ALP Government was more monetarist than the Thatcher government. See Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties*, 224. This analysis is given some support by Pollitt's research showing that over 'the eight years of the Reagan presidency the social programmes share of GNP actually rose slightly from its 16 per cent starting point.' Christopher Pollitt, *Managerialism and the Public Service: The Anglo-American Experience*, 91.

80 Comments made by Tony Blair at The Third Way: Progressive Governance for the 21st Century conference. URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/conferences/thirdway/transcript.htm> Consulted 6 May 1999. In a different context, Blair argued that a 'communitarian philosophy' 'allows us to move beyond the choice between narrow individualism [of by the market] and old-style socialism [with its faith in the state].' Tony Blair, *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 209.

81 John Patten and Douglas Hurd quoted in Dawn Oliver and Derek Heater, *The Foundations of Citizenship*, 125-126.

82 Oliver and Heater, however, note that the promotion of a more active citizenry was intended as a means to build local ties and, in the process, strengthen civic and national sentiment, consistent with the Tory emphasis on a limited but strong state. Moreover, the limits of this community building exercise become apparent in connection with the Conservative Government's promotion of an 'enterprise culture'. Following a rather crude and confused equation that conflated democratic governance with increased opportunities to own property, the Conservative Home Secretary Douglas Hurd explained the idea of the active citizen as an outcome of the Conservative Government's belief in the market. Just as the spread of the market increased the opportunities available to individual to own property, thereby 'democratising' property ownership, Hurd argued that the active citizen bought with it 'the democratisation of responsible citizenship.' Where, in the past, opportunities for public service

had apparently been the exclusive preserve of a small elite with the time and resources to spare, Hurd argued that the idea of the active citizen put public service within the reach of all. Douglas Hurd quoted in Dawn Oliver and Derek Heater, *The Foundations of Citizenship*, 125.

[83] Ian Hargreaves, "A Step Beyond Morris Dancing: The Third Sector Revival," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, eds. Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (London: Demos, 1998), 72.

[84] Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Live in a Connected World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1997), 235-236.

CHAPTER TWO

Governing Through Community

> Today, the search is on to reinvent community for a modern age, true to core-values of fairness, co-operation and responsibility, but applied to the world as it is, not the world as it was.
>
> Tony Blair[1]

> [W]hat do we mean by the concept of 'community'? Who's in? Who's out?
>
> Bill Clinton[2]

Introduction

On 14 July 2000, President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair were scheduled to participate in an online discussion about 'the common values, priorities, and international development of progressive Third Way politics around the world'. Promoted as a 'Trans-Atlantic Online Town Hall Meeting', the press release issued by the Democratic Party boasted that the online 'chat' between these two Third Way leaders would offer '[u]p to 50,000 Internet users from around the world ... the opportunity to participate and submit real-time text questions during the event, while watching and hearing the web cast on their computers'.[3] Unfortunately, this cyber-meeting of two Third Way leaders and an indefinite number of potential cyber-interlocutors was to remain a virtual affair — it never took place.[4] Nevertheless, the very notion of a 'Trans-Atlantic Online Town Hall Meeting' is interesting for thinking about the nature of community in the Third Way. It fuses the local and the global, and the cosmopolitan and the parochial, blending small-town civic virtue grounded in the intimacy of face-to-face meetings, with the disembodied, technologically mediated social relations of the internet.

The contradictions and incompatibility contained therein, serve as a useful departure point for a discussion about what the proponents of the Third Way mean when they talk about 'community'. The central argument of this chapter is that in contrast to other

political traditions that foreground the role of community in governance, such as the ethical and Christian socialist traditions, the community of the Third Way is not located in or restricted to place. In Section One it is argued that the proponents of the Third Way are wary of notions of 'community' that emphasise its embeddedness within the lineaments of place and tradition. Such accounts of community, it is claimed, are, at best nostalgic and, at worst, tend towards parochialism and even authoritarianism. Community is instead conceived of as a web of more or less spontaneously generated social relationships that break free of the lineaments of place and tradition, much like the Trans-Atlantic Town Hall Meeting.

Underpinning this notion of community is the social morphology of the network, which is explored in Section Two. I argue that the proponents of the Third Way attach little importance to understandings of community as grounded with particular places and times. They see community as a network of temporally and spatially extended social relations. The essence of community, furthermore, lies in the ethical character of these social relations. In particular, the 'network community' of the Third Way is characterised by relations of trust, reciprocity, mutuality and co-operation. By drawing individuals into such relationships, the proponents of the Third Way claim that individuals can be governed. This is explored in Section Three through a discussion of the interrelated ideas of 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurs' and 'social inclusion', all of which are seen as central to Third Way approaches to governance.

In developing these arguments, the focus of this chapter is somewhat broader than the first. Whereas Chapter One focused primarily on the Third Way in terms of the administrative reforms of the Clinton and Blair governments, this chapter examines the broader context and debates that have informed such reforms. The approach adopted here is to look at the Third Way as a loose-knit collection of interrelated ideas, concepts and strategies, rather than a specific administrative reform agenda as was the case in the previous chapter. This is to look, then, at the ideas and debates which have provided a distinctive conceptual vocabulary and milieu of ideas in which the Third Way has taken shape.

This presents a number of difficulties. For example, not every idea about community that is examined here has been taken up in a direct or explicit way by the governments of the Third Way. Moreover, there is a degree of distance between the way in which

certain ideas are developed and used in debate, and how they are carried through into practical policy. For example, the notion of 'social inclusion', which is examined in Section Three, has emerged as a central idea within Third Way debates about welfare reform, particularly in Britain. This has been understood in very broad terms to mean increased social, political and economic participation in community life. In policy terms, however, it has been understood more narrowly, referring to participation in the labour market. In placing these ideas into some semblance of order and coherence, then, there is the danger that some emphases are liable to be lost, while others may assume an importance that their expression in specific policies may not seem to warrant. To ward against this problem, I have attempted to ground my analysis firmly in recurring motifs, ideas and concepts within Third Way politics and, where appropriate, to connect these ideas to concrete policies.

1. Ending Community as We Know It

Determining what 'community' actually refers to in the context of the Third Way debates is not a straightforward or easy matter. Despite their frequent recourse to the term, the proponents of the Third Way rarely offer an explicit definition of what the term 'community' means, or explain how it is being used. Indeed, they are often more forthcoming about what they *do not* mean by 'community' as what they *do* mean. When a positive definition is proffered, it is often so broad as to be of little use in determining what community actually is. For example, in answer to the question 'What is community?' one advocate of the Third Way ventured that, 'the community changes according to the problem or issue at hand'.[5] This rather unhelpful observation is accompanied by a list of 'the kind of characteristics of community needed to be combined with the resources of government' to realise the aims of the Third Way. These characteristics include Activism, Accountability, Innovation, Priorities, Performance, Endurance and Longevity, Strength and Character. What these terms entail in practice is not explained, thereby complicating the original question rather than answering it.[6]

Lacking a clear definition of community, the proponents of the Third Way often use the term as if it were interchangeable with civil society.[7] Such vagueness might suggest that the emphasis on community in government is little more than an empty signifier, a convenient space within the discourse of electoral politics into which any meaning

might be inserted and in whose name any action might be justified. With its typical connotations of tight-knit social bonds and 'homespun' values, the emphasis given to community by proponents of the Third Way might thus appear as little more than opportunistic political marketing. Bearing these considerations in mind, I think that there is a consistent meaning attached to 'community' within the Third Way debate. As a first step to developing an outline of what this is, it is worth looking at what the proponents of the Third Way do not mean by 'community'.

The proponents of the Third Way have gone to considerable lengths to distance themselves from idealised visions of community, claiming that these rest upon little more than nostalgia and are blind to the less flattering aspects of traditional forms of communal life. Community, it is claimed, is not an unalloyed good. Communities can be authoritarian, giving priority to collective interests while neglecting the rights of their individual members. They can also foster prejudice, xenophobia, and the oppression of difference — be it sexual, racial, or ethnic — as well as hostility towards novelty, innovation or change in the name of defending social cohesion and stability. The US communitarian writer Amitai Etzioni expresses such misgivings in his observation that '[c]ommunities are not automatically or necessarily places of virtue'.

> Many traditional communities that were homogenous, if not monolithic, were authoritarian and oppressive. And a community may lock into a set of values that one may find abhorrent, say an Afrikaaner village that legitimates an ideology of lynching.[8]

Etzioni and like-minded communitarian thinkers have adopted the label 'new communitarian' to distinguish their own version of communitarianism from older traditions. In Etzioni's view, older forms of communitarianism suffered from a one-sided emphasis on harmonious social relations and social cohesion as central to community, neglecting the rights of individual members. By contrast, the new communitarians of the Third Way are concerned with achieving a 'balance between social forces and the person, between community and autonomy, between the common good and liberty, between individual rights and social responsibilities'.[9]

By emphasising individual rights and personal autonomy, proponents of the Third Way also reject a simple opposition between the collective interests of community and individual rights. Moreover, they reject any suggestion that their concern with community is a response to the so-called 'moral decline' of modern societies arising

from the emergence of a seemingly more selfish, permissive and 'me-centred' society.[10] Anthony Giddens, for example, rejects a popular perception that modern societies are more individualistic than was the case in the past — at least insofar as this suggests that people are increasingly indifferent to the needs of others. The notion that modern societies are riven by self-interest and increased selfishness is, according to Giddens, a perception created by the emergence of the 'new individualism'. The new individualism is a consequence not of heightened self-interest but of the weakening — in relative terms at least — of tradition and custom as authoritative guides as to how one might live. This creates a perception that societies are becoming increasingly atomistic because there is a greater diversity of lifestyles and personal beliefs.[11] The present era, according to Giddens, is one of 'moral transition' (as opposed to 'moral decay') in which '[s]ocial cohesion can't be guaranteed by the top-down action of the state or by appeal to tradition'.[12] For Giddens, the motivation behind the Third Way's focus on community is to search for 'new means of producing ... [social] solidarity', rather than a misguided attempt to restore older forms of community based upon the authority of tradition.[13]

Echoing such sentiment, the British Home Secretary in the New Labour government Jack Straw has argued:

> Rather than harking back to idealised villages and warm terraced cottages, we need to develop ideas for the future. We are trying to develop the concept of 'the Active Community' in which the commitment of the individual is backed by the duty of all organisations — in the public sector, the private sector and the voluntary sector — to work towards a community of mutual care and a balance of rights and responsibilities.[14]

Community, no less than any other sphere of government, has thus been made subject to the same demands for 'reinvention' and 'modernisation' that were noted in the reform programs outlined in Chapter One.

2. Reinventing Community: Community as an Abstract Network[15]

How, then, do the proponents of the Third Way envisage community? A clue to this is given in the recurring motif of the network as a way of structuring social relations throughout Third Way discussions of community. Giddens, for example, emphasises the importance of 'trust networks' as 'integral to the knowledge economy'.[16] 'Networks' according to Latham,

'are the natural mode of organisation for an information society'.[17] More specifically, Latham uses the model of the network to understand 'the work of social entrepreneurs, with their capacity to create mutual networks of community development' as well as 'the success of communitarian politics as a way of developing networks of moral dialogue and consensus'.[18] Similarly, Etzioni argues that the new communitarians define community in terms of 'webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values'.[19] For the proponents of the Third Way community can be 'reinvented' in the form of the network.

In spite of its association with the 'information' or 'knowledge' economy, the social form of the network has been observed in a variety of different societies. Within anthropological and sociological studies, for example, the model of the network has been used to described the social relations of a diversity of societal types, including urban, rural and even tribal societies. As Bott notes, 'networks of social relationships exist in all societies'.[20] It is therefore worth investigating the specific nature of the network in contemporary society, the cultural and political meanings with which it is associated, and their relation to the Third Way.

At the most general level, what is distinctive about contemporary analyses of the network as a model for social life is not simply the existence of social networks within other forms of social structure, but rather the emergence of the network as the dominant or pervasive relational form of social, economic and political organisation generally. Within contemporary social, economic and political analysis, the 'social network' has emerged as a common-sense description of the world as it is. Manuel Castells, for example, distinguishes contemporary society as a 'Network Society'. In Castells' view, this is characterised by the displacement of the 'space of places', in the organisation of power and production by the 'space of flows':

> flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols ... purposeful, repetitive programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society.[21]

On Castells' account, the organisation of social life in terms of these flows are modelled after the complex networks 'made possible by information technology devices'.[22] As Castell's comments show, not only has the network become the general model of social life, contemporary understandings of the network are based on informational networks.

Applied to social life, contemporary discussions of the social form of the network tend to privilege the *relational* dimensions of *social interconnection*, over what might be thought of as the *embedded* aspects of *communal life*. In other words, in its contemporary manifestations, the concrete contexts within which social relationships are embedded and given a specific character, such as the particularities of place or the reproduction of specific patterns of social life are secondary to the social relationships that constitute the network itself. The social relations of the contemporary network are thus 'lifted out' — abstracted — from particular locales and frameworks of meaning.[23] In relation to community, Giddens has claimed quite bluntly that '[i]n the sense of an embedded affinity to place, "community" has indeed largely been destroyed'. His only qualification to this sweeping statement is that 'one could quarrel about how far this process has gone in specific contexts'.[24]

Disembedded from place and tradition, the idea of the network community indicates a social formation that is marked by highly *mobile* and *reversible* relationships. The individual's capacity to step in and out of, as well as between different points within the network is perhaps its most seductive characteristic. The morphology of the network thus neatly coalesces with the general wariness that advocates of the Third Way harbour towards conceptions of community that give primacy to social harmony and cohesion. The mobility and reversibility of the relationships within a network — the ability to move between different points and withdraw from them more or less at will — wards against community becoming oppressive. If a particular community begins to exert undue control over its members, individuals have the capacity to withdraw from it. This aspect of the network is implicit in Etzioni's claim that

> [p]eople are at one and the same time, members of several communities, such as professional, residential and others. They can and do use these multi-memberships ... to protect themselves from excessive pressure by any one community.[25]

Proponents of the Third Way frequently distinguish the network with hierarchical or 'vertically integrated' forms of social organisation. The kinds of networks favoured by the proponents of the Third Way are thus structured 'horizontally'. Individual autonomy and collective interests are bought into balance by dispersing power throughout a multiplicity of points within the network. This is not to say, however, that the network is chaotic. Rather, order is assumed to be consensual and free from coercion. Moreover, it is self-generating,

emerging as if 'organically' from the structure of the relationships that make up the network itself.

The values suggested by the social form of network, then, are *openness, flexibility* and *plurality*. The 'network' or 'webs' of social relations through which community is constituted have no stable or clearly defined boundaries.[26] As such, the network carries a range of positive cultural and political connotations that neatly coalesce with contemporary structures of globalism. In particular, it appears to seamlessly fuse the dynamism of the global market, the possibilities and excitement engendered by the proliferation of new communications mediums, the immediacy and participatory potential of direct democracy, the savvy appeal of cosmopolitanism, as well as the openness and tolerance of multiculturalism. In the contemporary cultural imaginary, the network evokes the do-it-yourself cyberpunk ethos celebrated in sci-fi novels such as William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* and in films such as Larry and Andy Wachowski's *The Matrix*.[27] All of these celebrate a world of unimpeded and instantaneous communication, effortless mobility and unbounded autonomy.

On the model of the network, then, one is able to conceptualise a form of communal interdependence that is sufficiently flexible to accommodate a plurality of ethnicities, cultures and sub-cultures; lifestyles and beliefs as well as subjectivities and identities. The rights of each are protected in respect to all others by their more or less equal access to the network. By employing the social morphology of the network to describe community, the proponents of the Third Way can claim not only to offer a description of social life that is consistent with common-sense understandings and experience, but one that fits neatly with contemporary yearnings for individual autonomy, freedom, participation and democracy.

In conceiving of community in these terms, it might be noted that the proponents of the Third Way stand the older communitarian traditions, such as the ethical socialist and Christian communitarian traditions, on their head. Whereas these communitarian traditions saw the reassertion of community as a response to the fragmentation of modern life resulting from technological change, urbanisation and the market, the proponents of the Third Way conceive of community in a way that is continuous with contemporary forms of the market.[28] The theoretical framework that informs this view is explored in greater detail in the next chapter. For the moment it is sufficient to note

that the social form that underlies community is no different from that which underlies the contemporary market. In the same way that computer-based telecommunications networks hold out the fantasy of 'friction-free capitalism' to cyber-capitalists, so the network of affective and ethical bonds that constitute the Third Way community holds out the promise of 'friction-free community', a social form in which social cohesion underpins and enhances individual freedom and vice versa.[29]

The question arises, then, what distinguishes community from other networks? For the proponents of the Third Way, the answer is that the network community is constituted primarily through ethical relationships. In particular, the proponents of the Third Way emphasise relationships of trust, reciprocity, co-operation and mutuality as central to the network community. The overall picture of community that emerges from the framing of community within the form of the network, is that of a spatially and temporary disembedded network of ethical relationships. Nikolas Rose captures the Third Way notion of community perfectly in his observation that the

> community of the third sector, the third space, the third way of governing is not primarily a geographical space, a sociological space or a space of services, although it may attach itself to any or all such spatializations. It is a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of *emotional relationships*, through which *individual identities* are constructed through their bonds to *micro-cultures* of values and meanings.[30]

To go back to the idea with which this chapter began, community is thus imagined as the same kind of social formation as suggested by a Trans-Atlantic Online Town Hall Meeting: one that is constituted through a web of social relationships, at once thoroughly disembedded from place and stretched across of time, but nevertheless carrying with it the virtues and ethical relationships of more established or embedded forms of community. Such relationships are understood as being non-coercive and, above all, democratic in form. They are constituted through a free-flow of dialogue and relationships between a multiplicity of agents who share in, or can be equipped with the means to share in, the common meanings and values of the network. By tapping into such relationships, the proponents of the Third Way claim that individuals can be governed. As Rose further notes, 'it is through the political objectification and instrumentalization of *this* community and its "culture" that government is to be re-invented'.[31] For the proponents of the Third Way, then, processes of governance operate in an indirect way, not by force of coercive interventions in the social, but moral suasion operating through the dense micro-networks of moral sentiments that are

constitutive of community itself. Governance emerges 'organically' from the decentralised networks of relationships with which the community is co-extensive.[32] It is to a discussion of this that I now turn.

3. Governance and the Network Community

The British Home Secretary Jack Straw has expressed something of this approach to government in his claim that the Third Way 'asserts that there is no such "thing" as society; not in the way in which Mrs Thatcher claimed, but because society is not a "thing" external to our experiences and responsibilities. It is us, all of us'.[33] Clarifying this statement, Straw makes a further distinction between statist approaches to the government of social problems, which he refers to as 'social engineering', and Third Way approaches, which he calls 'social intervention'. Social engineering, according to Straw, focuses upon setting up an institutional framework to address specific problems in the belief that desirable outcomes can thereby be manufactured. For Straw, the problem with social engineering is that it pays little attention to the relationships between individuals and the institutions that are supposed to assist them. The governed are placed within an essentially passive relationship to the institutions by which they are governed. This approach is claimed to be associated with old-style social democrats. 'In contrast', claims Straw, social 'intervention ... seeks to treat our citizens as active participants in society, with rights yes, but with clear responsibilities too'.[34] In Straw's formulation, then, 'social intervention' seeks to govern by harnessing the individual's capacities for reflexive engagement with their social settings.

By tapping into the relations between citizens, the proponents of the Third Way claim that 'the attitudes and aspirations' of individuals can be shaped and directed from below.[35] In this way, seemingly intractable social ills such as unemployment, poverty and poor health, can be better governed or managed. In the words of Perri 6 from the influential British think-tank Demos, the Third Way draws on the '"weak" tools of government — education, training, information, persuasion, praise and blame, leadership, symbolic action, example-setting' to effect changes in individual conduct.[36] Such strategies, according to the advocates of the Third Way, are more effective and efficient than attempts to alter behaviour through things like monetary incentive, since they tap into the 'attitudes and aspirations' internalised by individuals.[37] Drawing on

Fukuyama's reading of Plato, Latham similarly argues that individual action is motivated by the search for social recognition. As such, he argues that desirable social and policy outcomes can be achieved by linking the individual's search for social recognition to the achievement of social needs.[38] Extending these kinds of ideas further, Etzioni claims that the new communitarians seek to lessen the 'policing role' of the state by strengthening the 'moral voice' of community.[39] In other words, communities can take a more active role in governance through developing and utilising informal relations of trust and mutual obligation between members of a community.

This is to speak in very general terms. The following sections examine how the proponents of the Third Way understand the role of the network community in governance, focusing on three interrelated notions: 'social capital', 'social inclusion' and 'social entrepreneurs'. Each is explored in turn.

a. Social Capital

The idea of 'social capital' has emerged as a central concept in Third Way debates about governance. While the term has been used by a number of authors, including the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the proponents of the Third Way have adopted the concept from the writings of US sociologist James Coleman, and the theorists Francis Fukuyama and Robert Putnam, who have helped to popularise Coleman's work.[40] The concept refers to networks of informal relationships that bind social actors together.[41] Social capital places the emphasis on the relationships through which social life is constituted, as distinct from the material conditions of social existence ('physical capital') and the attributes of individual social actors ('human capital'). In Coleman's words:

> If physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form, and human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual, social capital is less tangible yet, for it exists in the relations between people.[42]

Theorists of social capital such as Putnam, Fukuyama and the proponents of the Third Way place particular emphasis on participation in civic groups and communal organisations as indicators of social capital. Such groups are claimed to foster particular kinds of social capital, namely 'horizontal' rather than 'vertical' or hierarchically organised forms of social relations. As understood by the proponents of the Third Way, social capital is structured in terms of informal, non-coercive relations, rather than hierarchical forms of social capital which tend

towards clientelism and paternalism. Societies rich in these kinds of social capital are said to be characterised by dense and extensive networks of informal and voluntaristic relationships of trust, mutual obligation and civic engagement underscored by a heightened ethic of social reciprocity. At the same time, the proponents of the Third Way prefer 'weak' forms of social capital; in other words, loose, mobile forms of association rather than the unwieldy ties of tradition.[43] Such forms of social capital thus correspond perfectly to the network model of community.

By cultivating relationships of this kind, the proponents of the Third Way claim numerous benefits can be achieved. Szreter, for example, claims that cultivating social capital increases economic efficiency. He argues that in societies where dense networks of informal, reciprocal relationships are prevalent, the costs of information sharing tend to be lower than in societies marked by social division and mistrust. In the same way that firms exist in order to reduce the costs of information sharing (and therefore production) by drawing expertise and skill within a single organisational entity, social capital enables transaction costs between firms to be reduced.[44] Szreter thus advocates the importance of the social to the economic. Giddens has argued the virtues of social capital along similar lines, claiming that in 'knowledge economies', the costs associated with innovation and co-ordination can be lowered 'through shared norms rather than through bureaucratic hierarchy'.[45] Other proponents of the Third Way claim that increased social capital can rejuvenate the democratic process, reduce crime and poverty, and improve educational performance and public health.[46]

This is in spite of the fact that much of the literature upon which such claims are based has been criticised as reductionist in the extreme, selective in its focus, theoretically flawed, ahistorical and asocial and empirically unsustainable.[47] The work of Robert Putnam, whose work has influenced both Blair and Clinton, is a case in point.[48] Putnam's two extended works on social capital examined civic traditions in Italy and the claimed decline of civic participation in the United States since the 1960s. In the case of Italy, Putnam was concerned to find out why northern Italy has prospered economically, while the south has not. Simply put, Putnam's answer was that the north is characterised by strong, informal civic ties, while civic and communal bonds in the south are relatively weak. In short, the north is awash in social capital, relative to the south, which in turn affects economic prosperity. In the United States, Putnam claimed that since the 1960s, such networks have declined; a finding that he illustrated by pointing to the increasing

phenomenon of people choosing to bowl alone, rather than joining a bowling team. The core reason for declining social capital, according to Putnam, is the increased time spent watching television.[49]

Both of these studies are seriously flawed. In the case of Italy, Putnam is charged with ignoring the historical context within which southern and northern Italy developed. For example, Tarrow notes that

> Every regime that governed southern Italy from the Norman establishment of a centralized monarchy in the twelfth century to the unified government which took over there in 1861 was foreign and governed with a logic of colonial exploitation ... the South's communes and provinces were governed by northern administrators who regarded the region as a *terra di missione*; and its economy was penetrated by carpetbaggers in search of new markets ... Like the merger of West and East Germany 130 years later, a stronger, richer, more legitimate regime conquered a weaker, poorer, more marginal one, inducting its residents into political life through the tools of patronage, paternalism, and the power of money — and rubbing it in by sending in commissions of experts to shake their heads over their backwardness.[50]

Tarrow further argues that the Italian state has continued to intervene in the south in ways that are different from the north, the impact of which has been to hinder the development of the kinds social bonds that are characteristic of social capital.[51] Such historical details go some way to explaining the relative lack of economic prosperity in southern Italy, which bypass rather vague explanations in terms of declining social capital. Furthermore, Putnam has been criticised for using outdated data, with more recent empirical studies showing 'homogenisation of associational activity across Italy, with the south catching up to the north, but without any corresponding catch-up in economic development'.[52] The argument, in short, is that there is little empirical evidence to support a connection between dense social networks and economic prosperity.

In the case of the United States, Putnam has been criticised for using selective evidence. For example, others researching civic participation in the US have found marked increases in charity work and environmental organisations since the 1960s.[53] This research suggests that although involvement in bowling teams and similar group activities may be declining, this is because people are finding different arenas for social and civic participation. A more general problem with social capital with direct relevance to questions of governance, is that the link between increased social capital and improved health, higher educational achievement and better living standards have yet to

be explained. Levi notes that social capital theorists are yet to explain 'the mechanisms by which membership of such groups as bird-watching societies and soccer clubs leads to high level [sic] of civic engagement, democratic politics, and high quality government performance'.[54] The alleged benefits of dense social networks to education and health outcomes are no more than suppositions that have yet to be given empirical support. Moreover, blaming television as the primary reason for declining social capital is a little too convenient, allowing boosters of globalisation and the free market to side-step the ways in which de-regulation of the economy and working time diminish opportunities for engaging in community life.

In spite of the criticisms to which the concept of social capital has been subjected, increasing such networks of trust and co-operation remains an article of faith among the proponents of the Third Way. One policy area where social capital has had particular influence is in welfare reform, where it underpins the goal of 'social inclusion'.

b. Social Inclusion

Levitas has identified three discourses of social inclusion. The first discourse defines social inclusion in broad terms of social, economic and political citizenship. Gross social-structural inequalities in wealth, status and power are identified as the core threats to full participation within society, with special emphasis given to deprivation as a barrier to social inclusion. On this account, social inclusion can be best addressed through a comprehensive program of economic redistribution to those who are unable to fully exercise their citizenship rights as a result of material deprivation.

The second discourse defines social inclusion in terms of moral failure and centres on the existence of an underclass mired in a 'cultures of dependency'. Levitas notes that this is a gendered discourse, focusing on so-called 'welfare queens' — young, single mothers who manipulate supposedly generous welfare entitlements to support a lavish lifestyle — and young unemployed men, prone to criminal activity. This sees exclusion as a result of a more general moral decline within society which, it is claimed, is demonstrated by social ills such as increasing divorce, unemployment and crime rates. Redistributive economic policies are claimed to encourage such moral decline, creating cultures of dependency in which individuals can avoid taking on personal responsibilities such as work and family commitments. On this view, social inclusion is achieved through enforcing traditional norms and values, by withdrawing or reducing

income support to those who are unemployed or fail to fit traditional models of the family.

The third discourse on social inclusion identified by Levitas defines it in terms of social integration. According to this view, inclusion is achieved via participation in the paid work force. Paid employment provides the primary means by which individuals are integrated into society and underpins social cohesion. Economic and social policies are thus geared to increasing employment participation, even if the resulting jobs are poorly remunerated and the conditions are low. By focussing on social integration and social cohesion, questions about inequalities in power and wealth are sidestepped.[55]

In order to understand what the proponents of the Third Way mean by 'social inclusion', one needs to understand its opposite, namely *social exclusion*. According to Giddens, social exclusion can take two forms: voluntary and forced. Voluntary exclusion refers to the situation where people effectively secede from the rest of society, and their obligations to it. This form of exclusion is prevalent amongst the wealthy, and is exemplified in tax evasion or gated communities.[56] The solution to voluntary social exclusion, according to the advocates of the Third Way, is to cultivate a broad commitment to the principles of the welfare state by granting universal access to welfare, rather than targeting welfare based on a particular 'segment' of a person's life, such as gender or ethnicity.[57] Others argue for more interventionist measures to discourage exclusion at the top. In Australia, for example, Labor MP Mark Latham has proposed 'new forms of moral regulation', making government assistance to the private sector dependent on the recipients adhering to a 'Code of Corporate Citizenship'.[58]

In contrast, 'forced exclusion' refers to the exclusion of those in lower social and economic strata who lack the skills or resources — that is, social capital — to fully participate in society. The Blair Government's Social Exclusion Unit, which was established specifically to address the problem, defines this form of exclusion as

> a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown.[59]

Used in this way, 'social exclusion' is intended as a more encompassing term than what are considered more narrowly focused terms such as 'poverty' or 'inequality'. The latter concepts are claimed to be inadequate as a way of framing what are typically complex and multifaceted

social problems. In other words, the concept of 'social exclusion' seeks to go beyond seeing poverty, poor health, and poor academic performance as discrete problems requiring discrete policy solutions, to an examination of the complex relationships between them. As Giddens explains,

> [e]xclusion contrasts with being 'poor', 'deprived', or 'on a low income' in several ways. It is not a matter of differing from others in degree — having fewer resources — but of not sharing in opportunities that the majority have ...
>
> Exclusion refers to circumstances that affect more or less the entire life of the individual, not just a few aspects of it.[60]

'Social exclusion' thus focuses on the ways in which people are systematically cut off from the resources — economic, social and political — that are necessary to fully participating in society.

According to the proponents of the Third Way, simple transfers of wealth characteristic of the traditional welfare state are inadequate responses to the problem of forced social exclusion. These assume that individuals possess basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and interpersonal skills, to use these resources in an optimal way. However, because of the emergence of structural and generational unemployment, and therefore poverty, individuals can no longer be assumed to possess such basic skills.[61] For the proponents of the Third Way, there is a need to re-integrate individuals back into the basic norms of society so that they are able to develop the requisite skills to use such resources.

While there are commonalities between this analysis and the social-structural account of social inclusion outlined above, at least insofar as it recognises the complexity of the problem, the solution to social exclusion advocated by the proponents of the Third Way is closer to that of the moral and integration discourse. In the case of New Labour, for example, Levitas claims that the Party shifts between these two discourses of social inclusion.[62] Third Way strategies of social inclusion are thus intended to draw individuals into webs of social relations as a way of ensuring that they develop the attitudes and skills necessary to make the most of opportunities. This emphasis on inclusion fits neatly with the network community. Rather than be concerned with 'exploitation' as a result of unequal distribution of tangible resources, the logic of social inclusion is to reconnect individuals to networks of obligations and norms, thereby ensuring they possess the requisite social and cultural skills to function within society.[63] Consequently,

the welfare approaches of the Third Way focus not so much on the income levels of individuals or on the redistribution of resources, but on increasing the connections between individuals and their communities.[64]

In theory, proponents of the Third Way like Giddens argue that voluntary and forced exclusion are causally connected; opting out of social and financial obligations by those at the top has the effect of further excluding those at the bottom. As such, reducing voluntary exclusion is seen as the key to solving forced exclusion.[65] In practical political terms, however, the focus of policy has almost exclusively been on forced exclusion, reflected in policy reforms that seek to encourage greater participation in the labour force or in education and training, geared towards the needs of the private sector.[66] For example, the Blair Government's 'New Deal' welfare package includes 'Welfare-to-Work' programs and support for vocational and further education. A core focus of these programs is not only re-skilling the young and unemployed, but engineering attitudinal change. The aim is to foster a culture of 'rights and responsibilities' as a way of overcoming social exclusion rooted in so-called cultures of dependency.[67] In Rose's words, '[t]he problems of the excluded, of the underclass, are to be resolved by a kind of moral rearmament ... It is through moral reformation, through ethical reconstruction, that the excluded citizen is to be re-attached to a virtuous community'.[68]

Such strategies, however, only go so far beyond traditional state-centred forms of welfare reform. Beyond the state, advocates of the Third Way have argued for an expanded role for community bodies and faith-based institutions in welfare delivery. In particular, they champion the work of so-called 'social entrepreneurs' in reconnecting people to their communities.

c. Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs are charismatic individuals who are able to draw together people and resources from a variety of different sources — the private, public and community sectors — to develop solutions to pressing social problems.[69] The notion of 'entrepreneurialism' here links up with the idea of 'entrepreneurial government' outlined by Osborne and Gaebler, explored in the first section of Chapter One. Social entrepreneurs are contrasted with popular caricatures of bureaucrats as hamstrung by rigid rules and frameworks. Social entrepreneurs, according to the proponents of the Third Way, are concerned with results and outcomes, rather than procedures and rules. Whereas bureaucrats are claimed to be beholden

to special interest groups, such as professional social workers, health professionals, teachers and the like, social entrepreneurs are claimed to respond to the needs of people as customers. The notion 'the social entrepreneur' might also be usefully contrasted with the more explicitly political term 'the activist'. Whereas the notion of 'activism' suggests the pursuit of wide-ranging social, economic and political change, the notion of entrepreneurialism entails no such change. Social entrepreneurs are committed to working within existing social, economic and political structures, while seeking to utilise and leverage the resources offered by such structures in different ways.

'Social entrepreneurs' according to Latham, 'combine the best of social practice, forging new connections and support between people, with the best of business practice, encouraging risk taking and creativity in poor neighbourhoods'.

> They play the role of community brokers: identifying small bursts of effort and achievement; linking these projects into new partnerships and alliances; facilitating a wider span of community success and self-esteem. Social entrepreneurs are more interested in developing people than structures, in creating new social relationships than new bureaucratic rules.[70]

In Britain, for example, Tony Blair has endorsed the work of the social entrepreneur Andrew Mawson, an Anglican minister, who helped to revitalise the impoverished Bromley-by-Bow estate, building a health centre and developing partnerships with the private sector to bring internet services to people on low incomes. In one partnership, for example, social entrepreneurs joined forces with Coca-Cola to deliver information services in low-income areas.[71] Others have developed retail, health and banking co-operatives to cater to the poor and excluded.[72] According to social entrepreneurs, such partnerships cultivate communal integration, while providing much needed services. Social entrepreneurs are important the Third Way because they are claimed to develop the necessary relationships to build infrastructure and develop services within communities, in turn facilitating the creation of social capital.[73]

The work of social entrepreneurs and their role in building social capital extends to other areas of social and economic policy, beyond the more obvious aim of tackling social exclusion at the bottom. In Britain, for example, there have been calls for the Blair Government to take an active role in promoting 'a modern marriage culture' that emphasises 'the virtues of marriage' and equips 'people culturally for a new style of marriage'. This is to be achieved by using the relationships of community and its

resources to such ends as developing a voluntary network of '[m]arriage mentors — people from the community whose mission is to volunteer as a source of advice, support and a reference point for services'. The work of these social entrepreneurs would be complemented by

> education in schools, ... financing marriage preparation, relationship and parenting services at local levels, and through encouraging pre-nuptial agreements for money and goods, as developed extensively in France and America.[74]

New Labour's *Supporting Families* consultation paper, which was circulated during the first term in office, gave cautious support to such ideas. Among the policy suggestions canvassed by the paper were an expanded role for civil celebrants and registrars in preparing couples for married life and the promotion of voluntary 'baby-naming ceremonies'. In the words of the consultation paper, the purpose of these is to enable 'parents to show publicly their long-term commitment to their children and for unmarried parents it is a chance to make a joint parental responsibility agreement'.[75]

Calls for the promotion of a 'marriage culture' are linked to social research showing that married couples are likely to be wealthier and healthier in comparison to their single and divorced peers. In the United States, for example, communitarian thinkers associated with the Clinton New Democrats quite bluntly argue that:

> Marriage is one of the best anti-poverty programs ever invented; fewer than six percent of married couples live in poverty, versus 11 percent of all families. Over the past two decades, the median family income of married couples with minor children has risen from $45,500 (in 1996 dollars) to nearly $51,800.[76]

The authors go on to suggest that the changing composition of households as a result of rising divorce rates is a significant factor in 'the failure [of many people] to achieve middle-class economic status'.[77]

In addition, advocates of the Third Way claim that marriage contributes to the health of the individuals involved, thereby lessening the strain on public health resources, while contributing to the overall 'stores' of social capital and trust within society. As Wilkinson suggests,

> successful and stable marriages do not just enhance the well-being of children, they benefit the adults concerned, generate good health and at their very best enhance the social and cultural capital of the individuals concerned. People in

> successful marriages are on balance healthier and happier than those that are single or unmarried. They also tend to be better off, and to have a denser network of connections to the community.[78]

It might be noted here that the promotion of a marriage culture and the work of social entrepreneurs has little to do with traditional notions about the sanctity of married life or vague allusions to marriage as the 'moral foundation' of society. It is justified, rather, by reference to social research showing that marriage lowers public expenditure on health and welfare. The network community is thus not defined not by tradition, but by social research supporting the supposed benefits of social capital. The goal of policy is to draw people into such networks, thereby allowing them to be governed.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I want to round out this discussion of community and governance with a methodological/political critique of the network as a model for social life. This criticism centres on the way in which relations of power are absent from the network, the consequences of which is a conservative bias. In a critical reading of the network as a catch-all description and explanation of social, economic and political organisation, Judith Brett likens it to older 'organic' metaphors of society. This is seen particularly in functionalist approaches to social explanation, which were based on the metaphor of the body and the functioning of each of its constituent parts as a model for sociological analysis. Inherent within such approaches to social analysis and explanation is a political conservatism. Such approaches emphasise the specific contribution of each part of the 'social body' to its overall well-being. Underlying this is a concern with the equilibrium of the social 'organism'. As such, these approaches are biased in favour of existing social and economic arrangements, the logic being that such arrangements exist and persist because they contribute to the optimal functioning of society. As a consequence such approaches tend to overlook, excuse or justify social, economic and political inequalities between the different parts of the 'social organism', since these are claimed to contribute to the ultimate stability and functioning of society.[79]

While Brett acknowledges important differences between the network and organic metaphors for social and political life she claims that it reproduces the same basic

deficiencies in respect to its inability to accommodate questions of power and inequality.[80] According to Brett: 'The network as an open, horizontal system of communication shares with the older organic image its suitability to the central liberal ideological task of excluding questions of power and inequality'.[81] The network thus presents a model of social relations in which all social agents are attributed a heightened capacity for autonomous action, each having a more or less equal capacity to withdraw from or reverse the relationships into which they enter more or less at will.

The same problems can be seen in the Third Way approaches to governance through community. In short, relations of power simply do not enter into their account of network community. The network community is imagined as a consensual, harmonious place, where conflicts between competing interests and principles simply do not emerge. While the advocates of the Third Way are quite willing to point out the negative effects of power within older forms of community characterised by their embeddedness within the contours of place and bound by tradition, they have paid less attention to questions of power implicit within their own analyses of community. Community appears as a central site of governance but one in which power is mostly absent.[82]

This leads to some notable absences in Third Way policy, a glaring one being the distinction between the socially and culturally defined roles of men and women. The neglect of gender role is particularly striking since women are over-represented both as participants in community organisations and activities and as recipients of community services.[83] As such, women are likely to play a disproportionately larger role in creating and sustaining the kinds of social bonds which are characteristic of social capital. At the same time, however, other aspects of the Third Way policy agenda, such as more punitive approaches to welfare, are likely to restrict or complicate their contribution to such activities. As Hancock notes of the Australian context, '[w]omen, families and communities are marginalised not empowered, while at the same time, being put under increasing pressure'.[84] Similarly, in the British context, McRobbie has argued that the social and economic position of women are 'at the very heart of the present [Blair] Government's key concerns', reflected particularly in the interrelated issues of work, welfare reform and community.[85] However, Third Way theorists and politicians are unwilling to analyse these issues in gender terms, fearing that these are too closely related with 'Old Labour'.[86] In McRobbie's words, 'the Third Way envisages a politics for women without feminism'.[87]

There are two points that can be made here. The first is the quite straightforward contradiction between the Third Way's emphasis on community as a vehicle of governance and other aspects of their reform agenda which are likely to undermine it. In other words, the relations of community that appear central to governance — trust, mutuality, co-operation and reciprocity — appear to float free of the concrete power relations and social contexts within which such relations are inevitably enacted and negotiated. The second and more general point is that the Third Way's politics of community, modelled after the network, tends towards political conservatism, which is resistant to the kinds of wholesale changes that might make it workable. These problems are explored in greater depth in the following chapters.

ENDNOTES

[1] Tony Blair, 'Battle for Britain', *The Guardian*, 29 January 1996.

[2] Bill Clinton quoted in "Turning Ideas into Action: A Conversation Among Five World Leaders on the Third Way," *The New Democrat* 11, no. 3 May/June (1999), 14.

[3] Democratic Leadership Council, 'Live from the DLC National Conversation: A Trans-Atlantic Online Town Hall Meeting With President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair' June 30, 2000. URL: <http://www.dlc.org/ndol_ci.cfm?kaid=126&subid=166&contentid=1286>. Consulted 7 July, 2000 See also 'Strengthening Democracy in the Information Age' URL: <http://www.excite.com/clintonblair.html> Consulted 7 July 2000

[4] President Clinton had to withdraw from participating in the event to attend emergency talks at Camp David after a breakdown in the Middle East peace talks.

[5] Peter Botsman, "Master to the Servant State," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, ed. Peter Botsman and Mark Latham (Annandale: Pluto, 2001), 7.

[6] Peter Botsman, "Master to the Servant State," 7-8.

[7] For example, see Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), Part 5.

[8] Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Right and Responsibilities," in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, ed. Amitai Etzioni (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), xiv. The Australian media theorist and Third Way fellow traveller, McKenzie Wark, expresses similar reservations within the Third Way debate in Australia. He claims that 'community' 'is something of a "motherhood" term in Australian political culture, conjuring up images of a small town life where there's always someone to lend a helping hand'. Such images hide some of the less flattering aspects of communal life, such as racism and homophobia. These criticisms have been given added weight by the emergence of populist nationalist organisations, such as Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France, Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia, Pat Buchanan in the United States and Jorg Haider in Austria, which use the rhetoric of defending national community and protecting 'racial' and 'cultural' purity to justify the exclusion and

discrimination against those defined as different. See McKenzie Wark, *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World*, (Smithfield: Pluto Press, 1999), 269.

[9] Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Right and Responsibilities," in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, x.

[10] It should be noted that there is some difference between the arguments of writers such as Etzioni and Giddens. Etzioni sees the emphasis on community as necessary to restore a balance between collective interests and rising individualism and selfishness, whereas Giddens claims that the perception that societies are becoming more individualistic is just that — a perception.

[11] See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 35-36.

[12] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 36-37.

[13] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 37. McKenzie Wark, advances a similar argument. Wark claims that '[i]ndividualism is an illusion. We always confront each other in social life in packs, bands, bunches — and now in cyberspace, networks.' The 'illusion of individualism', as Wark describes it, is a consequence of a more highly educated and informed population, unwilling to passively follow traditional forms of authority. For Wark, 'there's now more flexibility about belonging', meaning that communities are now 'communities of choice' enacted through networks of voluntary associations. While such communities of choice may be less stable than communities of the past, they are, for Wark, preferable. In Wark's words: 'It's better to suffer a bit of anxiety of choice than to be forced to conform to compulsory forms of association, such as the churches or the old style trade unions were in the supposedly good old days.' According to Wark, communities of choice are encouraging of difference and foster creativity, in opposition to old-style communities that, in his view, were built upon 'obedience to cultural authorities' and 'sameness'. McKenzie Wark, *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World*, 270, 310 and 337.

[14] Jack Straw, "Building Social Cohesion, Order and Inclusion in a Market Economy" (Paper presented at the From Principles to Policies: Mapping Out the Third Way conference, July 3, 1998) URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/thirdway> Consulted 23 April 1999.

[15] The analysis of the network in this section is informed by and draws extensively on the work of the Arena group of writers, particularly the work of Geoff Sharp and Judith Brett. See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 70 (1985): 48-82 and Judith Brett, "On the Network," *Arena Magazine*, February-March 1994, 2.

[16] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 78. See also 79-83.

[17] Mark Latham, "Civil Society, Markets and Governments" (Paper presented at the Mutualism — A Third Way for Australia Conference, Melbourne, Australia, November 19-20, 1999). URL: <http://www.thirdway-aust.com/index2.html> Consulted 7 February 2000.

[18] Mark Latham, "Civil Society, Markets and Governments".

[19] Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Right and Responsibilities," in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, xiii.

[20] Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*, 2nd ed. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971 [1957]), 317. See also 313-330.

[21] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, vol. 1, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 412.

[22] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, vol. 1, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 412. See also 410-418. For another extended discussion of the salience of the network to the organisation of social life, see also Francis Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of the Social Order* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 194-211 and Scott Lash, *Critique of Information* (London: Sage, 2002).

[23] See Geoff Sharp, 'Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice'. *Arena*: 48-82, Geoff Sharp, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 99/100 (1992): 188-216; Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993): 221-237.

[24] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 117.

[25] Amitai Etzioni, "Introduction: A Matter of Balance, Right and Responsibilities," in *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, xiv. See also Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Live in a Connected World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1997), 229.

[26] Judith Brett, "On the Network," *Arena Magazine*, February-March 1994, 2.

[27] William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1993 (1984)), Neal Stephenson, *Snow Crash* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski. "The Matrix." Warner Brothers, 1999.

[28] This characterisation of older forms of communitarianism is drawn from Amitai Etzioni, ed., *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, x-xi.

[29] Bill Gates quoted in Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, (London: Verso, 1997), 156.

[30] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 172.

[31] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 172-173

[32] This is of course the ideal. In practice, the advocates of the Third Way have not shied from placing more putative measures if this fails, thereby provoking claims that the Third Way has a strong authoritarian dimension.

[33] Jack Straw, "Building Social Cohesion, Order and Inclusion in a Market Economy" URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/thirdway> Consulted 23 April 1999

[34] Jack Straw, "Building Social Cohesion, Order and Inclusion in a Market Economy" URL: <http://www.netnexus.org/events/july98/talks/thirdway> Consulted 23 April 1999.

[35] Perri 6, "Problem-Solving Government," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, ed. Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (London: Demos, 1998), 59.

[36] Perri 6, "Problem-Solving Government," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, 59.

[37] Perri 6, "Problem-Solving Government," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, 59.

[38] Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 271-272

[39] Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), 44.

[40] See James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94, Supplement (1988): S95-S120; Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the*

Creation of Prosperity (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions In Modem Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65-78; Robert D. Putnam, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," *Policy*, Autumn (1996): 3-15 and Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse And Revival Of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). Both Fukuyama and Putnam have had a particular influence on Third Way ideas in Australia and Britain. In Australia, Labor MP Mark Latham draws extensively on the ideas of these writers, while Putnam has been referred to as 'Tony Blair's "new favourite guru"', indicating his influence on Third Way thinking. See Nicola Hill, "Blair's 'Guru' Urges Social Action Role for Voluntary Sector," *Guardian*, March 30 2001. URL: <http://society.guardian.co.uk/voluntary/story/0,7890,465968,00.html> Consulted 26 November 2001. For a critical overview of the social capital literature, see Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[41] Coleman advances the idea of social capital as a way of conceiving social action as a corrective to two broad streams of thinking about social action – one which focuses on the social context of action, and 'sees the actor as socialized and action as governed by social norms, rules, and obligations' and another that sees social actions as driven by self-interest and the pursuit of 'maximizing utility'. The notion of social capital is intended to provide a coherent framework for understanding elements of both these accounts. Social action is deemed to be rational or goal oriented, in the same way that the idea of maximal utility suggests, but it is so within a social context, which it in turn reproduces. As Coleman argues: 'This is part of a theoretical strategy that involves use of the paradigm of rational action [which is inherent in the notion of utility maximisation] but without the assumption of atomistic elements stripped of social relationships.' James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," especially S95 and S118.

[42] James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, S100.

[43] Simon Szreter, "A New Political Economy: The Importance of Social Capital," in *The Global Third Way Debate*, ed. Anthony Giddens (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 292-293. See also Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics* (London: Polity Press, 2000), 78-79.

[44] Simon Szreter, "A New Political Economy: The Importance of Social Capital," in *The Global Third Way Debate*, 294-297.

[45] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, 78. Latham also claims that social capital is essential to 'underwriting the success of the new economy'. Mark Latham, "The New Economy and the New Politics," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, ed. Peter Botsman and Mark Latham (Annandale: Pluto, 2001), 32.

[46] See Glyn Davis, "Government by Discussion," in *The Enabling State: People Before Democracy*.

[47] See Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium* for a comprehensive and critical overview of the social capital literature.

[48] Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, 83.

[49] Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modem Italy*, Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.

[50] Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (1996), 394.

[51] Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*," *American Political Science Review*, 394-395.

[52] Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, 90.

[53] Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, 87

[54] Levi quoted in Ben Fine, *Social Capital Versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, 93.

[55] Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), Chapter One.

[56] See Mark Latham, "The Enabling State: From Government to Governance," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, 258 and Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 103-105.

[57] See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 165-167 and 188-190.

[58] Mark Latham, "The Enabling State: From Government to Governance," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, 258.

[59] Social Exclusion Unit, "Preventing Social Exclusion: Report by the Social Exclusion Unit," (London: Cabinet Office, 2001), 10. URL:<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/2001/pse/pse.pdf> Consulted 30 November 2001.

[60] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, 105.

[61] As Latham argues, 'Social democrats can no longer assume that each citizen is able to utilise the universal supply of services and rights with the same threshold of self-esteem, confidence and skills. In a skills-based society, minimum standards of income support are not in themselves sufficient to overcome poverty and foster social mobility ... The most effective standard of material well-being is one that individuals have been able to earn from their own skills and capability. To be certain, welfare works best when it lifts the recipients of government assistance to a new plane of personal capability.' See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor*, 203-204.

[62] Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, 28.

[63] See Scott Lash, *Critique of Information* (London: Sage, 2002), 4.

[64] As Latham argues: 'The first task in ending poverty does not relate to material goods. It is a social task — connecting people with others, rebuilding their self-esteem and confidence, creating a new common purpose in their lives.' Mark Latham, "The New Economy and the New Politics" in *The Enabling State*, 23.

[65] As Giddens notes, 'Limiting the voluntary exclusion of the elites is central to creating a more inclusive society at the bottom.' Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (London: Polity, 1998), 105. See also Mark Latham, "The Enabling State: From Government to Governance," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, 258.

[66] See Chris Holden, "Globalization, Social Exclusion and Labour's New Work Ethic," *Critical Social Policy* 19, no. 4 (1999): 529-538.

[67] Department for Work and Pensions, "Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society," (London: The Stationery Office, 2001) URL: <http://www.dfee.gov.uk/fullemployment/pdf/NewDealall.pdf> Consulted 14 December 2001, v and 13.

[68] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 265-266.

[69] Mark Latham, "The Enabling State: From Government to Governance," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, 259-260.

[70] Mark Latham, "The New Economy and the New Politics" in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, 23-24.

[71] Andrew Mawson, "Making Dinosaurs Dance: Social Entrepreneurship and Civic Action" in *The Enabling State*.

[72] See for example, Race Mathews, *Jobs of Our Own*, and Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital*

[73] Similarly, Leadbeater claims that social entrepreneurs 'operate as a kind of research and development wing of the welfare system, innovating new solutions to intractable social problems. They often deliver services far more efficiently than the public sector. Most importantly they set in motion a virtuous circle of social capital accumulation. They help communities to build up social capital which gives them a better chance of standing on their own two feet.' Charles Leadbeater cited in Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, 82.

[74] Helen Wilkinson, "The Family Way: Navigating a Third Way in Family Policy," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, ed. Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (London: Demos, 1998), 120-121.

[75] "Supporting Families: A Consultation Document", (London: Home Office, 1998). URL: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/sfpages.pdf> Consulted 3 March 2000, 36-37. See page 55 for the specific proposal.

[76] William A. Galston and Elaine C. Kamarck, "Five Realities that will Shape 21st Century Politics", *Blueprint: Ideas for a New Century*, Fall 1998. URL: <http://www.dlc.org/blueprint/fall/98/article1.html> Consulted 24 March 2000.

[77] Galston and Kamarck note that 'During that same period [the past two decades], the median income of female-headed households with minor children stagnated at about $16,000. Sharp increases in rates of divorce and non-marital births have thus contributed to the widening gap between the upper middle class and poor. And because a rising percentage of children now live in divorced or never-married families, the poverty rate among children has risen sharply over the past quarter century and is now 20.5 percent, nearly seven points higher than the rate for the population as a whole. Thus, while the percentage of poor households has not increased in the past generation, the composition of those households has changed: economic stagnation and poverty ... are more closely correlated with family structure than ever before.' See William A. Galston and Elaine C. Kamarck, "Five Realities that will Shape 21st Century Politics", *Blueprint: Ideas for a New Century*. URL: <http://www.dlc.org/blueprint/fall/98/article1.html> Consulted 24 March 2000.

[78] Helen Wilkinson, "The Family Way: Navigating a Third Way in Family Policy," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, 120.

[79] Judith Brett, "On the Network," *Arena Magazine*, 2.

[80] In reference to the differences between the network and older, organic models of society, Brett notes that the social form of the network allows for greater mobility in contrast to the relative

fixedness of the organism. Also, the network has an unbounded structure, whereas the organism is a relatively enclosed structure.

[81] Brett suggests, that the image of the network is so seductive, not because it hides the reality of power, but because it appears to offer an accurate description of lived experience. Its appeal derives, in large measure, not only from the fact that it taps into widespread desires for individual autonomy and freedom from constraint, but also from it purporting to offer an objective description of a social that is in the process of being born. As Brett argues: 'Ideology is not just illusion, in the realm of the imaginary; not just a veil over the true face of reality. It is, to use Althusser's formulation, an imaginary representation of real experience; that is, to be effective the ideological formulation of social experience must make sense to those whose lives are being represented: it must fit with their experience such that its representations seem not representations at all but descriptions of the way things are and have to be.' Judith Brett, "On the Network," *Arena Magazine*, 2.

[82] Stuart Hall has referred to the Third Way as 'a "politics without adversaries"'. See Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Nowhere Show," *Marxism Today: Interactive Edition* Special Issue (1998). URL: < http://www.ge97.co.uk/mt/great_moving3.html> Consulted 16 December, 2001.

[83] In June 1995, for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that women contributed a total of 246.3 million hours of community work compared to men's 187.6 million hours. The median hours contributed by women were concentrated in the fields of health and education as well as religious and environmental organisations. Such areas are more directly linked to areas of governance. The median hours spent in voluntary work for males only exceeded women in areas linked to leisure: sports and hobbies, the arts and culture and in foreign and international associations. This was a general pattern. For example, forty-two percent of men's voluntary activities were devoted to the category of sport, recreation and hobbies; a category that includes sporting clubs, racing and gambling, bird watching, book and gardening clubs. Women's voluntary work, by contrast, tended to be concentrated in the welfare and community sectors, as well as education, training, youth development and health. *Voluntary Work*, (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995).

[84] Linda Hancock, "Women's Policy Interests and the Third Way?," *Southern Review: Essays in the New Humanities* 33, no. 2 (2000), 206.

[85] Angela McRobbie, "Feminism and the Third Way," *Feminist Review* Spring, no. 64 (2000), 105.

[86] Angela McRobbie, "Feminism and the Third Way," *Feminist Review*, 105.

[87] Angela McRobbie, "Feminism and the Third Way," *Feminist Review*, 99.

CHAPTER THREE

Theorising the Third Way

> Forget about the text books and grand theories of sociology. Throw away the scores of government reports on poverty. Practitioners ... are actually getting answers. They are reinventing communities by rebuilding social capital.
>
> Mark Latham[1]

Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to identify, draw out and critically interrogate the various theoretical arguments advanced by the proponents of the Third Way in support of their political project. The core argument of this chapter is that most attempts to theorise or otherwise explain the Third Way are narrow and one-dimensional. In short, they tend to be based on linear notions of social change. In developing this argument, this chapter identifies three main streams of argument used to support the Third Way's return to community as a vehicle of governance. The first, and least sophisticated account emphasises the continuities between the communitarian politics of the Third Way and older, more established communitarian political traditions, rooted in various ethical traditions, such as the European social democratic tradition, the Christian and ethical socialist traditions, and certain streams within Catholic social thought. The network community and the concern with generating social capital are thus portrayed as a more or less straightforward attempt to update these older communitarian traditions — 'the pursuit of old ends (government through shared norms and values underscored by mutual trust and reciprocal social relations) via new means (the network community)'.[2]

The second theoretical stream frames the Third Way's politics of community less in terms of continuity with the past, but rather in terms of the transformation of contemporary societies as a result of underlying shifts in the production processes driven by technological change, particularly the proliferation of information and

telecommunications technologies. This was alluded to in Chapter One in discussing the notion of governmental overload. This shift is analysed in terms of a linear, often technological and economic determinist model of social change in which the economic structures of mass industrial society based around manufacturing are displaced by a service/information-based economy, calling out a new form of society — the so-called 'post-industrial' society. Where social integration in the settings of mass industrial society is claimed to have been underwritten by, and therefore reflected the principles of industrial production (centralisation, standardisation, uniformity, and hierarchical forms of social integration), post-industrial society is claimed to be characterised by fragmentation, diversity and 'horizontally integrated' social networks. The proponents of the Third Way thus argue that the network community is the natural counterpart to the emergent social and economic structures of post-industrial society.

The third theoretical stream is that presented by Anthony Giddens. Similarly to the proponents of the Third Way who base their politics on claims about the emergence of the post-industrial society and economy, Giddens' analysis rests on an account of the transformation of social structures as a result of technological innovation. However, Giddens' account differs in that he argues the significance of the proliferation of new technologies is their tendency to transform basic ontological categories of space and time which has consequences for the nature of place and tradition. For Giddens, space and time have become 'stretched' across greater expanses of space and time, with the effect that social life is no longer 'embedded' in place, and traditional forms of authority no longer provide an unquestioned guide to how to live. Social life has been 'disembedded' from place and is now organised in a more intensively reflexive manner, rather than obedience to tradition. Nevertheless, he claims that the so-called 'transformation of space and time', evident in processes such as globalisation and the retreat of traditional forms of authority in structuring social life, can underwrite new forms of communal solidarity.

It should be noted that the distinctions made here between these three streams of argument are not absolute. In reality, these different arguments frequently dovetail with one another. Giddens, for example, has suggested that the welfare reforms instituted by the New Labour government owe more to the European social democratic model than they do to the influence of the Clinton Administration. Tony Blair, meanwhile, draws on arguments about the renewal of the ethical socialist tradition and claims about an

emergent post-industrial society in seeking to explain his government's concern with community-based approaches to governance.[3]

In surveying these streams of argument, I have drawn on interpretations and criticisms of the Third Way provided by other writers. The focus here is specifically those writers who have engaged in a sustained analysis of the 'communitarian' aspects of the Third Way. For example, some critics have contested the post-industrial arguments of the Third Way, claiming that these are exaggerated and are not supported empirically. On this view, the renewed concern with community is simply an ideological weapon designed to ensure the smooth running of capitalist society. Others have sought to explain the Third Way by reference to more conventional political categories, framing it as a new form of liberal government. By juxtaposing and critically assessing these responses to the Third Way, the intention is to provide a clearer understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the Third Way.

1. The First Stream: The Pursuit of Old Ends Through New Means

A number of commentators have interpreted the renewed concern with community and ethics by the proponents of the Third Way as a sophisticated reworking of Anglo-American left/liberal politics through the incorporation of other, long-neglected ethical and political traditions. In both Britain and Australia, for example, the Fabian societies have provided focal points for debate, suggesting that the concern with community signals a renaissance of alternative, non-statist streams of ethical socialist thought and practice. Similarly, in their analysis of New Labour in Britain, Martell and Driver, claim that communitarian ideas form a central element of what they refer to as New Labour's exercise in '*post-Thatcherite* politics'.[4] This is characterised by the rejection of the policies and values closely identified with 'Old Labour', such as nationalisation of industry, the adoption of central elements of the Thatcherite agenda, particularly in relation to economic and industrial policy, as well as the embrace of communitarian ideas '[u]nder the influence of North American communitarianism and English ethical socialism'.[5] Rather than offering a post-ideological 'new politics' that transcends the established political polarities of the Left and the Right, as some advocates of the Third Way imply, Martell and Driver claim that the significance of communitarian thinking to New Labour is that it has enabled

them to rework established political oppositions — between, for example, collectivism and liberal individualism. For Martell and Driver, 'the new politics is a management of the old opposites: both are still there in tension with one another'.[6]

Overlapping with these assessments, commentators have also drawn attention to the continuities between the ideas of Third Way governments and communitarian streams within the European Christian socialist tradition and Catholic social thought, especially as these developed in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tony Blair's personal commitment to communitarianism, for example, has been widely attributed to the influence of his university mentor Peter Thompson, an Australian Anglican priest, who introduced him to the communitarian ideas of the Scottish philosopher and theologian John Macmurray.[7] Perhaps the clearest link between these personal beliefs and the Third Way came during a speech to Singaporean business leaders in January 1996, when Blair, as leader of the opposition, flagged the idea of 'stakeholder capitalism' as a model for Britain, which seemed to suggest a form of capitalism governed by a broad social ethic. In the Australian context, the former ALP MP and secretary of the Australian Fabian Society, Race Mathews has sought to consciously position and steer the Third Way towards a fuller engagement with such ideas and their practical expression in the co-operative and mutualist movements.[8]

Other commentators have suggested that European models of social democracy have been the most significant influence on the Third Way.[9] Although varying from country to country and undergoing something of a reversal during the 1980s towards an Anglo-American model of market-centred governance, European social democracy is typically characterised (and caricatured) by a combination of prudent economic management, high taxation, generous social spending and progressive social policies, underscored by a strong communal ethic. In the British and, to a lesser extent, the Australian debates about the Third Way, reference is often made in this regard to the so-called 'Rhineland model' of capitalism as a blueprint for governance that avoids the excesses of both 'market fundamentalism' and statism.[10]

Although these social, political and ethical traditions should certainly not be discounted entirely as informing the Third Way's concern with community, and may go some way towards explaining the motivations of particular individuals who, like Blair, emphasise the importance of community in addressing social ills, there are significant tensions

between the communitarian politics of the Third Way and these other traditions. For example, European social democrats have questioned the comparisons between their own politics and what the proponents of the Third Way propose. Erkki Tuomioja, an MP from the Finnish Social Democratic Party, for example, has questioned the comparisons made between the Anglo-American model of the Third Way to the Scandanavian social democratic model, particularly with reference to the question of welfare reform. In Tuomioja's view neither the US nor Britain can be considered welfare states in the Nordic sense.[11] Similarly, although New Labour appeared to be leaning in the direction of the European social democratic model while in opposition, Tony Blair has since distanced the Party from it in government, arguing that attempts to transplant economic and governmental models are unlikely to succeed because of their cultural specificity.[12]

Others have questioned the extent to which Christian communitarian ideas have influenced the proponents of the Third Way. Hale, for example, notes that John Macmurray, whose ideas are said to have influenced Blair, makes a clear and important distinction between community and society. For Macmurray, society is composed of social relationships that are instrumental in nature. In other words, social relationships are geared to the achievement of a particular end. By contrast communal relationships are what Macmurray calls 'personal'. For him the 'personal life':

> demands a relationship with one another in which we can be our whole selves and have complete freedom to express everything that makes us what we are. It demands a relationship with one another in which suppression and inhibition are unnecessary.[13]

While Macmurray believed that social (instrumental) relationships are necessary to human societies, these were not sufficient to express one's humanity itself, which was only fully expressed in the spontaneous relations of community. Hale argues that the proponents of the Third Way fail to make a similar distinction between community and society. As a result, many of the 'communitarian' ideas advocated by New Labour are in opposition to Macmurray's ideas.

Hale illustrates this point by comparing Macmurray's views on rights and responsibilities, and those of Third Way governments. She claims that while Macmurray stressed the importance of responsibility, he saw this as something people would freely take on under the right conditions when given appropriate opportunities. Hale argues

that this is in stark contrast to New Labour's welfare programs, which seek to impose responsibilities on individuals through punitive measures. While noting that Macmurray's ideas are based on an 'overly optimistic' view of human nature, she argues that 'it cannot be argued that New Labour's conception of responsibility reflects Macmurray's'.[14] This suggests, then, that the influence of the Christian communitarian tradition on informing the Third Way has been, at best partial and selective or at worst, superficial.

More fundamentally, there are significant tensions, if not outright contradictions between the *form* of the network community advanced by the proponents of the Third Way, and older communitarian traditions. As noted in the previous chapter, older, more established communitarian traditions, particularly those grounded in the ethical socialist traditions and Catholic social thought, understood community as framing, and in a sense containing the market and its social logic. In the Catholic communitarian tradition, moreover, the reassertion of community life was understood as a bulwark, not just against the market, but against modernity itself.[15] The proponents of the Third Way, in contrast, reverse this relationship: community, reconceived in the image of the network is to be reinvented *through*, rather than in *opposition* to the market. The effect of this reversal is that community no longer stands outside of the contemporary market; it is made radically consistent with it. Callinicos makes the point succinctly in asking: 'How can a political current [the Third Way] so strongly identified with the forces of capitalism and modernity somehow attach itself to communitarian theories that define themselves in opposition to these forces?'[16] While the proponents of the Third Way might therefore emphasise the continuities between their own communitarian politics and these ethical-political traditions, perhaps with the aim of lending some legitimacy to their own politics, the form of community that they embrace is at odds with the deeper grounding assumptions of these other traditions.

This raises a more general problem with respect to attempts to draw simple connections between the Third Way and other communitarian traditions. The substantive justification for Third Way approaches to governance is derived, not from a specific ethical framework, or belief system. Neither is it premised on an explicit political philosophy. Rather, its proponents justify it by reference to social theory. As Finlayson has noted in reference to New Labour, although the point applies more broadly:

> New Liberalism, theories of citizenship, communitarianism and Christian morality may all be parts of the New Labour package; but they do not take priority. The moral claims of socialism and social democracy have been watered down until they become very general claims about taking responsibility for ourselves and each other: social-*ism*. In their place, the third way derives its justification from a claim to access a certain kind of truth about the present.[17]

Finlayson's comments are specifically directed at the central role played by Anthony Giddens as a theorist of Third Way politics. Giddens' ideas are explored in Section Four below. Before getting to this, however, I want to explore another dominant stream of social theory within the Third Way, and critical responses to it, namely, the connection between theories of post-industrial society and community.

2. The Second Stream: Third Way or Third Wave? The Rise of Post-Industrial Society and the 'Atari Democrats'

Most attempts to lend theoretical support to the Third Way politics of community draw on claims about the social-structural transformation of contemporary societies. These posit a technologically driven shift from industrial, mass society based around manufacturing to a post-industrial communal society based on informational and service-based forms of work. On these accounts, industrial societies are claimed to be underwritten by, and therefore reflect the structures of mass manufacturing-based production based on 'Fordist' principles. Such societies are characterised by large-scale uniform hierarchical structures of political organisation, social integration, economic production and psychological reproduction. Moreover, they are marked by a limited number of easily distinguishable social groupings with more or less clearly identified interests, predictable values, beliefs, lifestyles and life-trajectories.[18]

In contrast to the monolithic form of mass industrial society, post-industrial production is said to usher forth a more complex, less uniform form of society, characterised by widely varying opinions and ideas, beliefs and preferences, which replace the hierarchically integrated, top-down structures of industrial society. The structure of post-industrial society, it is claimed, is characterised by small-scale, horizontally integrated and heterogenous forms of economic, social and political organisation marked by widely varying patterns of life and belief.[19]

This shift from industrial to post-industrial society is premised on an underlying claim about the potential for new technologies, particularly computer-based telecommunications technologies, to decentralise power and 'flatten' the hierarchical, top-down structures characteristic of mass industrial society. For example, the proliferation of affordable computers and the emergence of information-based service employment is claimed to grant individuals greater flexibility as to when and where they work. New forms of media similarly, are said to provide new avenues for cultural and political expression allowing individuals to disseminate their ideas to large audiences, with the result that a greater diversity of opinion is represented in the public sphere. Small-scale forms of social organisation that are able to reflect these diverse interests, such as community, are thus claimed to offer the optimal, even 'natural' setting for economic, political and social integration within the post-industrial society.[20]

Drawing on these kinds of ideas, the Australian Labor MP Mark Latham claims that the existing bureaucratic structures and practices reflect an outdated Fordist model of mass production reminiscent of the 'Industrial Age':

> This was the era of massification and standardisation — big industrial corporations, big government departments and big interest groups. The Information Age is turning these principles on their head. It is an era of disaggregation and demassification, hence the stunning growth of small businesses and niche markets.
>
> This trend in the new economy is now seeping into social governance. It is placing a premium on the relationships between people: the importance of collaboration in the marketplace; the significance of social capital in civil society.[21]

Latham's analysis echoes that of the *New Progressive Declaration* drafted in 1996 by the Progressive Foundation, a Third Way think-tank in the US with close ties to the Clinton New Democrats.[22] The *Declaration* characterises government in the post-war period as based upon a model of 'industrial democracy'. Public goods such as economic well-being, health and education services, and social security were, according the authors of the *Declaration*, underwritten by a tripartite 'social compact' involving the institutions of labour, business and the state. They claimed that all of these institutions shared essentially the same form, one modelled after Fordist principles of production, including centralised, top-down hierarchical control structures with standardised, uniform solutions to the problems of industrial society.

In the settings of post-industrial society, however, the authors of the *Declaration* deem such structures and practices to be ill-suited and counterproductive to combating the problems which they were established to address.[23] Technological change, the emergence of a consumer culture and the widespread availability of information have rendered political solutions based upon large standardised social programs delivered by bureaucratic institutions inflexible, paternalistic, unresponsive, ineffective and, ultimately, obsolete.[24] New models of government have to take into account people's increased knowledge, their desires for greater choice and access to alternative sources of information than those of the mass media. The *Declaration* thus calls for a new approach to government that replaces 'top-down bureaucratic government with a new model for bottom-up self-governance'.[25]

The proponents of the Third Way who advance such ideas argue further, that the same technologies responsible for these social, economic and political transformations can be harnessed to reconfigure governance around community. The founder and former director of the influential British think-tank Demos and now a member of Tony Blair's Downing Street policy unit, Geoff Mulgan, thus argues that new communication technologies, such as the internet, have meant that the 'scale of effective organisation has shrunk — to that of the school, the neighbourhood, the group...' Whereas government in the past was orientated towards mass provision organised through standardised rules that compelled individuals to act in particular ways, Mulgan argues that the emergence of more highly educated and diverse publics has created a new role for government in drawing connections among and between a multiplicity of actors. Accordingly, this involves a new approach to government that draws upon voluntarism and the capacities of individuals to act autonomously in the satisfaction of their needs. For Mulgan,

> [t]his is where community comes in. It is a deliberately different word from society. It may refer to neighbourhoods or workplaces, but to be meaningful it must imply membership in a human-scale collective: a scale at which it is possible to encounter people face to face.[26]

Similarly, the US communitarian writer Amitai Etzioni claims that the proliferation of so-called 'postmodern technology' (computers, modems, and the like) in the work force has the potential to revive communities, by drawing economic activity back into local settings:

> More people are again able to work at home or nearby, and a high concentration of labour is less and less necessary, in contrast with the industrial age. People can use their computers and modems at home to do a good part of the office work, from processing insurance claims to trading worldwide in commodities, stocks, and bonds. Architects can design buildings and engineers monitor faraway power networks from their places of residence.[27]

He further claims that the emergence of internet-mediated 'virtual communities' create new avenues for community participation, particularly for those unable or unwilling to participate in face-to-face community. For Etzioni, unlike Mulgan, the possibility of face-to-face interaction is not essential to community. Dismissing concerns that the proliferation of mediated communities of these kinds might undermine face-to-face communities, Etzioni claims that '[w]hen all is said and done, virtual is virtuous'.[28]

Although the proponents of the Third Way rarely make the link themselves, it should be noted that this 'high-tech communitarianism' is substantially prefigured in the work of a number of 'post-industrial utopians'.[29] More specifically, a range of post-industrial writers who Boris Frankel has usefully labelled 'Atari Democrats' advocated the kinds of community-centred governance now being advocated by the proponents of the Third Way.[30] In Frankel's words, Atari Democrats refers to 'those politicians and theorists who combine technocratic solutions with the rhetoric of small-is-beautiful'.

> In their self-image and public relations projections, they often distinguish themselves from traditional big business and big labour; they are the 'democratic vanguard' of the new information society. Rejecting the aggressive campaigns of the Moral Majority or the confrontationism of Thatcherism and Reaganism, the 'Atari Democrats' present the 'human face' of new technology, and stress the need for educated citizen initiatives, tolerance, consensus and personal awareness — while they leave largely unchallenged most of the existing practices of the corporate sector.[31]

In this vein, writers such as Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell argued that the technological changes transforming the structures of industrial society could be harnessed to reinvigorate communal forms of social and political life.[32] Toffler, for instance, claimed that the political organisation of industrial societies (or 'second wave civilisation' as he referred to it) was structured around large centralised, hierarchical bureaucracies with routinised decision-making procedures and clearly demarcated centres of authority. These were claimed to reflect the same principles of mass industrial production: large, geographically-concentrated factories, catering for mass markets of standardised tastes.

For Toffler, 'representative government was the political equivalent of the factory. Indeed, it was a factory for the manufacture of collective integrational decisions'.[33]

The emergence of new technologies and new forms of communications media would, he argued, fragment the structures that gave a recognisable form to industrial society. Established structures of socio-political integration and identity formation, such as the nation-state, would decline, and thus have less significance for providing shared social bonds and structures of identity.[34] While this would remove the supposed rigidities of industrial society, creating greater consumer choice and individual freedom, Toffler believed it would also destablise the integrative structures of industrial society.[35] Consequently, he argued for the urgent restoration of community as a means of negotiating the social dislocation and upheaval which would emerge as an effect of the 'de-massification' of post-industrial society:

> The break-up of mass society ... while holding out the promise of much greater individual self-fulfilment, is at least for the present spreading the pain of isolation. If the emergent ... society is not to be icily metallic, with a vacuum for a heart, it must attack this problem frontally. It must restore community.[36]

Toffler argued that the restoration of community could be achieved by harnessing the same transformative forces that were reshaping industrial society. In a precedent to Etzioni's upbeat assessment of the potential for 'postmodern technology' to revive community through telecommuting, Toffler claimed that communications technologies that permit workers to work from home could return production to the home, thereby creating a 'home-centred society' of 'electronic cottages'. The reorganisation of production in this way,

> could help to restore a sense of community belonging and touch off a renaissance among voluntary organizations like churches, women's groups, lodges, clubs, athletic and youth organizations.[37]

Taking a somewhat more sophisticated, although no less utopian path to that of Toffler, Daniel Bell argued in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* that community would emerge as the natural unit of social integration as a consequence of the social relations of production inherent within service-based, informational economies. Where the social relations of production in industrial society were structured around the individual and the machine — Bell refers to it as 'a game against fabricated nature' — those of the post-industrial society would be characterised by the interrelations between people, taking the form of 'a game between persons'.[38] The individual would therefore no longer offer a viable unit of social

organisation, which Bell claimed was the case in industrial society. Post-industrial society would instead see the interrelations between individuals come to the fore in social organisation. These changes in the social relations of production would thus underwrite the re-emergence of communal life. Community would emerge as the basic unit of social integration, the 'concerns of communal society' — that is, quality of life issues — being the defining political issues. Bell went as far as to predict that such concerns would replace 'quarrels between functional economic-interest groups for distributive shares of the national product'.[39]

From our present vantage point such claims can be seen to rest on a good deal of optimism fuelled by a leap of technological faith. As events in the intervening period between when writers like Toffler and Bell first made their pronouncements and the present have shown, the impact of new technologies has been more complex and politically and socially ambiguous than the Atari Democrats had allowed for. Although technologies have wrought enormous change, sometimes to the benefit of small groups and individuals, they have also bought with them large-scale social dislocation and alienation, as well increasing concentrations of wealth and power. For example, the advent of telecommuting and related technologies such as mobile phones in the workplace has often served simply to erode the boundaries between work and leisure, diminishing opportunities for community participation. As Paul James has noted

> working from home could as easily lead to privatized, isolated, fragmented and highly exploited drudgery as it could to Toffler's utopia ... In the decade-and-a-half since Toffler wrote *The Third Wave*, the reality of hyper-exploitation has raced on, the world has become a more unequal place and telecommuting has become a form of intensified intellectual out-work.[40]

There is, in short, no straightforward connection between the emergence of a post-industrial economy in which value is derived from services and information-based forms of work, and a renewal of community life.

It is somewhat puzzling then, that even with the benefit of hindsight, the Atari Democrats of the Third Way have been content to advance essentially the same arguments, simply updating the technological means by which this high-tech communitarian utopia is to be realised. Moreover, and quite apart from these considerations, there is no necessary reason to believe that the further proliferation of communications technologies and the renewal of community life should go together.

While the advocates of the Third Way claim that the latest communications technologies have the potential to bring many more people into contact with one another than was the case in the past, thereby placing a premium on communal relations, such an analysis has nothing to say about the *nature* or *quality* of those relations. If these are simply fleeting face-to-face encounters amongst otherwise anonymous 'others', such as those between workers employed in the service industries and their clients, or between participants in internet chat rooms, then it is unclear as to why these should herald a renaissance in community life.

The further weakness of the Atari Democrat's arguments is that it rests on a linear, even economic and technological determinist account of social change. Complex social, political and cultural transformations are reduced to little more than epiphenomenona of economic and technological processes of development. There is little in these analyses to indicate any awareness that the shift to the post-industrial society is being actively sponsored and underwritten by governments — which is to highlight the role of the proponents of the Third Way themselves in the transformations that they claim to be responding to. Rather, the proponents of the Third Way portray the shift to a post-industrial society as an objective 'social fact'; an inevitable and therefore unpolitical process to which there is no alternative.[41] The implication of this is that the kinds of political prescriptions advanced by the proponents of the Third Way in response to these transformations are disinterested and, more importantly, the only viable ones on offer.

The apparent inevitability of these processes is related to the more general tendency of the proponents of the Third Way, noted in the final section of the previous chapter, to overlook relationships of power and conflict within their own politics. It is with some reason, then, that in response to this strategy of de-politicisation many critics and commentators, particularly from the Left, have viewed the emphasis on community and ethical renewal with some suspicion. More specifically, the Third Way's politics of community is claimed to be either a political façade that glosses over unpalatable social and economic realities, or an intensification of what Elliott and Atkinson have dubbed the 'control culture'.

3. 'New Communitarians' and the Intensification of the 'Control Culture'

Rejecting claims about the emergence of post-industrial society, critics from the Left cite empirical economic data suggesting that the claims about the emergence of post-industrial society are at best exaggerated or at worst, false. James Petras, for example, argues that

> the claims of Third Way ideologues that we are entering a new economic epoch — a post-industrial, high-tech information era — are patently false. In the United States, computer industries represent less than 3 percent of the economy. Their productivity has been negligible and they have been greatly hyped in stock values by Third Way ideologues and stock market speculators ... Economic realities belie the ideological claims once again.[42]

Callinicos, whose assessment of the Third Way was touched on briefly in the Introduction, takes a similar view. Citing economic growth and productivity statistics, Callinicos argues that the productivity gains from the proliferation of computers have been negligible and their social consequences are minor when compared with the social impact wrought by technological developments of earlier periods, such as the introduction of affordable air travel.[43]

For writers like Petras and Callinicos, the valorisation of community approaches to governance are an ideological cover for the extension of neo-liberalism, the aim of which is to reduce the role of the state in governance by forcing individuals back onto their own resources. Petras, for example, claims that the concern with restoring civil society and communal bonds 'has become an ideological bludgeon to demolish comprehensive public programs and a code word for transferring public wealth into the hands of affluent private interests'.[44] Community is thus intended to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of services resulting from public spending cuts. Callinicos stresses the socially authoritarian character of the Third Way, suggesting that this is, in part, the logical by-product of neo-liberal assumptions about the nature of economy and society. Unemployment here is seen as an individual choice of those who are 'work-shy' and 'job-snobs'. The solution to such problems is moral reform of the individual through attitudinal change and smashing so-called cultures of dependency. For Callinicos, then, the Third Way's emphasis on community is an attempt to impose moral reform.[45]

Elliott and Atkinson take a similar view. Taking a Keynesian perspective, they argue that the concern with community is a tool of social authoritarianism to be used against those

who do not adhere to middle-class norms and values. As Elliott and Atkinson put it, the concern with community in Britain is an expression of a 'control culture' which seeks 'to micro-manage the private lives of sixty million Britons, from hours spent on homework to diet, personal habits and drunkeness'.[46] 'Communitarianism', they go on to suggest with some playful embellishment,

> is not content that people should be left alone once they have entered the garden gate; it wants to know how they are cleaning their teeth and washing their hands, how many minutes their children are spending on their homework, how much fatty food they are eating, how many units of alcohol they are imbibing, whether they are having safe sex and whether, having had the safe sex, they are guilty of the even worse sin of enjoying a post-coital cigarette.[47]

While Elliott and Atkinson's account is exaggerated, there is a large measure of truth in these assessments of the socially authoritarian character of the Third Way. Politicians and governments of the Third Way led by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair have, as we saw in Chapter One, implemented punitive policies to lever people into work and have expressed their approval for harsh anti-crime measures, such as so-called 'zero-tolerance' policing strategies.[48] Moreover, the concern to cultivate 'a modern marriage culture' examined at the end of the previous chapter, is an expression of the same authoritarian tendencies of the Third Way.

However, the attempt to reduce the Third Way to an instrument of social authoritarianism necessary for maintaining neo-liberal forms of economic organisation is inadequate as a broader analysis. The core problem with these analyses is that while they offer an important corrective to the overblown hype about the nature of post-industrial society, they are set within an overly narrow framework of analysis, which emphasises the continuities between contemporary social structures and those of the past. Callinicos, for example, gives primacy to the economic over the cultural. As such, his understanding of contemporary social and cultural changes arising out of processes of globalisation is limited to increasing economic integration, while his discussion of community is dominated by a discussion of economic equality. While economic questions are obviously important to any meaningful discussion of technology, globalisation and community, their consequences break free from the narrow economic framework within which Callinicos seeks to contain them. Moreover, while Callinicos does not entirely rule out the idea that information technology has had some impact on social life, he does not specify what that impact might consist in.

This is not to agree with the claims of some proponents of the Third Way that the supposed dissolution of the structures of industrial society has eliminated exploitation and alienation, or that the proliferation of technology allows for the automatic and unproblematic reclamation of community.[49] Rather it is to insist that technology and knowledge have reshaped social life in ways that disrupt the taken-for-granted assumptions of social life. The nature of such changes, and the social and cultural forms which they give rise to and which they are a consequence of, need, moreover, to be understood in a way that goes beyond the uncritical celebration of the Atari Democrats and the economic framework of traditional Left critics. For their part, writers such as Petras, Callinicos and Elliott and Atkinson are theoretically ill-equipped to analyse this shift, since their main concern is to highlight, in economic terms, the continuity between existing socio-economic arrangements and those of the past.

Knowledge and information are central to this social transformation, although in a somewhat different way than that theorised by the Atari Democrats of the Third Way. Chapters Four and Five offer a detailed discussion of the nature of this shift that can only be alluded to here. For now it is worth noting that lacking a more thorough-going analysis, these writers can offer little in the way of an explanation of, or alternative to the Third Way's politics of community. Elliott and Atkinson, for example, simply claim that New Labour's politics is an expression of their 'new core constituency in the social and corporate administrative classes'.[50] The focus on community as a vehicle of governance is thus simply an expression of a particular set of class interests. Although there is undoubtedly a class dimension to the Third Way, reducing it to this dimension can only lead to a cataloguing of class interests. While illuminating in some respects, such a catalogue does not amount to an explanation.

The limits of Elliott and Atkinson's account become clear when they come to offer an alternative to the Third Way. The best that they can offer is a defensive and — notwithstanding their assertions to the contrary — nostalgic valorisation of traditional forms of community, particularly working-class communities, as these supposedly were in the past.[51] Similarly, Callinicos's alternative is 'the development of a mass movement centred on the organized working class that seeks the democratic reconstruction of society', the beginnings of which he sees in the global anti-capitalist movement.[52] While it would be premature to rule out the potential of this movement in mobilising a political response to globalisation, it still has some way to go and significant obstacles to

overcome to develop a sustainable political project with a clearly defined, achievable objective. More generally, Callinicos fails to address how the fragmentation of working-class communities, culture and identity, which were central to organised resistance in the past, is to be reversed under present conditions.

In Chapter Seven, I will return to Elliott and Atkinson with the objective of retrieving some of their better ideas to help formulate an alternative to the Third Way's politics of community. For the moment though, I want to explore perhaps the most developed account of the Third Way from its most theoretically articulate supporter, Anthony Giddens.

4. The Third Stream: Social Solidarity and the Transformation of Space and Time

In Giddens' analysis, the emergence of community as an increasingly important arena of social, political and economic integration is underpinned by a more basic transformation in the fundamental ontological categories of space and time and their socio-ontological correlates, place and tradition. Giddens refers to this more basic transformation as 'time-space distanciation'; a process in which social life is 'stretched' across greater expanses of space and time. Two expressions of time-space distanciation which have particular significance to the renewal of community as a vehicle of governance, are globalisation and the emergence of what he refers to as a 'post-traditional' or 'reflexive' social order.[53] Each will be dealt with in turn.

According to Giddens, the notion of 'globalisation', although the product of a complex array of political and economic forces and having an enormous variety of social, political and economic consequences, refers at a basic level to 'the transformation of time and space in our lives'.[54] Put simply, events at the local level have global consequences, and vice versa. One example of this is that the proliferation of information and communications technologies that are driving the contemporary era of globalisation mean that the decisions and choices of geographically and temporally disparate actors have far-reaching implications and consequences — both intended and unintended — for one another. In Giddens' terms, processes of globalisation 'compress' the spatial and temporal frame within which social, economic and cultural relations between the local

and the global are set. The strength of this conception of globalisation, according to Giddens, is that it emphasises its complexities as a two-way process, as opposed to typical, one-dimensional analyses which see globalisation in terms of the increasing concentration of power and wealth.[55]

This technologically mediated compression of space and time, according to Giddens 'creates a strong impetus and logic to the downward devolution of power', presenting new opportunities for small-scale social actors to effect change at higher levels of political organisation.[56] This, he claims, can be illustrated by the success of local and regional groups in achieving political change, from nationalists who campaigned for the establishment of the Scottish parliament in the UK and greater autonomy for Quebec in Canada, to the environmental groups who prevented the Shell oil company from sinking its Brent Spar oil drilling platform at sea.[57] The 'downwards pressure' of processes of globalisation, according to Giddens 'makes a community focus both necessary and possible'.[58] To steer processes of globalisation in this direction, Giddens advocates the devolution of power and authority to layers of social organisation below that of the nation-state as a means of drawing individuals into a more intimate relationship with the decision-making processes that affect their lives.[59] This, he suggests, might be achieved through '"experiments with democracy" — local direct democracy, electronic referenda, citizens' juries and other possibilities'.[60]

Such measures are possible and likely to meet with success, according to Giddens, because they tap into a second expression of the transformation of space and time, which is connected with globalisation as both a contributing factor as well as one of its consequences: the emergence of a 'post-traditional' or 'reflexive' social order. For Giddens, contemporary societies are 'post-traditional', not because tradition is absent, but because its role as an authoritative guide on how individual's live and how social life is structured, has been weakened. One of the consequences of this is that individuals are forced to take a more active role in fashioning their own lives.[61]

The driving force behind the weakening of traditional forms of authority can, according to Giddens, be linked to the changed nature of knowledge in a society where the basic framing categories of space and time have been fundamentally altered. Unlike traditional forms of knowledge, whose validity rests upon, and is therefore circumscribed by, the places and social contexts within which it is instantiated and enacted, social life within

contemporary societies is increasingly structured and governed by the pronouncements of experts and specialist knowledges. Giddens refers to these knowledges as 'expert systems'.[62]

Expert systems are bodies of knowledge composed of abstract, 'impersonal principles', whose validity and practicality is independent of any particular spatial or temporal context within which they might be set. In Giddens' words, expert systems are 'systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organise large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today'.[63] An example of an expert system, according to Giddens, is sitting in a house. He claims that simply by sitting in a house, one is implicated into all kinds of expert knowledges — architecture, being the obvious one.[64] The abstract character of expert systems means that, in contrast to traditional or pre-modern forms of expertise which are embedded within the lineaments of place and tradition, they can be 'lifted out' or 'disembedded' from the spatial and temporal contexts within which they are developed, thereby taking on a more general form.[65] As such, 'knowing how to go on' in contemporary societies is no longer a matter of an attachment to a particular place or adherence to the precepts of tradition. Those aspects of life which could formerly be taken for granted or otherwise negotiated and governed by tradition, now have to be actively chosen (and re-chosen), decided (and re-decided) and, increasingly, justified (and re-justified), in accordance with, and by reference to, the opinions and findings of experts and expert systems.

The paradox of this is that the appeal to expert systems as guides on how one ought to live one's life, constantly undermines the certainty that they appear to promise in the place of tradition. While seeming to re-embed social life within a stable framework of meanings informed by the findings of experts, the openness of expert systems to contestation and consequent revision, ensures that this stability is always provisional. The logic of expert systems is such that they constantly work to undermine the certainties that at first they appear to promise. Our current era, then is one in which social life has become a 'reflexive project'.[66] 'The reflexivity of modern social life', Giddens argues,

> consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character. We should be clear about this phenomenon ... In all cultures, social practices are routinely altered in the light

> of ongoing discoveries which feed into them. But only in the era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalised to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world ... What is characteristic of modernity is not an embracing of the new for its own sake, but the presumption of wholesale reflexivity — which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself.[67]

From the way in which one conducts one's personal relationships to child-rearing practices to dietary and consumption habits to the belief system that one subscribes to, and even to one's identity, social life has been remade as an arena of radical choice mediated by the claims and findings of experts and expert systems.

According to Giddens, the socio-political consequence of the proliferation of expert systems is that hierarchical forms of organisations, including both traditional forms of community as well as modern bureaucratic organisation, have been undermined. The legitimacy of both is increasingly called into question as social actors desire, and are able to take, a more active role in fashioning their own lives.[68] While the current era of 'reflexive modernity' might mean that social life is experienced as less stable than it might have been in the past, Giddens nevertheless argues that the emergence of a reflexive social order can underwrite new forms of community and, with them, new forms of governance. 'An increasingly reflexive society' he claims, 'is also one marked by high levels of self-organization.'[69] The emergence of a reflexive social order in which hierarchy recedes and individuals are able to take a more active role in the life choices that frame their existence, is one that is ideally suited to a more participatory style of politics. The 'upwards' pressure of a reflexive social order can be drawn upon to underwrite the reinvention of community.

What are we to make of Giddens' analysis? Although it undoubtedly offers a more complex account of the Third Way than the post-industrial utopianism of the Atari Democrats with their tendency toward technological and economic determinism, Giddens' account suffers from a similar lack of theoretical depth. As John Hinkson notes, Giddens offers a structural account of contemporary social changes, but shows little understanding of social structures beyond a certain empirical awareness. In Hinkson's words, thoroughgoing processes of social-structural transformations are treated by Giddens as 'phenomenal surfaces'. In other words, social structures are named and their multiple connections and interdependencies are drawn out within a more encompassing framework of ontological analysis, yet, for all this, they are treated

empirically. Giddens, according to Hinkson, 'does not take his own account seriously enough, ... he musters a complex of categories to speak of the global situation but then allows their practical import to drift and dissipate'.[70]

This point can be illustrated by the way in which Giddens underestimates and therefore overlooks the consequences of processes of time-space distanciation to comprehensively reconfigure the social relations of presence on which community is based. The claim here is that Giddens offers a contradictory politics in which globalisation and the emergence of expert systems thoroughly transform the basic underpinnings of social life, hollowing out the foundations upon which traditional forms of community were founded. Nevertheless, for Giddens, new forms of social solidarity and participatory politics can be reworked by what are, in the argument of this thesis, essentially reformist political measures, which do no more than tweak these same transformative processes as a way of deriving desirable results.

Aside from the remarkable slab of optimism upon which Giddens' claim rests, there is no reason why globalisation (in its contemporary form) and an increasingly reflexive social order might result in a more participatory politics, much less the new forms of social solidarity that Giddens envisages. The 'downwards pressure' of globalisation that Giddens makes so much of, pales into insignificance when considered in light of the massive inequalities in wealth, resources and power globalisation has intensified.[71] Moreover, the aspect of globalisation which Giddens illustrates by a resurgence of national identity, can just as easily take the form of 'social atomisation' and 'social balkanisation', as an orderly decentralisation of power to participatory decision-making structures. Similarly, where practically every aspect of social life is conceived of as a matter for individual choice, the legitimacy, and indeed the very existence of collective interests, can be called into question, as illegitimate constraints on the rights of the individual to make their own lives.

For globalisation and social reflexivity to be steered in the direction that Giddens hopes, some sort of communal sentiment would, it seems, need to mobilised to rework them. The workability of Giddens' analysis therefore rests on an implicit presumption that, in spite of the wholesale transformation of space and time, basic sources of, and impulses toward, social solidarity and communality remain undisturbed. Yet this is precisely the assumption that Giddens' analysis, if it is to be taken at all seriously, puts radically in

doubt. Put roughly, Giddens' Third Way is dependent on him smuggling social solidarity in the back door.

From this, one of two conclusions present themselves. If such sources of social solidarity and community do remain, this would tend to suggest that the transformation of space and time as Giddens formulates it is overstated, in which case the justification for the kinds of political changes that he is arguing for is severely weakened. Why, one might reply, is there no possibility of a return to the forms of community of the past? If, however, the transformations of the fundamental socio-ontological categories of social life are as thoroughgoing as Giddens claims, then this would seem to suggest that any adequate response will need to be far more radical than any countenanced by the Third Way politicians and their advisers thus far. The response would have to tackle processes of time-space distanciation (particularly globalisation in its present form) head-on, rather than the current efforts to rework community inside of these processes — which is what the network community offers.

In the next chapter, these criticisms of Giddens' notion of time-space distanciation are developed further in order to clarify the alternative framework that I put forward for understanding the Third Way. For the moment, though, I want to explore a somewhat different line of criticism against Giddens advanced by the British sociologist Nikolas Rose. Rose rejects Giddens' account because it is premised on what he refers to as an explanation that rests on 'epochal terms'. As Rose characterises them, such analyses are based on the claim

> that we have moved into an age of 'late modernity' ... of post-history and detraditionalization, where the stable historical, cultural and institutional markers that used to provide the bearings for living a life have been eroded or subverted. From this perspective ... [the concern with ethical renewal] would appear merely one aspect of the more general rise of 'life politics' in an age of risk, self-reflexivity and the dethroning of traditional authority.[72]

Rose expresses a wariness of such 'epochal' approaches to the theorisation of social and political phenomena. In his view, such approaches reduce the renewed concern with community and the ethical in politics to a 'nostalgic wish for a solution to the perplexities of the autonomous self, condemned to search for meaning in a fragmented world resistant to stable sense-making procedures'.[73]

However, Rose's dismissal of such accounts is somewhat of target. While the proponents of the Third Way have expressed wariness towards nostalgic understandings of community, this does not entail a general attack on the role of the ethical in politics. As we have seen, the proponents of the Third Way are concerned with formulating new forms of social solidarity — a project which Rose himself, as we shall see in the final chapter, is also engaged. In spite of this case of mistaken identity, Rose offers a quite different interpretation of the Third Way than those examined thus far. For Rose, the Third Way can be understood as what he calls an 'advanced liberal' practice of government, which is distinctive in the way it seeks to govern through ethical relations. It is to a critical assessment of this that I now turn.

5. The 'Death of the Social': 'Advanced Liberalism' and 'Ethico-Politics'

In contrast to the 'epochal accounts' advanced by writers like Giddens and other proponents of the Third Way who frame their own political concerns in terms of claims about wholesale social transformation, Rose claims to explore 'changes at a more modest level, not in terms of cultural shifts but as empirically identifiable differences in ways of thinking and acting'.

> It is not a question of claiming that the older ways have been erased or consigned to history, but of identifying something new taking shape within and alongside the old arrangements, something different threatening or promising to be born.[74]

In working in this way, Rose draws explicitly upon the genealogical approach developed by Michel Foucault. The aim of genealogy is, in Foucaultian terms, to 'problematise' and 'destabilise' taken-for-granted practices and ways of thinking about social phenomena. The purpose of doing so is not to overthrow existing social and political arrangements and ideas, installing in their place a comprehensive alternative, but to understand how it is that we have come to be the subjects that we are and act in the ways that we do. Foucaultian genealogists thus concern themselves with the contingencies and accidents that underlie otherwise taken-for-granted discourses and practices. The political aim of genealogies is to enable individuals to create new ways of living and being for themselves.

Rose's analysis of the Third Way is developed within a broader genealogy of freedom. His objective is to draw out the historical contingencies — 'the lines of power, truth and

ethics' — that have shaped notions and practices of freedom and conferred on them a 'naturalness', such that they have become the uncontested ground upon which political and ethical thought and practices of government are enacted.[75] For Rose, the Third Way focus on community as a vehicle of governance can be understood as a practice of government that seeks to govern individuals by utilising their freedom.[76]

In framing the Third Way in genealogical terms, Rose's draws on Foucault's notion of 'governmentality'. Governmentality is a genealogical tool that seeks to identify the driving rationales of particular practices of government. Specifically, Rose analyses the linkages between the Third Way's politics of community and liberal rationales of government, or *liberal governmentality*. To understand what is meant by liberal governmentality and its connection to community, a brief excursus through Foucault's writing on liberalism is necessary.

In Foucault's words, liberalism is understood as 'a practice, which is to say, a "way of doing things" oriented toward objectives and regulating itself by means of a sustained reflection'.[77] According to Foucault, the 'sustained reflection' through which liberal forms of government are regulated is 'the internal rule of maximum economy'. In other words, according to liberals, government must tend to maximum efficiency. For Foucault, liberal approaches to government are characterised by a presumption 'that one governs too much'.[78] Rose refers to this as the 'recurrent dilemma of liberal government: the fear of not governing enough versus the fear of governing too much'.[79]

As liberalism developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Foucault claims that this dilemma was resolved through the surveillance of societies and the development of 'disciplinary knowledges'. Through the development of statistical knowledge and the 'human sciences' — psychiatry, criminology, economics, sociology, and so on — a grouping of people and their 'regularities' (rates of fertility, mortality, and illegitimacy) could be constituted as an object of knowledge.[80] These regularities were expressed in the concept of 'population'. With the concept of population, Foucault claims that the social became a field of calculable action, and therefore amenable to efficient government. For example, Foucault argues that the human sciences produce certain kinds of subjects (for example, 'the mad', 'the pervert', 'the criminal'), identified as such in relation to what is determined as 'normal' within a given population, and distributed at a statistically calculable frequency. The potential risk that such subjects

might pose to the social body can therefore be quantified, calculated and lessened through various forms of governmental intervention — incarceration, institutionalisation, hospitalisation, for example.

Foucault places particular emphasis on the role of economic knowledge in this process. The 'essential issue in the establishment of the art of government' he claims, is the 'introduction of economy into political practice'.[81] Economic thought, according to Foucault, offers a means by which the manifold dimensions of a 'population', once constituted as such, can be rendered calculable, and hence governable. The attraction of thinking about a population in economic terms is its apparent objectivity. The constitution of a realm of economic behaviour as a relatively clearly demarcated arena of behaviour co-extensive with a society existing within a determinate geographical space has, on this view, been central to the realisation of maximally efficient government.[82]

In Foucault's analysis, then, the 'recurrent dilemma' of liberal rule is resolved through the surveillance of society. Government proceeds through the information that is derived from the study of society itself. 'Society, as both a precondition and a final end', according to Foucault, 'is what enables one to no longer ask the question: How can one govern as much as possible and at the least possible cost?'

> The idea of society enables a technology of government to be developed based on the principle that it itself is already 'too much,' 'in excess' — or at least that it is added on as a supplement which can and must always be questioned as to its necessity and its usefulness.[83]

Through an extensive network of knowledges, the governmental action is made coextensive with the boundaries of the social body; society at once constitutes that which is to be governed and, through its own internal regularities, establishes the limits to governmental action. Government thus becomes a self-regulating process: society is governed according to its own internal rhythms.

Taking Foucault's analysis of 'liberal governmentality' as his point of departure, Rose claims that 'the social' is no longer the primary or 'natural' terrain of liberal government. The 'hold of "the social" over our political imagination', he claims, 'is weakening'.[84] An important factor in this process is the changed relationship between society and economy. The spaces of economic behaviour and social life are no longer as neatly coextensive with one another as they were in the past. Put simply, societies are

organised in terms of nation-states, while economic behaviour has broken free from the level of the nation-state, to the supra- and sub-national levels.[85] According to Rose, 'the economic well-being of a nation and of its population can no longer be so easily mapped upon one another ... [T]he social and the economic are now seen as antagonistic'.[86] The social can no longer function as a space open to economic calculation. As such, it is no longer possible to govern by governing 'society'.

The decline of the social as the 'terrain of government' has seen the emergence of what Rose refers to as 'advanced liberal' practices of government. In contrast to liberalism's concern with governing 'society', advanced liberal practices of government have sought 'to govern without governing *society*, that is to say, to govern through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents — citizens, consumers, parents, employees, managers, investors'.[87]

The ascendancy of neo-liberal forms of economic and social governance throughout the 1970s and their subsequent domination of political and economic debates throughout the 1980s to the present, which emphasise a certain kind of freedom (individualised, economic freedom) is, according to Rose, one expression of advanced liberal government.[88] Neo-liberalism, however, does not exhaust advanced liberalism as a more general political and governmental phenomenon.[89] For Rose, the Third Way, is another expression of advanced liberalism; the relations of mutual obligation within community offer 'a new spatialization of government' in which subjects can be governed.[90] He notes:

> in the institution of community, a sector is brought into existence whose vectors and forces can be mobilized, enrolled, deployed in novel programmes and techniques which encourage and harness active practices of self-management and identity construction, or personal ethics and collective allegiances.[91]

Rose refers to the advanced liberalism of the Third Way as an example of 'ethico-politics', which aims to govern through the ethical relations between individuals.[92] Against the claims of the proponents of the Third Way to have found a 'new politics' and the explanation of their communitarian focus by reference to 'objective social facts', Rose's idea of advanced liberalism positions the Third Way's politics of community firmly within liberal traditions of governance. In doing so, Rose's analysis draws out the complex micro-relationships of power that, although often unstated by its supporters, are integral elements of the Third Way.

What remains less clear in Rose's account, however, is the reason for the emergence of this ethico-politics of community. The nearest that Rose comes to offering a context for understanding advanced liberalism's turn to community are some all-too-brief remarks on the links between the emergence of community as the 'natural terrain' of government and the changing nature of political subjectivity — specifically the nature of citizenship. The emergence of community as an arena of governance, he suggests, has been accompanied by the multiplication and fragmentation of citizenship by new political subjectivities, such as those around which identity politics form. These no longer conform to the uniformities of social citizenship as this developed in the nineteenth and twentieth century, but to more specific 'sites': ethnicity, sexuality, gender, for example. These, in turn, are linked to more general alterations in the nature of identity formation, such as the way in which new media technologies, advertising images, and consumer culture directly intervene in the formation of personal identity.[93]

> This fragmentation of the social by the new technologies of images and identities, of lifestyles and choices, of consumption, marketing and the mass media has thus produced new collectivizations of 'habitus' outside the control of coherent discourses of civility or the technologies of political government. The commercialization of lifestyle formation thus allows for the possibility of 'other subjectivities' — novel modes of individuality and allegiance and their public legitimation. The politics of conduct is faced with a new set of problems: governing subject formation in this new plural field.[94]

Community, he suggests, has therefore appeared as the 'natural terrain' for governing in 'this new plural field'. By mobilising the personal affinities and emotional bonds that individuals have to the different communities with which they identify, in opposition to 'the "artificial" political space of society', individuals can be governed with maximum efficiency.[95]

Although such observations about the transformation of the self, and the changing nature of political identity are interesting and insightful, they are left undeveloped, remaining simply observations. What is lacking from Rose's analysis is a broader theoretical framework within which the specific social form of community advocated by the proponents of the Third Way — namely, the network community — can be understood or questioned. Here we come up against the limits of Rose's approach: although conceptually and descriptively useful, it lacks explanatory power.

To some extent, Rose acknowledges these limits in his own elaboration and justification of what genealogy entails, even as he attempts to avoid the force of this conclusion. His

own approach, he claims is 'more empirical than theoretical'.[96] The meaning of empiricism here is quite distinctive. Specifically, Rose advocates 'an empiricism of the surface' in opposition to understandings of empirical analyses that seek to interpretively disclose the underlying interests and hidden agendas that are at work within a certain rationale of government or 'an appeal to the primacy of lived experience'.[97] The aim of Rose's 'empiricism of the surface' is, he claims, 'diagnostic':

> To diagnose — the verb form emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century — was not to locate an essence, but to establish a singularity or individuation within a whole set of relations by means of a work on symptoms. In an analogous fashion, genealogies of government seek to establish the singularity of particular strategies within a field of relations of truth, power and subjectivity by means of a work on symptoms. The attempt to isolate, group and organize, to set forth a symptomology ... On the basis of a certain symptomology, then, genealogies of government seek to reconstruct the problematizations to which programmes, strategies, tactics posed themselves as a solution ... If, for example, imprisonment, marketization, community care are seen as answers, to what are they answers? And, in reconstructing the problematizations which accord them intelligibility as answers, these grounds become visible, their limits and presuppositions are opened for interrogation in new ways.[98]

Rose's aim is to create a space in which we might 'think otherwise' about our present, thereby opening the possibility for a plurality of alternative ways of being governed and, more fundamentally, being human.[99] Rose thus claims that his empiricism is both ethical and critical. It is ethical in that it is concerned with individuals as ethical beings and because, in destabilising the taken for granted ways in which we are formed as ethical beings, it opens the way for an alternative ethics. Further, it is critical, according to Rose, in the Nietzschean sense of fostering an 'untimely attitude to our present'.[100] By attending to the contingencies and accidents that underlie that which appears as given, one is able 'to open a space for critical thought' in which other ways of thinking and acting might be developed.[101]

Notwithstanding Rose's conception of diagnosis, and adopting even the most generous of interpretations, a symptomology does not equal explanation. A 'mapping' of symptoms is closer to description — a sophisticated form of description to be sure, but description nonetheless. More problematic for Rose is that this diagnostic approach is not dissimilar to that taken by the proponents of the Third Way. As Finlayson has noted in relation to Giddens' *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*:

> Its mode of discourse is diagnostic and prescriptive, giving recommendations for good health in an ailing society ... *The Third Way* is a kind of manual

> specifying the appropriate mentality for government in the present era. The legitimacy of its argument does not depend on the coherence of logical principles in the way it would in a work of normative political philosophy, but on the accuracy of the diagnosis and the coincidence of sociological reasoning with the reasoning characteristic of the present.[102]

Rose's 'empiricism of the surface' thus reproduces the same kind of problem noted above in relation to Giddens. While he provides novel insights into the Third Way's politics of community, his analysis of these is limited to what Hinkson refers to as 'phenomenal surfaces' that by-passes the deeper cultural transformations of which the Third Way is an expression. In other words, while Rose offers insights into the changing relationship between economy and society, and the emergence of novel forms of subjectivity, he has little to say about the roots of these changes. They appear simply as commonplaces of contemporary social life.

A consequence of this is that the critical capabilities of Rose's 'empiricism of the surface' and the capacity of this approach to generate alternatives is severely limited. For instance, although Rose offers qualified support for ethico-politics on the grounds that ethical questions are not easily reduced to technocratic concerns of administration, he is critical of the Third Way for having failed to realise this openness. The proponents of the Third Way have instead opted for a closed form of ethico-politics that emphasises normalisation and discipline over openness and experimentation. While such criticisms are to some extent justified, Rose's alternative to the ethico-politics of the Third Way is a radically open notion of community. More specifically, Rose advocates what he calls a radical ethico-politics, in which community would be

> imagined and enacted as mobile collectivities, as spaces of indeterminacy, of becoming. To community as essence, origin, fixity, one can thus counterpose community as a constructed form for the collective unworking of identities and moralities.[103]

Such communities, according to Rose, are 'practically enacted in all those hybridized, queer, subaltern and non-essentialized communities'.[104]

Putting aside for the moment the extreme vagueness of what is meant by 'hybridized, queer, subaltern and non-essentialized communities' or where 'all' of these communities are enacted, it is questionable whether such a social formation could be considered a community at all, or whether the term is simply inappropriate here. To the extent that this could be understood as a community, the emphasis on the 'unworking of identity'

and celebration of indeterminacy, suggests a very shallow, unstable even fleeting, sense of association. The core problem with this conception of community is that it elevates openness to a political good in itself. In seeking to distance himself from the closed ethico-politics of the Third Way, Rose appears to think that any form of 'closure' — ethical, political, cultural — should be avoided, apparently at any cost. As such, he seems incapable of making critical distinctions between different forms of closure, negating the possibility of closure as productive, even necessary for community.[105] Rose's conception of community and the problems associated with it are taken up at greater length in Chapter Seven.

Conclusion

The various approaches to the Third Way examined in this chapter can be summarised around the following three axes: tradition/modernity, structural change/structural stasis and, finally, ontology/genealogy. The first stream of argument emphasises the transition from tradition to modernity; the Third Way is simply reviving and updating communitarian forms of governance. This posits a basic continuity between the Third Way's politics of community and established ethical-political communitarian traditions. This emphasis on continuity can only be sustained provided that one ignores the details of what the proponents of the Third Way are saying. The network community explored in Chapter Two is contrary to the basic assumptions and ideas on which these older ethical and political traditions were based.

The second stream of argument emphasises the discontinuity between the Third Way and more established ethical and political traditions, focusing on the social-structural transformations within contemporary society. According to the Atari Democrats, who advance this argument, the Third Way's foregrounding of community in practices of governance is not driven by the aim of returning to older traditions, but is instead an attempt to forge a politics that is responsive to post-industrial economy and society. This is based on a structural approach to social explanation, in which social changes arising from technological developments necessitate and make possible community-centred approaches to governance.

The other side to this structural account of social change is the Left critics of claims about post-industrial society. While writers such as Petras, Callinicos and Elliott and Atkinson retain the focus on social structural explanation, they argue that the Third Way is an expression not of social structural transformation, but of structural stasis. Claims that contemporary societies have undergone a major structural transformation are argued to be exaggerated or simply untrue since the underlying structures of capital accumulation remain intact and unchanged. The advocacy of community-centred approaches to government is thus interpreted as nothing more than ideological window dressing, the object of which is to give the illusion of the radical change while leaving fundamental structures of exploitation untouched. The emphasis on mutual obligation and attitudinal change as tools of governance are claimed to be nothing more than a socially authoritarian project, the aim of which is to micro-manage the minutiae of people's daily lives. The problem with these approaches, however, is that each relies on an overly simplistic linear, understanding of social change. The Atari Democrats of the Third Way speak as if the structures of industrial society have withered away completely, while their critics, who emphasise structural stasis, overlook the significant changes that have occurred.

Giddens avoids such problems by claiming that there has been a social transformation, but it is one that is *primarily* ontological in nature. Giddens thus short-circuits the debate between the Atari Democrats and their critics on the Left, by focusing on the changes in the spatial and temporal categories within which social life is grounded. It is argued that social life has been disembedded from particular spatial and temporal contexts, as seen in globalisation and the weakening role of tradition in ordering social life. The effect of this has been to fundamentally alter the nature of politics. Globalisation creates opportunities and spaces for small-scale political actors, while the pervasiveness of expert knowledges in structuring social life has had the effect of making social actors more adept at self-organising, thereby by-passing large-scale, hierarchical forms of organisation. The Third Way's emphasis on community is thus claimed to respond to these transformations.

In contrast to Giddens' macro-analysis of ontological categories, Rose's genealogical approach examines relations of power in their minutiae. According to this approach, the Third Way is claimed to be continuous with the basic rationale of liberalism towards efficient government, an expression of what Rose refers to as 'advanced liberalism'. The

turn to community is a consequence of the disjuncture between the terrain of economic activity, which is said to have been central to classical forms of liberal government, and particular societies. Community thus becomes the new 'terrain' of governance. Efficient government is achieved by tapping the affinities and ethical relationships between individuals.

While Giddens' ontological approach and Rose's genealogy are evocative, both are limited by their tendency towards empiricism. Giddens' account is reduced to a description of ontological transformation, the effect of which is that his account of the reinvention of community and new forms of social solidarity rests on an unconvincing and uncritical account of globalisation and reflexivity. Rose's genealogy, meanwhile, suffers from depthlessness, leaving him unable to account for the cultural shifts which have produced the advanced liberalism, while depriving him of the ground by which it might be criticised.

In order to move beyond such accounts, it is necessary to examine in closer detail the cultural shifts that have produced the Third Way, and in so doing, rework the various elements of the approaches examined in this chapter into a different theoretical framework that allows one to work across categories of tradition and modernity, structural stasis versus structural change, ontology and micro-analyses of political practices. Such is the aim of the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

[1] Mark Latham, "The Enabling State: From Government to Governance," in *The Enabling State: People Before Bureaucracy*, ed. Peter Botsman and Mark Latham (Annandale: Pluto, 2001), 253.

[2] See for example, Tony Blair, *Socialism* (London: The Fabian Society, 1994).

[3] See "Tony Blair's 'Third Way' Compared to Nordic Welfare State," *Eagle Street: Newsletter of the Finnish Institute in London*, September 1998. URL: <http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/articles/es_10/thirdway.htm> Consulted 2 March 2000 and Tony Blair, *Socialism* (London: The Fabian Society, 1994).

[4] Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 1.

[5] Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 118.

[6] Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 178-179. 'Politically, communitarianism provides Labour moderizers with an alternative to Conservative neo-

liberalism (Thatcherism) and allows them to distance New Labour from Old Labour's postwar social democratic record and from the liberal influence on this record.' Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 29.

[7] Peter Thomson has made contributions to the Third Way debate in Britain and Australia in his own right, evidenced, for example by his contribution to a conference on the Third Way in Australia. Peter Thompson, "The Third Way: Its Historical Roots" (paper presented at the Mutualism: A Third Way for Australia. A National Conference on the Third Way, Melbourne, November 19-20 1999).

[8] Mathews has however, expressed some disappointment that Third Way politicians and governments, specifically Britain's New Labour, have failed to engage more fully with the ideas of the distributivist and co-operative movements, the enthusiasm for 'stakeholding' forms of governance fading from view once in power. See Race Mathews, *Jobs of Our Own: Building a Stake-Holder Society* (Annandale: Pluto, 1999), 245-247.

[9] In an early attempts to set out his approach to government, for example, Tony Blair claimed that his concern was to 'liberate' the British Labour Party from the influence of Marxism, hinting that the 'ethical socialism' associated with European Social Democrats offered an alternative path for New Labour. Tony Blair, *Socialism*, 2. On the question of welfare, Anthony Giddens has argued that New Labour's approach to welfare has been influenced more by the Scandinavian model than the US approaches: 'Blairism is not simply a British version of the American 'welfare to work' programme because [Tony] Blair specifically rejects the American model due to its strongly punitive tone. What Blair has done is to incorporate aspects of the tried and tested Scandinavian system into the British approach to "welfare to work".' Quoted in "Tony Blair's 'Third Way' Compared to Nordic Welfare State," Eagle Street: Newsletter of the Finnish Institute in London, September 1998. URL: <http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/articles/es_10/thirdway.htm> Consulted 2 March 2000. See also Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 21-23.

[10] Martel and Driver make mention of the influence of the 'Rhineland model' of capitalism on the reform of the Labour Party in Britain. This is characterised by 'long term' relationships between banks, firms and workers. Each is viewed as making a valued contribution to the community, and to that extent, have a legitimate stake in the way in which each operates. In government, however, Martell and Driver note that Blair shied away from the European model. Stephen Driver and Luke Martell. *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 50. British journalist Will Hutton also has pointed to the virtues of German capitalism as a model for Britain and New Labour. See Will Hutton, *The State We're In*, Fully rev. ed. (London: Vintage, 1996) and Will Hutton, *The Stakeholding Society: Writings on Politics and Economics*, ed. David Goldblatt (Cornwall: Polity, 1999).

[11] Erkki Tuomioja, "Blairism – Europe's Shining Beacon or a Low-Watt Glow?," Eagle Street: Newsletter of the Finnish Institute in London, September 1998. URL: <http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/articles/es_10/tuomioja2.htm> Consulted 2 March 2000. See also "Blairism Divides Finnish Social Democrats," Eagle Street: Newsletter of the Finnish Institute in London, June 1998. URL:http://www.finnish-institute.org.uk/articles/internet/jaakonsaari.htm Consulted 2 March 2000.

[12] In Blair's words, 'It is not always possible or desirable to transpose institutions from one country to another. The institutions themselves will to some extent reflect different cultures and traditions.' Tony Blair quoted in Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 50. Martell and Driver go on to note that in government 'New Labour's emphasis has been on developing an Anglo-American model [of capitalism], extolling the virtues of flexible labour markets and building welfare around the needs of a flexible workforce, with

training and education to deal with job insecurity'. Stephen Driver and Luke Martell, *New Labour: Politics After Thatcherism*, 50.

[13] See Sarah Hale, "Professor Macmurray and Mr Blair: The Strange Case of the Communitarian Guru Who Never Was," *Studies in Political and Social Thought*, no. 4 (2001), 21-22. URL: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/SPT/journal/past/pdf/issue4-2.pdf> Consulted 12 March 2002.

[14] See Sarah Hale, "Professor Macmurray and Mr Blair: The Strange Case of the Communitarian Guru Who Never Was," *Studies in Political and Social Thought*, 225-26. URL: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/SPT/journal/past/pdf/issue4-2.pdf> Consulted 12 March 2000. Similarly, Levitas argues that Macmurray was far more liberal and critical of capitalism when compared to the proponents of the Third Way. See Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 105-110.

[15] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 64.

[16] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 64.

[17] Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1999), 271-272.

[18] An early advocate of the post-industrial society, Alvin Toffler, for example characterises industrial or 'second wave' society as 'a society of big organizations, big cities, centralized bureaucracies, and the all-pervasive marketplace, whether capitalist or socialist.' Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (London: Pan, 1980), 127. See also 110-127.

[19] Toffler, claimed that 'As the mass society of the industrial era disintegrates ... regional, local, ethnic, social and religious groups grow less uniform. Conditions and needs diverge. Individuals, too, discover or reassert their differences.' Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 327.

[20] See Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*.

[21] Mark Latham, "Civil Society, Markets and Governments" (paper presented at the Mutualism - A Third Way for Australia Conference, Melbourne, Australia, November 19-20 1999) URL: <http://www.thirdway-aust.com/index2.html> Consulted 7 February 2000.

[22] In its mission statement, the Progressive Foundation defines its objective as developing and promoting a workable progressive political philosophy relevant to the 'information age' that 'points to a "third way"' in government. See The Progressive Foundation, "The New Progressive Declaration: A Political Philosophy for the Information Age," (Washington: The Progressive Foundation, 1996). URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/adobe/declare.pdf> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[23] 'Our chief political and governing institutions ... have failed to cope effectively with these disruptive changes. Instead, special interests, ossified bureaucracies, and outdated ideologies have stalemated our democracy. Most Americans have ceased believing that the solutions to today's problems are to be found in a larger, stronger central government.

... America needs a third choice that replaces the left's reflexive defense of the bureaucratic status quo and counters the right's destructive bid to simply dismantle government.' The Progressive Foundation, "The New Progressive Declaration: A Political Philosophy for the Information Age", 2-3. URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/adobe/declare.pdf> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[24] People who have direct access to valuable information, who face exploding choices in the marketplace and who are encouraged to participate in decisions at work will not be satisfied with bureaucratic, one-size-fits-all solutions imposed by government. Indeed, the self-managing

skills Americans are mastering and the more entrepreneurial organizations where many of us work suggest the need for parallel efforts to restore effective self-governance to our society and our politics.' The Progressive Foundation, "The New Progressive Declaration: A Political Philosophy for the Information Age", 5. URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/adobe/declare.pdf> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[25] The Progressive Foundation, "The New Progressive Declaration: A Political Philosophy for the Information Age", 10. URL: <http://www.dlcppi.org/adobe/declare.pdf> Consulted 22 September 1999.

[26] Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Live in a Connected World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1997), 230.

[27] Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), 121.

[28] Amitai Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 113.

[29] Boris Frankel, *The Post-Industrial Utopians*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1987).

[30] Boris Frankel, *The Post-Industrial Utopians*, 6.

[31] Boris Frankel, *The Post-Industrial Utopians*, 7.

[32] In the present context, the notion of post-industrial theory is somewhat problematic. To the extent that it suggests a homogenous body of literature or 'school' of thought with a shared tradition and a common political project, it is misleading. Beyond a general convergence of themes revolving around the collapse and subsequent transcendence of industrial society — a society based mass manufacturing, heavy industries, mass employment and the structures of social integration and political administration, modes of production and reproduction that go along with these — as a result of the emergence of new processes of production through transformations in technology and changed relations of production, there is little that is common to theorists who could be said to fall under the 'post-industrial' label. The theoretical framework through which such transcendence is interpreted and theorised, not to mention the political consequences and the prescriptions for future action that are drawn from it, derive from disparate, even contradictory intellectual and political positions, including conservative, liberal, socialist and Marxist traditions. Doing justice to the full complexities of this literature and the associated debates would require a lengthy and, for the most part, unproductive digression, which is beyond our present concerns.

[33] See Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 96, 94 and 91.

[34] 'Third Wave civilization will be based on a new distribution of power in which the nation, as such, is no longer as influential as it once was, while other institutions — from the transnational corporation to the autonomous neighbourhood or even city-state — assume greater significance.' Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 366.

[35] Toffler claims that 'The mass society itself ... is beginning to de-massify. Not merely information, production and family life, but the marketplace and the labour market as well are beginning to break into smaller, and more varied pieces.

The mass market has split into ever-multiplying, ever-changing sets of mini-markets that demand a continually expanding range of options, models, types, sizes, colours and customizations.' Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 241.

[36] Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 379.

[37] Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 214-15.

[38] Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 116.

[39] See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, 366-67.

[40] Paul James, "Reconstituting Work: Towards an Alternative Ethic of Social Reproduction," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 10 (1998), 96-97.

[41] The Australian Labor MP Mark Latham is a good example of this strategy of de-politicisation. Latham claims that objective technological progress has undermined the conditions upon which class division were based. To support this argument, he points to the increasing proportion of the workforce in the service and information technologies industries (at least at the upper echelons) whose ability to create value lies in their skills and knowledge, a category that Latham refers to as 'wired workers'. Such workers, Latham claims, have greater control over the conditions under which they work and can therefore escape the exploitation and alienation that Marx theorised. The distinction between capital and labour that Marx and Marxist theorists premise their politics on, therefore, are claimed to no longer hold, swept away by the tide of history. See for instance Mark Latham, "Marxism, Social-ism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker," *Arena Magazine*, August/September 1999, 9-10.

[42] James Petras, "The Third Way: Myth and Reality," *Monthly Review* 51, no. 10 (2000), 32-33. Similarly, Frankel asks 'if we have supposedly moved from an "industrial society" to a "post-industrial" information society, why do our political institutions, legal structures, military and police forces, churches, media, unions and business lobby organisations essentially retain most of the characteristics that they had in the "industrial age"?' Boris Frankel, *When the Boat Comes In: Transforming Australia in the Age of Globalisation* (Annandale: Pluto, 2001), 14.

[43] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 40-42.

[44] Further, Petras claims that the '[p]romotion of citizenship has in turn served as justification for fragmenting working-class organizations — turning public debate away from substantive class politics to civic morality devoid of specific social content. ... In the political sphere, the Third Way has deepened and expanded the centralizing and authoritarian politics of the Old Right while adopting the participatory rhetoric of the postmodern (pseudo) left.' James Petras, "The Third Way: Myth and Reality," *Monthly Review*, 33-34.

[45] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 62.

[46] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity* (London: Verso, 1999), 214.

[47] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 259. See also James Petras, "The Third Way: Myth and Reality," *Monthly Review*, 33-34.

[48] See the comments by Blair quoted in Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 56-57. See also Nick Cohen, *Cruel Britannia: Reports on the Sinister and Preposterous* (London: Verso, 1999) and Ralf Dahrendorf, "The Third Way and Liberty: An Authoritarian Streak in Europe's New Center," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (1999): 13-17.

[49] For an example of this kind of view, see Mark Latham, Marxism, Social-ism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker," *Arena Magazine*, August/September, 1999, 9-10.

[50] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 212.

[51] See Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 208-212 and 279-281.

[52] Alex Callinicos, *Against the Third Way: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*, 124.

[53] The multiple dimensions and full implications of Giddens' thesis about reflexivity are incredibly broad. The following discussion of Giddens' ideas, then, focuses specifically on the aspects of his analysis that have a direct bearing upon the communitarian politics of the Third Way. For a more general discussion see Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, ed. Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash Ulrich Beck (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

[54] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 31.

[55] See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 30-33.

[56] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 72.

[57] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 31-32 and 49-50.

[58] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 79.

[59] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 61.

[60] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 75.

[61] See Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 194-196 and Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 5.

[62] See the discussion of 'disembedding mechanisms' in 'expert systems' as well as the related notion of 'symbolic tokens' in Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 21-29.

[63] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 27.

[64] It might be noted in passing that in defining the concept of expert systems in so general a way, Giddens is in danger of emptying it out of any meaning. If sitting in a house is to be implicated in an expert system then just about anything can be claimed as an instance of an expert system. Travelling by plane, driving a car, walking along a suburban street, or walking in a forest wearing the latest ergonomically designed pack and hiking boots could be considered as expert system. The problem, then, is that the concept of expert systems is so broad as to potentially encompass almost every aspect of life in late/post modernity, with the consequence that expert systems are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere.

[65] As Giddens asserts: 'Expert systems decontextualize as an intrinsic consequence of their impersonal and contingent character of their rules of knowledge-acquisition; as decentred systems, 'open' to whosoever has the time, resources and talent to grasp them, they can be located anywhere. Place is not in any sense a quality relevant to their validity; and places themselves ... take on a different significance from traditional locales.' Expert systems, are thus examples of what Giddens calls 'disembedding mechanisms'. See Anthony Giddens, 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society', in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, 85 and Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 21-29.

[66] Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, 74.

[67] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 38-39.

[68] Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, 85.

[69] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 80.

[70] John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 13 (1999), 110.

[71] The 1999 United Nations Human Development Report observed for example, that the value of the assets belonging to the three wealthiest billionaires in the world 'are more than the combined GNP of all least developed countries and their 600 million people'. Such disparities of wealth are, moreover, increasing, the report noting that the two hundred wealthiest individuals 'more than doubled their net worth in the four years to 1998, to more than $1 trillion.' *United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3.

[72] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173.

[73] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 173.

[74] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 173.

[75] As Rose explains: 'To focus on freedom and its genealogy ... is not to claim that 'we' – the universal and undifferentiated subjects of the present – have entered the sunny uplands of liberty and human rights. Rather it is to suggest that certain values and presuppositions about human beings and how they should live, values and presuppositions given the name of freedom and liberty, have come to provide the grounds upon which government must enact its practices for the conduct of conduct. And hence, for that reason alone, it is useful to try to ascertain the costs, as well as the benefits, of organizing our experience, our aspirations, our relations with ourselves and with others, our politics and our ethics in terms of freedoms.' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 10-11.

[76] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 186-87.

[77] See Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics' in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 (London: Penguin, 1997), 74.

[78] Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics' in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 74.

[79] Nikolas Rose, "Government, Authority and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism," *Economy and Society* 22, no. 3 (1993), 292.

[80] In this way, Rose claims that liberal government presents us with a thoroughly modern form of government. Legitimate government will not be based upon tradition or custom, but 'on intelligence concerning those whose well-being it is mandated to enhance ... rule must be exercised in the light of a knowledge of that which is to be ruled — a child, a family, an economy, a community — a knowledge of both its general laws of functioning (supply and demand, social solidarity), of its particular state at any one time (rate of productivity, rate of suicide), and the ways in which it can be shaped and guided in order to produce desirable objectives while at the same respecting its autonomy.' Nikolas Rose, "Government, Authority and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism," *Economy and Society*, 290.

[81] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Colin Gordon and Peter Miller Graham Burchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 92.

[82] Summarising the distinctive role of the economy in the practice of liberal government, Burchell notes that [t]he sphere of "the economic" is important to governance ... because of its affiliations to the domain of "the calculable", its capacity to inform specialised and purely practical arenas of policy, as well as its claim to a supposedly more reliable style of argument ... '

David Burchell, "'The Mutuable Minds of Particular Men': The Emergence of 'Economic Science' and Contemporary Economic Policy," in *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government*, ed. Mitchell Dean and Barry Hindess (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 205.

[83] Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics' in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 75.

[84] Nikolas Rose, "The Death of the Social? Re-figuring the Territory of Government," *Economy and Society* 25, no. 3 (1996), 353.

[85] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 143.

[86] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 144.

[87] Nikolas Rose, "Government, Authority and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism", *Economy and Society*, 298.

[88] For Rose, neo-liberal government is characterised by the retreat of the social from economic government 'in the name of maximizing the entrepreneurial comportment of the individual. This is ... a politics of economic activism. Politics must actively intervene in order to create the organizational and subjective conditions for entrepreneurship.' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 144.

[89] Nikolas Rose, "Government, Authority and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism," *Economy and Society*, 298.

[90] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 136. Drawing an explicit connection between advanced liberalism and the role of the community in government, Rose suggests that: 'Central to the ethos of ... 'advanced liberal[ism]' is a new relationship between strategies of government of others and techniques for the government of the self, situated within new relations of mutual obligation: the community.' Nikolas Rose, "The Death of the Social? Re-figuring the Territory of Government," *Economy and Society*, 331.

[91] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 176.

[92] In Rose's words, 'ethico-politics concerns itself with the *self-techniques necessary for responsible self-government* and the *relations between one's obligation to oneself and one's obligations to others*.' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 188.

[93] Rose suggests that individuals 'can now access a whole range of resources and techniques of subject formation in order to invent themselves, individually and collectively, as new kinds of political actors.' This has seen a shift from an externally imposed morality to a personal 'ethics — the active and practical shaping by individuals of the daily practices of their own lives in the name of their own pleasures, contentments or fulfilments.' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, see 178-179.

[94] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 178-179.

[95] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 177. It might be noted that this analysis echoes that of the Atari Democrats, in their claims that community liberates individuals from the uniformity of mass, 'Fordist' approaches to government.

[96] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 11.

[97] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 12.

[98] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 57-58.

[99] Rose claims that the aim of such investigations is 'to disturb that which forms the very groundwork of our present, to make the given once more strange and to cause us to wonder at how it came to appear so natural. How have we been made up as governable subjects? What kinds of human beings have we come to take ourselves to be? What presuppositions about our nature are operationalized within strategies that seek to act upon our actions? How did human beings become the objects and subjects of government, the subjects of logics of normativity... ?' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 58.

[100] See Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 59 and 13.

[101] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 19-20. Rose thus claims that his empiricism offers 'a method of inventivity ... an attention to all the occasions when the minute modifications becomes possible, when difference can be made' Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 12.

[102] Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly*, 275.

[103] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 194-95.

[104] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 195-196.

[105] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 194-195.

SECTION TWO

COMMUNITY AS IDEOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR

Constitutive Abstraction: An Alternative Framework

> [T]he ongoing life of a human society is inconceivable without intersections of more and less abstractly constituted practices. At the level of social relations or social interchange, it is possible for some people to spend long periods of time exclusively within a technologically mediated setting of interchange; it is easy to understand too how, in some cultures, many people might have restricted experience of abstracted forms of practice which almost fully engage some of their contemporaries. But, by and large, within the terms of social relations or interchanges as distinct from the life of an individual person, the normal situation is for the intersection of forms of life constituted at different levels of abstraction to itself be institutionalized.
>
> Geoff Sharp[1]

Introduction

The present chapter marks something of a turning point in my discussion of the Third Way insofar as it attempts to set out an alternative framework for theorising social relations in a way that addresses some of the shortcomings of the approaches examined in the previous chapter, while taking up some of the themes explored there. The approach that is developed in this chapter draws extensively on, and is fundamentally shaped by the work of the Arena group of writers, particularly the work of Geoff Sharp, Paul James and John Hinkson.[2] Central to this approach, as the above quote from Sharp illustrates, is the idea that all societies are structured through the intersection of different forms of social life constituted across different levels of abstraction.

The notion of levels here refers to ways of structuring basic ontological categories. In this context, the term 'ontology' has a quite specific meaning. Typically, ontology is used in connection with metaphysics to specify a form of philosophical inquiry that seeks to transcend the contingencies of history, society and culture to disclose universal

structures of Being. For present purposes, ontology is used in a much more modest sociological sense to refer to basic categories, such as embodiment, time and space, within and through which social life is lived and enacted, and without which social life would be inconceivable. Following James ontology can be defined 'in the sense of the modes of being-in-the-world, the forms of culturally grounded conditions, historically constituted in the structures (recurrent practices) of human inter-relation'.[3]

In this chapter, particular attention is given to ontological categories of embodiment, knowledge, and time and space as these relate to social integration. To say that societies are constituted through the intersection and interpenetration of different levels is, in the first instance, to say no more than social life is mediated by the fact that human beings have bodies, that they possess knowledge about the social contexts within which they live, and that these social contexts are set within particular spatial and temporal contexts.[4] Importantly, then, no claim is being made about these categories as having a transcendental status. How categories of embodiment, knowledge, space and time are structured and lived, then, is in part socially and culturally determined, and thus subject to historical variation and change.

These levels can be analytically distinguished from one another by specifying the lived practices through which they are constituted and enacted. For instance, they can be enacted through social relations in which the embodied presence of the Other is the framing or defining feature of social integration. The most obvious example here is face-to-face social relations. Alternatively, social relations can be more *abstractly* constituted. The meaning of the term 'abstract' is elaborated further in Section One below, although in rough terms it can be said that are characterised by the structural absence of the Other who is party to the social interchange.[5] As such, abstract forms of social relations break free from the limits of particularised social settings and are realised in a more general way.

In Section One, three levels of social integration are identified and elaborated. These are embodied-extended social integration, object-extended social integration and abstract-extended social integration. Each level specifies a constitutively more abstract form of social integration than the one preceding it: embodied-extended social integration the least constitutively abstract, whereas abstract-extended social integration is the most constitutively abstract.

Having drawn out these three levels of social integration, in Section Two I anticipate a potential objection that might be levelled at them. The objection is that this approach does not differ significantly from Anthony Giddens' notion of 'time-space distanciation' that was rejected as flawed in the previous chapter. In particular, Giddens' notion of 'abstract systems', (a general name for what he calls 'expert systems' and 'symbolic tokens'), suggests a similar approach to theorising social relations as that presented here.

While there are certainly common points of overlap between Giddens' account and the constitutive abstraction argument, as the approach outlined here is sometimes called, the notion of constitutive levels refers not simply to the stretching of ontological categories of time and space, as is the case with time-space distanciation, but rather to the different ways of structuring these ontological categories themselves. Moreover, and unlike Giddens' account of time-space distanciation, the social relations indicated by the notion of levels do not stand in relations of equivalence to one another. One constitutive level is, in relative terms at least, dominant and in this respect *frames* the others.[6] The relative positions of the dominant and subordinate levels of integration are, however, not fixed or unchanging; they can alter. Where a hitherto subordinate level of social integration comes into a position of dominance relative to others, it is possible to speak of the reconstitution of those other levels. This is not to imply that the displaced levels disappear, or cease to play a role in the constitution of social life. Rather, it is to say that they will be reconstructed in a modified form.

Drawing on the work of Sharp, the argument of the present chapter, outlined in Section Three, is that contemporary social life is characterised by a shift in the levels of social integration, such that more abstractly constituted forms of social integration, which have historically been subordinate to those levels of social integration that are grounded within relations of embodied presence of others, have become the dominant integrative level. To the extent that they have, it is possible to speak of the reconstitution of less abstractly constituted forms of the social. The reasons for this shift in levels of integration can, in part, be traced back to the role of intellectuals and the distinctive social relations that structure intellectual practice. Briefly put, the argument here is that intellectual practices, through the market, have become increasingly central to social activity. Furthermore, relations of intellectual practice are distinctive insofar as they are structured in terms of abstract networks, and characteristically conducted via media of abstraction such as writing and print. As such, they have tended to restructure social

relations in similarly abstract terms.[7] This is illustrated in the conclusion through the way in which intellectual practices have come to overlay and reconstitute labour practices.

In terms of its structure, then, this chapter moves from the most theoretically abstract concerns of ontological categories, to how these are instantiated in lived practices, through to the least theoretically abstract terms of a concrete example. Where appropriate, reference is made to the theoretical approaches examined in the previous chapter in order to help clarify the overall theoretical framework and distinguish it from others. I begin, though by delineating three levels of social integration.

1. Levels of Social Integration

In practice, it would be possible to delineate any number of integrative levels to describe all of the potential ways of organising and structuring basic ontological categories of embodiment, knowledge and space and time. In this chapter, and following the work of Paul James, I want to outline just three levels of social extension that can be referred to as 'embodied-extended', 'object-extended' and 'abstract-extended'.[8] Each level can be thought of as constitutively more abstract than the one preceding it. Before elaborating what these different levels mean, though, some space should be given to explaining what is meant by the term 'abstract' in the present context.

In ordinary usage, to describe something as abstract is to distinguish it from more immediate or 'concrete' ways of approaching or apprehending the world. In this sense, 'abstract' refers to a conceptual or ideational process that stands in direct opposition to materialist ways of engaging with the world. In the present context, however, the notion of abstraction is understood in *socio-material* terms. This understanding of the term is not completely unknown within social theory. As Geoff Sharp points out, such a conception can be found in Marx's analysis of the process of commodity abstraction. This refers to the process whereby the value of an object is detached from the particular characteristics that make it useful — its 'use-value' — and is reconstituted in the more general, universal form of 'exchange-value'. What is important to note about the process of commodity abstraction is that it is not simply a change in the way that an object is perceived or conceptualised. If this were all that was involved, then the process of

commodity abstraction would hardly warrant further consideration. The significance of the commodity form for Marx, and indeed the ubiquity of the commodity form itself, lies in the way in which it is object is constituted, and the consequences that this has for social relations more generally. In short, in the process of commodity abstraction, objects are re-constituted in socio-materially abstract terms. Sohn-Rethel draws this point out is his claim that the

> essence of commodity abstraction ... is that it is not thought-induced; it does not originate in men's minds but in their actions. And yet this does not give 'abstraction' a merely metaphorical meaning. It is abstraction in its precise, literal sense. The economic concept of value resulting from it is purely by quantity and by applicability to every kind of commodity and service which can occur on the market ... It exists nowhere other than in the human mind but it does not spring from it. Rather it is purely social in character, arising in the spatio-temporal sphere of human interrelations.[9]

Commodity abstraction thus realises a more abstract form of the object such that, unlike barter, or better still, gift exchange, the possibility of exchange is no longer dependent upon the subjective assessments of value by those who partake in the transaction.

Whereas Marx's analysis was, for the most part, confined to the immediate consequences of commodity abstraction to social relations of production and exchange, Sharp argues that the significance of commodity abstraction is that it points to a more general 'form of social life'.[10] With commodity exchange, for example one no longer needs to maintain an ongoing bond with specific Others, to share their particular cultural assumptions or even to occupy the same spatial and temporal location as them, in order for exchange to successfully occur. In practice, then, the social relations of commodity exchange as well as the social actors who participate in them can be thought of as more abstractly constituted in the sense that they are lifted out of particular contexts.[11] One of the consequences of commodity exchange, for example, is that individuals experience a degree of autonomy from social constraints, such as obligations to a specific Other, that they might otherwise feel.

Beyond relations of exchange, Sharp argues that the social relations of intellectuals offer another example of this abstract form of life. Through media such as writing, print, and more recently telecommunications, intellectual practice escapes the constraints of particular social settings, and is extended in space and time.[12] This point, and its significance to our present concerns, is elaborated further in Section Three.

For the moment, though, I want in the following sections to distinguish three levels of social integration, each one more socio-materially abstract than the one prior to it. It should be noted that while these levels are *analytically* distinguishable, such neat divisions do not exist in practice; each level thoroughly overlaps and intersects with others in complex and often contradictory ways.[13] So as to avoid giving the impression that these exist as separate from one another, then, I have sought to show how each relates to and intersects with the others. For purposes of clarity and brevity, however, it has been necessary to simplify this discussion.

a. Embodied-extended Social Integration

Depending on how the phrase is used, 'embodied-extended social integration' could incorporate a very limited or a potentially enormous range of social relationships. In one sense, it could be interpreted literally as referring to embodiment-as-corporeality. The notion of embodied-extended social integration would therefore encompass only those forms of social integration that are based on face-to-face relations. Alternatively, embodiment could be understood more broadly, as a framing category through which social relations are structured and constituted. This would be to understand embodiment as a more expansive category, encompassing those forms of social integration which extend beyond the limits of face-to-face interaction but whose unity and coherence remains predicated on, and structured by categories of embodiment such as kin ties, blood relations and groundedness in place. While categories such as kin, blood ties and place can be structured more abstractly, as will be illustrated below, what is distinctive about them at this level of integration is that, *in their particularity*, they have a deep bearing on people's relations with others and their engagement with the world more generally.

For present purposes, the concept of embodied-extended social integration is intended to hold together forms of social integration that are enacted through social relations of embodied presence, as well those that depend on categories of embodiment to maintain their internal coherence.[14] This level of integration can be illustrated most clearly by the example of Indigenous communities. Many Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, for example, are integrated through face-to-face social relations bound up with kin and blood ties. Moreover, such communities are bound by their

shared relations to particular places and landforms — Uluru and the surrounding area and Oyster Cove being good examples — which are intimately connected to their collective group identity and the personal subjectivity, physical and psychological well-being of their members.[15] Even where such communities have been dispossessed of their country and fragmented by forces of colonialism and the forced removal of children from their parents, for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait people connection to land and sea continues to be central to their sense of being-in-the-world, and their belonging to community. Such communities are thus structured both through relations of embodied presence in face-to-face interaction and connection to place.

The notion of embodied-extended social integration may also be relevant to some diasporic communities, such as faith-based communities, like a Jewish, an Islamic or a Catholic community. While these examples of extended community are enacted through means other than the immediacy of embodied presence, categories of embodiment nevertheless remain integral to the way in which they are constituted and enacted. While such communities are constituted through abstracted means such as the written word in the form of scripture and sacred texts (the Bible, the Koran, the Torah), symbolic connections to particular places (the Holy Lands and Mecca, for example) and shared symbols (the cross, the Star of David, the crescent moon), these abstracted means of social integration are framed within and structured through embodied forms of social integration, such as praying and worshipping together. What is central to this level of social integration, then, is that social life is structured within the limits of embodiment understood both literally as the corporeal body and in the more expansive sense outlined here. Communities structured in such terms thus tend to be characterised by stable, long-lasting social relations.

b. Object-Extended Social Integration

Object-extended social integration, by contrast, is characterised by more temporally and spatially extended social relations than those grounded within categories of embodiment. This is not to suggest however, that social relations defined within the framework of embodiment, such as those based on kin or attachment to place disappear or are irrelevant at this level of integration. Rather, such relations are overlaid and reconstituted by more abstract forms of social extension.

A simple way of explaining this is the changing nature of monarchy. In the British political system, for example, the final assent of the monarch is still required to make a bill law. In a technical sense, then, the legitimacy of law derives from the will of a particular person, whose position remains, through the practice of hereditary succession, grounded within social relations of kin and blood. The monarchy is thus substantially defined by categories of embodiment. Unlike the era of monarchical absolutism, however, such categories no longer structure or frame political authority. The monarch's body and kin ties are no longer the primary or effective source of political authority. Rather, kin ties and blood relations are structured and organised in terms of institutions.[16] The dissolution of monarchical absolutism and its reconstruction in the form of constitutional monarchy, while by no means a straightforward historical or political process, is one illustration of the way in which social relations structured in terms of embodied categories, such as blood and kin, can be reconstituted within the terms of those structured via what might be thought of as 'object-extended social relations'.

The defining feature of social integration at this level, then, is that particular objects mediate social relations. In the present context, the term 'object' has two senses. In one sense it refers to the 'objectification' of social relations, such that they take on 'object-like' properties. Social institutions are a good example of this, as the above example of constitutional monarchy shows. In codifying and formalising social relations, institutions like the monarchy, reframe social relations in a more general way. Neither the personal qualities of the individuals engaged in social interaction, or the particular settings within which they take place structure or order relations. The effect of this is that one no longer has to maintain an ongoing relationship to a specific Other or a particular place for social relations to be possible. In this way, institutions, such as bureaucracies, civic organisations, political and social groups, function as intermediaries that expand the possibilities of binding individuals who are spatially and temporally dispersed.[17]

Objectification also includes the way in which institutions themselves reconstitute the world. The notion of 'territory', for example, can be thought of as an objectification of place or land. Whereas place is defined by the particular features that distinguish it from others, such as landforms and one's subjective relation to a particular locale, territory refers to the institutional mediation of place. To go back to the example of Indigenous people's connection to land, while many white Australians also have an attachment to

places like Uluru and Arnhem Land most would not define themselves in terms of them. Instead, they might define themselves primarily in terms of their state or territory of residence (New South Wales, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory) and their status as an Australian citizen. While the attachment of white Australians to their country may be as deeply felt and significant as it is for Indigenous people, it is different insofar as it is institutionally mediated, resting as it does on the institutions of the state.[18]

The notion of 'population', encountered in the previous chapter in discussing Nikolas Rose's analysis of the Third Way illustrates a similar objectification of the 'people'. As Foucaultians like Rose point out, the emergence of population as a 'discursive object' is linked to a complex institutional framework (bureaucracies, hospitals, asylums) and their associated practices (administration, economics, medicine, psychology, psychiatry). Society is thus no longer understood in its immediacy as an undifferentiated multitude of individuals and groups, but can be viewed as a unified field of behaviour, with clearly demarcated boundaries and an internal coherence and order. It thus allows one, in a relative sense at least, to stand outside of the immediacy of social interaction and to re-frame one's relations to others in a more abstract way.

It should be stressed here that notions such as 'territory' and 'population' are not simply different ways of conceiving, discussing or representing people and place. They constitute different ways of structuring and organising categories of embodiment, knowledge and time and space. As such, they have material consequences. Since one's relationship to place is no longer bound within the limits of embodied categories, and is mediated by institutions, a far more general connection to place is permitted. Similarly, the notion of 'population' permits the possibility of intervening in the social in a more systematic way through the identification of specific patterns of behaviour and kinds of subjects. Population thus enables forms of social control that are not possible with the concept of 'the people'.

The second sense of the term 'object' is somewhat more straightforward. This refers to specific objects that carry social relations beyond the limits of embodied social integration. A good example of this is the process of commodity exchange discussed above. As we have seen, in the process of commodity exchange, and unlike barter or gift exchange, which are constituted primarily through relations of embodied-extension, commodity exchange is mediated by particular objects, namely money. The effect of this

is that money enables exchange with an almost infinite number of Others scattered over larger expanses of space and time than is possible with gift or barter exchange. Money thus simultaneously breaks away from exchange relations set within particular spatial and temporal contexts, between embodied persons, whilst re-integrating them at a higher level of social integration.[19]

c. Abstract-Extended Social Integration

Whereas object-extended forms social integration are distinctive insofar as they mediate relations of embodiment, the phrase 'abstract-extended integration' is intended to capture those social relations whose underlying logic is to efface or radically bypass the kinds of boundaries that are integral to the embodied- or object-extended levels. This level of social integration is thus characterised by *deterritorialised* and *disembodied* social relations. The means of abstract-extension include those that are relatively established, such as print, as well as more recent means of extension such as the full range of telecommunications technologies. What is common to both print and telecommunications is that social relations break free from the corporeal limits of speech, enabling the possibility of social integration over larger spans of space and time.

For example, Benedict Anderson has highlighted the central role played by print, fused with capitalist exchange, in the emergence of the modern nation. The proliferation of mass-produced books and newspapers in the vernacular, he argues, was instrumental in breaking down the diversity of languages and dialects connected with particular geographical areas, thereby enabling the integration of large numbers of geographically separate people into a single national community.[20] An extreme expression of a similar process can be seen in recent attempts by a number of European nation-states to reinvent themselves as brands. The pioneer of this was New Labour's attempt to 're-launch' Britain as 'Cool Britannia' as one element of the modernisation program discussed in Chapter One. The aim of this was to create an image of Britain as a producer of high-tech consumer goods and services, and hub of entertainment and cultural production. Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Peter van Ham notes that a number of other European countries have followed New Labour's lead. Acting on the advice of advertising consultants, van Ham claims that the Belgium Government

> has decided to introduce a new logo and hip colors and will sport the cool Internet suffix '.be' as its international symbol. The overall aim of the campaign is to emulate Virgin, which, according to one Belgian advertising expert, 'isn't big, but you see it everywhere you look.'[21]

According to van Ham, similar branding strategies are under way in Estonia and Poland in an effort to create an image of these countries as a favourable destination for investment and tourists.

While they may be clumsy and, as in the case of Cool Britannia, short-lived, the phenomenon of the 'brand-state', as van Ham refers to it, is a perfect illustration of the logic of abstract-extended social relations. In the brand-state, social integration is no longer structured primarily through the institutional structures of the nation-state, nor in embodied social relations. This is not to say, though, that these are irrelevant. In all of the examples listed above, institutions are the driving force behind re-branding. Moreover, brand states draw extensively on embodied categories, utilising images of iconic geographical features and landmarks, ethnic traditions and histories as necessary components in building the 'national brand'. However, these are re-constituted within the logic of abstract-extended forms of the social.

Ethnicity, for example, is drawn upon as a surface motif, rather than as deeply lived aspects of life that bears upon one's very engagement with the world, as in the case of embodied-extended social integration. In van Ham's words, the use of ethnicity and history by brand states 'lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity and uniqueness that can accompany nationalism'.[22] In the brand-state, the primary or dominant carriers of social integration are abstract — symbols, images, and icons of ethnicity, history and place — as opposed to stable and fixed attachments to place, body, ethnicity and common institutional bonds.

The phenomenon of the brand-state, structured through disembodied and deterritorialised relations is consistent with broader changes in relations of production of exchange. For example, many multinational companies have shifted away from the production of actual objects to the production and exchange of signs, ideas and images. The value of an object is thus increasingly derived from the signs, images and connotations that can be attached to the object. Nike CEO, Phil Knight, perfectly expresses this logic in claiming that: 'There is no value in making things any more. The value is added by careful research, by innovation and marketing'.[23] Nike is now less a

sports shoe and apparel manufacturer as a co-ordinator of images, ideas and attitudes; the actual tasks of making and selling sports wear having been contracted out to a globally integrated network of suppliers, producers, designers, none of whom are directly employed by Nike. A similar trend is evident in the dominance of finance market in exchange. As such, production and exchange are increasingly structured in terms of abstract-extended relations.

All of these examples are expressions of the dominance of the abstract-extended level of social and economic integration, over other, less abstract integrative levels. Before proceeding further to explore the significance of this claim for our present analysis, however, I want to anticipate a potential objection against the 'levels approach' outlined here. This concerns the overlap between the framework advanced here and Giddens' notion of time-space distanciation, which was explored briefly in the previous chapter.

2. Time-Space Distanciation: A Levels Approach?

In his discussion of time-space distanciation, Giddens distinguishes two main 'mechanisms' that function to stretch social relations across space and time. Giddens refers to these as 'abstract systems', which are broken down further into what he refers to as 'symbolic tokens' and 'expert systems', explored in the previous chapter.[24] In Giddens' words 'symbolic tokens' refer to 'media of interchange which can be "passed around" without regard to the specific characteristics of individuals or groups that handle them'.[25] Giddens' prime example of a 'symbolic token' is money. As a medium of exchange, money provides a more abstract form of value, which relative to other forms of exchange, such as barter, is independent of particular social contexts. Money permits social relations to be 'stretched' across space and time, such that they need no longer be constrained within a particularised spatial and temporal context.[26] Giddens argues further that writing has similar consequences to those of money.[27] Since the concept of expert systems was discussed in some detail in the previous chapter, it will be sufficient to note here that it refers to abstract bodies of knowledge, whose validity or usefulness is independent of specific places and times. As is the case for symbolic tokens, expert systems stretch social relations in space and time.

In recognising the importance of abstract systems, it might be argued that the ideas discussed to here in terms of ontological levels are implicit within Giddens theoretical framework. As such, it could be argued that the approach outlined here is not significantly different from Giddens', and is therefore open to the same kinds of criticisms directed against time-space distanciation in the previous chapter.

In responding to this objection, it ought to be noted that there are clear points of overlap between time-space distanciation and the framework being sketched here. Both approaches seek to theorise social life in ontological terms, and both have some understanding of the way in which social relations can be extended in space and time.[28] This common point of focus should not, however, obscure important and crucial differences. The core difference between Giddens' account and the levels approach is that the notion of time-space distanciation remains set 'within a single plane' of analysis.[29] This is to say that although Giddens' notion of time-distanciation clearly recognises the existence of different forms of social interchange *these are not understood as constitutively different forms of social life, but function rather as different modes of social interchange within a single constitutive level.* Expressed differently, whereas time-space distanciation entails the stretching of ontological categories of time and space, the levels approach focuses on the intersections between different ways of structuring ontological categories (time, space, embodiment, knowledge) as these are constituted through more or less abstract levels of social practice. In doing so, one is able to examine the way in which a dominant level of social integration structures others that, in a relative sense at least, are relatively subordinate to it.

While Giddens is therefore able to draw an analytical distinction between those relationships that are enacted through embodied presence and those that are extended in time and space, he is unable to provide much insight into the consequences that temporal and spatial extension have for the ways in which social relations are themselves constituted in and through one another. Paul James has thus argued that 'time-space distanciation' suggests a conception of the social whereby different kinds of social relations can be described

> as if they were progressively larger circles of demarcated social activity able to be marked on a map, without recognizing how the more abstract extensions of social relations are part of the overlay or reconstitution even of the form of one's circle of day-to-day associations.[30]

The effect of this is that the concept of 'time-space distanciation' tends to be used to make prosaic observations about the relationship between the local and the global — the fact that '[d]istant events ... affect us more directly and immediately than ever before' and that, '[c]onversely, decisions we take as individuals are often global in their implications', to cite an example taken from Giddens himself — without saying anything further about the nature of social relations as they are lived across space and time.[31]

By contrast, the three levels of social integration distinguished in Section One are not reducible to relationships between the local and global. It is *not* a matter of embodied-extended forms of social integration being limited to social relations enacted at the local level, abstract-extended forms the global level while object-extended forms of social integration exist in some intermediary point between these, such as the national level. Embodied-extended forms of social integration can be enacted within face-to-face settings and also in global settings. This was seen in the case of diasporic communities in which relations to a particular place remain central to their integration as distinctive communities, even though all of the members of such communities do not inhabit that particular place. Conversely, the simple fact of embodied presence does not necessarily mean that embodied-extended social integration is the dominant or operative integrative level.[32] In itself the spatial and temporal proximity of people to one another says little about the depth of the relation between them, or the way in which they are bound together as a group. As we shall see in the conclusion to this chapter, even within the settings of face-to-face social *interaction*, abstract-extended social relations can be the dominant *integrative* level. The point to be made here, then, is that different levels of social integration entail different ways of structuring ontological categories such as space, time, embodiment and knowledge, and thus different ways of constituting social relations across the local and the global. The constitutive abstraction argument thus escapes the tendency to simplify social complexity to simple binary terms, such as the local and global.

The theoretical limits of time-space distanciation can be illustrated by Giddens' analysis of the way in which expert systems affect social life. While Giddens notes that expert systems result in heightened social reflexivity, the corollary of which is the weakening authority of tradition, this amounts to no more than the *intensification* of an already pervasive feature of social life. For Giddens, then, there is no difference between reflexive social practices that are constituted through disembodied, deterritorialised

social relations, and practices of social reflexivity that remain substantially grounded within the horizon of embodied categories, such as face-to-face social relations. Reflexivity thus appears as a kind of trans-historical social relationship, varying only in its intensity, but always structured and lived in essentially the same way.

By contrast, the argument of the levels approach is that practices of social reflexivity will vary according to the way in which they are structured and how this overlaps with, and is intersected by differently constituted levels. In particular, where expert knowledges intervene in and structure social reflexivity as a pervasive aspect of social life, thereby displacing (in relative terms at least) ongoing social relations grounded within embodied categories, this suggests not simply an intensification of reflexive social practices, but their *reconstitution* by abstract-extended forms of the social. This is to raise, in a preliminary way, the theoretical claim that can be drawn from this approach: namely, that under conditions of contemporary capitalism, less abstract levels of social integration have been reconstituted via abstract-extended social relations. As we shall see, the role of experts and expert systems, or intellectuals and intellectual practice, as we shall call them, are central to this process of reconstitution. It is to an elaboration of this point that I now turn.

3. Intellectuals and the Reconstitution of Social Relations

The meaning of the term 'intellectual' in the present context needs to be clarified. In the first place, the term 'intellectual' includes professional academics in the humanities, the social and natural sciences. One might also distinguish the 'intellectually trained' referring to those individuals whose social relations are structured by dint of training in terms of the social relationships distinctive of intellectuals. Although a far from exhaustive list, this includes non-tertiary teachers, writers, lawyers, engineers, journalists, media professionals, IT professionals, and the like. Both intellectuals and the intellectually trained can be referred to collectively as what Sharp refers to as the 'intellectually related groupings'.[33]

Expressed in terms of occupational role, however, this definition of intellectuals is liable to be misinterpreted as a statement about intellectuals as a class. To speak about the role of the intellectually related groupings in the reconstitution of social life could therefore

be understood as a statement about the nature of class relations in contemporary society. As such, the theoretical perspective being presented here could be reduced to the familiar terms of class analysis, some of which were critically explored in the previous chapter. While not wishing to deny the validity of such analyses, my interest in emphasising the role of the intellectually related groupings in the present context is somewhat different. Specifically, the focus here is on intellectuals and intellectual practice as a particular way of structuring or organising social relations; '*a distinguishable form of life*' characterised by a distinctive 'mode of social interchange'.[34]

The distinctiveness of this form of life was alluded to in the discussion of integrative levels in terms of the way in which print abstracts social relations from particular social contexts. Print is significant because it abstracts social relations from the corporeal limits of speech. Via print and other means of abstraction, intellectual practice is structured in terms of a spatially and temporally extended social network.[35] As Sharp notes:

> the intellectual culture was the first social system to construct its basic internal relations in terms of technological extension. The means whereby it does, do tend to liberate the individual, rather than bind him in conformity to alien interests. In the intellectual culture the basic means whereby the universally extended network is achieved is the book. In direct contrast to the single active source/many passive listeners, assymetry [sic] of the mass forms of technologically extended social relations, we have here a manifold of overlapping networks all activated by and anchored on individuals. Each intellectual 'listener' chooses his own 'speakers' and synthesises them as the active process of his self development. *Because the networks differ the persons differ and yet the 'free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'*.[36]

By means of print and, more recently, other forms of abstract-extended social interchange, such as those made possible by electronic forms of communication, the embodied presence of an Other can be attenuated to the point where it is relatively unnecessary to social relations. As Hinkson notes: 'At the heart of intellectual practice is a core principle: interrelations with the other in this mode *do not require physical presence with another*. Rather, they are mediated by the technology of the book, or now, the high-tech communications revolution'.[37] Intellectuals, in their capacity *as* intellectuals, thus break free from the basic socio-ontological settings of social life grounded within particular places and times and relations, such that they are able to 'stand outside' of the particular social contexts and reflect on those social contexts in a more general way.[38]

For most of human history, the form of social life characteristic of intellectuals have been set within, and to that extent, structured by other constitutive levels characterised by less constitutively abstract ways of relating to others. In short, abstract-extended social integration has been the exception, rather than the rule. The theoretical claim of Sharp and others is that in the present the relative positions of constitutively abstract forms of the social have been transformed: abstract-extended forms of social relationships have come to frame and to that extent reconstitute the more deeply embedded social relations of embodied-extension.[39]

Sharp argues that this transformation has gone hand-in-hand with broader social and economic changes. Specifically, he emphasises the central role that intellectual practices play in processes of production and exchange, since at least World War II. In his words, there has been a 'fusion' of intellectual practice with the commodity form, the divisions between the social relational form of the commodity and that of intellectual practice collapsing. In such conditions, abstract-extended forms of social integration characteristic of intellectual practice have become immanent in social relations more generally.[40] Via the fusion of intellectual practice and the commodity form, abstract-extended social integration has become the generalised form of social integration. The brand-state and the contemporary logic of production and exchange centred on the image and the dominance of financial markets, can all be seen as expressions of the reconstitution of forms of social and economic integration grounded within embodied- and object-extended forms of the social.

It is important to be clear about what is and what is not being said here. In particular, the present position needs to be distinguished from claims about the emergence of a 'post-industrial society', the defining feature of which is that social and economic activities are structured around the production and exchange of information. There are at least two important differences between the present argument and those of the post-industrialists. The first is that the transition noted here is not *primarily* economic or technological in nature, as it is for the post-industrial theorists, but ontological. It is an expression of the dominance of a particular way of being in the world and relating to others, and the consequences of this for other ways of constituting social relations. Secondly, and crucially, this transition is not a linear process as the term '*post*-industrial' society might suggest. It is not the case that the forms of social integration characteristic of modern, industrial society have withered away, or are on the verge of doing so,

having been replaced by abstract-extended forms of social integration. Neither is it the case that social relationships of embodied presence, such as those enacted at the level of face-to-face, have disappeared altogether or that these no longer play a significant role in the constitution of social life. On the contrary, in its most developed form the constitutive abstraction argument emphatically rejects such linear accounts of social change. Such claims are easily refuted by the fact that many features characteristic of industrial societies and economies remain unchanged. Moreover, most people meet and work with one another in settings of face-to-face social interaction and, as such, these kinds of social relations remain integral to the constitution of society. The argument rather is that such social relationships have themselves been reconstructed via abstract processes of social interrelation. While face-to-face forms of social exchange remain, therefore, they are increasingly structured via the intervention of more abstract modes of social practice. As such, the reconstitution of social life in terms of abstract-extended forms of the social is far more complex than a story of increasing liberation and empowerment that the Atari Democrats of the Third Way tell.

Expressed in such a general way, this claim might seem exaggerated, even alarmist. By way of conclusion, therefore, it may be prudent to offer an illustration of the reconstitution of the embodied-extended social relations by more abstract forms of social relationships.

Conclusion

In his book *The Corrosion of Character*, Richard Sennett reports on his observations of the work practices at a Boston bakery which he had visited some twenty-five years prior, while researching an earlier book, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Looking back on his first visit to the bakery, Sennett recounts the sheer physicality of the bread-making process, the bakers kneading the dough and baking the bread by hand — the whole process requiring a great deal of strength and dexterity, and carrying a significant risk of injury. Sennett also recalls the lack of gender and ethnic diversity within the bakery. All the workers were Greek men, their identities as bakers tightly intertwined with both their ethnic identities and their masculinity. As Sennett notes, most aspired to 'be a good father, followed by a good worker' and equated 'good worker' with 'good Greek'.[41]

On his return twenty-five years later, Sennett finds that the bakery has changed markedly. The Italian owners who had operated the bakery when Sennett first visited it had sold it to a giant food conglomerate, the workforce was no longer all-male, and neither were all the bakers Greek. By far the most significant change that Sennett notes, though, relates to the bread-making process itself. A computer-controlled baking machine had almost entirely eliminated the manual aspects of kneading and baking. In fact, the closest that the bakers' hands came to the dough was to press icons on a touch-screen to select the different types of bread required. As Sennett observes:

> Computerized baking has profoundly changed the balletic physical activities of the shop floor. Now the bakers make no physical contact with the materials or the loaves of bread, monitoring the entire process via on-screen icons which depict, for instance, images of bread colour derived from data about the temperature and the baking time of the ovens; few bakers actually see the loaves of bread they make. Their working screens are organized in the familiar [Microsoft] Windows way; in one, icons for the many more different kinds of bread appear than had been prepared in the past — Russian, Italian, French loaves all possible by touching a screen. *Bread had become a screen representation.*[42] [Emphasis added]

The primary focus of Sennett's analysis is the impact that this changed way of working has for the formation of personal and collective identity among the bakers. However, Sennett's account of the bakery perfectly illustrates the intersection and wholesale reconstitution of one form of life enacted and constituted at the level of embodied-extended social integration, by abstract-extended forms of social integration. This more general point can be drawn out by the ways in which the corporeal aspects of work in the bakery had been rendered relatively insignificant to the social relations of labour, as well as the personal identities of the bakers themselves. Whereas the personal identities of the workers and their social relations of labour had formerly been structured around embodied-related categories — gender (male), ethnicity (Greek), and of course, manual labour (work of the hand) — on Sennett's second visit, these have been reconstructed in terms of more abstract categories, structured around the bread-making machine. Bread-baking is thus no longer 'inscribed on the bodies' of the bakery employees in the same way that it was in the past, but has been 'lifted out' of a particular social context and reconstituted in a more abstract form.[43]

This is illustrated by the fact, noted by Sennett, that many of the bakery staff do not even think of themselves as bakers, since what they do in the bakery is almost

indistinguishable from a myriad of other jobs.[44] The specificity of bread-baking has thus been reconstituted in more general terms. Although the bread-making process itself still requires the embodied presence of the workers, these have been refracted through more abstract categories and processes. Face-to-face relationships as well as the embodied aspects of bread-making have, in relative terms, been displaced as the primary way of structuring the social relations of labour within the bakery and, as such, have been rendered peripheral to the bread-making process itself.

We might clarify this further by contrasting this interpretation with how Giddens might interpret the situation that Sennett recounts in the Boston bakery. In Giddens' terms, the entry of the baking machine into the bakery can be understood as an example of the extension and intensification of particular forms of expert knowledges to yet another sphere of social life. While Giddens notes that the expansion of expert systems has negative consequences, such as de-skilling individuals and producing feelings of alienation as a result of the disruption of the 'local knowledges' that they possess about their day-to-day social contexts, he does not see this as effecting a fundamental reconstitution of those spheres of life. For Giddens, '[w]ith the expansion of abstract systems ... the conditions of daily life become transformed and recombined across much larger time-space tracts; such disembedding processes are processes of loss [of power]'.[45] While no doubt true, there is no sense here of one's day-to-day life being reconstituted on quite different terms than had previously been the case. The transformation and recombination that Giddens refers to here is one of a 'stretching' of social relations across time-space, while the fundamental nature of social life remains relatively unchanged. Hinkson makes the point well in his claim that

> Giddens registers a new situation for intellectual practices when he speaks of the rise of abstract expert systems which dis-embed and displace older traditions, which make more abstract time-space distanciation by their very emergence. What he does not bring to the fore in these discussions is the way in which this entry of intellectual practice into the social structure, including the economy proper, is a fundamental shift given the history of intellectual practice.[46]

Giddens' failure to recognise this fundamental shift can be seen in that in spite of the transformation and recombination that he describes, he argues that social actors are nevertheless able to reappropriate the power that they have lost. Since social actors retain a great deal of knowledge about the social contexts within which they live in spite of the effects

of expert systems, and it is (at least in part) through these knowledges that society is constituted and reconstituted, individuals are able to use expert knowledges to re-empower themselves in changed situations. In Giddens' terms, then, there is a basic continuity between social form on which expert systems are based and that on which social relations more generally are based. Giddens describes this is in terms of a dialectical relationship between everyday knowledges and abstract systems:

> Whatever skills and forms of knowledge laypeople may lose [in the expansion of abstract systems to areas of social life previously left relatively unaffected by them], they remain skilful and knowledgeable in the contexts of action in which their activities take place and which, in some part, those activities continually reconstitute. Everyday skill and knowledgeability thus stands in dialectical connection to the expropriating effects of abstract systems, continually influencing and reshaping the very impact of such systems on day-to-day existence.[47]

To some extent, the dialectical connection between everyday knowledges and abstract systems is evident in the in the example of the bakery; Sennett notes, for example, that the bakers have had to learn computer skills to perform their work tasks. The de-skilling of the bread-making process through the expansion of expert systems in to the baking process has thus led to the workers re-appropriating expert knowledges into their everyday work practices. According to Giddens, then, the expansion of abstract systems provides individuals with new and potentially more powerful means to shape their social contexts.[48]

However, Giddens does not acknowledge the limits of this dialectical relationship. Such limits are well illustrated by Sennett's observations of the helplessness and confusion experienced by the workers when the bread-making machine breaks down. Although the employees have some knowledge of computers, it does not extend to the repair of complex computer systems. In addition, although some of the employees know how to bake bread by hand, such 'everyday knowledge' is impotent where the process of bread-making is structured in ways that cut across the contexts wherein any such knowledge might prove useful.[49] In short, there is a disjuncture here between the form of life on which 'everyday knowledge' is based and that upon which 'expert systems' are based. The confusion experienced by the workers observed by Sennett can, in the terms developed here, be understood as an expression of the limits of everyday knowledges under condition in which the social contexts within which these had purchase have been radically disrupted and reconstituted by more abstract forms of social relations which underlie expert systems. The process that Sennett describes in the bakery is thus more

complex than a stretching of social relation across space and time, as Giddens' analysis would suggest. The entry of the bread-making machine into the settings of manual labour points to the dissolution of one form of social life, characterised by embodied-extended social relations, and its reconstitution within the settings of abstract-extended forms of social interchange.

Similar processes of dissolution and reconstitution could be multiplied at will across a range of social settings, from attempts to gear secondary and tertiary education towards training in abstract technique as opposed to the idea of education as forming the person, to the proliferation of anti-depressant drugs, such as Prozac, which by-pass treatment of depression through relations grounded in relations with embodied Others through neuro-chemical manipulation,[50] to *in vitro* fertilisation which, as Alison Caddick argues, reframes the social meaning of motherhood in a manner that points 'in the direction of a society bent on the practical, or lived, abstraction of the person'.[51] Another expression of this abstraction of social life is evident in the network community of the Third Way, or so I shall argue in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

[1] Geoff Sharp, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 99/100 (1992), 196.

[2] Based in Melbourne, Australia, the Arena group is a community of scholars and writers who work out of the Marxist and post-Marxist traditions. The ideas of the core editorial group have been developed over the years in *Arena*, *Arena Journal*, and *Arena Magazine*. In particular see: Geoff Sharp, 'Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice', *Arena*, no. 70 (1985): 48-82; Geoff Sharp, "Intellectuals in Transition," *Arena*, no. 65 (1983): 84-95; Geoff Sharp, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 99/100 (1992): 188-216; Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993): 221-237; John Hinkson, *Postmodernity: State and Education* (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1991); John Hinkson, "Postmodern Economy: Self-Formation, Value and Intellectual Practice," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993): 23-44; John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 13 (1999): 101-123; Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?," *Arena* Spring, no. 99/100 (1992): 66-85;

Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

[3] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, xii. See also, Paul James, 'Reconstituting Work: Towards an Alternative Ethic of Social Reproduction', *Arena Journal*, no. 10, 1998: 85-111.

[4] See Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?," *Arena*, 70.

[5] Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*: 221-237

[6] In Sharp's terms, 'any society with a relatively developed mode of production, ... [is] inevitably composed of a series of constitutive levels. One of these stands in relative dominance and at the same time allows within the terms of that general dominance a variety of ways of ordering the social whole: some relatively co-operative in form, others exploitative and entailing one form or another of political domination.' Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 58.

[7] Geoff Sharp, 'Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice', *Arena*, no. 70 (1985): 48-82.

[8] The formulation and discussion of these levels of integration draw heavily on the work of the Paul James. James delineates three levels of social integration, 'face-to-face', 'agency-extended' and 'disembodied-extended'. He also delineates a fourth level, 'object-mediated integration' which is similar to object-extended integration. See Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 23-37.

[9] Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour: A Critique of Epistemology* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 20.

[10] As Sharp notes, 'Marx, in his analysis of the commodity abstraction, was almost exclusively concerned with an institutional analysis of the role of the market in the communication of capitalist interest through the realization of surplus value. Certainly quite clear implications are traced as to the way this process lends a distinctive normative frame to capitalist culture and hence to the underlying formation of the persons engaged in its practice', however, '[t]hey remain as beings constituted on one plane, distorted and constrained in the fulfilment of their human potential by the practices consummated and fixed by capitalist exchange.' There is in other words no broader social theoretical development of the implications of this analysis to the constitution of social relations more generally. Nor is their any analysis of the intersection of differently constituted forms of social relationships. See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 63.

[11] In Sharp's words, the process of 'commodity abstraction calls out a more abstract mode of the constitution of the world of objects in exchange, of the social relations of exchange, and of the persons involved in these processes.' Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 57.

[12] See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*: 48-82.

[13] This point is emphasised by Freya Carkeek and Paul James. See Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?," *Arena*, 70.

[14] Following on from the previous point about the nation, James argues that the nation 'is an abstract community but one which always, subjectively and ideologically, reaches back to more concrete ways of living and representation.' See Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 2.

[15] See for example Dick Leichleitner Japanangka and Pam Nathan, *Settle Down Country*, (Malmsbury: Kibble Books, 1983), Chapter One.

[16] This example is drawn from Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 28-29.

[17] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 25-26.

[18] This is not to say that the Indigenous person's relationship is not mediated at all. Ritual and myth, for example, may mediate the connection to land, however, both tend to be framed by embodied-extended forms of social integration.

[19] This analysis is drawn from James' notion of 'object-mediated integration'. See Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 25.

[20] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 44-47.

[21] Peter van Ham, "The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation," *Foreign Affairs*, (2001) URL: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/articles/vanham0901.html> Consulted 11 January 2002.

[22] In van Ham's argument: 'By marginalizing nationalist chauvinism, the brand state is contributing greatly to the further pacification of Europe.' This is somewhat mistaken. The brand state does not entail the end of nationalism, but rather a different form of nationalism; one which works at the abstract level of integration. James refers to this as the 'post-modern nation', arguing that whereas 'the modern nation-state was experienced as both publicly and intimately structuring one's lifeworld, then the postmodern nation is increasingly experienced as an unstructured, and at times even optional, background choice: for example the distinctions between race, ethnicity and nationality have become further stretched with nationality becoming less and less inscribed in one's body.' Thus, the nation is integrated through abstract-extension rather than the corporeal or institutional. See Peter van Ham, "The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation," *Foreign Affairs* and Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 35.

[23] Quoted in Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (London: Flamingo, 2000), 197.

[24] See Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 242.

[25] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 22.

[26] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 24.

[27] Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism: Volume One Power, Property and the State* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 38-39.

[28] As Geoff Sharp notes, 'Giddens ... is notable for having adopted an interest in the phenomena associated with the extended forms of the social and for giving them some degree of conceptual differentiation by way of his concept of space-time distanciation.' Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*, 234.

[29] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 54.

[30] Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 38.

[31] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 31.

[32] This point is made well by James in his argument that 'Neither the act of being in the presence of others, nor the continuation of ties of blood, nor attachment to a particular locale, necessarily suggest a setting in which the face-to-face is the dominant integrative level. For example, the description that peak-hour subway commuters are squashed in to Tokyo express by professional passenger loaders says nothing about the relevant structures of relations which holds together these strangers-cum-national compatriots.' Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*, 24-25.

[33] This meaning of intellectual and intellectually trained are drawn from Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 64.

[34] Geoff Sharp, "Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice," *Arena*.

[35] See Geoff Sharp, 'Intellectuals in Transition', *Arena*, 91.

[36] Geoff Sharp, 'A Revolutionary Culture,' *Arena*, no. 16 (1968), 3.

[37] John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal*, 113.

[38] See Geoff Sharp, 'Intellectuals in Transition', *Arena*, 1983, particularly pp. 89-91 and 'Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice', *Arena*, particularly 190-197.

[39] See Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*: 48-82.

[40] For a full discussion of this fusion, see Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, 64-68.

[41] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 71 and 66.

[42] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 68. See also, 64-75.

[43] While Sennett acknowledges that this has had many beneficial consequences, namely a greater ethnic and gender diversity at the bakery, as well as making for a safer workplace, the main thrust of his argument is that the automation of production has resulted in weakening of the personal and collective identities of the workers. He argues that this has had a deleterious effect on the formation of the personal and collective identities of the bakery employees, and their understandings of themselves. See Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 65.

[44] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 70-71.

[45] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 138.

[46] John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal*, 112-113.

[47] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 138 and 137-139.

[48] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 138-139.

[49] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 72-73.

[50] This argument is drawn from the work of Guy Rundle. See Guy Rundle, "Learning From Prozac: Depression and Post-Modernity," *Arena Journal*, no. 4 (1994/95): 17-29, and "Ten Years of Vitamin P: Prozac and Social Meaning," *Arena Journal*, no. 13 (1999): 25-30.

[51] Alison Caddick, "'Witnessing' the Bio-Technical Revolution: Maternal Desire and the Insinuation of a New Cultural Form," *Arena Journal*, no. 8 (1997), 81.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Third Way and the Re-constitution of Community

> ... 'reality' is the social reality of the actual people involved in interaction, and in the productive process; while the Real is the inexorable 'abstract' spectral logic of Capital which determines what goes on in social reality. This gap is palpable in the way the modern economic situation of a country is considered to be good and stable by international financial experts, even when the great majority of its people have a lower standard of living than they did before — reality doesn't matter, what matters is the situation of Capital ... In short, the highest form of ideology lies not in getting caught up in the ideological spectrality, forgetting about its foundations in real people and their relations, but precisely in overlooking this Real of spectrality, and pretending to address 'real people with their real worries'. Visitors to the London Stock Exchange are given a leaflet which explains to them that the stock market is not about some mysterious fluctuations, but about real people and their products — *this* is ideology at its purest.
>
> Slavoj Žižek[1]

Introduction

In the concluding pages of his most sustained attempt to elaborate his theory of 'structuration', *The Constitution of Society*, Anthony Giddens draws an important distinction between the natural and the social sciences. The kernel of his argument is that whereas the natural sciences can credibly maintain a distinction between the objects that they inquire about and the subjects who do the inquiry, no corresponding subject–object distinction can be made in the social sciences. Instead, Giddens argues that the findings of social scientists and social researchers contribute to the constitution of the very 'objects' that they study. In Giddens' terms, '[t]he social sciences, unlike natural science, are inevitably involved in a "subject–subject relation" with what they are about'.[2]

As Giddens explains, this is a consequence of the fact that the social world as encountered by social theorists and researchers is always-already saturated with meanings created by social

agents themselves as a necessary and unavoidable by-product of social interaction. The concepts and findings created by social scientists are therefore always 'secondary' to a domain of social action that is already inherently meaningful, as a consequence of the behaviours of social actors in the course of their daily activities. As such, Giddens argues that sociological concepts are '"second-order" concepts in so far as they presume certain conceptual capabilities on the part of the actors to whose conduct they refer'.[3]

Importantly, however, Giddens notes that these second order concepts can 'become "first-order" concepts by being appropriated within social life itself'.[4] Because social theorists inhabit the same social and conceptual universe as the social agents that they study, and these social agents are themselves capable of understanding the findings of social scientific inquiry, the insights generated by social research can be, and often are, integrated back into people's day-to-day lives.[5] In doing so, the findings of the social sciences help to shape the social contexts that they were intended to describe and explain in the first place, thereby contributing to the way in which those contexts are constituted. For Giddens social inquiry is always a 'double process' of interpretation, structured in terms of what he calls the 'double hermeneutic'.[6]

To clarify and illustrate the double hermeneutic, Giddens cites a passage from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The relevant passage concerns Machiavelli's advice on how the Prince should conduct himself so as to win the favour of the people, a matter that is determined by the manner in which he has won power. Giddens' point is that Machiavelli's writings are not simply an extended treatise on the nature of politics. Rather, they have become part and parcel of the way in which political behaviour is conducted. According to Giddens,

> Machiavelli's theorem is not just an observation about power and popular support in politics. It was intended to be, and has been accepted as, a contribution to the actual mechanics of government. It can be said without exaggeration, that the practice of government has never been quite the same since Machiavelli's writings became well known.[7]

Giddens' use of Machiavelli to illustrate the role of social scientists in the constitution of social and political life is interesting given his present role as an adviser to a modern-day 'Prince' seeking to secure the prosperity and well-being of his 'principality' in an era of cultural and economic flux.[8] If Machiavelli's writings can be said to have altered the nature of political practices, as Giddens claims, then it can also be said that to a somewhat more limited

degree, the proponents of the Third Way have also contributed to the constitution of political and social practices. Giddens' observation of Machiavelli can thus be applied to the Third Way itself, to say — albeit with some exaggeration — *that the practice of government has never been quite the same since the writings of the Third Way became well known.*[9]

This is to raise, in a somewhat pointed way, the central concern of this chapter: namely the way in which the proponents of the Third Way have contributed to the constitution — or more precisely, the *reconstitution* — of politics and society. Drawing on the levels approach outlined in the previous chapter, my argument is that the network community represents the generalisation of abstract forms of social integration, relative to less abstract forms. The network community does not therefore signal a reversal of processes of social abstraction. Rather it signals the generalisation and legitimation of a comprehensive reconstruction of social life lived in more abstract ways. This is not to say that social relations constituted within the settings of face-to-face interaction, or institutionally mediated forms of social integration are no longer significant to how social life is lived. On the contrary, the proponents of the Third Way draw on such social relations in their own politics. Even as they do so, though, they simultaneously reconstruct such social relations via more abstract forms of social integration. In short, the Third Way's politics of community can be understood as an ideology of abstract forms of social life, or so I will argue.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be made clear at the outset that the term 'ideology' is used here to refer to a process of naturalisation or normalisation. Terry Eagleton captures something of this meaning of the term in his analysis of ideology as that which

> offers itself as an 'Of course!', or 'That goes without saying' ... Ideology freezes history into a 'second nature', presenting it as spontaneous, inevitable and so unalterable. It is essentially a *reification* of social life ... [10]

In other words, the proponents of the Third Way reify abstract social relations, such that other ways of thinking and acting are precluded in advance. To distinguish this concept of ideology from others, it might be referred to as a 'meta-ideology'. As noted in the Introduction, unlike '[p]articular ideologies [which] express divisions within a particular framework of *practice* ... a meta-ideology defines itself in expressing the drive to displace a currently dominant framework as such'.[11] One of the hallmarks of a meta-ideology is that

contradictions within an existing framework arising out of a fundamental incompatibility of practices are claimed to be reconcilable within the new framework. In their claim to offer a politics that is 'beyond Left and Right' the proponents of the Third Way advocate something like this 'drive to displace a currently dominant framework'. Specifically, the network community seems to offer a social form that reconciles tensions between co-operation and commercial relations, individual autonomy and collective interests, and capital and labour, which were central to ideologies and political movements in the past.

This is not to say, however, that the advocates of the Third Way are wholly or even primarily responsible for the reconstitution of the social in more abstract terms. Neither should I be interpreted as claiming that this is a conscious or deliberate strategy. It is not the case that the reconstitution of social relations is the unspoken intent of the proponents of the Third Way. Rather, they offer a political justification and legitimacy to a process that is already well in-train arising from a fundamental acceptance of the abstraction of social relations their starting point for thinking about policy. The Third Way lends political legitimacy to such processes, seeking to generalise the dominant form of social interrelation in the name of pragmatism. In this sense, pragmatism is not the opposite of ideology, as some proponents of the Third Way like to imagine. It is its highest form.

One of the consequences of this is that much of the ideological content of the Third Way appears as commonsense and seemingly unchallengeable. In developing this argument then, there is some need to de-naturalise the taken for granted, to make the familiar unfamiliar. In order to do this, I focus on three interrelated concepts: 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurs' and 'social inclusion'. All of these concepts were examined in some detail in Chapter Two as central to the Third Way approach to governance through community. The intention of reprising them in the present chapter is to draw out how each carries with it the normalisation of abstract forms of the social.

There are three main reasons for focusing on these terms. The first is the simple fact that they are central to the Third Way analyses of community and governance. Secondly, each term carries with it a different, although related aspect of community. 'Social capital' can be thought of as the *social-relational form* of community; the 'social entrepreneur' the ideal form of *subjectivity* and agency through which practices of governance function, while 'social inclusion' specifies the *integrative principle* that links

these agents to community. Taken together then, these terms offer an outline sketch of the Third Way's notion of community and its connection to governance. The third and final reason for focusing on these terms relates back to the previous concern to make the familiar unfamiliar. What is interesting about these terms is that each has become taken for granted and incontestable. How, it might be asked, could the attempt to generate social capital — social relationships of heightened trust, mutuality, reciprocity and co-operation — be any other than a noble goal of policy makers? How could social inclusion be any other than virtuous? Is not the concern with empowering social entrepreneurs simply a recognition of the limits of the state and the need to mobilise the energies and capabilities of individuals for social good? It is, I suggest, the very innocuousness of these terms, their imperviousness to any deep criticism or debate, *while at the same time helping to re-define and reconstruct social relations*, that belies their (meta-)ideological character. The purpose of subjecting these terms to critical interrogation, then, is to show how each reifies the reconstitution of social relations in abstract-extended as natural, normal and inevitable.

Before proceeding, however, I want to begin by fleshing out, in general terms, the manner in which the proponents of the Third Way have contributed to the constitution of society. Giddens' notion of the double hermeneutic, with which this chapter began, provides a useful entry point in to this discussion.

1. Community as Ideology

The significance of Giddens' analysis of the double hermeneutic to our present concerns is that it highlights the nature of writing and social inquiry as itself a socially constitutive act, an act that intervenes materially in the way in which social life is structured. More specifically, it illustrates the process by which a particular grouping — in this case 'social scientists' — help to constitute social life. While we might agree with Giddens that social scientists or, speaking more generally, intellectual practices contribute to the constitution of the social, his analysis does not go far enough. It might be added that they do so in a manner that is distinctive to, and discontinuous with other social actors. Drawing on the analysis of the previous chapter, we can say that intellectual practices constitute the social in a more abstract way. This, as has

already been stressed, is not simply an ideational process; abstraction here refers to a socio-material process. This point is summarised well in Geoff Sharp's observation that:

> For a period which is at least coextensive with the history of class societies the role of the intellectuals has been to construct more constitutively abstract versions of 'reality' which then intersect the relationships of class and of everyday life. Take for instance religions and priesthoods as the custodians of schemes of religious representation. These are not simply accounts of another world or cosmologies which may, for instance, relate the 'City of God', to the 'City of Man': they intersect with the class system and are phrased so as to lend legitimacy to a given arrangement of the class interests and to the way in which particular types of persons interpret their stations in life and their relationships with others.[12]

The construction of more abstract accounts of the social reality is therefore not simply a conceptual act. Neither is it politically neutral. As Sharp notes, such accounts affect the constitution of social reality itself. In other words, they call into being a more abstract layer of social interrelation that reinforces certain social orders while potentially ruling others out as unrealistic.

Moreover, they do not reconstitute social life of their own accord, but intersect with other ways of living and being that are constituted through less abstract ways of living, such as class and everyday life. The extent to which these 'more constitutively abstract versions of "reality"' reconstitute the social in more abstract terms is limited to the extent that they are framed within other ways of Being and relating to others. More specifically, where social life is structured through relations grounded within embodied categories as the dominant level of social integration, such as those of face-to-face social relations, the extent to which intellectual practices can reconstitute social relations in a general way is limited.

This point can be illustrated by looking at other thinkers who, like the proponents of the Third Way, have extolled the virtues of community to governance. While such ideas have been formulated and articulated by others with intellectual training — social reformers, priests, academicians for example — their claims were, to a significant degree, framed within relations of embodied-extension as the dominant level of social integration. A brief excursus through the ideas of the nineteenth-century English social reformer and manufacturer, Robert Owen, can help to clarify this point.

Owen's case is particularly pertinent because many of his ideas parallel those advanced by the proponents of the Third Way.[13] He sought to influence public policy, particularly laws relating to the government of the poor, espousing what today would be recognised as communitarianism. Like the proponents of the Third Way, the communitarian ideas of Owen were not based upon a yearning for the past. Owen viewed custom and tradition as the enemies of social progress, which would only be overcome through universal education and training for children up until the age of twelve. For Owen, education and training would be the tools with which the good society would be built.[14] Owenite communities were to be based on 'scientific' principles of Enlightenment rationality. Although he frequently expressed disdain for intellectuals, Owen is today considered as one of the first theorists of socialism, writing numerous pamphlets and papers on how society should be ideally ordered. He can thus be considered as an intellectual in the sense noted above, producing constitutively abstract versions of social reality. Furthermore, like Tony Blair's idea of 'social-ism', Owenite socialism was reformist rather than revolutionary in its trajectory. Indeed, Owen frequently reiterated his view that radical reforms would only be for the worse.[15]

Moreover, Owen grappled with many of the same kinds of problems that the proponents of the Third Way have sought to respond — namely the social consequences of rapid scientific and technological innovation. In his *Report to the County of Lanark* written in 1820, which drew on his experiences in setting up the model community New Lanark, Owen outlined a detailed proposal to solve the interrelated problems of overproduction, unemployment and poverty. He traced these interrelate problems to technological advances in the production processes, namely mechanisation. The deployment of machinery in the production process had increased productive output while reducing the demand for labour. The effect was to concentrate wealth, leading to a slump in consumption, which lead to overproduction and further redundancy.

Owen's remedy for these social and economic ills was to change the way in which value was measured. He regarded precious metals as '*artificial* values', which he contrasted with '*intrinsic* values'. He claimed that the artificial values of precious metals distorted the true value of things and the corresponding social relations of production and exchange.[16] To correct this he proposed a labour theory of value. In the new society envisaged by Owen, human labour would function as the standard of value. For Owen, 'the natural

standard of value is, on principle, human labour, or the combined manual and mental powers of men called into action'.[17] Such a change in the measure of value would, he reasoned, greatly increase the demand for labour. To facilitate this change, Owen advocated an expansion of manual labour, to be achieved by abandoning the use of ploughs in farming and returning instead to spade cultivation. This would increase demand for labour, thereby countering the unemployment stemming from mechanisation and the consequent problem of overproduction. He also cited scientific reasons for this change in practices of agricultural cultivation. Manual cultivation of land, he claimed, produced superior soils and yields.[18]

To effect the transition to spade cultivation, Owen advocated a communitarian society arguing for the creation of small-scale farming communities of 300–2000 people.[19] Social relations in these communities were to be organised on what Owen considered rational scientific principles. The most important of these was the principle that individual character was to be understood as amenable to reform through education and training. For Owen, '"man is the creature of circumstances"'.[20] He thus opposed individualism and the view that individuals were the sole authors of their character, claiming that '[o]ne of the most general sources of error and evil to the world is the notion *that infants, children, and men, are agents governed by a will formed by themselves and fashioned after their own choice*'.[21] Owen saw traditions and customs as responsible for the persistence of such ideas. With their elimination, and given the appropriate training and education, he argued that individuals could be taught to live in a utopia of plenty, in which social relations were based upon consensus, mutual interdependence and reciprocity. In the words of Gatrell, 'Owen believed that the proper relations between men had been attained in rural England and the mutual dependence and the reciprocal obligations there exemplified he tried consciously to reconstitute within the industrial village of New Lanark'.[22]

Owen's communitarian socialism can be understood as an attempt to negotiate a transition in the dominant level of social integration. More specifically, he was writing in circumstances where the intimate social bonds of rural village life were steadily being eroded by mechanisation and the industrial revolution, and reconstituted in more abstract forms of association — namely the mediated social relations of urban industrial society. Owen's communitarianism was an attempt to negotiate this transition in levels of social integration by reflexively reconstructing the social bonds of the village within

urban industrial settings. His aim was to loose the social relations of the village from their moorings within tradition and custom and, via a system of universal education and training, reflexively reconstruct them within the settings of urban industrial society. The effect of this was that the social bonds of the village were to be reconstituted and reintegrated through abstract process of scientific rationality.

However, in the conditions within which he wrote, the reconstitution of such relations could go only so far. Even as he sought to reconstruct social relations along lines of scientific rationality, he simultaneously re-grounded them in less abstract forms of the social, namely in the face-to-face relations of manual labour. While Owen insisted that his views were based upon rational scientific principles, at the heart of his argument lies a moral defence of embodied-extended social integration, based on the primacy of face-to-face social relations. This is implicit in his advocacy of the labour theory of value, which forms the basis of Owen's social reforms. Implicit within the labour theory of value is a moral argument about the importance of social relations of presence, in contrast to more abstract ways of relating to others. As Hinkson has noted in a more general discussion of political economy, the labour theory of value 'was an attempt to humanize and concretize money and markets'.[23] A similar defence of face-to-face forms of social integration is evident in the reforms that Owen advocated to means of exchange. Owen saw commerce as a morally deficient form of exchange, since it is based on the principle 'produce or procure every article at the *lowest*, and to obtain for it, in exchange the *highest* amount of labour'.[24] As noted above, this could only be achieved through by the creation of an 'artificial value', that is, by using precious metals in exchange. Value was thus abstracted from the labour 'contained' in the article of exchange. Owen argued that the use of artificial values led to, among other things, individualism and selfishness.[25]

To remedy the moral deficiencies of commerce, Owen argued for combining it with principles of barter exchange, which he viewed as morally sound. He thus advocated a medium of exchange that would reflect the true and unchanging value of the labour in the items of exchange — essentially a currency with a fixed price.[26] Owen's idea for a new form of exchange can be understood as an attempt to negotiate the intersection of two ways of constituting social relation: the face-to-face relations entailed in barter exchange are to be realised in a more general way, through the object-extended relations made possible by money.

The point to be drawn from this brief excursus through Robert Owen's social reforms is that to the extent that Owen can be considered as an intellectual constructing more abstract accounts of social reality, his analysis intersects with and is grounded in more concrete forms of social life. It is informed by, and grounded within an ethic of social relations of co-presence, even as he sought to reconstitute such social relations in more abstract terms via rational principles. Owen's 'new view of society' was thus framed by other ways of being and relating to others than simply the abstract, in spite of his pretensions to scientific analysis.

In contrast to the conditions within which Robert Owen wrote, less abstract ways of Being and relating to others have been, as I sought to show in the previous chapter, relatively displaced by more abstract ways of being and relating to others. Social life has been reconstituted through more abstract practices, to the point where these intervene in the constitution of the social in a more general way, by-passing (in relative terms) less abstractly constituted forms of social life. As Simon Cooper has noted, social life in the present can be characterised by

> two fundamental shifts. First, the scope and constitutive power of intellectual practice has been radically enhanced via the techno-sciences and the collapse of cultural-moral frameworks which might have set limits on intellectual activity. Second, the degree to which intellectual practices have come to the centre of daily life has increased. More and more of our daily life is constituted through some kind of intellectual practice, culturally through the use of media and information, materially through the replacement of natural environments with techno-scientific ones.[27]

Once again, it ought to be emphasised that this is not to say that social relations constituted at lower levels of social abstraction have disappeared. The point, rather, is that they are increasingly structured through intellectual practices, the effect of which is to attenuate relations of mutual presence, while remaining relatively free of other ways of being and relating to others.

It is in this within context that the Third Way's politics of community needs to be considered. To some extent, the proponents of the Third Way have some — albeit theoretically limited — insight into the generalisation of such relations. Concepts such as the 'post-industrial society', the 'information society' and 'reflexive social order', for example, register a change in the structure of contemporary social life in a way that foregrounds the central role played by the intellectually trained ('knowledge workers',

'wired workers') and intellectual practices, ('expert systems'). Moreover, there is some awareness on the part of the proponents of the Third Way that this transition in the dominant level of social integration has disrupted basic processes of socialisation. This is to say that where social relations are framed within more abstract ways of relating to others, the formation of the person as a social being undergoes some degree of disruption such that it is necessary to reassert basic social bonds — hence the renewed emphasis on the ethical relations of community and the concern with forging new forms of social solidarity.

However, as noted in Chapters Three and Four, the proponents of the Third Way do not view intellectual practices (or relations of commodity exchange, for that matter) as an expression of a distinctive form of social life. As such, there is little acknowledgment of the way in which one form of social integration, constituted within a particular level of social abstraction, can be reframed by another more abstractly constituted level. One of the effects of this theoretical blind-spot is that the proponents of the Third Way fail to recognise the way in which their own practices contribute to the reconstitution of social life in more abstract terms.

In drawing out this point, it ought to be noted that in spite of the rhetorical emphasis on participation and small-scale forms of political association, the Third Way is not and has never been a broad-based, grass-roots social movement. It is primarily a project of the intellectually related groupings: professional politicians, academics, social theorists, commentators, journalists and think-tanks. Furthermore, and again in spite of their frequent emphasis on the importance of ethical considerations to politics, most proponents of the Third Way do not rely on the claims or formulations of ethical traditions to ground their own politics. As noted in Chapters Two and Three, the politics of the Third Way is not grounded within a particular ethical framework. Neither, for that matter, do its proponents seek to connect their political project within an identifiable political tradition or as an expression of a social movement grounded in the ongoing conditions of life. While references to older forms of communitarianism rooted in religious or secular ethical traditions can be found within the Third Way literature, the substantive justification for it rests on the claims and findings of social theory.[28]

The import of this point is that the proponents of the Third Way contribute to normalising the abstract reconstitution of social life as the taken for granted ground on

which social life is lived. Social theoretical claims about the nature of social life come to be seen as if they are identical with social life itself, unmediated by other ways of Being and relating to others, grounded in other, less abstractly constituted levels of the social.

This point can be illustrated by Giddens' position as both a social theorist as well as an author of popular and influential political tracts. As a social theorist, he is able to stand outside of the particularity of his immediate social context and can therefore reflect on it in a more general way to construct more abstract forms of social reality. The condition for him doing so is partaking in intellectual practice as an abstract-extended form of social life. It is through this form of social life that Giddens is able to stand at a distance from the immediacy of contemporary social life, allowing him to reconstruct it in more abstract ways. Terms such as a 'reflexive social order', 'time-space distanciation' and 'the risk society' are expressions of this process of 'standing back'. At the same time, however, via the Third Way, Giddens' account of social life feeds back into political practices themselves. Informed by such accounts, policy makers and politicians formulate policies for a society in which all individuals are assumed to reflexively organise their lives according to the findings and claims of experts, the effect of which is to contribute to the reconstitution of social life itself.

Finlayson notes something similar in expressing concern that Third Way politics is founded on a 'dangerous solipsism'. In critically assessing the Third Way, and Giddens' work in particular, he notes that there is

> a tendency to accept economic developments as non-political, even natural, phenomena, and the role of government as shaping us all up for the new world, forcing us to be reflexive. The intellectual justification for policy is an interpretation of our present socio-economic context, where that context is the source of both the conditions for economic transformation and their legitimacy.[29]

The 'dangerous solipsism' to which Finlayson refers can be understood as a consequence of this more general reconstruction of social life in more abstract terms. The proponents of the Third Way effectively collapse less constitutively abstract forms of the social into the abstract-extended layer of social integration. Unlike Owenite socialist communitarians who sought to abstract the social relations of the rural village and reconstruct them in 'scientific' terms, while remaining substantially grounded within social relations of presence, Giddens and the other proponents of the Third Way re-present a social world in which social life is

already more abstractly constituted. Social theoretical ways of apprehending the social world thus become a common-sense description of how social life is increasingly experienced. Social theory is not simply a way of taking hold of the social; it increasingly legitimates interventions into the constitution of social relations themselves. It does so in a situation where social relations are already structured in the abstract, such that it is relatively untempered by other ways of relating to others, such as those structured through embodied categories.

One of the consequences of this, as noted in previous chapters, is that other ways of constituting community, namely those that give primacy to social integration based upon relations structured through the ongoing presence of others, come to be seen as nostalgic, unrealistic or undesirable. In the network community, it is imagined that social relations enacted within the settings of embodied-extended integration can be unproblematically lifted out of particular social contexts, and reconstructed via social relations of abstract-extension.

To take an example cited earlier, community is seen to be strengthened where there is a 'marriage culture' actively created through specialist marriage counsellors backed up by social research showing that married people have better health and are wealthier than their single peers. The basis of marriage is thus lifted out of its grounding within ethical and religious frames of reference, and reconstructed via, using Giddens' term, 'expert systems'.[30] Community is thus reconstructed through people's 'abstract trust' and investments in the findings of such expert systems. While prior levels of social integration, such as those constituted through embodied- and object-extended social relations remain, these are structured through social relations of abstract extension. It is in naturalising abstract forms of social integration as the dominant integrative level that the ideological character of the Third Way is seen most starkly.

Žižek's distinction between 'reality' and 'the Real', quoted at the beginning of this chapter, can help to clarify the ideological character of Third Way politics. This distinction can be understood in terms of the process whereby abstract-extended forms of social interconnection — the '"abstract" spectral logic of Capital' — come to structure less constitutively abstract forms of the social — 'actual people involved in interaction'. The ideological moment in this process is where one focuses on the embodied-extended social relations, overlooking the way in which these have been

comprehensively reconfigured via more abstractly constituted forms of the social. By extension, it is no longer possible to readily distinguish between the logic of abstract-extended social relations and social life itself. Ideology refers here not to that which conceals the 'real' situation behind a façade such that people systematically mis-recognise their 'true' interests. Rather, it refers to the way in which the gap that separates the 'façade' (the shadowy workings of the stock exchange, in Žižek's example) and the 'real' situation ('real people with their real products') is collapsed so that it is no longer possible to readily distinguish them from one another. Real people and their real interests are now structured via abstract processes, and their fate entwined within them. (As such, it no longer makes sense to speak of a 'façade' that conceals the 'true' state of things, since ideology is identical with the dominant structures of society).

In a similar way, the proponents of the Third Way effectively collapse different levels of social integration into a single layer of abstractly structured sociality. While the proponents of the Third Way frequently claim to respond to 'real people, and their real concerns', evident in their emphasis on pragmatic approaches to addressing pressing social problems that is unencumbered by the supposed ideological dogmas of the old social democratic Left, they do so in a way that simultaneously identifies those interests with social life as constituted within abstract terms. Life as lived across different levels of sociality in tension with one another thus becomes to be seen as unrealistic or mired in ideological rigidity. In this sense, the pragmatic approach that has become a hallmark of Third Way politics, can be seen, to quote Žižek, as 'ideology at its purest': an ideology of the dominant form of social life, such that any alternative appears as a distortion of the real. The Third Way is thus not simply a response to the changing nature of social life — the emergence of the knowledge economy and society, the decline of collective social bonds, the intensification of reflexive social practices, and so on — *it is simultaneously an ideological naturalisation of the more general social form of which such phenomena are expressions.*

Furthermore, the proponents of the Third Way claim that reconstituted thus, the social relations of community can be realised without contradiction. They claim that older values that the tensions and divisions between individual autonomy and solidaristic co-operation, the market and community, labour and capital dissolve. Stuart Hall, writing about the New Labour government in Britain, for example, has commented on this, noting,

> [t]he 'Third Way' speaks as if there are no longer any conflicting interests which cannot be reconciled. It therefore envisages a 'politics without adversaries'. This suggests that, by some miracle of transcendence, the interests represented by, say, the ban on tobacco advertising and 'Formula One', the private car lobby and John Prescott's White Paper, an ethical foreign policy and the sale of arms to Indonesia, media diversity and the concentrated drive-to-global-power of Rupert Murdoch's media empire have been effortlessly 'harmonised' on a Higher Plane, above politics.[31]

Hall's choice of the phrase 'higher plane' ties in neatly with the notion of levels. For the proponents of the Third Way, it is assumed that as social life is reconstituted at a more abstract level of social integration, the contradictions and tensions that gave rise to distinctive ideological boundaries between the Left and Right disappear or can be unproblematically reconciled.

A good example of this is Mark Latham's argument that in societies where production is based around the work of intellectually related groupings — Latham's preferred term is 'wired workers' — the division between capital and labour dissolves. Drawing on a somewhat crude interpretation of Marx, (by way of Fukuyama's re-reading of Hegel), Latham argues that 'wired workers reflect an apex in historical materialism'.

> They represent a synthesis of the tension between labour and capital, between Left and Right. This is why they so clearly embody the politics of the Third Way. This is the binding of labour and capital into a new economic epoch — people in control of their own labour but also deriving substantial income from their intellectual capital. Labour as the thesis, capital as the synthesis, wired workers as the synthesis — this is the new economy.[32]

For Latham, the intellectually related groupings combine a social ethic of co-operation, community, democratic inclusiveness and solidarity, while favouring the market as a means of distributing economic rewards.[33] For Latham, then, the appearance of the wired worker and the knowledge society permits the seamless fusion of socialist ethic based on relations of co-operation and reciprocity, and the relations of the capitalist market.[34]

The reason why this fusion of hitherto incompatible principles and values seems workable is the ambiguity of the social form on which intellectual practice is based, namely the network of abstract-extended social relations. Specifically, the network is based upon equal measures of interdependence and individualism.[35] In order to be successfully sustained, networks require a basic level of consensual interdependence, which finds its expression in an ethic of co-operation and reciprocal and mutual

exchange. One sees this in terms of intellectual practice, in the fact that intellectuals have historically abided by an implicit set of principles, namely the free exchange of ideas, peer review, citation, and so on, characterised by consensus and co-operation. At the same time, the social relations of the network, at least in so far as they dispense with the need for the embodied co-presence of an Other as a necessary element of social interchange, tend to give rise to radically autonomous forms of subjectivity. As opposed to more cohesive social formation, such as the group or class, the network is a more open social formation that carries with it a sense of heightened individual mobility and autonomy. It is because of this aspect of the network that intellectuals are able to 'stand outside' of their particular social context and reflect on them in a more general way.[36]

Because of this ambiguous nature, an ethic of co-operation and mutual trust, on the one hand, and individual autonomy, on the other hand, seem to be simultaneously possible within the settings of abstract-extended forms of social interchange. Whichever form of the network takes priority, however, depends to a significant extent on how the social relations are constituted and enacted. For example, where social relations of mutuality are constituted in abstract terms, the messy business of actually negotiating with others through time in the settings of face-to-face social relations can be, for the most part, by-passed. Mutuality takes the form of a general willingness to enter into social relations with others, occasionally punctuated by intense commitment. Alternatively, trust is understood as the expectation that 'abstract systems' will function in a predictable and anticipated manner.[37] In such circumstances, it is arguable that an ethic of autonomy tends to take priority. One example here is the way in which participants in internet chat rooms feel greater licence to express ideas and views that they might would not otherwise or would temper if they were to be expressed within face-to-face meetings.

In the next chapter I argue that the consequence of reconstituting community in these terms is to divest terms such as 'co-operation', 'mutuality' and 'reciprocity' of their potential political significance. As such, the Third Way undermines its own radical credentials. The point to be made here, however, is that in this attempt to reconcile these incompatible forms of social practice the Third Way assumes the status of a meta-ideology. The traditional values associated with the socialist tradition and capitalism are reworked so as to be seamlessly fused with each other.

Having provided this general overview of the meta-ideological character of the Third Way, the following sections illustrate the way in which the proponents of the Third Way's politics of community naturalises the abstraction of social relations through the interrelated notions of 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurs' and 'social inclusion'. Our starting point for this discussion is the most general social relational form of the Third Way, seen through the idea of 'social capital'.

2. Social Capital

The notion of 'social capital' illustrates perfectly the Third Way's ideological naturalisation of the abstract community. As we saw in Chapter Two, the proponents of the Third Way argue that social capital — dense social networks characterised by shared norms and values based on reciprocal trust — is central to community and governance. Informal, horizontal networks of social capital, it is claimed, foster forms of social connectedness that avoid authoritarianism and clientelism. At first glance, the emphasis on social capital might seem to run counter to my argument about the abstraction of social relations. Against the abstract, impersonal relations of the market or the bureaucracy, social capital appears to assert the importance of intimate social bonds, based upon informal connections that individuals choose with others, rather than the social bonds that are structured and mediated through institutions or money. It would therefore seem to root community within the level of embodied-extended social relations.

While social capital does emphasise such social bonds, it does so in a way that simultaneously reconstructs them in a more abstract form. The use of the term 'capital' is particularly telling in this respect, at least in so far as this carries with it connotations with the relationships of the market. As theorists of social capital are quick to point out, however, social capital is different from economic capital in at least two important respects. Firstly, while social capital may feed into and support economic capital, it is unlike economic capital in that it is a public good and is therefore difficult, if not impossible to privatise. Relations of trust and co-operation are necessarily public. To be sustained they must be shared. Furthermore, the benefits that flow from them do not confer an exclusive advantage on those who generate them. Since those who generate social capital recoup only a small part of the efforts and costs expended in generating it,

theorists of social capital claim that they tend to require higher levels of commitment and reciprocity, in contrast to the 'shallower' relationships of the market.[38] Secondly, theorists of social capital point out that benefits of heightened trust and co-operation are unlike economic capital in that they are not subject to the law of diminishing returns. Social capital is claimed to generate more social capital. This contrasts with economic capital, which diminishes with use. Theorists of social capital claim that whereas using machinery or land gradually depletes the benefit derived from them, requiring continual inputs to renew them, trusting others (at least in theory) encourages them to reciprocate that trust, thereby increasing the general willingness of individuals to trust one another.[39]

This last point is worth dwelling on, since it highlights a basic confusion about what capital is amongst some social capital theorists. Capital is conceived here as a particular object, such as land, machinery or money. Social capital is claimed to be different from these forms of capital since it refers not to objects, but to *relationships* between social actors. Against such a conception of economic capital, it is worth recalling one of the core insights of Marx, against the political economists of his day, namely that capital does not refer to particular objects, but to a *social relation*. For Marx,

> capital is not a thing, it is a definite social relation of production pertaining to a particular historical social formation, which simply takes the form of a thing and gives this thing a specific social character. Capital is not the sum of the material and produced means of production. Capital is the means of production as transformed into capital, these being no more capital in themselves than gold or silver are money.[40]

On Marx's account, particular objects like land, machinery and money can *under certain circumstances* assume the form of capital, but in themselves they are not capital. It is only when they enter into particular kinds of social relations that they become capital. What is distinctive about such social relations is that it is socio-materially abstract in character. The process of exchanging money for commodities which are then exchanged in turn for more money, which for Marx is the basic form of capitalistic relations, is one that is only possible via the process of commodity abstraction, which, to refer back to our discussion in the previous chapter, is one example of a socio-materially abstract form of social relation.

At a deeper level of social relational form, then, economic capital and social capital are homologous: just as relations of exchange within the market involve a process of 'commodity abstraction', whereby an object is stripped of the particular qualities that

give it a 'use value' and is reconstituted in the more 'constitutively abstract' form of the commodity, the notion of social capital, (if it is to be more than a tautology, signifying a 'social' social relationship), points to a parallel process, this time in reference to non-economic, ethical — as opposed to economic — exchange relations.[41]

As such, the notion of social capital expresses a social relational form in which ethical relationships constituted within embodied relations with others are 'lifted out' of the particular settings within which they arise, and are restructured in a more universal form of abstract-extended network. The effect of this is that ethical relationships, like the objects of commodity exchange, are realised in a more abstract way. As Gamarnikow and Green note in their discussion of social capital theories, '[s]ocial trust in modern complex societies arises not from personal relations but from norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement ... Social networks institutionalise generalised reciprocity and make collective action a fruitful endeavour'.[42]

Such generalised forms of ethical relations are not new. To some extent, a generalised willingness to enter into relations of reciprocity, mutuality or trust, has always been a feature of social life. What is significant about the notion of social capital and, in particular the Third Way, is that such relations are understood as the *dominant* or *general* form of social bond. Ethical bonds that depend upon deep, ongoing attachments to particular Others, by contrast, are seen as counterproductive to contemporary economic and social requirements. As we saw in Chapter Two, the proponents of the Third Way claim that in the contemporary phase of globalisation and in the context of a post-industrial economy and society, it is counter-productive to establish communities of long-term stable relationships. Community therefore needs to be 'reinvented' in a way that is compatible with existing structures of social life. Social capital is an expression of communal life perfectly calibrated to the abstract social form in the era of globalisation. In the same way that telecommunications technologies permit the abstraction of social relations from territory, and reintegrates at a higher level of social abstraction, social capital offers a model of community that is in accord with this same logic. Social capital does not therefore indicate a reversal of processes of social abstraction, but their radical intensification such that they encompass basic social bonds of co-operation, trust, mutuality and reciprocity.

Indeed, from reading the Third Way literature on community, one could be forgiven for thinking that the notion of social capital is synonymous with community itself. Community becomes no more than a 'store' or 'site' for the production of abstract ethical relations, rather than a social formation based on the particularity of relations with others. This is an expression of the way in which social theory thus comes to stand in for, and frame other ways of living. Community is therefore good to the extent that it produces social capital, which is deemed necessary for facilitating other forms of abstract exchange, namely market transactions. As Giddens notes in his discussion of social capital, '[c]oordination costs are lowered through shared norms rather than through bureaucratic hierarchy'.[43] Community thus has an instrumental role in facilitating production and exchange.

It is here that we see the ideological character of social capital most starkly. Community as constituted through abstract ethical relations is normalised, with the effect that other ways of relating to others, namely those that are embedded within the lineaments of particular places and time are seen as nostalgic, or else as potentially authoritarian. Reconstituted in the more abstract and open form of social capital, different forms of life — the market, community, and polity — enacted across different levels of social interchange and integration — face-to-face relationships within the settings of local neighbourhoods through to more abstract-extended forms of social relations, such as virtual communities or the exchange relations of the global market — are subsumed within a single level of abstract-extended interchange. This point is well illustrated by arguments for welfare reform along Third Way lines of mutual obligation and reciprocity. In critically assessing such arguments in the Australian context, Martin notes:

> the government view of 'mutual obligation' is consistent with increasing reliance upon market and quasi-market forces in areas of social as well as of economic policy. It is also consistent with a view of the individual as being abstracted from *particular* networks and communities and from a commitment to *particular* values and locales.[44]

The effect of this view is that any boundaries that are set up between the ethical relations of community as distinct from, and potentially in opposition to these other forms of life and practice, are difficult to sustain both analytically as well as in practice, and even harder to justify.

This is not simply a different way of speaking about or conceiving of community. To the extent that this has become a common-sense way of thinking about community that feeds into and informs policy, the effect is to materially reconstitute community itself in a more abstract way. Something of this process can be seen in the Blair government's education policies, particularly the introduction of so-called 'Education Action Zones' (EAZ's). EAZ's are an attempt to get businesses, community organisations, primary, secondary and special schools and families within a local area working together to improve the educational standards and achievements of students, particularly in deprived areas. Zones are managed by an 'Action Forum' that develops a range of proposals for change and specific goals. These goals may include changes to the staffing organisation of the school, improving teacher training, increasing literacy and numeracy standards, reducing truancy, forging links with local businesses to help school leavers find work, helping parents to support learning in the home and classroom, and increasing access to information technology resources. Schools that participate in such activities are eligible for substantial Government grants.[45]

The basic premise of Education Action Zones is that the root of educational under-achievement is deeper than simply an individual pupil's abilities, or their family's economic well-being. It is seen as a problem for whole communities lacking social capital. The aim of EAZ's, therefore, is to co-ordinate the activities of all sections of the community to improve educational outcomes. Communities are thus encouraged to develop the kinds of social capital that will enable them to increase the educational opportunities of pupils. As Gamarnikow and Green note,

> [t]he central dimension of the EAZ policy is social regeneration in areas which have high levels of educational underachievement, poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. Therefore there is a concern for the wider social parameters within which educational underachievement occurs. EAZs have an explicit commitment to address theses wider social issues of rebuilding civil society. This is where social capital enters the picture in the contexts of parenthood, households and community relations.[46]

While on the surface EAZs may seem a novel and effective approach to social problems, there has in practice been a tendency to emphasise the relationships between recipients and the providers of services, rather than those between recipients. As Gamarnikow and Green note, 'there is very little in the EAZ bids about developing networks amongst lay members of communities. Social networks are effectively networks of professional providers ... the focus

is on networks of providers, not recipients, of EAZ services'.[47] What this suggests is an idea of community in which the relations of co-operation and mutualism are mediated and structured through experts. The coherence of community therefore rests on the relations of the community to those with intellectual training. Social trust is not the kind developed between individuals and embedded within face-to-face interactions, but abstract trust in the claims of experts. While EAZ's no doubt draw upon the face-to-face relations between teachers, parents, business people and the like, these relations are structured through the abstract networks of social relations of intellectual practices. EAZ's thus reassert social bonds while simultaneously reconstituting these through the abstract-extended social relations of experts. There is a move, then, from relations of trust structured through embodied relations with others, to relations of abstract trust.

Moreover, social capital is claimed to resolve the tension between competing values and aims. This can be illustrated by the prominent role played by businesses in the establishment of EAZ's.[48] While it may be claimed that businesses are part of the local community like any other organisation, and therefore have a role to play in education, many of those involved with EAZ's are transnational companies, including Shell, McDonald's, Cadbury Schweppes, Nissan, Rolls Royce, Kelloggs, and American Express. Perhaps the most controversial of these is the role of Shell International in the Lambeth Education Action Zone.[49] Speaking at the launch of the EAZ's, Shell's Managing Director, Mark Moddy Stewart claimed that Shell is 'part of society ... We contribute to society and schools are the most important bit of society. It's not a question of direct profit but a prosperous society is absolutely *in everyone's commercial interest*'. (Emphasis added).[50] The role of Shell is particularly interesting given the company has been targeted by human rights and environmental activists, over its support for the Nigerian government, which has violently suppressed the activists fighting for the rights of the Ogoni people, on whose land Shell had drilling operations up to 1993.[51]

Similarly, in the case of McDonald's, the hamburger chain places a priority on appealing to school-age children in its marketing. The 'Operations Manual' for McDonald's store manager, for example, notes:

> Schools offer excellent opportunities. Not only are they a high traffic [sales] generator, but students are some of the best customers you could have. McDonald's have developed a number of programs that you can take into the

> schools in your area ... Good relations with your local schools can also offer opportunities for crew recruitment.

Similarly, the US head of marketing at McDonald's has claimed that children are 'virgin ground as far as marketing is concerned' and that promotions linked to education '"generate better feelings towards McDonald's" and lead to more "patronage", while 'community and charitable activity ...[is] "good business" which gain[s] "free publicity".[52] Cadbury, meanwhile, has provided packs to schools which, in part, informed children that 'Chocolate is a wholesome food that tastes really good. It is fun to eat at any time of the day and gives you energy and important nutrients that your body needs to work properly'.[53] Similarly, British Nuclear Fuels sought to ease concerns about their industry by implying that the seriousness of nuclear accidents was on par with a grazed knee in the school-yard or a spilt cuppa. School children were informed that 'Accidents happen all the time' and asked: 'Can you think of some accidents that have happened in school, at home or locally?'[54]

Under the rubric of building social capital, then, the branding strategies of giant multinationals are presented as integral to building co-operation and trust within the local communities in which they are sited. For the proponents of the Third Way, then, there is no difference between the co-operation between particular individuals who have an abiding connection to one another and the commercial interests of transnationals. This is to highlight the meta-ideological function of social capital. Such relations which, in other political and ethical traditions, referred to qualitatively different forms of social life outside of the circulation of abstracted relations of commodity exchange and to a greater or lesser degree in opposition to such relations, are now constructed as seamlessly compatible with them. As Champlin notes of the social capital model of community, '[t]he purpose of cooperation is to obtain tangible, economic benefits for individuals. There is nothing social or cultural in this meaning of community; it is merely a particular type of exchange'.[55]

In the next chapter, I will argue that in constructing the ethical relations of community in this way, the proponents of the Third Way blunt the ethical, and therefore the potential political role of community.

3. Social Entrepreneurs

Whereas social capital expresses the social relational form upon which the Third Way community is based, the notion of the 'social entrepreneur' expresses the ideal subject or form of social being for the network community. In the context of the Third Way debate, as shown in Chapter Two, the notion of 'social entrepreneurs' refers to individuals who use their skills and resources to develop solutions to areas of pressing social need. In the present context, the notion of entrepreneurialism is used more generally, to refer to the form of subjectivity that is necessary to the network community. Specifically, the notion of 'the social entrepreneur' suggests a form of subject as radically open to processes of self-reinvention and remoulding in response to social, cultural and economic conditions characterised by heightened risk. The argument here is that this notion of the subject underlies Third Way notions of 'community' and, by extension, strategies of governance. The links between the entrepreneurial subject and governance finds its clearest expression in Third Way discussions about welfare, work and risk. Giddens for example claims that historically, the welfare state developed as a means of managing a variety of social and economic risks. Social security, as the concept suggests, was a collectively organised response to the uncertainties associated with economic downturn, redundancy and sickness.[56] However, for Giddens, contemporary risks are different from those of the past. Contemporary risks can be distinguished from 'traditional' forms of risk in two ways. Firstly, whereas the main source of risk in the past was the natural world, contemporary risks stem from human actions. Secondly, many contemporary forms of risk are unprecedented. As such, there is no basis on which to calculate the potential hazards that may stem from them or predict their consequences. Giddens' refers to new risks as 'manufactured risk'. Such risks, he explains, are 'a result of human intervention into the conditions of social life and into nature'.[57] In the 'natural' world, Giddens points to the phenomenon of global warming and the development of genetically modified organisms as examples of manufactured risks. With reference to the social world, Giddens points to processes of globalisation and the decline of the authority of tradition as examples of manufactured risks.

While Giddens would not put it in such terms, it is worth noting that all of his examples of manufactured risks (global warming, genetically modified organisms, and in the social world, processes of globalisation) are all expressions of the reconstitution of the social

and natural words via intellectual practice. They are not simply a result of just any human intervention in the social and natural worlds, but stem from interventions by the intellectually related groupings in these spheres. As such, what Giddens (and others) refer to as a 'risk society'[58] is a society in which life has been comprehensively restructured via abstract practices, whether these are the transformation of the atmosphere as a result of carbon gas emissions, or the effects of telecommunications and transport technologies.

Rather than seeking to address the manufactured risks arising out of the reframing of society via abstract processes, however, Giddens effectively normalises them by reworking people's relationship to risk so as to be in harmony with this reconstitution of social life. For Giddens, the advent of manufactured risks requires a different response than that taken to older forms of risk. Contrary to most perceptions of risk as a negative to be minimised, Giddens celebrates the 'positive or energetic side' of risk.[59] He therefore counsels that Third Way governments harness risk. Rather than seeking to increase security, Giddens argues that in the risk society — a society characterised by the prevalence of manufactured risk — governments should equip individuals to engage and deal with new forms of risk.

Giddens thus advocates what amounts to the reconstruction of subjectivity, whereby people experience and understand their selves as open to continual reinvention and transformation as a way of dealing with risk. In Giddens' words, Third Way politics should aim to 'develop a society of "responsible risk takers" in the spheres of government, business enterprise and labour markets'.[60] A society of responsible risk takers is underpinned by a notion of subjectivity as open to continual to revision and re-engineering, rather than as relatively fixed and stable throughout one's lifetime. Such a conception of the subject is the logical counterpart to the network community; rather than a member of a community of abiding relations with others, individuals are to reinvent themselves as autonomous actors within a multiplicity of networks, ever-ready adapt to constantly changing circumstances. The entrepreneurial subject has few ties to established ways of living and relating to others, and is in stark contrast to human subjectivity as grounded within embodied-extended community.

We should be clear about what is and is not being said here. The argument is *not* that risk-taking is in itself ideological. Giddens is right insofar as he claims that risk is, to

some extent at least, unavoidable. The ideological aspect of this analysis is the way in which Giddens and other proponents of the Third Way valorise and normalise the risk-taking entrepreneurial subject as a natural and desirable state of being. The valorisation of risk and the mode of subjectivity to which the risk society gives rise is evident in Giddens' claim that

> [t]he new prominence of risk connects individual autonomy on the one hand with the sweeping influence of scientific and technological change on the other. Risk draws attention to the dangers we face — the most important of which we have created for ourselves — but also to the opportunities that go along with them. Risk is not just a negative phenomenon — something to be avoided or minimized. It is at the same time the energizing principle of a society that has broken away from tradition and nature.[61]

The valorisation of both risk as an 'energizing principle of a society that has broken away from tradition and nature' and the more autonomous mode of subjectivity which is necessary for its negotiation corresponds neatly to the logic of community-as-abstract-extended network. Risk-taking is equated with life itself, rather than something to be minimised.[62] Moreover, the notion of the risk society is meta-ideological to the extent that it enables Giddens to by-pass existing political and ideological divisions. The risk society ushers in a raft of problems that neither the Left nor the Right can provide solutions. In other words, the risk society displaces existing political and ethical responses, leaving social theorists to do the work of reconstructing meaning and how one might live in the contemporary world.[63]

As with social capital, the meta-ideological significance of the entrepreneurial form of subjectivity goes beyond simply signifying a different way of conceptualising the person; to the extent that it informs social policy, it helps to materially constitute this form of subjectivity. Something akin to the self-making, entrepreneurial subject underpins Third Way strategies of 'lifelong learning'. In simple terms, lifelong learning refers to an expansion of education beyond formal schooling. Particular emphasis is given to vocational training and retraining throughout an individual's working career and retirement, as well as encouraging learning in informal settings.[64]

Although yet to be fleshed out fully in policy, themes of lifelong learning have filtered in to a range of policy areas, most notably, national economic competitiveness and growth, education, and welfare. Creating a 'learning society' has been seen as integral to the creation and maintenance of national economic competitiveness and prosperity in the

'information age' in which workers will need to frequently update their skills throughout their working lives, or to retrain for new jobs when old industries decline. As Clark notes,

> [t]he emergence of so-called 'learning organisations', underpinned by the concept of knowledge as capital, have led to a rapid increase in demand for both information technology and knowledge management skills. Shorter product cycle lifespans, continuous improvement and relentless organisational restructuring has made it mandatory for most workers to constantly re-skill.[65]

In the 'new economy' where information has become the primary input in production, equipping individuals with skills is viewed as a silver bullet to slay problems of poverty and social exclusion. As Wood notes, 'education looms large in the philosophy of the third way. It is central to the vision of a civic community in which individuals have access to basic economic and social goods, and are in a position to take responsible for their own choices'.[66] Lifelong learning is thus about preparing individuals for the uncertainties inherent within the risk society.

More generally lifelong learning overlaps with Third Way concerns about community building. Education is seen as a means of creating social cohesion in diverse, modern societies, where people seek greater individual autonomy. For example, Latham links education to the creation of social capital. His argument is that education encourages empathetic understanding of others, and promotes trust among people from different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This is seen to be an imperative in societies undergoing rapid and fundamental change. According to Latham, increased education gives individuals the confidence to construct and move between different identities, thus satisfying the demands for increased individual mobility and autonomy, while contributing to social cohesion.

> Well-educated people find it easier to cross social boundaries and trust in the position of others. They more readily practice the habits of multiple-identity citizenship. These 'connected citizens', with their regular use of information technology, tend to be publicly minded and socially progressive ... Lifelong learning has a unique capacity to build a virtuous circle in public policy. It is a catalyst for both social capital and economic innovation.[67]

Lifelong learning therefore has a more explicitly political rationale in creating a cosmopolitan citizenry. Latham thus claims that lifelong learning is a bulwark against populist authoritarian

leaders and nationalism, whose appeal is often based on an emotive appeals, offering a return to a simpler time against the apparently more complex nature of contemporary society.[68]

On the face of it, there would seem to be little to object to in the notion of lifelong learning. However, to the extent that lifelong learning entails a process of constant reinvention and re-skilling to fit changing social and economic conditions, it presupposes a conception of the person in which there are few psychological, even biological, limits to the capacity for self-reinvention.[69] Such a view of the person would seem to underpin New Labour's suggestion that new mothers use their maternity leave to learn 'a new skill or language to equip her on her return to work'.[70] Equally, Latham's suggestion that learning opportunities be expanded to shopping centres and transport terminals, among other places, is predicated on an idea of people as complex learning machines, endlessly capable of acquiring new skills and absorbing enormous amounts of information in short spans of time, while juggling other responsibilities.[71] Such suggestions reveal not only an astonishing ignorance of the demands of motherhood, the time pressures of shopping and commuting and the distractions of public space, they assume that personhood can be subjected to endless transformation. There is no sense here of a person developing or arriving at a stable sense of self throughout their life. The entrepreneur is the ideal subject of the abstract society: a mobile, malleable subject able to re-engineer himself or herself in order to respond to new risks posed by constant change.

To the extent that it forms the basis of policy reforms in education, training, employment and welfare, lifelong learning helps to materially reconstitute subjectivity as open to continual reinvention. Lifelong learning thus helps to engender a mode of subjectivity adapted to the needs of the 'risk society'. People are to reconstruct themselves, not as members of a community, in the sense of having and abiding connection to others in relations of co-presence, but as an actor within a network of abstract attachments that are contingent on their utility in negotiating and profiting from risk. The meta-ideological moment in this is that not only does this mode of subjectivity come to be seen as a natural condition; it also reconciles individual autonomy and social cohesion. As Latham seeks to argue, lifelong learning and the mode of subjectivity that it both presupposes and helps to constitute increased civic awareness and individual autonomy. This reconciliation appears possible because social integration is to be achieved at a more abstract level, not in terms of deep attachment to place, to particular

ways of living with others, but as entrepreneurial exuberance for the network and the moral soundness of responsible risk-taking. An ethics of risk-taking, civic responsibility, and the commitment to the free market are thus harmoniously fused within the figure of the entrepreneur.

4. Social Inclusion

Whereas social capital refers to the underlying social form, and the social entrepreneur to the ideal subject, the notion of social inclusion, as flagged above, refers to the integrative principle which informs of the Third Way's politics of community. As was noted in Chapter Two, the proponents of the Third Way advance social inclusion in place of equality as the goal of a reconstructed social democratic politics. Social inclusion, it is claimed, is a more encompassing idea than that of inequality or poverty, directing attention to the complex causes of poverty. Poverty, it is claimed, is a consequence not simply of a lack of economic resources but a range of problems, including lack of educational opportunities and achievement, poor health and isolation from social and cultural resources. Moreover, the proponents of the Third Way claim that the problem of social exclusion at the bottom of society is causally related to the exclusion of those at the top. By choosing to exclude themselves, those at the top lessen their obligations to those at the bottom, thus contributing to the forcible exclusion of those at the bottom.

As such, there might seem to be little to object to in the idea of social inclusion as a principle of social integration. It suggests a conception of poverty as a complex, multi-layered problem, the solution to which lies not only in granting access to material resources but in broad ranging cultural change, both of those at the bottom and at the top. In practice, however, social inclusion has been understood in much narrower terms. Third Way policies of social inclusion have been targeted almost exclusively at those at the bottom. As such, little has been done to reconnect those at the top into the social bonds of community. Moreover, inclusion has been understood as increased participation in the labour market, or in educational courses that are geared towards paid employment. This is in contrast to a more encompassing notion of 'social inclusion', which focuses on the political and cultural dimensions of inclusion.[72]

Inclusion is thus understood as participation within the exchange relations of the market. As former adviser to New Labour's Social Exclusion Unit, the body specifically established to tackle problems of exclusion, Geoff Mulgan claimed 'exchange ... is the main means of inclusion: without being able to sell your labour, and without the cash that comes from successful exchange of labour, you are effectively excluded from participation in most forms of communal life'.[73] Inclusion within community is thus defined as attachment to a network of production and exchange relations as a seller of labour.

There are a number criticisms that can be made with respect to such ideas, which will be taken up in a fuller way in the next chapter. For the moment, however, I want to focus on ideological character of these ideas. A comparison with the traditional goal of social democratic politics — equality — can help to draw out the ideological character of social inclusion. As noted above, for the proponents of the Third Way, equality and inequality are to be redefined as social inclusion and exclusion, or, alternatively 'equality as opportunity' or in terms of 'social capability'.[74]

Whereas the goal of social, economic and political equality suggests a fundamental transformation of social relations of exchange and production, inclusion within the community entails no significant alteration of existing social relations of power or exchange. Its end is simply to integrate individuals into the dominant structures of society as the kinds of entrepreneurial, self-active agents explored in the preceding section. Equality of opportunity or social capability entails ensuring that individuals have the skills and the capacity to participate in the new economy and society. As Finlayson notes, for the proponents of the Third Way,

> [i]nclusion is important since it is the only way to bring security to people in the new society. For New Labour it means bringing people into the knowledge economy and enabling them to be the kinds of well-educated and technologically literate individuals both made possible by 'New Times' and made necessary — since without them there will be nobody to practice or consume the weightless economy.[75]

Such would seem to be the logic behind strategies such as New Labour's 'National Grid for Learning' an internet site designed to encourage use of computers in schools by pooling online educational resources.[76] This has been given an explicit link with community building through 'Community Grids for Learning', described as 'an internet site hosting information,

advice or learning materials relevant to the community'.[77] Although somewhat far fetched, the underlying logic of this strategy appears to be that social inclusion can, to a significant degree, be ameliorated by increasing access to the internet. Here, then, inclusion is literally about connecting individuals to abstract-extended networks. What is overlooked though is the fact that many of the problems to which social exclusion encapsulates are themselves consequences of the reconstitution of social relations via the social form of which the internet is one expression, namely, social relations of abstract-extension. As Hinkson notes,

> social exclusion is not simply a policy failure of global politicians, it is a *cultural contradiction* relating to how global structures work. That is to say, where societies are re-organised around 'mental labour' and high technology there is a reduced need for a balance of bodily and mental activity in the act of production and there is a radically reduced need for physical labour and certain kinds of mental labour outside of the cyber-machine. Exclusion emerges as a consequence of this shift in cultural forces — where intellectual practices move into the foreground of social structures.[78]

One might note the meta-ideological character of this change: by abandoning the old division between equality and inequality and emphasising social inclusion instead, the proponents of the Third Way can claim the social form that is itself partly responsible for the problem of exclusion as the solution to the problem. Basic inequalities in power and resources thus appear to dissolve within the new world of inclusion. In seeking to address the immediate problem of social inclusion — 'real people and their real worries', in Žižek's words — the proponents of the Third Way overlook the way in which social exclusion is itself a consequence of the reconstitution of social and economic relations in abstract-extended terms. Pragmatism, in other words, becomes the highest form of meta-ideology.

Conclusion

In referring to these ideas as serving the ideological naturalisation of a particular form of society, it may be claimed that I am implying that any and all who use such ideas are dupes, incapable of understanding the 'real agenda' that lies at the heart of the Third Way. This is neither the case and nor is it my argument. The term 'ideology' here does not imply any 'hidden agenda'. Neither is it the case that such terms as 'social capital', 'social entrepreneurs' and 'social inclusion' are completely damnable. The many

different meanings and contexts within which these terms are used make such generalisations unsustainable. There is much that can be applauded in the strategies that have been advanced under these terms. For example, in so far as social inclusion draws attention to the harm done by the retreat of the wealthy and the powerful from public provision and its causal relation to social exclusion at the bottom, as well as the complex nature of poverty, it is a welcome corrective to the idea that poverty and low academic scores are attributable to individual moral failure.

In pointing to the ideological character of these interrelated terms, I have sought to highlight how they help to naturalise a particular social form, one which places a premium on more abstract ways of going on at the expense of those structured via social relations of presence with the Other. Such terms carry certain assumptions about the nature of social relations, subjectivity and social integration, to the point where different ways of being and relating to others come to be viewed as fanciful nostalgia. The ideological dimension of the Third Way is the way in which it normalises a more abstract form of social relational form, forms of subjectivity and modes of social integration.

As stressed throughout this chapter, this is a material intervention in the constitution of social life. As Giddens' analysis of the double hermeneutic demonstrates, the claims of intellectuals contribute to the constitution of society. In this chapter, I have sought to turn Giddens' insights of the double hermeneutic back upon the proponents of the Third Way, to show how they have helped to generalise the form of social life which underlies intellectual practice itself. The proponents of the Third Way assume something like a one-to-one relationship between the findings of social theoretical investigation and social life itself. In contrast to other ways of thinking about the social which, while abstracting the social, also re-grounds it in other ways of being and living, the proponents of the Third Way take as given the notion that community can be lived *as if* it were nothing more than abstractly constituted networks of trust and co-operation, *as if* social subjectivity can be enacted and reconstructed on the basis of an understanding of the person as open to continual reformation and reconstruction. In doing so, it is thought that the tensions and contradictions inherent within other ways of living and Being can be dissolved or reconciled within the settings of community.

To be sure, this is not an easy argument to make. One constantly comes up against the way in which more abstract forms of the social have to a degree become taken for granted, structuring the very way in which social life is already constituted and enacted. Indeed, as has been noted already, part of the appeal of the Third Way is its claim to pragmatism against the supposed rigidity of other approaches to governance. This chapter has therefore sought to denaturalise the Third Way, to draw out the way in which the pragmatism that it claims for itself is ideological to the extent that it collapses other levels of social integration into the most abstract. There are, furthermore, good reasons for resisting the ideological normalisation of the abstract society inherent in the Third Way's politics of community, some of which have been hinted at in the preceding discussion. These are taken up and fleshed out in the next chapter, to which I now turn.

ENDNOTES

[1] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2000), 16.

[2] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984), 348.

[3] See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, 284.

[4] See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, 284.

[5] As Giddens notes: 'The social sciences necessarily draw upon a great deal that is already known to the members of the societies they investigate, and supply theories, concepts and findings which become thrust back upon into the world they describe.' Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, 354.

[6] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, 284.

[7] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, 350.

[8] I am of course referring to Giddens' close connections with the New Labour government and his apparently close personal relationship to Tony Blair. The parallels between the proponents of the Third Way and Machiavelli have not gone unnoticed by other commentators on the Third Way. Finlayson, for example notes the affinities between Giddens' *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*: 'Giddens' book *The Third Way* has a tone quite different from works of normative or analytic political philosophy. It is not concerned with the clarification of normative principles but with laying out objectively the components of the social organism. Its mode of discourse is diagnostic and prescriptive, giving recommendations for good health in an ailing society. The work of "political theory" of which it is most redolent is Machiavelli's *The Prince*. *The Prince* is an attempt at objective social and political study offering itself as a prescription for a leader who wished to understand how political society work and what should be done to achieve certain aims. *The Third Way* is a kind of manual specifying the appropriate mentality for government in the present era. The

legitimacy of its argument does not depend on the coherence of logical principles in the way it would in a work of normative political philosophy, but on the accuracy of the diagnosis and the coincidence of sociological reasoning with there reasoning characteristic of the present.' Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (1999), 275.

[9] *With* exaggeration, because contrary to what Giddens' claims, no 'social scientist', whether it is Niccolo Machiavelli or Anthony Giddens, has had the capacity to single-handedly alter the nature of society or politics. The ideas expressed by Machiavelli, for example, were expressive of a more general change in thinking about the nature of the state.

[10] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 59.

[11] Geoff Sharp, "Social Form and Discourse Theory: Foucault and the Hidden Sociology of Post-Structuralism," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 5 (1995), 134.

[12] Geoff Sharp, "Constitutive Abstraction and Social Practice," *Arena*, no. 70 (1985), 61-62.

[13] Tony Blair, for example, has lamented the fact that the British Labour Party lost sight of the idea of Owen and other like-minded social reformers. Owen's *A New View of Society*, which was based on his model community New Lanark, carries with it some ideas that would no doubt find assent among the proponents of the Third Way. Owen for example argues 'that every state, to be well governed, ought to direct its chief attention to the formation of character; and the best governed state will be that which shall possess the best national system of education'. Tony Blair, "The Active Community: Speech to National Coalition of Voluntary Organizations Conference on the Third Sector" Paper presented at the NCVO Conference on the Third Sector, January 21 1999 URL: <http://www.ccp.ca/information/documents/gd29.htm> Consulted 24 February 2002. See also Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, ed. V. A. C. Gatrell (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970), 176.

[14] For example, in his *Report to the Country of Lanark*, Owen notes: 'It is only by education, rightly understood, that communities of men [sic] can ever be well governed, and by means of such education every object of human community will be attained with the least labour and the most satisfaction.' Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 251.

[15] As Gatrell notes, Owen 'talked as if society were ordered still in a pyramid of estates ... He firmly believed that the changes he advocated in the distribution of wealth would "touch not one iota of the supposed advantages" enjoyed by the governing classes. Certainly he wanted their "advantages" to be shared by all, but he abdicated entirely from any direct assault on the survival of their privileges. Not only had he no desire to assail the established structures of status and political power: to the contrary, he declared that his measures were calculated to strengthen it. He merely thought the wealthy would surrender their advantages once they saw that it was intelligent and decent and to their moral benefit to do so'. V. A. C Gatrell, "Introduction," in Report of the *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 16.

[16] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 205.

[17] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 207.

[18] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 216-218.

[19] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 226.

[20] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 247.

[21] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 247.

[22] V. A. C Gatrell, "Introduction," in *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 20.

[23] John Hinkson, "The Postmodern Market," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 9 (1997), 90 and 91

[24] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 222-223.

[25] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 223.

[26] Robert Owen, *A New View of Society and Report to the County of Lanark*, 223.

[27] Simon Cooper, 'Post-Intellectuality? Universities and the Knowledge Industry,' in *Scholars and Entrepreneurs: The Universities in Crisis*, ed. Simon Cooper, John Hinkson and Geoff Sharp (Fitzroy: Arena Publications, 2002), 220-221.

[28] Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly*, 271-272.

[29] Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly*, 278.

[30] See William A. Galston and Elaine C. Kamarck, "Five Realities that will Shape 21st Century Politics", *Blueprint: Ideas for a New Century*, Fall 1998. URL: <http://www.dlc.org/blueprint/fall/98/article1.html> Consulted 24 March 2000, Helen Wilkinson, "The Family Way: Navigating a Third Way in Family Policy," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, ed. Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (London: Demos, 1998) and "Supporting Families: A Consultation Document", (London: Home Office, 1998). URL: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/sfpages.pdf> Consulted 3 March 2000, 36-37.

[31] Stuart Hall, "The Great Moving Nowhere Show," *Marxism Today: Interactive Edition* Special Issue (1998). URL: <http://www.ge97.co.uk/mt/great_moving3.html> Consulted 16 December 2001.

[32] Mark Latham, 'Marxism, Social-ism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker,' *Arena Magazine*, August/September 1999, 10.

[33] Mark Latham, 'Marxism, Social-ism and the Third Way: The Long March of History and the Wired Worker,' *Arena Magazine*, 9-10.

[34] In a different, although in many respects similar context, Sharp notes that 'the consensual appeal of the new information level of social reality lies in the compelling appearance that a frame of interchange has really been established which makes a significant junction with the long-established values of previously incompatible traditions; offers to realize those values; and at the same time reconciles what, at least in the Left tradition, were irreconcilable opposites.' Geoff Sharp, "Reconstructing Australia," *Arena*, no. 82 (1988), 79.

[35] See Geoff Sharp, 'Intellectuals in Transition', *Arena*, no. 65, 1983, particularly 89–91

[36] See Geoff Sharp, 'Intellectuals in Transition', *Arena*, 89–91 and 'Intellectual Interchange and Social Practice', Arena, no. 99/100, 1992, particularly 190–97.

[37] See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 83-88.

[38] Coleman claims that one of the drawbacks of this is 'underinvestment in social capital'. James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94, Supplement (1988), S119.

[39] Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 268. See also, *What Did You Learn Today? Creating an Education Revolution*, (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2001), 65.

[40] Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981 [1894]), 953. See also Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979 [1867]), 932-933 and 997-1000.

[41] This is to take up Fine's objection to the concept of social capital. He claims that the term social capital represents the colonisation of the social sciences by economics. For Fine, 'mainstream economics treats labour as a physical input like any other. By the same token, social capital is essentially reduced to a thing that can enhance production or economic performance even though it is conceptually designed to deal with the social. So just as commodity fetishism defines how real production relationships appear as relations between things, so the individualistic conceptions of human and social capital obscure the nature of the social relations through which learning takes place and through which society impinges upon individual's life experiences.' Ben Fine and Francis Green, "Economics, Social Capital and the Colonization of the Social Sciences," in *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives*, ed. John Field and Tom Schuller Stephen Baron (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 89.

[42] Eva Gamarnikow and Anthony G. Green, "The Third Way and Social Capital: Education Action Zones and a New Agenda for Education, Parents and Community." *International Studies in Sociology in Education* 9, no. 1 (1999) 9.

[43] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, (Cambridge: Polity 2001), 78.

[44] Martin's comments were made within the context of a response to the arguments of Cape York Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson. Pearson's analysis of welfare and his prescriptions for reform have both helped to shape and been shaped by the Third Way, particularly the Australian Labor MP Mark Latham. See D. F. Martin, *Is Welfare Dependency 'Welfare Poison'? An Assessment of Noel Pearson's Proposals for Aboriginal Welfare Reform* (Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, 2001), 12.

[45] Department for Education and Skills, 'Summary', Meet the Challenge: Education Action Zones, URL: <http://www.dfee.gov.uk/mc_eaz/summary.htm> Consulted 27 February 2002.

[46] Eva Gamarnikow and Anthony G. Green, "The Third Way and Social Capital: Education Action Zones and a New Agenda for Education, Parents and Community." *International Studies in Sociology in Education*, 13.

[47] Eva Gamarnikow and Anthony G. Green, "The Third Way and Social Capital: Education Action Zones and a New Agenda for Education, Parents and Community." *International Studies in Sociology in Education*, 13.

[48] See George Monbiot, *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2001), 335.

[49] Department for Education and Skills, '£75 Million Boosts Radical Education Action Zones To Raise Standards', 23 June 1998, URL: < http://www.dfee.gov.uk/eaz/intro.htm> Consulted 3 March 2002 and "Education Action Zones Mean Business," BBC News, 23 June 1998 URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/education/newsid_118000/118446.stm> Consulted 3 March 2002.

[50] "Education Action Zones Mean Business," URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/education/newsid_118000/118446.stm> Consulted 3 March 2002.

[51] Cameron Duodu, "Shell Admits Importing Guns for Nigerian Police," *Observer*, 28 January 1996 URL: <http://www.greenpeace.org/~comms/ken/observer.html> Consulted 3 March 2002.

[52] Quoted in Dave Morris, "Inviting the McWolf into the Fold," *Corporate Watch Magazine*, Spring 1999 URL: <http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/magazine/issue8/cw8rep.html> Consulted 3 March 2002.

[53] Quoted in George Monbiot, *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain*, 333.

[54] Quoted in George Monbiot, *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain*, 333-334.

[55] Dell Champlin, "Culture, Natural Law and the Restoration of Community," *Journal of Economic Issues* 31, no. 2 (1997), 581.

[56] It should be noted, however, that Giddens sees risk as uniting a whole range of issues, beyond simply welfare. He claims that 'In a society such as ours, oriented towards the future and saturated with information, the theme of risk unites many otherwise disparate areas of politics: welfare state reform, engagement with world financial markets, responses to technological change, ecological problems and geopolitical transformations. We all need protection against risk, but also the capability to confront and take risks in a productive fashion'. Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 64.

[57] Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4.

[58] See Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1992 [1986]).

[59] For Giddens, 'Opportunity and innovation are the positive side of risk. No one can escape risk, of course, but there is a basic difference between the passive experience of risk and the active exploration of risk environments. A positive engagement with risk is a necessary component of social and economic mobilization.' Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 63.

[60] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 100.

[61] Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 62-63.

[62] Sennett notes something similar in his observation that '[t]he modern culture of risk is peculiar in that failure to move is taken as a sign of failure, stability seeming almost a living death. The destination therefore matters less than the act of departure. Immense social and economic forces shape the insistence on departure: the disordering of the institutions, the systems of flexible production — material realities themselves setting out to sea. To stay put is to be left out'. Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1998), 87.

[63] It might be noted in passing that it seems not to have occurred to Giddens that the fact that such risks derive from human actions rather than from the natural world, makes them more, not less, amenable to human control.

[64] As Wood notes with respect to lifelong learning in Britain, '[t]he government's aim is to break the exclusive association of learning with schooling by emphasizing the variety of formats in which learning can take place, and by stressing that education continues throughout working lives rather than exclusively prior to them'. Stewart Wood, "Education and Training: Tensions at the Heart of the British Third Way," in *New Labour: The Progressive Future*, ed. Stuart White (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2001), 51.

[65] Terry Clark, "Lifelong Learning: Contested Ground," *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 40, no. 3 (2000), 139-140.

[66] Stewart Wood, "Education and Training: Tensions at the Heart of the British Third Way," in New Labour: The Progressive Future, ed. Stuart White (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2001), 49.

[67] Mark Latham, *What Did You Learn Today? Creating an Education Revolution*, 17-18.

[68] See Mark Latham, *What Did You Learn Today? Creating an Education Revolution*, 17-18.

[69] I am indebted to Guy Rundle for this observation.

[70] This claim was made in the Labour Party's 1996 Strategy for Women document quoted in Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 146.

[71] Mark Latham, *What Did You Learn Today? Creating an Education Revolution*, 74.

[72] See Chris Holden, "Globalization, Social Exclusion and Labour's New Work Ethic," *Critical Social Policy* 19, no. 4 (1999). Holden notes that these policies have been accompanied by minimum wage legislation and regulations on working hours, although these tend not to be available to those in casual or part-time employment or for those employed in small businesses.

[73] Quoted in Ruth Levitas, *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, 154.

[74] It should be noted that some of the proponents of the Third Way have explicitly sought to avoid defining equality in terms of equality of opportunity. Giddens, for example, objects to the conception of equality of opportunity, on the basis that: 'An emphasis on equality of opportunity, it should be made clear, still presumes redistribution of wealth and income. There are several reasons why ... One is that since equality of opportunity produces inequality of outcomes, redistribution is necessary because life-chances must be reallocated across the generations. ... A second is that there will always be people for whom opportunities will be necessarily limited, or who are left behind when others do well'. Nevertheless, Giddens presents little in the way of an alternative for redistribution. He steers clear of progressive income taxes fearing that these will stymie entrepreneurial investment, and argues instead for taxes on consumption (ignoring the fact that such taxes indiscriminately tax rich and poor alike, and thus overlook the different impacts that these have on different socio-economic groups), while also emphasising the importance of '[p]ositive incentives for philanthropy' and action at a global level to reduce tax evasion by transnational companies. See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, 89 and 100-103. See also Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, 101-102.

[75] Alan Finlayson, "Third Way Theory," *Political Quarterly*, 277.

[76] See URL: <http://www.ngfl.gov.uk> Consulted 26 March. 2002 and Neil Selwyn, '"E-stablishing" an Inclusive Society? Technology, Social Exclusion and UK Government Policy Making', *Journal of Social Policy*, 31, no. 1 (2002), 9.

[77] Quoted in Neil Selwyn, '"E-stablishing" an Inclusive Society? Technology, Social Exclusion and UK Government Policy Making', *Journal of Social Policy*, 9.

[78] John Hinkson, "Third Way Politics and Social Theory: Anthony Giddens' Critique of Globalisation," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 13 (1999), 109-110.

CHAPTER SIX

Interrogating the Third Way

> ... a pedestrian crossing is an ethical structural fact. It is a space where the dominant mode of occupying and circulating on roads is required by law to yield to a marginalised form of road occupancy, walking. This is what constitutes its ethical component and its character as a social gift. It is social because even when it is an individual driver who 'offers' the pedestrian the possibility of crossing, what the driver is offering or, better still, conveying, is really society's gift to the pedestrian. ... There are pedestrians who receive the gift gracefully and those who receive it arrogantly or nonchalantly. There are those who snatch it and those who are grateful for it being offered to them. But underneath all these possible modes of interaction remains the fact of the crossing as a structurally present ethical space: a space where people can enact a ritual of stopping and crossing, and through which society affirms itself as civilised (that is, ethical) one where dominant modes of inhabitance yield to marginal modes of inhabitance.
>
> Ghassan Hage[1]

Introduction

To most people, pedestrian crossings are a wholly unremarkable feature of most urban streetscapes. They might seem, therefore, an unlikely place to begin a discussion about the nature of ethics. For Ghassan Hage, however, pedestrian crossings reveal something about the nature of ethical relations. Hage explains this by recounting the story of Ali Ateeck, a Lebanese man who migrated to Australia in 1979. In a 1993 interview with Hage, Ali told of how a shell hit his house in Beirut, a few days after receiving a visa to migrate to Australia. He arrived in Australia still suffering the effects of shell shock and by his own account was 'half-mad'. His condition gradually worsened to the point where he would sometimes disappear from family and friends for days. As Ali explains in the following excerpt, one of his favourite pastimes during these absences was to spend hours crossing at pedestrian crossings.

> I developed a liking for pedestrian crossings *(laughing)*! I spent hours crossing them and crossing them again. I loved the moment the cars stopped for me! It made me feel important! I thought it was magical! Can you imagine this

> happening in Beirut ... I had a vague memory of myself crossing after doing it. Like I wasn't totally off the air! I even remember I used to have conversations with people from the village [in Lebanon] inviting a few of them to see how the cars stopped. My brother's family returned to Lebanon. They asked me to return with them but I didn't want to. They joked that I won't leave Australia because of the pedestrian crossings.[2]

In Hage's interpretation, Ali's amazement at pedestrian crossings is attributable to the fact that, 'a pedestrian crossing is an ethical structural fact'.

Elaborating Hage's analysis, we can say that pedestrian crossings have an ontological dimension. The ontological dimension is that of the intersection of different ways of being in the world, different forms of life or, to use Hage's terms, two different 'modes of inhabitance'. There is a tension between these different modes of inhabitance insofar as one (walking) is subordinate to a dominant one (driving). The tension can only be negotiated via ethical relations of mutuality, co-operation and trust: the pedestrian and the driver share a mutual recognition of each other's right to occupy this space; the driver co-operates by yielding to the pedestrian allowing them to cross the road; the pedestrian trusts that the driver will not mow them down when they reach the middle of the road.

Such ethical relations can thus be thought of as an intersection of different levels of social integration. Those who partake of the 'ritual' of pedestrian crossings are connected via an abstract ethics, meeting in only a fleeting bond. At the same time, such relations are deeply embedded within a culture of embodied relations through which individuals are formed as social beings. Ali's amazement at the pedestrian crossing, for example, is due in no small part to the fact that his day-to-day experiences in Beirut had never prepared him for such a phenomenon. To reiterate Hage's point, the pedestrian crossing is a 'structurally present ethical space'; a concrete, embodied space that is reproduced by social agents entwined within relations with particular others within a culture.

It is precisely these aspects of the pedestrian crossing — the fact that it is constituted through the tension between subordinate and dominant ways of relating to others, and that this tension is negotiated through social relations constituted across both the corporeal and abstract forms of social integration — that is absent in the Third Way's politics community. The network community naturalises and contributes to the

reconstruction of social life as lived via social relations of abstraction-extension, flattening community in the process. Based on this analysis, the present chapter seeks to advance a critique of ideological community reconstructed thus. Three interrelated lines of critique are advanced, grouped under three main headings: the cultural, the ethical and the political.

The first line of criticism centres on the cultural conditions within which ethical relations are constituted. The argument here is that the proponents of the Third Way pay insufficient attention to the concrete social contexts within which ethical relations are constituted. What is overlooked here are the ways in which people are constituted as social beings. There seems to be an implicit assumption that individuals emerge spontaneously, fully formed social beings responsive to the moral claims of others. I want to suggest, however, that such social being is grounded in more concrete ways of relating to one another than simply the abstract. As we shall see, this is not simply an academic or theoretical problem. Rather, it raises a serious contradiction at the heart of Third Way strategies of governance.

The second criticism relates to the ethical significance — or lack thereof — of social relations constituted through abstract forms of association. The argument here is that where relationships of trust, mutuality co-operation and the like are realised solely in abstract form, their ethical significance is diminished. This is not to say that abstract ethical relations have no significance. Rather, the point is that their significance is lessened where they are disconnected from other ways of Being and relating to others. The argument here is that the proponents of the Third Way tend to realise ethical relations simply in the abstract, with the consequence that they seem compatible with almost any form of social action, no matter how shallow or fleeting or seemingly contrary to the ethical ideal being upheld. Moreover, it can be argued that this aspect of the Third Way's community gives rise to an authoritarian undercurrent. Lacking any deep grounding in the common conditions of life, the proponents of the Third Way resort to draconian means of imposing social cohesion and instilling the 'appropriate' attitudes within individuals.

The third line of criticism follows on from the second, and concerns the political significance of such relationships. The argument here is that where social relations are so undemanding as to be compatible with almost any form of social action, their

political significance is also diminished. Politics refers here to an oppositional form of social action. Because the form of community advocated by the proponents of the Third Way simply contributes to the naturalisation of an already dominant form of social life it presents no challenge to the existing parameters of political action. The ideological naturalisation of abstract forms of the social means that the Third Way's approach to governance is one of stasis, capable only of reproducing and administering present social arrangements, rather than altering them in any fundamental sense. In other words, the social relations through which the network community is constituted lacks any oppositional significance. Each of these lines of criticism is developed in turn.

1. The Cultural Assumptions of Ethical Action

In Chapters One and Two, it was argued that the distinctiveness of the Third Way as an approach to governance is to be found in the idea that governance can proceed by tapping into the ethical relationships between individuals. This assumes, either implicitly or explicitly, that there exist ethical subjects who recognise and are open and receptive to the suasion of moral claims. The immediate question that arises from this consideration is where do these subjects come from, or more precisely, how are such subjects constituted?

One British advocate of the Third Way has attempted to respond to this kind of question by recourse to evolutionary theory. Drawing on the work of the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, Peter Kellner argues that it is biologically advantageous to act in an ethical manner towards others.

> Through the Darwinian process of evolution, the creatures that survive and prosper are those that employ an optimum degree of reciprocal trust, while persistent 'cheats' go into decline ... Human beings are 'fit', in the Darwinian sense, in part because we are programmed to trust each other: If we weren't we would not have evolved as far as we have.[3]

For Kellner, 'mutualism is not just practical, ... [it] also goes with the grain of human nature. We are genetically programmed to behave in a mutual manner'.[4]

Even if one accepts the claim that there is some biological basis to human action — and something of this sort would appear to be inescapable, given that all social life, even the most abstractly mediated forms, are in the final analysis linked to embodied agents —

the meaning of such action is necessarily social and cultural. As such, the ethical significance of action is primarily social and cultural. Kellner's recourse to human nature to explain ethical relationships, backed up with the apparent inevitabilities of 'genetic programming' and biological inheritance, like many forms of socio-biological explanation, overlooks the simple fact that genes give people no more than a propensity to act in a particular way. They do not determine action. Such propensities are, moreover, structured, shaped, modified, channelled and qualified by cultural, social environmental and other factors.

Moreover, Kellner's 'explanation' of ethical behaviour would seem to imply that human societies are becoming progressively more ethical. If humans are genetically programmed to act in an ethical manner, then as we evolve humans and human societies on the whole become progressively more 'fit', one might expect each successive generation to more ethical than the one which preceded it. Given that genocide and mass killing, both between and within societies has been a disturbingly frequent feature of the recent past of human history, and continues in the present, such a conclusion has little to recommend it. (Although this is not to suggest the opposite conclusion; namely that human societies in the past were golden ages of trust and co-operation).

To be fair, it ought to be noted that Kellner's argument would, most probably, find little support amongst the proponents of the Third Way who tend more towards cultural and sociological explanations over those of socio-biology. In spite of this preference for cultural and sociological explanations, however, the proponents of the Third Way rarely inquire very deeply as to what the social and cultural conditions of mutualism, trust, co-operation and the like might be. There is a tendency rather to simply assert that the reconstitution of the social relations of communities via the abstracted social form of the network naturally creates the kinds of people who recognise, and are amenable to the suasion of ethical claims.

This point can be developed and illustrated by taking a step back from the Third Way's politics of community and comparing the network community with the social formations of more established forms of communitarianism. To do so, we can explore the secretary of the Australian Fabian Society, Race Mathews' research into the potential of co-operative and mutual forms of social and economic governance. Mathews' work is

particularly instructive, not only for what it tells us about communitarian forms of the past, but also because of what it highlights about the Third Way.

Drawing on his extensive research of the successful Mondragon co-operatives located in the Basque region of Spain, he has argued that such co-operatives offer a model for Third Way governments in Australia and overseas.[5] According to Mathews, the success of the Mondragon co-operatives can be attributed to three interrelated factors. The first is workplace democracy. The workers at Mondragon not only own the co-operatives that they work for; they also participate in the decision-making processes that govern them through a system of one-member-one-vote. The second is the structure of Mondragon co-operative. Mondragon is claimed to work because a secondary layer of support co-operatives surrounds the 'primary' co-operatives. The third factor in the success of Mondragon is the role of the Mondragon Credit Union. This has a dual function: to finance the expansion of the co-operative and to fund new co-operative ventures.[6]

All of these factors, it might be noted, focus on issues of institutional design. While such issues are undoubtedly important to the success of community approaches to governance, institutions do not exist in a social vacuum. The workability of co-operatives relies on individuals who are willing to engage in co-operative forms of social relationships. This is to underline the importance of the social and cultural contexts and belief systems in and through which practices of co-operation and reciprocity are established. Without such a culture and ethos, institutions are little more than empty shells.

The limitation of Mathews' account, and the proponents of the Third Way more generally, is that, for the most part, they either overlook the cultural conditions of co-operative forms of social practice, or simply take their existence as given. In Mathews' case, this oversight is somewhat curious since in his own research on mutual societies and co-operatives, two factors stand out as having particular importance to their success. Firstly, all the successful examples of co-operatives and mutuals that he cites, at least in their initial stages, emerged out of a shared ethical framework, whether religious (Christianity) or secular (ethical socialism) or some combination of the two. Secondly, they developed in agrarian societies, where manual labour and the immediacy of social relations was central to the material production and reproduction of society.

While Mathews notes both of these, they appear as little more than historical background, having only a contingent bearing on the practices that they gave rise to and helped to sustain. For example, while he notes the pivotal role played by Catholic clergy in the establishment of the Mondragon and Desjardins co-operatives, such persons appear as charismatic individuals possessed of a heightened sense of social obligation who happened to be in the right place at the right time. Neglected is the contribution of Catholicism as a distinctive ontological, ethical and cosmological framework that provides a narrative within which co-operative forms of relationships appear as intrinsically valuable. Within such a framework, co-operative forms of social and economic organisation are not simply an instrumental means to provide life's necessities. They are part of a comprehensive narrative of social reconstruction — the desire to see God's kingdom realised on earth, or a classless society, or both — which gives co-operative social relations an inherent meaningfulness beyond simply the provision of life's necessities.

Moreover, these ethical narratives are grounded within the concrete social relations through which these societies were produced and reproduced. This is to emphasise the second aspect shared by the co-operatives that Mathews' examines, but whose significance he does not pursue: namely the fact that the successful co-operatives emerged out of agrarian societies. The significance of this to our present concerns is that the dominant mode of production was based around relations of manual labour and the dominant mode of social integration was relations of embodied-extension. This is not to say that other ways of relating to others were absent, so much as to point out that these other forms of the social were subordinate and structured by relations of embodied-extension. Within societies based around manual labour, one's formation as an ethical social being was framed within ongoing relations of presence with particular Others.

While such forms of communitarianism tapped into and, for the most part, could take for granted shared cultural narratives and ethical frameworks, these can no longer be assumed under conditions where social integration is structured through abstract forms of interchange. On the contrary, totalising frameworks of social and cultural meaning — such as organised religions and transformative social and political movements — that gave ethical social relations an inherent meaning that went beyond their immediate function in meeting pressing social needs have been radically disturbed. While one could

debate the extent to which such processes have gone, it is arguable that individualised forms of ethics have weakened the authority of more communal forms, while comprehensive narratives of political and social transformation are, for many, an object of suspicion.

Such changes are not unrelated to the dominance of more abstract forms of social integration. On the contrary, the concrete social settings that sustained co-operative movements have been radically transformed. For example, an increasing number of people experience work as a series of short-term contracts that may be performed at geographically dispersed locations. At the most extreme, the embodied presence of the Other can be entirely dispensed with from the labour process as no longer necessary. Where work retains ongoing face-to-face interaction with others, abstract intellectual forms of labour, such as computerisation or automation — as we saw in Sennett's observations of the bakery in the conclusion to Chapter Three — increasingly structure such relations. In addition, collective experiences are more and more mediated by technology, and technology itself permits us to dispense with the embodied presence of the Other as a necessary element to sociality.

The point of highlighting such change is not to mourn or argue for a return to a lost golden past. On the contrary, the proponents of the Third Way are correct in their criticisms of older forms of community to the extent that these tended to privilege to collective interests over individual needs. It is to point out, rather, that the kinds of social relations that were constitutive of older forms of community were lived across layers of association. The abstract, universalising cultural framework (Catholicism, socialism, communitarianism) intersected with concrete social relations of the face-to-face: the ethical frameworks of Catholicism or socialism extend ethical relations of co-operation, mutuality and reciprocity across space and time, as these intersected with the level of embodied-extended social relations of manual labour.

By contrast, as was argued in the previous chapter, for the proponents of the Third Way social life is to be simply reconstructed in terms of abstract forms of sociality. Community is to be reconstructed via abstract forms of social interconnection and individuals are to be bound into normative bonds via abstracted social relations. The effect of such changes is to militate against the kinds of long-term attachments that might draw people into the kinds of affective relationships that the proponents of the

Third Way themselves advocate as central to governance. In short, the proponents of the Third Way seek to realise the kinds of social relations that were characteristics of older form of communitarianism, but without the socio-ontological conditions within which these were framed. The consequence of this is that the Third Way's reinvention of community as an ethical space is undermined by the fact that the social conditions that gave rise to those ethical forms have given way.

This points to a cultural contradiction within the Third Way's politics of community. The proponents of the Third Way claim to govern by tapping into the social bonds between individuals, the so-called '"weak" tools of government — education, training, information, persuasion, praise and blame, leadership, symbolic action, example-setting'.[7] At the same time, they seek to do so through a social form — the abstract-extended network — which radically disrupts those same social bonds. This is seen, for example, in their embrace of contemporary processes of globalisation and rapid technological change, which have contributed to the disrupted the narratives and concrete conditions which could be called upon as the means of reinventing community. Andrew Scott makes this point well in his claim that

> [t]here is a clear contradiction between ... [Tony Blair's] proclaimed desire to rebuild community values and his simultaneous commitment to a freer market, given that the incursions of free-market forces are a primary reason for the break-up of old communities. If the tradition of ethical socialism is to be genuinely recovered, as he says it should, then the very radical implications of its critique of the market ought to be recognised too.[8]

One of the practical political consequences of this contradiction is to call into question the adequacy of Third Way strategies aimed at combating deep-seated social ills. For example, strategies intended to combat social exclusion are likely to fall far short of their goal unless it is recognised that exclusion itself is a consequence of the abstract reconstitution of social life. This refers not simply to the Third Way support for globalisation, but also more straightforward approaches to addressing social exclusion. As we saw in the previous chapter, the main approach to tackling social inclusion is increased participation in the labour market, the assumption being that work is the basis of other forms of inclusion. What is overlooked here is the way in which the reconstitution of work in terms of abstract relationships undermines processes of social inclusion.

Sennett, for example, has argued that if social inclusion is to have any substantive meaning, it must satisfy three basic criteria. These are *mutual exchange* by which people are recognised as included and to whom obligations are owed; *ritual*, which sustains the bonds between people; and *witnesses to one's behaviour* which, in Sennett's terms, entails accountability to, and dependence on, others. For Sennett, contemporary work practices mitigate against the kinds of relations that are integral to inclusion. He notes that the proliferation of short-term contracts and casualised labour has severely diminished loyalty and the kinds of relationships through which mutual recognition might be created and sustained. Likewise, the obsession with autonomous work practices means that any form of dependence, like seeking direction from managers, is likely to be interpreted as incompetence. Responsibility for this falls on individual employees while managers are largely shielded from the consequences of their own decisions.[9]

In such circumstances, practices of social inclusion are hollowed out to a transactional arrangement; one that is unlikely to foster the kinds the ethical relationships that the proponents of the Third Way seek to foster. Stories vaunting the supposed virtues of 'wired workers', and their putative thirst for individual autonomy and mobility in the free market, combined with a commitment to civic and communal participation, thus overlook the way in which such forms of work can actually undermine the possibilities of ongoing participation in community. The more general point here is that such transactional arrangements are unlikely to elicit the kinds of deeper social ties that Third Way strategies of governance depend. This brings us to a second line of criticism of the Third Way, namely that the community of the Third Way is without ethical significance.

2. The Question of Ethical Significance

Before discussing the ethical significance of the network community, the notion of 'ethical significance' itself needs to be briefly explained. In using the term 'significance' here, my analysis is informed by what Charles Taylor has referred to as 'horizons of significance'.[10] By this, Taylor means the background of social and cultural meanings against and within which acts are deemed ethical. Taylor's argument is that one cannot determine these horizons of significance in isolation from others; horizons of significance are socially given. Taylor elaborates the notion of 'horizons of significance' in the context of a critique of the

subjectivism that underpins some versions of ethical relativism. His claim is that these tend to view any course of action as having ethical value because the individual who undertakes it chooses it. In other words, the simple act of choosing one course of action over another is deemed sufficient to make that act ethically significant, since the individual who chose it sees it as such. Against this, Taylor argues that such views neglect or deny the *social* basis by which acts might be adjudged ethically significant or insignificant. For Taylor, the ethical significance of one course of action in relation to others can only be assessed by reference to the cultural and social meanings through which it is constituted. These cannot be determined by the individual alone, but are socially given. In Taylor's words: 'Self-choice as an ideal makes sense only because some *issues* are more significant than others ... Which issues are significant, *I* [as an individual] do not determine. If I did, no issue would be significant'.[11] By contrast, the ethical relativist, in seeking to locate the source of ethical significance in the lone individual, deprives us of the means by which one act might be assessed as significant in relation to others. In Taylor's words, such arguments 'collapse horizons of significance'.[12]

My purpose in drawing on the notion of ethical significance is slightly different from Taylor's. To be certain, my claim is not that the proponents of the Third Way are subjectivists or ethical relativists. The purpose of drawing on Taylor's notion of significance is to emphasise the more general point that the ethical significance of an act derives, at least in part, from the manner in which it is socially constituted. 'Ethical significance' can thus be extended to encompass the way in which ethical relations are enacted. For example, there is a distinction between a relationship of trust where that relationship is conducted between people who have an ongoing face-to-face relationship as compared to one where the relationship between people whose encounters are temporary, mediated via extended forms of the social and focused on the achievement of a specific goal. The first might be thought of as an instance of 'embedded' or 'embodied' trust, while the latter, might be thought of as 'transactional' or 'abstract' trust. The ethical significance of the first is not unrelated to the way in which it is enacted. Because it is embedded within long-term social relationships with a particular Other it can be said to be a more demanding, and therefore ethically significant relationship. By contrast, the latter's ethical significance is lessened, at least to some degree, because the ties that bind social actors together can be withdrawn from with relative ease.

To draw this distinction, however, is not to damn abstractly constituted ethical relations altogether or to say that such relations have no significance to the way in which social life is conducted. On the contrary, ethical practices that are structured through abstract forms of social life can be just as significant to the way in which social life is constituted as those that are structured and enacted within the settings of embodied-extended relations. As Paul James has noted, the Marxist maxim 'between each according to their means' can be interpreted as expressing an ethic of 'abstract reciprocity' — a general willingness of people to act in a reciprocal manner towards strangers.[13] Similarly, the second commandment 'love thy neighbour' could be read as a generalised ethics of care towards others. More generally, it is difficult to see how social life could occur at all in the absence a general predisposition to trust, co-operate and to reciprocate with others.

What is at issue here, then, is not a contest or choice between ethical relations that are constituted via abstract-extended social relation and those that constituted through embodied-extended social relations. The point, rather, is that the proponents of the Third Way gloss over the distinction between how ethical behaviour is socially constituted, seeing all forms of trust or reciprocity as having equal significance. In so doing the proponents of the Third Way, to use Taylor's phrase, collapse the horizons of significance that enable us to talk meaningfully about ethical behaviour in the first place. The danger of this is that there is the potential to endorse a rather shallow, undemanding form of ethics, such that practices such as co-operation and trust are understood as compatible with almost any form of behaviour.

A good example of how ethical principles such as 'mutualism', 'trust' and 'co-operation' can be emptied of their ethical significance when enacted through abstract social relationships, is well illustrated by a pamphlet produced by the British Mutual Party on the role of technology in reinventing mutualism. The pamphlet in question cites the internet and e-commerce as successful examples of co-operative mutualism. In the words of its author, the internet

> is the biggest successful experiment in mutualism ever attempted ... After all, how many other co-operatives have almost three hundred million members, doubling in size every eight to nine months, or will shortly handle over five trillion pounds of trade each year?[14]

Mark Latham has made a similar case for processes of globalisation and the internet as the future of the ethical socialist tradition, claiming that:

> Progressive politics has much to gain from globalisation. Only by bringing people closer together, through advanced communications and transport, can we create a more co-operative and understanding society.
>
> The Internet, for instance, is allowing people across the world to share their ideas and aspirations. Surely, after centuries of distrust and violence between nations, the globalisation of information is a good thing.[15]

Conceived of in very broad, loose terms there is no doubt that the technologically mediated relations of the internet, like many other forms of social relations, entail some element of mutual interchange and co-operation. Moreover there are some instances where the culture of the internet has spawned — sometimes without the conscious intent of its participants — models of mutualism and co-operation that may have both ethical as well as political significance. For example, many of the key players in the Open-Source movement responsible for the Linux computer operating system were consciously seeking to engender a community of hackers.[16] There have also been attempts to extend the Open-Source model to other forms of intellectual practice such as law and academic writing, thus demonstrating the potential ethical significance of abstract forms of co-operation and reciprocity. Although one should take care not to overstate the case, or to engage in uncritical technological utopianism, such movements are to some extent structured through, and reproduce elements of the relationship of the gift.[17]

However, there are limits to these forms of abstract mutuality and reciprocity.[18] Firstly, such examples represent only a small fraction of internet culture, and should not be seen as representative of the social relations of the internet more generally.[19] Secondly, and more problematically for proponents of 'e-mutualism', to equate the disembodied, often depthless social interchange of the internet with forms of mutuality that are enacted within deeply embedded, face-to-face relationships that are continually negotiated through time, is to empty notions of mutuality and co-operation of much of their content. On this account, almost any relationship — from trading in the futures market to working in community organisations for many years — could be defined 'as an experiment in mutualism', simply by virtue of the fact that both are social relations and, as such, entail the mutual participation of at least two people. Similarly, to portray e-commerce as an example of a 'co-operative' is to make the notion of co-operation so all-encompassing as to gut it of any of its deep complexity whatsoever — ethical or otherwise. On this basis, almost any form of social interchange that is based on more

than naked self-interest, no matter how transitory or shallow, can be called an example of co-operative activity.

It is on the basis of this rather shallow notion of co-operation that the proponents of the Third Way can repackage the marketing strategies of transnational companies as contributing to social cohesion and trust, some examples of which were noted in the previous chapter in relation to Education Action Zones. Alternatively, punitive contractual arrangements between a citizen receiving their welfare entitlements and a government agency, in which the recipient is requested to agree to a set of conditions on pain of having their entitlements reduced or cancelled altogether, can be cast as 'mutual obligation'.

The other side of what is effectively a hollowing out of the ethical is the resort to draconian authoritarian social policies. Third Way policies of mutual obligation in welfare, and zero-tolerance policing are good examples of these. Such policies cannot be explained away as a lamentable but temporary aberration resulting from an excess of populist expedience on the part of Third Way politicians. Rather, they have become a central and persistent feature of Third Way governments as noted by a number of commentators on the Third Way.[20] It is arguable that such policies are directly related to the failure of the abstract community of the Third Way. They have become necessary to elicit the kinds of social solidarity that might make governance through the community possible. Where the fundamental socio-ontological settings of life and the formation of the person as an ethical social being have been radically disrupted, as we saw in the previous chapter, some kind of ethical order has to be imposed. People thus have to be coerced into engaging in co-operative and mutual forms of social participation. That such coercion undermines the very notion of mutuality and co-operation passes unremarked on by the proponents of the Third Way is indicative of the way in which such relations have been watered down to transactional relations that are compatible punitive social policies. In other words, where ethical relations are flattened out to the point where deeply lived layers of the social are collapsed within a single constitutive plane of abstract-extended social relations, such that these are assumed to be indistinguishable from long-term, deeply embedded attachments to others, ethical principles can be fashioned to add legitimacy to almost any social policy.

The practical political consequence of ethics that are without depth is that the proponents of the Third Way strip community of any integrative political significance. Community is reduced to an instrumentally useful means of facilitating administrative and economic efficiency within the abstract society, rather than one that defends different ways of living. It is to a consideration of this point that I now turn.

3. The Third Way as 'Post-Politics'

The Lacanian psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek has referred to such forms of politics as 'post-politics'. For Žižek a post-political 'politics' is one that forecloses certain possibilities in advance, by ruling out alternatives as unworkable and therefore untenable.[21] To illustrate this, Žižek cites New Labour's pragmatic emphasis on 'what works' as the basic test by which ideas should be accepted or rejected. It is in this concern with 'what works', Žižek argues 'that we encounter the gap that separates a political act proper from the "administration of social matters" which remains within the framework of the existing relations, but something that *changes the very framework that determines how things work*'.

> To say that good ideas are 'ideas that work' means that one accepts in advance the (global capitalist) constellation that determines what works (if, for example, one spends too much money on education and healthcare, that 'doesn't work', since it infringes too much on the conditions of capitalist profitability). One can also put it in terms of the well-known definition of politics as the 'art of the possible': authentic politics is rather, the exact opposite, that is, the art of the *impossible* — it changes the very parameters of what is considered 'possible' in the existing constellation.[22]

The Third Way politics of community is post-political insofar as the network community is seamlessly compatible with existing structures of economic and social organisation. As such, it presents no challenge to the 'existing constellation' of social and economic relations. Community is thus reduced to nothing more than another tool for the 'administration of social matters', rather than part of an 'authentic' politics which alters the political landscape itself.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is the response of proponents of the Third Way to the protests of groups seeking alternatives to contemporary processes of globalisation in the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, such as the protests in Seattle, Prague, Melbourne and Genoa. While such groups could be seen as legitimate expressions of

autonomous communal action, the proponents of the Third Way have criticised such groups.[23] At first, such criticism may seem puzzling. After all, the protestors were from a variety of community groups and non-governmental organisations, including churches, charities, environmental organisations, political interest groups and community media organisations. Many of these groups are voluntary organisations, based upon principles of trust and co-operation. Furthermore, the protesters themselves used non-hierarchical networks of informal connections to organise. For the most part, such protest actions would seem to be a legitimate expression of civil society; rich expressions of social capital, utilising the kinds of 'bottom-up' principles of self-organisation that the proponents of the Third Way have championed.

The difference of course, is that the aims of such groups and their commitment to ethical principles of co-operation and self-help go well beyond simply the 'administration of social matters'. While the aims and motivations of such protest groups are diverse, sometimes ill-defined and even contradictory, in general the protestors can be understood as sharing a fundamental opposition to the remaking of the world in terms of abstract flows of social, economic and political relations that characterise the contemporary era of globalisation. In short, such protests call into question the social and economic form that the proponents of the Third Way are seeking to naturalise. The illegitimacy of such protests for the proponents of the Third Way stems from the fact that they are, in Žižek's terms, 'authentically political': they seek a transformation of the dominant forms of social, economic and political practice.

Another way of illustrating how the Third Way gives up on the political in preference to the post-political, can be seen in the attempts to redefine equality as inclusion. As we saw in the previous chapter, equality is understood in terms of inclusion within the community. Inclusion here is elaborated in terms of 'equality of opportunity' and 'social capability'.[24] All of these are expressions of the retreat from authentic politics to post-politics. This is to say that while inclusion within community, opportunity and access, and capability are all important elements of, and preconditions for the realisation of social and economic equality, they are not interchangeable with equality itself. All of these terms indicate an open-ended commitment to aspects of equality that may or may not realise it as a substantive end.

Inclusion, for example, simply meets the most basic conditions of equality. It says nothing about the terms on which one is included in community. Even interpreted in its broadest sense, it is possible to be included within community on grossly unequal terms. As Levitas observes, '[t]he very popularity of the exclusion/inclusion discourse is that it focuses attention on a minimum threshold, from which "outsiders" must be helped, induced or forced to cross into the mainstream, but it systematically ignores inequalities within the mainstream'.[25] A commitment to equality of opportunity, meanwhile, simply commits one to expanding individual access and opportunity in the expectation that by doing so, individuals will by their own efforts be able to improve their own social situation. It has nothing to say about whether individuals actually have the cultural and material resources to utilise such opportunities or whether the outcomes of such increased opportunities actually lead to equal outcomes. Social capability, finally, addresses the issue of resources and the abilities of the individual to improve their own social situation. However it has nothing to say about those forms of social and economic inequality that stem, not from lack of individual capability, but from a complex range of historical, social and cultural factors.

All of these attempts to redefine equality are explicitly or implicitly based on the idea of abstract individualism. This is to conceive of the person in a way that brackets what might be thought of as the 'accidental' or social-contextual attributes of the individual, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and culture, for the purposes of thinking about social, economic and political issues. Doing so denies the salience of the embodied when thinking about issues of equality. Since such characteristics do not determine an individual's abilities and capacities, they are considered incidental or irrelevant to thinking about social and economic policy. The problem with abstract individualism, however, is that it advances an asocial and ahistorical understanding of the person. As Pateman argues, 'abstract individualism is precis.., what it says, an abstraction from social reality'.[26] It is an insufficiently sociological conception of the individual, denying such factors as gender, class, and culture — or else seeing these as aspects of the individual that can be made subject to an ongoing process of transformation, rather than as deeply embedded within the individual person as aspects of who they are. It thus encourages consideration of issues of social and economic equality as disconnected from the broader social context within which they arise. Accounts of equality based upon abstract individualism are thus incapable of taking into account the way in which

the embodied dimension of human Being affect the way in which we are structured in to social, economic and political life. As a consequence, ethical principles such as equality can be upheld without regard for how they might be realised in practice.

The limits of an abstract ethics of equality were evident in Tony Blair's address to the British Labour Party's 1997 national conference, following New Labour's election victory. During the course of his speech, Blair lamented the under-representation of people from Asian and black backgrounds in the parliament, and their total absence from the upper echelons of the judiciary, police force and civil service. He went on to qualify these statements, though, by insisting 'I'm against positive discrimination. But there is no harm in reminding ourselves just how much negative discrimination there is.'[27]

Having affirmed his commitment to a general principle — in this case the principle of racial equality — Blair immediately absolves himself and his Party of any responsibility for taking action that might substantively realise that principle in practice. A general commitment to equality can therefore be matched by an equally general commitment to expand individual opportunities, which may or may not have the effect of producing equal outcomes. The principle of equality is thus upheld simply by being conscious that inequality exists, reminding others that it exists, strenuously condemning its continued existence at every opportunity, and creating the conditions for expanding individual opportunities, (which may or may not produce equal outcomes).

The political outgrowth of this conceptual oversight, then, is to offer what are likely to be ineffective measures to combat inequality. The attempt to combat complex imbalances of power, while treating separately the embodied settings upon, and within which those social relationships are based and played out, leads to empty sloganeering. Where unequal social and political status of an individual or group is linked to embodied difference, such as Indigeneity, gender, sexuality or ethnicity, improving an individual's skills and capacities, or expanding access is likely meet with only limited success in redressing social inequality. Since these aspects of the person are inscribed on the bodies of those who are deemed different, they cannot simply be bracketed away when considering issues of social and economic equity. Such characteristics and attributes have a bearing on every aspect of one's life. While access, inclusion, opportunity and capacity are certainly necessary to the realisation of social, economic and political

equality, they do not and cannot exhaust or replace it. Inclusion within the community can thus be upheld without actually having to confront relations of power. As such, the network community can be criticised for ensuring that existing structures of power remain unquestioned and unchallenged, in the same way that principles of co-operation, reciprocity, mutualism and trust can only be upheld so long as they pose no threat to the dominant structures of social life.

Conclusion

To return to Ali's story and his experience of pedestrian crossings with which this chapter began, the community of the Third Way is post-political precisely because it denies alternative 'modes of inhabitance', different ways of constituting community. The notion of community as an oppositional space wherein different ways of relating to and structuring social relations intersect and are negotiated is alien to Third Way post-politics. It was argued here that the this partly due to the way in which the proponents of the Third Way deprive the social relations of community of their potential ethical significance. It is assumed here that all social relations which entail a modicum of trust, co-operation and or mutuality have equal significance. Thus, the fact that a monetary transaction entails some degree of co-operation between purchaser and buyer is held up as an example of co-operation, even though the co-operative aspect of the relationship is instrumental, as opposed to intrinsic, and is framed by pecuniary concerns that are in tension with co-operation. Insofar as they do not permit distinctions regarding the ethical significance of particular acts, proponents of the Third Way collapse what Taylor refers to as horizons of significance. Ethical relations become so undemanding and inclusive, as to be almost meaningless in terms of integrating community.

These criticisms of the Third Way community can be linked back to the more practical problem that its proponents neglect the concrete conditions within which ethical social relations are embedded. It is assumed that ethical forms of social action emerge spontaneously with the spread of abstract social networks. It was argued in this chapter, however, that where community is simply understood as abstract-extended social relations, unmoored from grounding within more concrete conditions of social life — structural ethical spaces, to use Hage's term — ethical social relations and social being

itself float free from the conditions that may give rise to them. The practical consequence of this is that strategies of governance that are premised on tapping into people's ethical sensibilities are unlikely to succeed. In their resort to socially authoritarian measures intended to impose control, the proponents of the Third Way give tacit acknowledgment of this failure.

In thinking about an alternative politics of community, then, there is a need to reground the ethical in more concrete conditions, such that social relations are constituted across layers of sociality, from the more concrete to the more abstract. Outlining such a politics of community is the task of the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

[1] Ghassan Hage, "On the Ethics of Pedestrian Crossings: Or Why 'Mutual Obligation' Does Not Belong in the Language of Neo-Liberal Economics," *Meanjin*, 59, no. 4 (2000), 30-31.

[2] Ali Ateeck quoted in Ghassan Hage, "On the Ethics of Pedestrian Crossings: Or Why 'Mutual Obligation' Does Not Belong in the Language of Neo-Liberal Economics," *Meanjin*, 28-29.

[3] Peter Kellner, *New Mutualism: The Third Way* (London: The Co-operative Party, 1998) URL: <http://new-mutualism.poptel.org.uk/pamphlets/mutual1.txt> Consulted January 11 2001.

[4] Peter Kellner, *New Mutualism: The Third Way.*

[5] See Race Mathews, *Jobs of Our Own: Building a Stakeholder Society: Alternatives to the Market and the State.* Sydney: Pluto Press, 1999.

[6] See Race Mathews, 'Turning the Tide: Towards a Mutualist Philosophy and Politics for Labor and the Left." *Arena Magazine*, April/May (2001), BB 6-7.

[7] Perri 6, "Problem-Solving Government," in *Tomorrow's Politics: The Third Way and Beyond*, ed. Ian Hargreaves and Ian Christie (London: Demos, 1998), 59.

[8] Andrew Scott, *Running On Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labor Parties* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2000), 256.

[9] For Sennett, 'We see, less and less, those kinds of mutual symbolic exchanges which signal that employees are noticed and heard by the corporations for which they work; the fraternal rituals that bind worker to worker are diminishing; employers dismiss the idea that they are accountable to those who depend on them.' Richard Sennett, "How Work Destroys Social Inclusion," *New Statesman*, 31 May 1999, 25-27.

[10] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 39.

[11] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 39.

[12] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 38-39.

[13] See Paul James, "Beyond a Postnationalist Imaginary: Grounding an Alternative Ethic," *Arena Journal*, no. 14 (1999/2000), 72. See also 71-73.

[14] Bill Thompson, *New Mutualism: e-Mutualism or the Tragedy of the Dot.Commons?* (London: The Co-operative Party, 2000), 2. URL: <http://new-mutualism.poptel.org.uk/pamphlets/mutual5.pdf> Consulted 16 June 2002.

[15] Mark Latham, 'Dying Gasp from the Global Socialists', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 September, 2000, 27.

[16] For an account of the development of the open source movements, and the motivations of those individuals who have been at its forefront, see Glyn Moody, *Rebel Code: Linux and the Open Source Revolution* (London: Penguin, 2001).

[17] The Open-Source movement, which produced the free computer operating system Linux through the co-operative and mutual exchange of programming code from programmers around the world, is perhaps the most successful example here of the realisation of mutual principles on the internet. Those at the core of the open source movement have consciously sought to create community. As Alan Roberts argues the open source movement that created Linux is an example of a gift economy, structured by principles of reciprocity and mutuality. Roberts has noted that the principles of open-source — the reciprocal sharing of information and knowledge for collective ends — has now spread beyond the creation of software, such as the provision of free legal advice and peer review of papers. As such, it poses a potential challenge to forms of social and economic exchange based on the commodity form. See Alan Roberts, "Giving it all Away: Is Open Source Software a Threat to the Neo-Liberal Dream?," *Arena Magazine*, February-March 2000, 41, and 38-43 as well as Alan Roberts, "Open Source: The New, New Economy," *Arena Magazine*, February-March 2001, 21-23.

[18] Taking up the previous note about the Open Source movement, Alan Roberts has also noted that the movement is suited to information based forms of work and exchange, such as computer coding, law and academia. The potential of this model for other forms of production based upon manual work and the exchange of 'things' is less obvious. In the case of Linux, moreover, large software houses have moved to put out their own distributions of the operating system, thereby hijacking the fruits of the gift economy, and drawing them back within the orbit of the commodity form. As Roberts notes, 'Firms like RedHat are already making tidy profits from Open-Source programs, supplying manuals, online help, ease of installation, after-sales support.' These considerations simply reinforce my point that the mediated forms of exchange via the internet offer, at best, a limited example of mutual co-operation. See Alan Roberts, "Giving it all Away: Is Open Source Software a Threat to the Neo-Liberal Dream?," *Arena Magazine*, 41.

[19] See Darin Barney, *Prometheus Wired: The Hope for Democracy in the Age of Network Technology* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000), 105-106.

[20] See Ralf Dahrendorf, 'The Third Way and Liberty: An Authoritarian Streak in Europe's New Center', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 5, 1999; Nick Cohen, *Cruel Britannia: Reports on the Sinister and Preposterous* (London: Verso, 1999); Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity* (London: Verso, 1999); and John Pilger, *Distant Voices* (London: Vintage, 1994).

[21] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 198.

[22] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, 199.

[23] Mark Latham, 'Dying Gasp from the Global Socialists', *Daily Telegraph*, 27.

[24] See Mark Latham, *Civilising Global Capital: New Thinking for Australian Labor* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 202–206, Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics* (London: Polity Press, 2000), 87–89 and Tony Blair, "Conference '97 - The Prime Minister - Rt Hon Tony Blair MP"

(paper presented at the Labour Party Conference, 1997). URL: <http://www.labour.org.uk/> Consulted 15 April 1998.

[25] Ruth Levitas, "Against Work: A Utopian Incursion into Social Policy," *Critical Social Policy* 21, no. 4 (2001), 456.

[26] Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critical Analysis of Liberal Theory* (Chichester: John Wiley and Son, 1979).

[27] Tony Blair, "Conference '97 - The Prime Minister - Rt Hon Tony Blair MP".

SECTION THREE

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE

CHAPTER SEVEN

Retrieving Community

> Every time I hear the word community I want to reach for my revolver.
>
> Tom Morton[1]

Introduction

Given its political and ethical debasement at the hands of the proponents of the Third Way, it is not difficult to understand the disdain with which some commentators have responded to the renewed emphasis on community as a vehicle of governance. In Morton's view, community-based approaches to social, political and economic problems are an attempt to enforce conformity, wind back individual rights and reduce state-provided services. He thus advocates abandoning community altogether, at least as far as public policy and politics are concerned, in favour of the impersonal, formal, codified (or semi-codified) rules of civil society. According to Morton:

> Increasingly, the new dividing lines in politics will be drawn between those of us who embrace the warmth of community as a cure for the predicament of modernity, and those of us who prefer a cool democracy, both liberal and social, one which would try to provide the enabling framework for people to exercise their personal autonomy and their social responsibilities, without presuming to tell them how they ought to live.[2]

Are our options this stark, though? Does rejecting the politics of the Third Way mean that we must abandon the 'ethical talk' of community and embrace the 'rights talk' of civil society, as Morton suggests? The choice that Morton presents us with is, I think, a false one. The main problem with it is that it assumes that civil society can be neatly excised from community. In practice, such distinctions don't work. While communities can (and do) exist in the absence of civil society it is unlikely that civil society could emerge or be sustained in the absence of communal bonds — 'warm' or otherwise.

Some basic level of co-operation and reciprocity would seem to be necessary for civil society to exist.

In this chapter I argue that the Third Way's concern with community and the reconstruction of social relations of solidarity and collective action more generally, is well founded. The reframing of social life by abstract processes discussed in previous chapters calls for a rethinking of how basic social bonds are to be constructed. However, this does not mean that we are bound to accept the network community of the Third Way. Instead, we need a clearer sense of what it is we mean by community. The question, then, is not whether community is desirable or undesirable, as Morton would have it, but *how* community is to be constituted.

This chapter attempts to move some way towards sketching out principles for an alternative to the network community. It makes no pretence to offer a fully developed alternative to the Third Way or a detailed set of policy prescriptions. This is beyond the scope of the present inquiry, for the simple reason that it would be foolhardy to suggest an alternative to the Third Way that did not take into account the specific national contexts within which it is to be applied. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest principles that an alternative politics of community might entail and, where appropriate, to set out the kinds of policies that these would give rise to. The alternative advocated here is outlined in dialogue with three different understandings of community. The first is what might be thought of as community as an *abstract-ethical* formation; the second, community as an *embodied-ecological* social formation, and the third is what can be thought of as an *abstract-aesthetic* social formation. It ought to be stressed that it is not my argument that these are the only ways to think about community. It is simply that they offer a ready framework for thinking about the nature of community that engages with both the proponents and the critics of the Third Way.

The first conception of community, as an abstract-ethical formation, is exemplified by the Third Way. As we have seen, community is understood here as, in essence, a complex web of informal relationships of mutuality, trust, reciprocity and co-operation. Such relations are structured in terms of an abstract network. Social integration is realised via participation within the network. Since so much has already been said about this conception of community throughout this thesis, I will pause only long enough to summarise my criticisms of it.

The second form of community — the embodied-ecological notion of community — can be contrasted with the network community. In the present context, the term 'ecological' is used in a sociological, rather than a biological, sense. The emphasis here is not on community as an organism, as on the built and natural environs within which communal bonds are formed and lived. Unlike the network community of the Third Way, this conception of community understands community as embedded within a particular geographical locale and a shared temporal frame. This conception of community was touched upon in Chapter Three in discussing Elliott and Atkinson's alternative to the Third Way that they call 'green Keynesianism'.[3] They emphasise the tangible settings within which relationships of community are formed, such as common institutions and material infrastructure structured through face-to-face social relations. In political terms, this conception of community accords primacy to the goals of social and economic security and social cohesion. Section Two explores the ideas of Elliott and Atkinson's alternative in detail.

In contrast to Elliott and Atkinson's concern with social cohesion and security, the third conception of community that I explore in this chapter places the accent on community as a productive and transformative space; a domain of power relations, social and personal experimentation and economic innovation. This conception of community is found in Nikolas Rose's alternative to the Third Way, which he refers to as 'agonistic ethico-politics'.[4] Like Elliott and Atkinson's green Keynesian alternative, this was also touched on in Chapter Three, but not explored there in detail. In contrast to the Third Way's emphasis on shared norms and ethical regulation, Rose's conception of community gives priority to the creation of new ways of living; *ethos-making* as opposed to ethical regulation. The corresponding politics to this conception of community is a libertarian politics, which gives priority to personal freedom, mobility and the interplay of difference over normative regulation and communal cohesiveness. This conception of community can be thought of as an abstract-aesthetic conception of community, the term 'aesthetic' being understood in the Foucaultian sense of a transformative, creative practice. In common with the proponents of the Third Way, however, such practices are constituted through abstract forms of the social. This conception of community is explored in detail in Section Three.

All three conceptions of community are assessed in turn and rejected, at least in the unqualified way in which they are advanced. Each accents one aspect of community

while overlooking or dismissing other dimensions of community as politically or theoretically suspect. As such, I argue that each offers a one-dimensional account of community that is both conceptually problematic and politically undesirable. However, by working through the problems raised by these different accounts of community, each offer insights into how one might begin to think about a politics of community differently. The object of this chapter is to critically retrieve the different dimensions emphasised by these different conceptions of community — ethics, ecology and aesthetics — as integral to an alternative politics of community.[5] Critical retrieval entails reworking these different dimensions of community, so as to move away from one-dimensional accounts of ethics, ecology and the aesthetic, to see these as constituted and lived across different layers of the social, from the least to the most abstract. More specifically, I want to retrieve these different dimensions of community in what can be thought of as 'relational' terms: 'relational ethics', 'relational ecology' and 'relational aesthetics'. These terms are elaborated further in Section Four.

In Section Five I want to suggest how, retrieved thus, these might offer the basis for a different politics of community. I refer to this as 'frictional community', in the sense that these different aspects of community are seen as in tension with one another. In contrast to the 'frictionless' community of the Third Way, a frictional politics of community seeks to realise community as constituted through the intersection of different ways of living and being. Before moving to this, the task of the first three sections is to critically examine the three conceptions of community outlined above, beginning with the abstract-ethical politics of community.

1. An Abstract-Ethical Politics of Community

Conceived of in abstract-ethical terms, community is understood not in terms of a geographical locale or a group of people who share a common history and fate, a common culture, tradition or ethnic heritage. As was argued in previous chapters, the proponents of the Third Way are wary of defining community in such terms on the basis that communities so constituted underwrite parochial and authoritarian forms of politics. Communities defined in terms of attachment to particular place and ways of living, for example, can become oppressive and stifle difference and innovation.

Similarly, communities defined by a particular ethnic heritage can exclude those who do not share that heritage. To avoid these problems, the proponents of the Third Way advance the network community. Community here refers to a diffuse network of abstractly constituted relationships of trust, co-operation and reciprocity. In this context, it is worth recalling Rose's characterisation of the Third Way's understanding of community. Community here is understood as

> a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of emotional relationships, through which individual identities are constructed through their bonds to micro-cultures of values and meanings.[6]

Governance proceeds through the force of moral suasion on individuals who have been drawn into this regulative 'space'. In the network community, the proponents of the Third Way claim to reconcile what have hitherto been viewed as incompatible principles, fusing individual desires for autonomy, freedom and choice, and social solidarity and collective social bonds. Moreover, it is claimed that the benefits of community can be gained without this entailing a nostalgic retreat to 'embedded' forms of the social that may inhibit social mobility and individual enterprise. Because the ethical relationships of community are abstract in form, they are loosed from particular contexts, and therefore freed from the constraints that such contexts may entail. In this way, the proponents of the Third Way claim that community and social solidarity can be reinvented in a form that entails no change from the dominant economic and political structures of our present.

The network community, however, comes at a price. As was argued in Chapter Six, the proponents of the Third Way flatten community out. Disembedded from the concrete social settings within which they are constituted and lived, the social relations of community are deprived of their ethical and therefore their political significance. It was argued that in doing so, the abstract social relations of the network community undermine the very social relationships and commitments that the proponents of the Third Way seek to realise and which are central to their own strategies of governance.

The focus on the abstract-ethical is not completely damnable, though. The impetus behind the Third Way's concern with ethical relations is valid. Relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity are important to how individuals are formed as social beings, but these need to be realised in a way that carries their complexity and depth — or so I

will argue. Without this, they slide into an empty pragmatism. Later in this chapter, I want to rework the ethical dimension of community in such a way that sees ethics as constituted and lived across different layers of the social, rather than simply the most abstract. For the moment, however, I want to consider a somewhat different account of community, which is almost an inversion of the community of the Third Way.

2. An Embodied-Ecological Politics of Community

In reply to the flattening of community in this way, one is tempted to reverse the logic of the Third Way. Where the proponents of the Third Way accent the ethical relations of community and neglect the social contexts within which these are embedded, an alternative politics of community might focus on the tangible infrastructure around which communal life forms. I refer to this an embodied-ecological conception of community. As noted above, the term 'ecological' is used here in a sociological, as opposed to the more commonplace biological sense. Used in this way, ecology refers to the built environment or 'habitat' within which communal bonds are developed and lived. Rather than focusing on the somewhat amorphous relations of social capital or ethics, the advocates of this politics of community stress the concrete settings within which people live and are formed as social actors. In rough terms, this might be thought of as a 'bricks-and-mortar' politics of community. The underlying assumption of those who advocate this conception of community is that the ethical will take care of itself so long as the right environment — appropriate infrastructure such as public spaces and amenities, roads and buildings, along with high quality services, for example — is cultivated. Furthermore, just as natural eco-systems can be seriously disrupted by the introduction of outside organisms, the advocates of an socio-ecological politics of community point to the destabilising effects of outside economic and political forces. They thus highlight the ways in which local communities can be undermined if the tangible resources that sustain them are withdrawn, allowed to fall into a state of disrepair, or are restructured through processes over which the local community has no say or control.

This account of community can be seen in Elliott and Atkinson's alternative to the Third Way alluded to in passing in Chapter Three. According to Elliott and Atkinson:

> Communities do not spring into being at the behest of uplifting speeches from politicians. Like the natural environment, they need care and nurture; indeed they could be said to represent the human equivalent of the natural environment, the human ecology ... [T]hey are the soil in which a healthy socio-economic system can flourish.[7]

Elliott and Atkinson thus reject the 'communitarian' politics of the Third Way because it does not pay sufficient heed to the ecology of community. More pointedly, they dismiss the emphasis on the ethical as a distraction from the 'real' issues of adequately funding services and infrastructure. The Third Way's concern with community, they claim, is nothing more than 'gaseous uplift about "rediscovering the community spirit"' and 'cost-free waffle', which simultaneously masks a class-driven, morally authoritarian attempt to control the lives and attitudes of individuals — specifically working class individuals.[8]

In contrast, they argue that community is only possible where people share relations of mutual presence with one another. These, they claim, are underpinned by shared institutions, set within a shared geographical and temporal framework. The ecology of community is thus structured at the level of embodied-extended social relations. In Elliott and Atkinson's words, the 'essence of community is the *living together cheek-by-jowl* of a diversity of types'.[9] (Emphasis added.) They claim further that '[c]ommunities congregate around the local presences of institutions of all types: post offices, police stations, schools, hospitals. Without them, the community becomes a collection of houses: the linear city'.[10]

The underlying politics of this community is a return to a more or less traditional social democratic position. Advocating a 'green-Keynesianism' alternative to the Third Way, Atkinson and Elliott argue for the promotion of economic growth and the 'reinvestment of hard cash and assets' as a way of strengthening communal bonds.[11] Furthermore, they advocate the protection of local economies from the destabilising effects of global market forces through barriers to the free-flow of international capital, and the re-regulation of world finance and trade, as well as the protection of the natural environment.[12] In addition to these measures, which are geared primarily to shoring up the spatial dimension of community at both the local and national levels, Atkinson and Elliott also argue for uniform trading hours and common days of rest and holidays as a way of securing the basic temporal conditions for a life lived in common.[13]

In some respects, it is easy to sympathise with Elliott and Atkinson's concern with the social ecology within which communal bonds develop. One need not look far for evidence of the damage wrought to communities when local infrastructure and services are run down or withdrawn.[14] Ultimately though, they offer a reductive, one-dimensional account of community. The chief problem is that the social relations that are constitutive of community are overdetermined by the concrete settings within which it is embedded. By Atkinson and Elliott's logic, community can be restored by increasing investment in public building schemes and the provision of local services, as if community is nothing more than the sum of a particular locale's physical and administrative infrastructure, public spaces and services.

However, simply sharing services and living together do not, of themselves, make a community. Conceived of in this way, the social relations that make up community are understood in terms reminiscent of the Marxian base-superstructure model: the social relations of community appear as the direct expression of the economic base — as epiphenomenona of the tangible settings of place.[15] By privileging the social ecology of community, Elliott and Atkinson reproduce the problem that is at the core of the Third Way conception of community, only in reverse. In response to the one-dimensional conception of community advanced by the proponents of the Third Way, Elliott and Atkinson offer an equally one-dimensional understanding of community, the difference being that where the proponents of the Third Way define community in abstract ethical terms and neglect the fact that these are grounded within tangible settings, structured through social relations of embodied presence, this 'bricks and mortar' conception of community neglects the abstract-ethical dimension.

Moreover, Elliott and Atkinson take for granted social relations of embodied presence as the unproblematic ground from which social relations can be rethought. They assume face-to-face social relations as a taken-for-granted, even 'primordial', category. In doing so, they overlook the way in which embodied-extended forms of social integration have, to some degree at least, been mediated by abstract-extended ways of knowing and relating to others, such as the disembodied forms of social interaction made possible via technologies such as writing.[16] I will explore this point further later in this chapter when thinking about how embodied forms of social integration might be thought differently from the one-dimensional form in which Elliott and Atkinson advance. For the moment, I want to explore the consequences of thinking about social relations of

embodied presence in such terms. The main problem here is that Elliott and Atkinson understand social ecology as set within a single layer of embodied-extended forms of the social, as if these are immune to broader social and cultural transformations. As such, their analysis lacks any insight into, let alone any way of grappling with, the way in which the social ecology of community has been constituted and reconstituted via abstract processes explored in Chapters Four and Five.

A good example of this theoretical blind spot is the way in which, despite their claims to the contrary, Elliott and Atkinson's politics operates on an uncritical and romanticised conception of working-class individuals and communities. Working-class individuals are portrayed as having a common-sense approach to life, underscored by an attitude of equanimity. They contrast this working-class caricature to the middle-class, morally censorious 'control culture' of the Third Way, which is claimed to be imported from the United States and thus alien to English sensibilities which are characterised as down-to-earth, welcoming of personal eccentricity and imbued with a healthy disrespect for authority.[17] While perhaps comforting, this idealisation of working-class culture and communities fails to acknowledge, much less address, the way in which class is actually constituted in the present. While changes in the social relations of production resulting from technological change have not erased class divisions, relations of exploitation or gross inequities in wealth and power exist — on the contrary, in many respects they have exacerbated them[18] — they have created a situation in which personal and collective identities have been reconstituted such that that many individuals no longer define themselves as belonging to any particular class. The extent and comprehensiveness of these transformations was noted in the conclusion to Chapter Four.

Another factor to be considered here is the way in which the contemporary market and technology have transformed the nature of individual subjectivity. For example, Hinkson argues that the fusion of media technologies and the commodity brings to the fore a new kind of market, which he calls the 'postmodern market'. An important expression of the postmodern market, which distinguishes it from the modern market, is its power to intervene directly into processes of self-formation. The creeping influence of corporations over the content of school curriculums, which was discussed briefly in Chapter Five, is one expression of this. According to Hinkson, in the postmodern market, processes of self and social formation are restructured via the

media and the commodity, one consequence of which is that desires are no longer shaped and conditioned within the orb of local attachments and settings. Individual desires are thereby opened to being more directly shaped and stimulated by abstract processes rather than local settings, which is to say that the market, in combination with the media, can now enter more powerfully into the stimulation of demand, and thereby create conditions of 'scarcity'.[19] In such conditions, advocating economic growth and investment in infrastructure as a way of rebuilding community is unlikely to succeed, because the formation of individual desires are no longer structured through, and thereby regulated and constrained by the normative frameworks of one's relations with others. Rather, in relative terms at least, they are structured through, and interwoven with the media and the commodity, and as such, are loosed from the normative constraints of the past.

This is one way example of the way in which social ecology or habitat is increasingly structured and experienced via more abstract processes. As such, to insist on the social ecology as constituted within relations of mutual embodied presence as the core of community, as Elliott and Atkinson do, is to say nothing of the way in which these categories are structured via technologies whose social logic is towards abstract forms of interchange. In short, valorising class identity and local presences as central to a politics community does not help in understanding or combating such changes.

In one way this is to criticise Elliott and Atkinson's politics of community as nostalgic, in that it seeks a return to embodied-extended forms of the social as the privileged ground from which an alternative can be developed. More problematically, though, an uncritical valorisation of the embodied-ecological dimensions of community is politically naïve, setting up a simplistic binary opposition between social relations structured through embodied forms of the social as 'good', while portraying those social relations that are more abstractly constituted as politically suspect, even pathological. However, communities defined in terms of place, face-to-face social relationships and the like, are not automatically political desirable. As we have seen, an uncritical valorisation of such communities can simply slide into a defence of parochialism and exclusionary forms of political community. The political significance of this point is given added poignancy by the renewed electoral appeal of nationalist political movements around the world, such as Jean Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider's 'Freedom Party' in Austria, the Reform Party in the United States led by Pat Buchanan

and Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia. Such movements can be seen as an inverted political reflection of the abstract forms of social life legitimated by the proponents of the Third Way. Where the proponents of the Third Way enthusiastically embrace the reconstitution of community through abstract-extended forms of the social, these movements represent a political backlash against the same.

The electoral support for such movements and parties is drawn predominantly from those disaffected and disadvantaged by the fluidities and mobility engendered by the dominance of abstract-extended networks. It is no surprise, then, that their political messages frequently emphasise the restoration of the apparent fixities and certainties that were a characteristic of social integration structured by embodied-extended relations (even if, paradoxically — and almost certainly unintentionally — this return is to be effected via 'postmodern' means).[20] Hence the recurrence of themes of embodiment (understood as a fixed and unchanging category) as a unifying theme of such movements. For example, such political parties and movements emphasise the territorial integrity and physical security of the nation-state, illustrated by the frequently expressed fear of being physically 'swamped' by those deemed Other by virtue of appearance (facial features and skin colour, for example). They also express suspicion of international capital and their preference for more tangible forms of production, such as agriculture, manufacturing and mining. Moreover, such political parties and movements typically advocate a return to 'common sense' and truths derived from everyday experience, which are held up in opposition to truths that are the result of abstract modes of inquiry carried out by the intellectually related groupings. The claims of the mass media are deemed to be unreliable for similar reasons. The media's enormous ability to shape stories through manipulating images and sound bites, itself an expression of an abstract mode of communication, makes them an object of suspicion. Finally, such movements tend to dismiss those forms of politics which emphasise difference and plurality, thereby implicitly destabilising the apparent fixities of social roles grounded in biological make-up (sexual and gender roles for example).[21]

The point here is not that every emphasis on embodiment is always, or is necessarily racist and exclusionary. On the contrary, and in opposition to the tendency of the proponents of the Third Way to pathologise the embodied dimension of community, I want to argue for social ecology constituted through embodied categories as integral to an alternative politics of community. At the same time, though, I want to move beyond

a one-dimensional analysis of the social ecology, to see it as constituted across different layers of the social. This is to see social ecology as constituted through the intersection of embodied and abstract forms of social extension, thereby avoiding the potential of community constituted thus to create exclusions. This is explored later under the heading of 'relational ecology'.

Before getting to this, however, I want to explore another politics of community that would reject those examined so far on the grounds that they are based on 'essentialised' or fixed categories, whether ethics or ecology. From this third perspective, both of the accounts of community examined so far are politically suspect, since they can be the basis for morally authoritarian or exclusionary forms of politics. In contrast to these essentialised categories, this account understands community as a space of creativity, contestation, plurality and the interplay of difference. I refer to this as an 'abstract-aesthetic' politics of community.

3. An Abstract-Aesthetic Politics of Community

The easiest way to introduce this conception of community is by way of an example. It is most clearly expressed in Nikolas Rose's alternative to the Third Way, alluded to briefly in the Chapter Three, but not explored there in detail. In principle, Rose welcomes what he refers to as the 'ethico-politics' of the Third Way. Questions of ethics, he claims, are not easily reduced to matters of technocratic-administration. As such, they open spaces for debate and the exploration of alternative forms of politics and ways of Being, rather than foreclosing such possibilities in an instrumental pursuit of administrative efficiency.[22] Nevertheless, Rose criticises the Third Way on the basis that its proponents have failed to realise this potential of ethico-politics. He attributes this failing to the fact that Third Way politicians and their supporters have opted for a 'moralising ethico-politics', underpinned by an 'essentialised' conception of community. For Rose, the proponents of the Third Way understand community as 'a space for the fixing of identities', which rejects in advance certain ways of living and being.[23] In opposition to the moralising ethico-politics of the Third Way, Rose advocates an 'agonistic ethico-politics'[24] that 'operates closer to the pole of ethics'.[25] In contrast to the Third Way, this would argue 'for the powers of "other communities" and "other

subjectivities", for an experimental ethical politics of life itself'.[26] For Rose, such a community could be 'imagined and enacted as mobile collectivities, as spaces of indeterminacy, of becoming. To community as essence, origin, fixity, one can thus counterpose community as a constructed form for the collective unworking of identities and moralities'.[27]

Before exploring this politics of community further, a note of clarification needs to be made about what Rose refers to here as an 'agonistic ethico-politics'. What Rose is advocating is not primarily concerned with ethics as such, but *meta-ethics*. In other words, Rose is concerned less with normative judgements *per se*, as with interrogating how such judgements are made and the criteria on which they are based. As such, he gives priority to the creation of new ethical forms — *ethos*-making — as a political practice. In this regard, Rose's agonistic ethico-politics takes its inspiration from Foucault's notion of aesthetics. This is evident in Rose's explicit endorsement of Foucault's suggestion 'that we might each try to make our own "life a work of art"' as the maxim for his politics of community.[28] In the Foucaultian sense, aesthetics refers to creative practices of self-transformation and the exploration of new ways of being human. Rose's politics of community is thus subsumed by the aesthetic. Community, here, is a site of experimentation and creative self-transformation, rather than normative regulation, as in the case of the Third Way.[29] However, and in common with the proponents of the Third Way, the kind of politics advocated by Rose rejects community as grounded in embodied categories. It is structured in terms of fluid networks, and can thus be referred to as an *abstract*-aesthetic politics of community.[30]

Underlying this vision of community is a libertarian politics, which actively seeks the effacement of established boundaries that are presented as 'natural' or given. The political appeal of this notion of community is not difficult to decipher. It is encouraging and accommodating of multiple ways of being human — different ethnicities, sexualities, cultures, and sub-cultures. As such, it avoids the morally authoritarian streak of with the Third Way, while promising a similar kind of mobility. Equally, it avoids the potential for community, constituted through embodied-extended relations to exclude those defined as Other.

However, the main problem with Rose's abstract-aesthetic community is that it is based on a conception of social life as an unrelenting struggle for power. This is combined

with an almost utopian romanticisation of openness, mobility, and the dissolution of fixed social bonds, as well as a simplistic rejection of stable social bonds as essentialist and therefore politically suspect. But for the liberatory promise of such a politics to be realised in practice, one must assume a more or less even distribution of resources and capabilities, such that individuals have at their disposal similar cultural and economic resources to enter into contestation and debate. In the absence of such equality, the benefits of openness and mobility that Rose anticipates are likely to be enjoyed only by a select, privileged few; namely those who are comfortable with, and are able to engage in a constant process of self-reinvention and fluid forms of sociality. While the proponents of the Third Way enthuse over the possibilities of openness in similar terms, this is qualified, in theory at least, by shared ethical norms. On the abstract-aesthetic conception of community though, even this minimal basis of community is removed.

Even if Rose's alternative can answer this problem, such a politics of community is only likely to be realised in the moment of struggle. Beyond a basic commitment to openness, nothing can be prescribed in advance, because any such prescription would risk a foreclosure of potential ways of living and being. To appreciate the problems that this poses, it is worth noting that in spite of the relative theoretical sophistication of Rose's analysis, there is, in practical terms, little difference between the *social form* on which his counter-ideal of community is based and that advocated by the uncritical boosters of globalisation. The logical counterpart of what Rose advocates as an ideal of community is reflected in the kind of community advocated by Charles Leadbeater in his book *Living on Thin Air*. Like Rose, Leadbeater is critical of the Third Way, seeing it as an attempt to shore up older forms of 'closed community' that carries with it morally authoritarian tones. In Leadbeater's view, 'settled' and 'stable' communities, 'are the enemies of innovation, talent, creativity, diversity and experimentation'.

> They are often hostile to outsiders, dissenters, young upstarts and immigrants. Community can too often become a rallying cry for nostalgia; that kind of community is the enemy of knowledge creation, which is the well-spring of economic growth.[31]

He is similarly suspicious of the kinds of values and relationships that 'settled' and 'stable' communities foster, such as long-term bonds of trust, thereby dismissing the importance that Third Way thinkers and writers attach to increasing social trust through community. In Leadbeater's terms, 'too much trust can be bad for you. High-trust, long-

term relationships do not always lead to efficiency. On the contrary, sometimes they lead to corruption and abuse'.[32] He claims that such communities constitute obstacles to the 'goal of politics in the twenty-first century ... to create societies which maximize knowledge, the well-spring of growth and democratic self-governance'.[33]

The purpose of rehearsing Leadbeater's arguments is to show that the radical aura that surrounds Rose's counter-ideal of community derives in large part from that fact that it is articulated in terms of a personal politics of self-transformation. It suggests a politics of individual creativity, autonomy and freedom from hierarchically imposed constraints, within a pluralistic, multicultural society. When articulated in economic terms, however, the radical political potential of Rose's counter-ideal quickly dissipates. The radically open form of community, characterised by fluid forms of sociality, subjectivity and identity-formation that Rose celebrates as a radical political departure is, in reality, little different from the bland pronouncements about the virtues of openness frequently put forth by pop-management gurus and the self-serving claims of cyber-entrepreneurs with pretensions to being public intellectuals.[34] In short, a community in which all fixities are dissolved, in which 'all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned', is one that is perfectly calibrated to the logic of the commodity and the further commodification of identity and social life.[35]

Rose is not unaware of this problem. He thus attempts to distance his politics from the kind of social formation celebrated by the advocates of a rampant consumer culture, claiming that his conception of community should be understood as 'an invitation to creativity and experimentation, not a retreat to consumerized narcissism'. It is in this context that he invokes Foucault's ideal of life lived as '"a work of art"' as the animating ideal of his politics of community.[36]

However, one could just as easily reply to Rose's antipathy towards consumerism and the commodification of lifestyle by arguing that this rejection of consumerism is itself a form of moralistic closure not dissimilar to the moralistic closure that he criticises the Third Way for. One might argue further that Rose is blind to the potentially creative and ironic possibilities of consumerism. In contrast to Rose's moralistic closure with regard to consumerism, one might insist on consumption as a creative, even politically transgressive act. This is not simply an idle thought experiment. Writing about consumption practices in Japan, for example, Clammer characterises shopping as an

'aesthetics of the self', in which, echoing Rose's own Foucaultian approach, the construction of the self is likened to a 'work of art': 'the product of a dialectical relationship between interior cultivation and external canons of acceptance'. In this context, Clammer claims that

> [s]hopping — the material construction of and adornment of this dialectical self — takes on an almost metaphysical significance as a result, since this self-identity must be constantly reaffirmed in ways that are socially visible as well as aesthetically pleasing.[37]

Similarly, Shields characterises

> consumption as an active, committed production of self and of society which, rather than assimilating individuals to styles, appropriates codes and fashions, which are made into one's own. In the process, hegemonic systems find themselves undermined... [38]

Sites of consumption, such as markets and malls, according to Shields, can be places 'of carnivalesque inversions and alternatives to rational social order'[39] while consumption itself, 'has become a *communal activity, even a form of solidarity*'.[40] (Emphasis added.)

My purpose in entertaining these arguments is not to argue for the political potential of consumerism. On the contrary, and following Johnston, while such claims provide some potential insights into the cultural complexities of consumption, their political-libertarian potential is, for the most part, limited to the level of personal liberation, and can only be experienced in the moment of 'resistance' (consumption).[41] The purpose of raising them in the present context is to demonstrate that Rose's rejection of consumerism is, on his own terms, arbitrary and unsustainable. By advancing radical openness as an overriding political ideal of community, combined with an unwillingness to critically or normatively distinguish between different forms of openness, Rose deprives himself of the means by which 'a retreat to consumerized narcissism' might be avoided. While appeals to Foucault's idea of life as a work of art in opposition to consumerism may give a radical veneer, the social form that underpins his own politics is little different from the open social forms celebrated by the boosters of global consumer capitalism.

The main problem with Rose's politics of community is that he advances fluidity, alterity, openness and mobility as political ends in themselves. In doing so, social relations that are based on different principles, such as the search for security, solidarity

and an ongoing attachment to place, are overlooked or neglected entirely. These critical remarks should not, however, be interpreted as carrying an implicit argument in favour of morally closed forms of community. On the contrary, I want to argue for an aesthetics of creativity, alterity, openness and mobility as integral to the way in which community is constituted. The question, as with the ethical and the ecological dimensions of community, is how these principles are to be realised. This is to endorse an aesthetics of community, while recognising its limits as a basis for community.[42] More broadly, it is to endorse social ecology, ethics and aesthetics as all integral to an alternative politics of community, while arguing over how these are constituted and lived. The following section begins to work out how the different dimensions of community explored so far might be retrieved.

4. Critically Retrieving Ethics, Ecology and Aesthetics

Thus far, I have provided a critical outline of three different politics of community. Each gives priority to a specific dimension of community — ethics, ecology, aesthetics — constituted within a single level of the social. The abstract-ethical politics of community views community as primarily a diffuse web of ethical relations that regulates individual behaviour, constituted through abstracted social relations. Priority is given to shared normative frameworks, while seeking to preserve and maximise individual autonomy and social mobility. The corresponding politics of this community is exemplified by the Third Way. In contrast, an embodied-ecological politics of community gives priority to the tangible infrastructure of community, namely common institutions, services and the built environment, constituted through social relations of embodied presence. The corresponding politics is a return to more or less traditional social democratic politics, which emphasises economic security and social solidarity. An abstract-aesthetic politics of community, in common with the Third Way, is structured in abstract terms. Importantly, though, it rejects the Third Way's emphasis on shared norms, giving priority, instead, to creativity, freedom, and the interplay of difference. The Third Way's emphasis on relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity, gives way to a meta-ethics or aesthetics of self-experimentation. The corresponding politics is a version of libertarianism, underscored by the celebration of difference, fragmentation and constantly shifting relations of power. These points are summarised in Table One.

Table One

	Community as an abstract-ethical social formation	**Community as an embodied-ecological social formation**	**Community as an abstract-aesthetic social formation**
Exemplar	The Third Way (Anthony Giddens, Mark Latham, Amitai Etzioni)	Social Democracy (Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson)	Libertarianism (Nikolas Rose, Charles Leadbeater)
Dominant Social Form	Social relations structured in terms of an abstract network of informal, shared normative relationships	Social relations structured in terms of categories of embodiment	Social relations structured in terms of an abstract network characterised by agonistic social relations
Form of Community	Community as a site of regulation	Community as a site of social solidarity	Community as a site of personal experimentation
Underlying Principles	Abstract trust, reciprocity and mutuality	Embodied solidarity, security, and stability	Abstract difference, mobility and hybridity

In the preceding sections, I argued that each of these conceptions of community is conceptually, empirically and politically flawed. Each identifies community with a single one of its dimensions, lived within a single constitutive level, flattening of community in the process. As such, all should be rejected in the way they are formulated here. Nevertheless, all have something to contribute to an alternative politics of community, albeit with some reworking. I want, then, to continue to argue over how community is constituted and enacted. The following sections are intended as a contribution to how we might think differently about the social relationships of community that recognises its multi-dimensional nature, and seeks to think through these in a way that is politically sustainable.

Before doing so, a note of caution ought to be sounded. In focusing on the accounts of community and the different principles that underpin them, I am not suggesting that they constitute the exclusive or exhaustive terrain from which an alternative politics of community *must* be constructed. My argument, rather, is that they offer a *working*

framework through which to rethink a politics of community that may go some way beyond the one-dimensional terms within which they have been elaborated. The approach that I want to take to these different dimensions of community, is what might be thought of as 'critical retrieval'. At the outset some general comments should be made as to what critical retrieval entails. The term itself is borrowed from Stephen Ames, a member of the Arena group of writers. Ames has used the idea of 'critical retrieval' as a way of engaging with different religious and ethical traditions which avoids an uncritical and potentially fundamentalist embrace of 'one true faith'. The notion of 'critical retrieval' also resonates with Charles Taylor's 'work of retrieval' outlined in *The Ethics of Authenticity*.[43] In Taylor's hands, the notion of 'retrieval' is intended as a counter to the unconditional embrace of a narrow range of social and political ideals or principles as the basis for social life. It entails that 'we identify and articulate the higher ideal behind the more or less debased practices, and then criticize these practices from the standpoint of their own motivating ideal'.[44] Taylor's argument is that unless particular social and political practices and the ideals that motivate them are understood within a social context, and therefore tempered by other ideals and practices, their unrestrained pursuit is likely to produce perverse, even 'disastrous' results.

To illustrate this, Taylor offers the example of instrumental reason. Although he regards instrumental reason as a valuable conceptual tool, he suggests that freed from social and ethical constraints, reason can serve the interests of tyranny. In contrast to an asocial understanding of reason, Taylor seeks to retrieve reason by '[d]rawing on (a) the conditions of human life that must condition the realization of the ideals in question, [so that] we can determine (b) what the effective realization of the ideals would amount to'.[45] In this way, Taylor's objective is to recover what he refers to as the 'rich moral background' that lies behind and provides the justification for the ideas that he seeks to retrieve.[46] Social life is thus understood as based on different ways of living, instead of a single, over-riding principle.

In the present context, critical retrieval refers to a similar kind of reworking of the different politics of community outlined in the above sections. Where Taylor explores the philosophical and moral background of the ideas he wishes to retrieve, thereby qualifying them, I want to retrieve ecology, ethics and aesthetics by understanding them as set within, and therefore qualified by differently constituted forms of social life. A useful metaphor for what is entailed by retrieval in the present context is a politics of

'friction'. Friction places limits on movement, yet it is also the prerequisite for intentional, purposeful and controlled movement. The absence of friction, in comparison, results in a lack of control. Friction also entails the interaction of differences. More precisely, friction requires the presence of *sustainable* differences: too much difference creates inertia, whereas a lack of difference is numbing. A politics of friction thus admits of tension as productive and creative. Against approaches that seek to constitute community through a single one of its dimensions set within a single level of social integration, a frictional politics of community argues for community as constituted through the ethical, the ecological and the aesthetic each constituted across different levels of the social. It thereby seeks to restore to community ontological depth, through complexity, constraint, limitation, ambiguity and difference.

Specifically, the object here is to critically retrieve the different dimensions of community outlined in the previous discussion — ecology, ethics, aesthetics — as *relational* categories.[47] The term 'relational' should not be interpreted as meaning a reconciliation or synthesis of these different dimensions of community. On the contrary, it is to argue for their integrity, as deeply lived dimensions of community. It is therefore in opposition to reductive, one-dimensional accounts of social life examined in the first three sections of this chapter. At its most basic, critical retrieval can be understood as a double process of qualification. The first qualification focuses on the way in which each aspect of community is lived and socially constituted. This is to see ethics, ecology and aesthetics considered separately as constituted and lived across different layers of the social, from those structured through embodied relations to those framed by abstract processes. A simple schematic representation of this is presented in Table Two.

Table Two

Embodied-Ecology	⟷	Abstract-Ecology
Embodied-Ethics	⟷	Abstract Ethics
Embodied-Aesthetics	⟷	Abstract Aesthetics

This is to avoid the tendency of understanding these different dimensions of community as self-contained categories which might offer the taken-for-granted ground from which to rethink community. It is to understand the ethical, the ecological and the aesthetic dimensions of community as socially and culturally constituted across different levels of social life. These principles can thus be thought of in relational terms: *relational ethics, relational ecology, relational aesthetics.*

Table Three

Embodied-Ecology	→	*Relational Ecology*	←	Abstract-Ecology
Embodied-Ethics	→	*Relational Ethics*	←	Abstract Ethics
Embodied-Aesthetics	→	*Relational Aesthetics*	←	Abstract Aesthetics

The second qualification in critically retrieving these terms is to see relational categories as mutually interconnected and therefore as qualifying one another. The politics of community advocated here, then, is not premised on the privileging of a single one of its dimension. Community is understood as constituted through the 'friction' between ethics, ecology and aesthetics understood in relational terms. This is to advocate neither a politics of conservatism nor agonism but one that sees community as enacted through 'principles in tension', lived across different forms of the social.[48]

These comments are intended to provide no more than a general overview of the notion of critical retrieval. The next sections seek to work through the critical retrieval of these terms as relational categories in a more detailed way, and how they might offer principles for an alternative politics of community.

a. Relational Ethics

Relational ethics is an attempt to retrieve the broader social context within which ethical relations are embedded. More specifically, the intent is to move away from the ethical as constituted through abstracted social relations advocated by the proponents of the Third Way. This is not to say that abstract ethics are, in themselves, problematic. As was

noted in Chapter Six, they can be just as important to the way in which ethical relationships are lived. However, without some understanding of how such principles are grounded in, and related to the embodied contexts within which they are negotiated, their practical effect tends to give way to an empty pragmatism. Moreover, and again drawing on the discussion in the previous chapter, where ethical principles are enacted simply through abstract forms of interchange, they are constructed in a wholly undemanding manner with the result that their political and ethical significance is diluted. Equally though, in the absence of abstract, universal ethical principles, ethics slide towards an empty particularism.

The notion of relational ethics is an attempt to conceive of ethical relationships as constituted and practiced across different levels of the social, from the least to the most abstract, while privileging neither. This is to advocate a multi-layered ethics which, rather than simply talking about an ethics of mutualism, reciprocity and trust as if these can be substantially loosed from their moorings within face-to-face social relations, as some proponents of the Third Way assume, seeks to conceive of ethical practices as socially constituted and therefore as having an embodied dimension and as grounded within relations of mutual presence.

This can be illustrated by what can be thought of as a relational ethics of equality. It might be recalled that the proponents of the Third Way redefine equality in general and open-ended terms such as access, capability and inclusion, as opposed to substantive outcomes. In the previous chapter, I argued that these ideas are based on the liberal idea of abstract individualism. This omits the social-contextual and other so-called 'accidental' attributes of the individual, or redefines them as 'segment of life' characteristics and therefore as having little significance to questions social well-being.[49] Such an understanding of equality is ontologically shallow. It supposes a society of genderless, asexual, cultureless, ahistorical subjects, stripped of any attachment to place or group. In doing so, it overlooks the bearing that the embodied aspects of being human, such as physical ability, sexuality, ethnicity and race have on the way in which we are structured into society and the consequences that these have for the social and economic well being and life chances of the person. In short, while inclusion, capacity to participate and access might furnish the basic conditions for the achievement of abstract equality, they say nothing about how equality is to be realised in concrete settings.

A relational ethics of equality, by contrast, upholds access, capacity and inclusion, while also taking into account how these are shaped and qualified by embodied characteristics, such as Indigeneity, gender, culture, sexuality, ethnicity and history. The notion of a relational ethics of equality, therefore, suggests a multi-layered 'ethico-politics', one that connects abstract ethical principles with considerations of how those principles relate to embodied contexts.

In a similar way, relationships of 'social capital' — retrieved as relationships of trust, reciprocity, co-operation and mutuality — can be conceived in relational terms. While the proponents of the Third Way frequently emphasise abstract social capital they neglect the deeper social contexts within which such relations are grounded. This permits them to emphasise the compatibility between the social relationships of the market and relationships based upon mutuality, trust and co-operation. Taking inspiration from Francis Fukuyama's writing on trust, for example, Mark Latham claims that

> mutual trust creates a more productive economy. It lowers transaction and checking costs; it builds workplace cooperation and productivity; it allows collaboration and competition to co-exist.
>
> Mutualism also underpins the success of government. It lowers the costs of authority and enforcement; it places cooperation at the centre of the social contract; it allows moral order and personal liberty to co-exist.[50]

While to some extent true, Latham's analysis is confined to instrumental forms of trust, mutuality and co-operation. In other words, his account is limited to transactional forms of trust and mutuality that are involved within relationships of exchange or contracts. Such relations are shallow, insofar as they do not require an abiding connection to an Other, but are oriented towards the achievement of a particular end. Defined more broadly, however, differently constituted forms of trust, mutuality and co-operation are not so easily reconciled with the market and government as Latham's analysis suggests. Trust, mutuality, co-operation and reciprocity are, to some extent, grounded within embodied social settings, and are based upon non-instrumental ways of knowing and relating to others. They demand ongoing commitments of individuals in relations of mutual presence to one another over time. In core respects, then, they are in opposition to the spatially and temporally extended forms of social relationships characteristic of the commodity.[51]

As I have indicated in a number of places throughout the preceding chapters, the oppositional character of these relationships to both the market and state was well understood by older political and ethical traditions. Christian social thinkers and the ethical socialist traditions, for example, understood mutualism and co-operation as politically significant precisely because they imposed constraints on the abstract social logic of the market, and advocated alternative forms of exchange and production as a way of countering it. Moreover, often they sought to renew such relationships by a return to agrarian forms of production based upon manual labour, where the presence of the Other is structured into the basic relationships by which a society produced and reproduced itself. The idea here is that ethical relationships place limits on the way in which social life is enacted. Relationships of mutuality, reciprocity, co-operation and trust, for example, carry their own social logic, that is muted where these are made subordinate to simply instrumental ends, such as economic and administrative efficiency or 'what works'. While I am not advocating an uncritical return to such traditions and the communities of which they were a part, the oppositional or 'frictional' character of ethical relationships should be acknowledged and acted upon.

In doing so, the ethical and therefore the political significance of principles such as mutualism might be restored. Where the proponents of the Third Way have been unwilling to acknowledge the oppositional nature of these ethical principles, accepting them only insofar as they pose no obstacle to the dominant social structures, a relational ethics seeks to recognise the complexity of such relationships as grounded within prior levels of sociality. In practical political terms, this entails viewing long-term attachments grounded within the face-to-face as integral to the generation of trust, reciprocity and co-operation, rather than portraying these, as the proponents of the Third Way often seem to, as in need of 'modernisation' and 'reinvention'. In particular, it would contest the subordination of ethical relationships to the structures of globalism in its present form, and the claim that these are seamlessly compatible with market solutions to problems of governance. In contrast to the Third Way, then, relational ethics advocates the renewal of community that gives some weight to the embodied as a counterweight to the restructuring of social life in abstract term.

b. Relational Ecology

As with relational ethics, the notion of relational ecology is an attempt to rework the ecological dimension of community as constituted across layers of the social. At the outset, it ought to be recognised that the concern with the 'human ecology' of community, as Elliott and Atkinson refer to it, is valid. Attachment to a particular place, mutual embodied presence, security and stable relationships through time are all integral to the formation of communal social being. The tangible settings and resources of community underpin the kinds of relationships through which individuals and groups are able to develop more or less stable narratives about who they are and what their relationship to others is. Conversely, the disruption of such relationships and attachments can be detrimental to both the psychological and social well being of individuals and groups.

However, it is for precisely the same reasons that make this dimension of community politically problematic. Where ecology is defined and constituted solely through embodied categories such as ethnicity, gender, race and attachment to place, it has historically underwritten a variety of forms of social and political exclusions, including racism, ethnocentrism, cultural superiority and pathological forms of nationalism. Rather than seeking to understand the ecological dimension of community as inherently problematic, and wishing to transcend it, a more prudent course would seem to be a reworking how ecology is constituted, moving beyond the 'pure' or primordial conception of ecology based on embodied categories.

It is against this background that I want to suggest the notion of 'relational ecology' as an alternative to both the one-dimensional form that Elliott and Atkinson advocate. At its simplest, the concept of 'relational ecology' is an attempt to understand the tangible settings of communal life as constituted and experienced through the intersection of both embodied and abstract forms of social interchange. This to understand embodied categories as having a dialectical character in the sense that they are both '*constitutive of*' and '*constituted by*'; as at once ontologically integral to the *constitution of* social interaction, while simultaneously *constituted* by, and thereby altered by other, more abstractly constituted forms of social integration. This dialectical character of the embodied was flagged earlier in Chapter Four, where it was noted that abstract forms of social

interchange such as writing and myth have in post-tribal societies always, to some extent at least, structured more concrete forms of social integration.

The infrastructure of most communities, for example, can no longer be said to emerge solely from within the relations of community as sufficient in themselves. The administrative and physical infrastructure of communities is increasingly constituted in ways that go beyond the face-to-face relations of community. The recognition of the virtues of public space and its political importance to the ecology of community, for example, is not immediately self-evident. It is informed by a long tradition, going back to the Agora in ancient Athens. While its virtues are certainly realised through embodied interaction in the present, its meanings are linked to much older traditions informed by theories of what constitutes a desirable polity. Moreover, the design of public space is structured through abstract processes such as architecture and planning, rather than arising 'organically' from the community itself. Similarly, school curricula, policing and medical services, to take three areas of community service infrastructure mentioned by Elliott and Atkinson, rarely emerge fully-formed out of the tangible settings communities within which they are practiced. Community-policing strategies, for example, are informed by a vast body of literature and research, rather than arising from the interaction the concrete settings of particular communities. The design of schools and school curricula and community medical services are informed by similar kinds of abstract knowledge formation. The point here is that abstract forms of social practice intervene in, and help to constitute the ecology of community. They do not, as Elliott and Atkinson suggest, spring spontaneously from the simple fact of mutual presence within community.

Relational ecology is thus an attempt to conceive of the tangible settings of community as constituted through the complex layering of embodied-extended and abstract-extended forms of social life. In doing so, relational ecology lessens the potential for embodied categories to form the basis for exclusionary forms of politics and community. Because embodied-extended forms of the social are always-already constituted via more abstract forms of social relations, (and vice versa), they are therefore not fixed and immutable but constituted in social terms. As such, it is to reject both the politics of community advanced by writers like Elliott and Atkinson in which the forms of the social based on embodied categories are romanticised over more abstract forms of the social, as well as the uncritical claim that communal solidarity can

be unproblematically reconstructed through social relations of heightened mobility, fluid subjectivity and technological extension. Relational ecology thus understands the tangible settings of community as constituted via the tension of different forms of social life. Moreover, in acknowledging that communal solidarity is always constituted through the intersection of different ways of relating to others, the notion of relational ecology is better positioned to understand and therefore to respond to contemporary social transformations, which goes beyond a nostalgic yearning for communities based upon mutual presence.

At the same time, relational ecology implies constraints on those social forms that efface the tangible settings of community. More pointedly, it entails limits to the reframing of the social life via abstract processes, such as those carried by economic globalisation. Relational ecology would thus advance a politics that advocates the provision of local infrastructure and services as well as public spaces as central to community. Moreover, it entails accepting the limits of embodiment. Where both the proponents of the Third Way and those in favour of an aesthetic politics of community understand the person as malleable and capable of continually reinventing themselves in response to changing social and economic circumstances, the notion of relational ecology would argue for the need to recognise and respect the psychological and biological limits of individuals. This is to see some degree of security as integral to community and to therefore reject the attempt by some proponents of the Third Way to valorise risk and risk taking as a natural and permanent state. While risk certainly exists, the attempt to naturalise and celebrate it as a social good undermines the idea of the person as achieving a stable sense of themselves and the relations to others. Structured in relational terms, then, the concern with social ecology recognises the role of community as a bulwark against risk.

Extending this point further, it entails respect for the limits imposed by the natural and built environment as integral to the way in which communities are constituted. This is to reject the reframing of the natural environment by abstract processes, whether via the market or the techno-sciences, or a combination of both (as in the case of genetic modification, for example), as potentially harmful to the long-term stability of communities. Such processes may place unacceptable limits on the capacities of communities to control their own destinies, insofar as they privilege abstract ways of knowing about the world and relating to others that bypass considerations of the

particularity of place and ways of living that are grounded in place. The reframing of social ecology by such abstract processes would thus be tempered by relational ecology.

c. Relational Aesthetics

While often elusive, the aesthetic dimension of community brings to the fore aspects of community that are often neglected or overlooked completely in many discussions of community. Community is often characterised as antithetical to openness, difference and mobility. It is, moreover, portrayed as a yoke on individual freedom, rather than the condition of its realisation. As such, the aesthetic dimension is important to a rounded politics of community. Nevertheless, constituted through abstract social relations, the aesthetic tends to undermine community. This is well illustrated by the way in which Rose's emphasis on openness and mobility is, even on his own terms, unsustainable as a politics of community. Part of the reason why it is unsustainable is that the creation of new ethical frameworks, which Rose sees as central to his alternative politics of community, presupposes a range of background conditions, not least of which is some degree of proficiency in making ethical judgments and applying ethical criteria. These assume some degree of critical self-awareness that are, to some extent at least, based on a fixed framework of values formed in abiding relationships to others. The abstract social relations are unlikely to provide such background conditions. Indeed, a community based on indeterminacy, difference, becoming, and 'the collective unworking of identities and moralities' is unlikely to generate, much less sustain, the stable background conditions against which such abilities might develop. On the contrary, the retreat to 'consumerized narcissism', which Rose rejects as incompatible with his agonistic ethico-politics of community, would seem to be the likely outcome of a community constituted thus.

The point here is that, although Rose does not openly admit it, the integrity of his own counter-ideal of community presupposes some forms of closure. The notion of relational aesthetics builds such closure into aesthetic practices by insisting that these are constituted across layers of sociality from the least to the most abstract. Rather than engaging in uncritical celebrations of difference and hybridity, a relational aesthetics asks how such principles are to be lived within the settings of face-to-face community and objectified in institutions. For example, a relational aesthetics asks what would an

institution that upheld hybridity look like? What kinds of practices would it support and engage in? Similarly, it is to ask how difference is to be realised at the level of the face-to-face?

To reiterate a point made earlier, this is not to argue for, or to implicitly endorse, morally closed forms of community based upon a privileging of less abstract forms of social interchange. Rather, it is to see practices of experimentation, creativity and innovation as necessarily grounded within specific social relations to others, rather than as realisable simply through abstract, mobile networks. For example, the liberatory ideal that lies at the core of living one's life as a work of art only has meaning and value where one specifies how freedom is grounded within, and therefore limited by, ongoing relations with others. Freedom to disrupt stable social settings as an end in itself does not present a desirable social state. Furthermore, the abstract kind of freedom envisaged within Rose's alternative may place enormous social-psychological demands on the person insofar as it demands a mobile, fluid form of subjectivity, similar to that which underpins the Third Way's idea of the entrepreneurial subject. While some may experience this form of subjectivity as an expansion of freedom, many others would recoil at the dissolution of all certainties and fixities. One response to this might be a resurgence of various forms of fundamentalism as individuals search for fixed narratives of social order in the hope of recovering some stable framework of social and personal meaning. To be meaningful, freedom needs to be grounded within and negotiated within in the embodied relations in which individuals go on. In short, individuals and the communities that they inhabit are not constituted simply in terms of abstract relations of openness and indeterminacy.

Similarly, an aesthetics of difference constituted in relational terms, would look at the institutional settings in which difference is negotiated and, at lower levels of social abstraction, in the settings of face-to-face social intercourse. The creation of novel forms of being and experimentation would thus be curbed, to some extent at least, by the fact that these would be in tension with more grounded ways of being. Unrestrained self-invention and creation would thus not simply be a socially abstract practice, but one rooted and qualified by the fact that these are necessarily negotiate with others. A relational aesthetics of community thus puts the accent on the underlying social contexts — cultural and material resources, stable connections with others, for example — through which individuals are constituted as social agents capable of enjoying and

negotiating freedom. In seeking to reground the aesthetic dimension of community in less abstract forms of social life, relational aesthetics moves away from a simple concern with the creation of new forms of life as an end unto itself, to look at the way in which freedom, mobility, openness, difference are constituted across layers of the social. In doing so, a relational aesthetics raises the question of how such practices *ought* to be lived and negotiated. In short, relational aesthetics is qualified by ethical considerations.

This brings us to the second aspect of critical retrieval flagged in the outline above; namely to see these different dimensions of community as qualifying and qualified by one another. I refer to this as frictional community.

5. Frictional Community

As noted in Chapter Three, in setting out an alternative to the Third Way, Rose goes no further than advocating 'hybridized, queer, subaltern and non-essentialized communities' as examples of his preferred politics of community.[52] While it is difficult to say with any precision what sort of community Rose has in mind when he uses these terms — and it is likely that he deliberately leaves them open-ended so as to avoid foreclosing some options — none of these provides a compelling argument or vision of community. For example, a hybrid or queer community could be seen as encouraging of individual differences without further specifying what forms those differences might take. Such communities might thus encompass differences that are insignificant from a political or ethical standpoint, such as personal eccentricities, as well as differences that are baleful, such as racial hatred. A basic question here is that if we are bound to accept difference as an important dimension of community, are we then committed to accepting all forms of difference as legitimate? A 'subaltern' community, meanwhile, could just as easily refer to those that are structured according to co-operative social action as communities bound together by hatred of another group. A 'non-essentialized' community, furthermore, could simply refer to a community in which there is little continuity between past and present or deep connections amongst its members; in other words, a community in a permanent state of flux.

The problem with all of these alternatives is that none of them is accompanied by a normative framework by which one might evaluate them. Absent is any overarching or compelling sense of what constitutes a desirable community. To have any value, or substantive content, the aesthetic dimension of community needs to be informed by considerations of how we ought to live. This is to see relational aesthetics as in tension with, and therefore qualified by, relational ethics. To take an example drawing on the foregoing discussion, the principle of difference expressed by the term 'hybridity' or 'queerness' is, by itself, not a sustainable basis for community. Nor is it an unqualified good. To be of value, it must be specified how difference is to be lived and negotiated, and second, what limits or boundaries there to be on difference. The first condition is addressed by the first aspect of critical retrieval outlined above in relational aesthetics: difference is only valuable insofar as it is assumed that the background social and cultural conditions exist such that one is equipped to make a distinction between forms of difference. Difference in this sense is constituted and negotiated across concrete layers of sociality.

In itself, however, this is insufficient to the critical retrieval of an aesthetics of difference. On such a view, it is not clear why difference is valuable. As such, the principle of difference needs to be understood as limited by ethical considerations, conceived in relational terms outlined above. For example, the principle of difference could be understood as integral to community to the extent that it is checked with social equality and on condition that the recognition of difference is reciprocated. Thus, forms of difference that are characterised by an intolerance of other differences or as detrimental to social and individual equality constituted through the intersection of embodied ways of living, would be seen as less than desirable. Difference understood as an unconditional good, defined autonomously by individuals or specific groups, without respect to other ways of living and other values would thus be tempered by these other considerations.

Going further, both relational ethics and relational aesthetics need to be grounded within and qualified by tangible social settings. There is, in short, a bricks-and-mortar aspect to ethics and the aesthetic. This is to raise the ecological dimension of community. The political and ethical significance of difference, co-operation and reciprocity, for example, are linked to the extent to which they are lived in abiding connection to others, rather than simply as an exotic, carnivalesque and ultimately

momentary experience. In the absence of a concern with such particularistic settings, the realisation of principles of difference, equality and reciprocity are diminished to the status of private goods, available to a select few. If the assertion of one's difference entails risk or a threat of loss to one's well-being, it is unlikely to be realised in a meaningful or far-reaching way. While the emphasis on the ecological dimension of community might place some kinds of constraint on what kinds of difference are admitted, it also offers their conditions of possibility, by securing the common settings within which they are enjoyed. Insofar as social ecology emphasises the interdependence of individuals on one another, it offers a degree of protection for ethics and the aesthetic.

However, this is not to privilege stability and security as overriding social goods. As relational terms, these are understood as equally tempered by a respect for difference as well as mobility, openness and freedom as these are lived across layers of the social. The politics of community envisaged here is thus characterised by friction in the sense that the different principles that constitute are a) constituted in terms of ontological depth and b) are understood as placing friction on one another, without privileging any particular principle. A frictional politics community argues for community constituted through the intersection of ethics, ecology and the aesthetics structured and lived across layers of sociality, against the flattening of community to a single one of its dimensions, constituted within a single form of social life.

Conclusion

Returning to Morton's analysis with which this chapter opened, rejecting the Third Way does not mean that we must give up on community altogether. The alternative outlined here is no more than a departure point for thinking about an alternative of politics. Nevertheless, it is an attempt to begin to think about community in a way that eschews both the nostalgic return to communities of the past and the uncritical embrace (or surrender) to the dominant structures of our present. A frictional community rests on retrieving, to repeat Charles Taylor's apt phrase, the 'rich moral background' of community. The community outlined here acknowledges different ways in which community is constructed. Moreover, it seeks to realise these in a way that recognises

their ontological depth. As such, it is an attempt to think about community in a way that night generate the kinds of deep attachments that the proponents of the Third Way seek to position as central to government.

As such, a frictional politics of community departs significantly from that advocated by the proponents of the Third Way. It also contrasts with the alternatives proposed by some critics of the Third Way. It requires that we acknowledge some forms of closure as necessary to community, while checking such closure through the endorsement of other principles. The strength of this conception of community is the attempt to constitute community through the intersection of different ways of living. Such a community can not be spoken into existence; it requires real choices to be made about how one is to live. More pointedly it requires a significant redistribution of resources and power. It means contesting the reframing of social life via abstract processes and the appreciation of other ways of living and relating to other. In short, it requires a return to the political, rather than the 'administration of social matters'.[53]

ENDNOTES

1 Tom Morton, "Why Community can be a Curse," *Age*, 4 November 2000. <http://www.theage.com.au/news/20001104/A25075-2000Nov3.html> Consulted 23 January 2001.

2 Tom Morton, "Why Community can be a Curse," *Age*.

3 Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity* (London: Verso, 1999), 269.

4 Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 195.

5 The notion of critical retrieval will be fleshed out in greater detail in section four of this chapter. It should be noted here though that the term itself is borrowed from Stephen Ames who is associated with the Arena group of writers. My particular interpretation of it is also informed by Charles Taylor's 'work of retrieval' outlined in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity*. See Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 72.

6 Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 172.

7 Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 280.

[8] In setting out their alternative to the New Labour's advocacy of the Third Way, Elliott and Atkinson assert 'we would decontrol completely what is currently known as "leisure" and what we prefer to think of as social life. Not only would we free the citizen once he clocks off work, but would protect him in the workplace from such indignities such as drug and alcohol testing and psychiatric assessments. An employees "attitudes" are entirely his own affair; the employers' role ought to be confined to ensuring the job in hand is carried out as agreed and the external appearance and behaviour of employees conform with the company ethos. What happens inside the employee's head is a private matter. Employers have no right to act as compulsory father-confessors or brain-washers.' Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 291.

[9] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 279.

[10] The authors go on to note the discrepancy between New Labour's policies of 'decentralization in the context of new regional assemblies and bureaucracies while acquiescing in, for example, the centralization of county constabularies into a handful of fortress-like headquarters buildings.' Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 281.

[11] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 279.

[12] In their own words: 'Companies should be told in no uncertain terms that they have to "site here to sell here", and trade restrictions should be imposed to keep as much economic activity at the local level.' Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 277.

[13] Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 282-283.

[14] One particularly clear and well-publicised illustration of what happens to communities when basic services are withdrawn has been seen in the Australia in recent years in rural and regional areas. Throughout the 1990s, Australia's four largest banks began closing branches in small rural towns and centres, often leaving them without banking services. Additionally, the banks have cut back on, and sought to discourage people from over-the-counter banking, steering them instead towards electronic banking, through increasing fess on over-the-counter transactions while emphasising the convenience of automatic teller-machines, phone-banking and more recently, internet-banking. These closures have seen a drop in local economic activity and a loss of confidence in the community's future, with many a vast majority reporting that they would leave their community if the opportunity arose. See Diana Beal and Deborah Ralston, *Economic and Social Impacts of the Closure of the Only Bank Branch in Rural Communities*, (Toowoomba: Centre for Australian Financial Institutions 1997).

[15] It might be noted also, that Elliott and Atkinson's account depends upon setting up a sharp distinction between the public and private spheres; the private sphere being the arena of the ethical life of the individual and the public sphere, the political. Seen in these terms, it is not immediately obvious that this alternative is politically desirable. Feminist scholars have, for example, done much to show how the public/private has historically been to the disadvantage of women.

[16] See Freya Carkeek and Paul James, "This Abstract Body?," *Arena*, no. 99/100 (1992): 66-85.

[17] See Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, 208-217 and 290-292.

[18] See Darin Barney, *Prometheus Wired: The Hope for Democracy in the Age of Network Technology* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000).

[19] According to Hinkson: 'The social logic of technological mediation promotes self/other associations in which the other has no necessary presence. When the balance of associations shifts towards technological mediation, a broad range of consequences follow: for children,

cultural formation is much less 'anchored' by a range of particular others and is drawn in the direction of the image-based media industries; within politics we find the rise of media politics; within education, radical transformations occur which draw education away from interpretive concerns towards high-tech economy. The economy proper undergoes two broad changes: the market, now supercharged by the new forms of technological mediation carried by the media and other forms of communication, becomes a global one; and modes of production are redefined by the logic of mental labour in the form of high-technology. Facilitated by the media, processes of subject formation become interwoven with the needs of consumption and to a significant degree, relative to modernity, displace the subject formed through relations of presence.' John Hinkson, "Subjectivity and Neo-Liberal Economy," *Arena Journal* New Series, no. 11 (1998), 139.

[20] For example, writing in the Australian context Bill Bainbridge has noted that 'Pauline Hanson's One Nation is (not in the content of its policies, but in the form of its political engagement) the most postmodern of all the political parties: it relies for its profile on the presence of a celebrity spokesperson [Hanson herself]; it is structured like a highly effective marketing operation; [David] Oldfield [Hanson's key advisor and later a One Nation State MP in the New South Wales parliament] is the most visible spin doctor in Australian politics; not to mention a president who is a fundraiser on a percentage for profits.' Bill Bainbridge, 'Improving the Spin While Losing the Plot', *Arena Magazine*, August-September 1998, 47.

[21] These general points are well illustrated by the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in Australia. While One Nation lacked an explicit ideological or theoretical core its coherency as a political force was underpinned by its political targets, all of which can be seen as expressions of abstract forms of social life. Specifically, One Nation defined itself in opposition to four core groupings: the mass media, experts and professionals, Indigenous people and migrants groups, and international capital. The problem with the media, for One Nation supporters, was its almost infinite capacity to decontextualise meanings and images; a result of its abstract form in which signs and symbols can be lifted out of particular contexts and their meaning changed. One Nation supporters frequently attributed any political gaffes by Hanson as the product of a biased media quoting her out of context. The claims of experts and intellectuals were dismissed by One Nation supporters for similar reasons. Attempts to refute Hanson's claim that Australia was being 'swamped' by Asian immigrants in her maiden speech to parliament by reference to official statistics, for example, were interpreted as evidence of official distortions and the collusion of intellectuals with the 'multicultural industry', rather than an accurate reflection of immigration numbers. The reason why such statistics and other pronouncements of experts were suspect, was that they did not accord with what people's intuitions, which were perceived to be more accurate than the claims of experts based on complex statistical analyses. Indigenous Australians and immigrants, especially recently arrived migrants from Asian countries, were a third category to face attack, on the grounds that these groupings received entitlements and preferable treatment from government agencies which Australians from Anglo backgrounds were ineligible to claim. In most cases such claims were false; others were exaggerated. Opposition to bodies like the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and programs aimed specifically at the needs of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders by One Nation supporters, for example, was based on a rejection of political claims predicated on categories of cultural and ethnic difference and identity. From a Anglo perspective, such categories as 'Aboriginality' and 'migrant', and notions of equality, other than those of equality-as-sameness, could only have meaning as abstract categories, without practical import. The unwillingness or inability of One Nation supporters to engage with these more abstract political categories was demonstrated by the fact that One Nation supporters frequently interpreted these kinds of political claims by reference to more immediate, mainstream political concerns,

such as motivations of economic self-interest. The fourth main target of One Nation was that of international capital. While One Nation was committed to the national market economy, international capital was seen as problematic in so far as its capacity to move across national borders represented a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the modern nation-state. In regards to the supporters of One Nation, Bainbridge notes that their primary support base was derived 'from those who have no experience of being fluid, identity forming subjects and view such politics as a threat to their once taken-for-granted ways of life. They are largely men living in regions without much ethnic diversity, with few global or information industries, where global trade is eradicating local industries and where status, relative to Aboriginal people, has come under a perceived threat.' Bill Bainbridge, 'Improving the Spin While Losing the Plot', *Arena Magazine*, 48.

[22] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 192-193.

[23] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 195.

[24] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 195.

[25] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 193.

[26] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 194.

[27] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 194-95.

[28] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 282.

[29] Stephen Riggins, "Michel Foucault: An Interview by Stephen Riggins," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 (London: Penguin, 1997), 130.

[30] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 195-196.

[31] Charles Leadbeater, *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy* (London: Viking, 1999), 15.

[32] Charles Leadbeater, *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, 156. In spite of his criticisms of the Third Way, Leadbeater has won praise from some of the key supporters and advocates of the 'new politics' in both Australia and Britain, including Prime Minister Tony Blair and the British cabinet MP Peter Mandelson. Mandelson, who is often cited as the chief architect of New Labour's 'modernisation' is quoted on the dust-jacket, enthusiastically endorsing *Living on Thin Air* as 'a blueprint for what a radical modernising project will entail in years to come'.

[33] Charles Leadbeater, *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, 16.

[34] See for example Peter Schwartz and Peter Leyden, "The Long Boom: A History of the Future, 1980-2020," *Wired* 5, no. 7 (1997). URL: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/5.07/longboom.html> Consulted 19 June 2002 and Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead* (London: Viking, 1995).

[35] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin, 1985 [1848]), 83. This point has been made by other critical commentators on postmodern forms of political thought and practice. Most recently Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt characterised postmodern thought as a 'symptom of passage' from one socio-cultural form to another. Taking their inspiration from Frederic Jameson's analysis of postmodernism as 'the cultural logic of late-capitalism' and David Harvey's analysis of postmodernism as a new stage in the development of capitalism marked by 'flexible accumulation', Negri and Hardt claim that 'postmodernists are still waging battles against the shadows of old enemies: the Enlightenment, or really modern forms of sovereignty and its binary reductions of difference and multiplicity to a single alternative between Same and Other. The affirmation of hybridities and the free play of

difference across boundaries, however, is liberatory only in a context where power poses hierarchy exclusively through essential identities, binary divisions, and stable oppositions. The structures and logics of power in the contemporary world are entirely immune to the "liberatory" weapons of the postmodernist politics of difference. ... Despite the best intentions, then, the postmodernist politics of difference not only is ineffective against but can even coincide with and support the functions and practices of imperial rule. The danger is that postmodernist theories focus their attention so resolutely on the old forms of power they are running from, with their heads turned backwards, that they tumble into the welcoming arms of the new power.' Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 142. Closer to our present concerns, Paul James has noted in context of theorists who uncritically welcome the deterritorialised mobility of postnationalism, '[i]t is not the fault of the postmodernists that global capitalists extol the same virtue of the borderless [and we might add, fluid, mobile, open] world, but it should give them pause for reflection'. Paul James, 'Beyond and Post-Nationalist Imaginary: Grounding an Alternative Ethic', *Arena Journal*, no. 14, 1999/2000, 67.

[36] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 282.

[37] John Clammer, "Aesthetics of the Self: Shopping and Social Being in Contemporary Urban Japan," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 196.

[38] Rob Shields, "Spaces for the Subject of Consumption," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 2.

[39] Rob Shields, "Spaces for the Subject of Consumption," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, 17. Shields argues that these are 'sites of deflected and displaced resistance. Even the most disadvantaged have demonstrated the ability to steal the opportunity for pleasure in the "clever art" of appropriation; an invasive "poaching" of luxurious and "climatized" environments ... through vicarious observation, gratuitous flânerie and window shopping, or cheap luxury', 12-13.

[40] Rob Shields, "The Individual, Consumption Cultures and the Fate of Community," in *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 1992), 110.

[41] See Josee Johnston, "Consuming Global Justice: Fair Trade Shopping and Alternative Development," in *Protest and Globalisation: Prospects for Transnational Solidarity*, eds. James Goodman (Annandale: Pluto, 2002), particularly 40-42.

[42] In this vein, Simon Cooper has noted, in regard to questions of contemporary citizenship and openness, that: 'While it is clear that we need to go beyond the kinds of closure that underwrote modern social integration, it is another question entirely whether we need to regard this form as wholly negative ... A commitment to openness, especially an openness generated by the processes of globalization in its current mode, does not necessarily entail a commitment to the social other, nor to more democratic social forms.' Simon Cooper, "The Limits of Openness: A Comment on Alastair Davidson and Michael Arnold," *Arena Journal*, no. 14 (1999/2000), 136.

[43] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 72.

[44] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 72.

[45] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 105.

[46] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 105.

[47] The notion of relational principles is adapted from Paul James. See "Beyond a Postnationalist Imaginary: Grounding an Alternative Ethic," *Arena Journal*, 68.

[48] See Paul James, "Beyond a Postnationalist Imaginary: Grounding an Alternative Ethic," *Arena Journal*, 68.

[49] Expanding on this, Latham argues that positive discrimination 'measures are based on special categories, quotas and funding for citizens according to their personal characteristics (such as gender and ethnic background). Difficulties arise, however, from the way in which these programs encourage people to rely on a single source of identity for their citizenship.

In the new politics of multiple points of identity and citizenship, positive discrimination is often interpreted as a form of tribalism, especially among those people excluded from its benefits. This resentment is generally associated with a part of the electorate described as "angry white males". Tribalism of this kind is very damaging to the level of social trust and cohesion. Despite their good intentions, positive discrimination programs now create more harm than good in the public arena'. Mark Latham, "The New Politics — An Australian Story," *Policy* Summer, 1998/99 URL:<http://www.cis.org.au/Policy/summ9899/summ989905.htm> Consulted February 8 2001. Rather than seeking to defend the more complex notion of equality that programs and policies of positive discrimination seek to express, Latham simply seeks a return to universal and formal notion of equality, based on capacity to participate.

[50] Mark Latham, "Mutualism — A Third Way for Australia": 2000 URL:<http://www.brisinst.org.au/resources/lathamm_mutual.html> Consulted February 8 2001.

[51] See Geoff Sharp, "Extended Forms of the Social: Technological Mediation and Self-Formation," *Arena Journal*, no. 1 (1993).

[52] Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, 196.

[53] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 199.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this dissertation has been the renewed focus on community in Britain, the United States and Australia by parties and commentators aligned with the social democratic Centre-Left under the banner of a Third Way in politics. It was argued that proponents of the Third Way have sought to avoid both a return to classical social democracy based around centralised state provision, as well as neo-liberal forms of governance based around the market. While unwilling to reject either the state or the market entirely, the proponents of the Third Way have sought to temper both by emphasising the role of the informal, ethical bonds of community in governing people. By nurturing and tapping into informal bonds of trust, co-operation and mutual obligation, it is argued that people can be empowered to take a greater role in shaping their own lives. Community is seen by the proponents of the Third Way as a means of empowering individuals, creating more dynamic, efficient and effective forms of governance than would otherwise be possible by state intervention, while fostering forms of social cohesion that are claimed to be undermined by the competitive relations of the market. Community is thus seen as rectifying the deficiencies of both the market and the state as means of governance.

For the proponents of the Third Way, the move towards community is portrayed as consistent with broader social, cultural and economic trends. In particular, the widespread use of computer-based communications technologies is claimed to undermine monolithic, hierarchical forms of social and economic organisation. New communications technologies, it is claimed, underwrite new forms of social organisation that are horizontally rather than vertically or hierarchically integrated. Such social forms are said to operate on principles of trust, co-operation and mutual exchanges. Others argue for a greater role for community in governance on the basis that processes of globalisation create opportunities for small groups to effect changes on a global level. The emergence of a more highly educated citizenry, able and willing to take a more active role in shaping their own lives is also seen to strengthen the basis for community-centred approaches to governance. Some proponents of the Third Way have sought to portray this concern with community as a re-vitalisation of older streams within the Left tradition. In particular, it has been greeted as a much needed modernisation of certain,

long-neglected streams within the ethical and Christian socialist traditions, that emphasised the role of ethical relations as central to government.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued against such an interpretation. The Third Way signals not the recovery of older forms of community, but the reconstruction and reinvention of community in ways quite different to that of the past. Using the term the 'network community', I have sought to distinguish the community of Third Way from those forms of community advocated by other political traditions. The proponents of the Third Way are wary of defining community in terms of a particular geographical locale, shared traditions or ongoing relations with others. Such 'embedded' forms of community are treated as suspect because they are seen as, at best, nostalgic, and at worst, harbouring social authoritarianism and stifling of innovation. What is important about community for the proponents of the Third Way is simply that individuals share affective bonds with others. Such bonds should remain open and respect individual desires for mobility and autonomy. The social form on which the Third Way community rests is that of the network. The network is understood here in terms of a deterritorialised, open and mobile social form, in which priority is given to maximising the relations between people, with relatively less concern as to how such relations are grounded in specific social contexts. The network community is thus claimed to offer a social form which combines relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity, while enabling individual mobility and autonomy. For the proponents of the Third Way, then, the psychological, social, political and economic benefits associated with the informal and intimate bonds of community can be detached from deeply set, ongoing relations of embodied presence within which these have historically been grounded.

Applied to community, the network suggests a politics that reconciles the ways of living that have hitherto been seen as in tension. Specifically, individual desires for mobility and autonomy are seemingly reconciled with collective interests of social cohesion and solidarity. The tensions between state provision and the market are presented as resolved. So long as individuals are able to access the network and to act within it, tensions between individual interests and collective ones are viewed as resolved. The only significant political question that remains is ensuring that all have more or less equal access to networks. Through the network community, then, the proponents of the Third Way claim to have found a politics that realises the most cherished goals of the ethical socialist tradition, of a society structured around principles of co-operation,

reciprocity and mutual trust, within the settings of the market economy. For the proponents of the Third Way, the key virtue of the network community is that it is compatible with contemporary structures of communication, production and exchange. Just as these are organised in terms of open globally integrated networks of users, suppliers, producers and consumers, so the network community is constituted through mobile networks of trust, co-operation and reciprocity.

Throughout this dissertation I argued that the network community is an expression of a more general social and cultural transformation. This was analysed in terms of a transition in levels of social integration, in which more constitutively abstract forms of social integration, characterised by temporally and spatially extended social relations, have come to frame and structure less abstractly constituted forms of social integration structured through social relations of embodied co-presence. Drawing on the work of Sharp and the Arena group of writers, it was argued that the dominance of abstract-extended forms of social integration is the result of a 'fusion' of intellectual practices with the commodity form. This is registered in commonplaces such as the 'information' or 'knowledge economy and society'. While such terms describe the central role that knowledge workers currently play in the production process, for the most part the distinctive social form ushered forth by this fusion goes unremarked upon. Specifically, the distinctive form of life that underpins both intellectual practice and the commodity form — namely that both are abstract-extended forms of the social — is overlooked. The claim of Sharp and others is that where intellectual practices come to the centre of processes of production and reproduction, they have made over the social whole in similarly abstract-extended terms. This is not to suggest that other forms of social integration structured through less constitutively abstract social relations, such as face-to-face social interchange have withered away or are on the verge of doing so. The point, rather, is that even the most basic forms of social integration have been reconstituted within the terms of more abstract forms of social extension. Thus, face-to-face social relations are now framed and structured via more abstract processes.

The central argument of this dissertation has been that the network community of the Third Way offers an ideological naturalisation of a social form that is fitted to the contemporary structures of capitalism structured via abstraction carried via intellectual practice. The network community is, I argued, an ideological naturalisation of the dominance of abstract-extended social relations. The underlying assumption of the

network community is that basic social relations such as co-operation, mutual obligation, trust, and reciprocity can be lifted out from the embedded contexts of communities embedded within specific context and be reconstructed through social relations of abstract-extension. Perhaps the clearest expression of the naturalisation of abstract forms of social is the way in which, for the proponents of the Third Way at least, the notion of 'social capital' — densely structured networks of informal trust, co-operation and reciprocity — has become interchangeable with community. The extent to which social capital has become a commonsense understanding of community illustrates perfectly the extent to which abstract forms of the social have some to dominate the meaning and value that is attached to community. Insofar as the notion of social capital informs policy, the proponents of the Third Way contribute to the material reconstruction of community in more abstract way.

It was further argued that the attempt to reconstruct the ethical relations of community within a single level of abstract-extended social interchange necessarily undermines itself. The Third Way's reinvention of community is simultaneously a flattening of community. The network community strips the ethical relations of community of their oppositional significance, making them so undemanding as to be compatible with almost any form of communal action. As such, the network community is incapable of realising the kinds of individuals who might be amenable to the claims of others. The network community, in short, is a debasement of the classical meaning of community. The Third Way offers not so much a new politics, but a post-politics, in which community offers little in the way of an alternative to the dominant social and economic structures of the present.

It should come as no surprise then that the Third Way is has, on its own terms, failed to realise the new form of governance which was its main aim. Symbolic of this is the fact that the term 'the Third Way' is now rarely used, even amongst those sympathetic to the ideas that were proclaimed in it name. The chief reason for this is that its supporters have failed to communicate what they mean by it in a convincing or coherent manner.[1] In spite of the frequent invocation of community and ethics, the differences between the Third Way and their opponents have remained minor or cosmetic.

Moreover, commentators have noted that supporters of the Third Way have had little success in reversing a pervasive sense of alienation and disillusionment with political

parties and leaders and political processes. While Blair's two landslide election wins may appear to refute this, and instead indicate enthusiastic and popular endorsement of the participatory approach of the Third Way, closer inspection suggests otherwise. The 2001 British General Election at which New Labour won its second 'landslide' victory, recorded the lowest total voter turnout since 1918 when voter turnout (57% of eligible voters) was disrupted by the war. In 2001, only 58 per cent of the population bothered to vote.

To add to the woes of the Third Way, the centre-Left governments in Europe that dominated the political stage in the late 1990s and early 2000 are in retreat, partly in the wake of a resurgence of support for populist Right-wing politicians and parties. Meanwhile, in the US, former President Clinton's bold claims to have discovered a Third Way in politics failed to provide a stable foundation for his successor. Much of the Clinton New Democrat rhetoric about community has since been appropriated by the Bush (Jnr) administration, under the banner of 'compassionate conservatism' — a fact not lost on the Democratic Leadership Council which was central to formulating Clinton's approach.[2] Of the five Third Way leaders who met for a round-table discussion about their shared political project in Washington 1999, only the parties led by Tony Blair and Gerhard Schroeder remain in power.

In Australia, meanwhile, the Labor Party remains in the political doldrums. After a third consecutive election loss to the conservative Liberal-National coalition in 2001, the Party launched a Committee of Review to investigate and suggest reforms to the Party's to increase it primary vote.[3] The main recommendation of the report is structural and organisational change to the Party, the most contentious being changes to union representation within the Party which have since been implemented. Calls for the ALP to follow the lead of Third Wayers in Britain and the US, which preceded the Report's publication, have yet to be embraced in an unequivocal manner, although the language of 'modernisation' associated with New Labour has been adopted by the reformers to defend their position. No doubt part of the reason for the hesitation shown by the Australian Labour leadership in adopting the Third Way is that much of the reform agenda identified with New Labour was first pioneered by the ALP while it was in government from 1983-96, making it difficult to portray Third Way policies as 'new thinking'. To many Australian voters it would appear that the Third Way appears as 'more of the same'. Moreover, many Third Way policies have since been adopted by the

Liberal-National coalition government led by John Howard, including mutual obligation tests in the provision of welfare services. In return, Blair's New Labour government has taken inspiration for its punitive approach to refugees and asylum seekers from the Howard Government.[4]

To be sure, the causes for low voter turnout and poor electoral performances are complex, and are attributable to a variety of factors specific to national context, issues, personalities and the strength of opposition parties. As such, they cannot be laid solely at the feet of the Third Way. At the same time, however, widespread disengagement with formal political processes, as a key indicator of civic participation, should be cause for concern for politicians and political commentators who have placed such a high premium on renewing democratic participation and decentralising power. Whatever else it may have achieved, the Third Way must be seen as having failed to achieve a thoroughgoing reform of the practice of governance.

Many proponents of the Third Way appear unconcerned by these failings. For example, some New Labour MP's and their supporter tried to put a positive spin on the poor voter turnout, claiming that it reflected of widespread contentment with New Labour's policies.[5] In his most recent contribution to the Third Way debate *Where Now for New Labour?* published in the months after New Labour's second successive election victory, for example, Anthony Giddens concedes that the Blair Government has not lived up to expectation in many policy areas. He makes particular mention of constitutional reform, reform of the National Health Service and changes to corporate governance. In spite of these failures, he claims that the voter turnout was a result of 'a free rider effect. Many of those who stayed away from the polling booth did so because they saw the result as a foregone conclusion'.[6] In spite of Giddens' attempts to claim otherwise, his own evidence is consistent with the existence of widespread apathy and disillusionment among the electorate. If voters think that the election result is a foregone conclusion, this suggests that they do not believe that their vote is going to make any difference to the outcome, thus indicating apathy and disillusionment with formal political processes. In other words, Giddens' 'free rider effect' simply confirms the point that individuals are disillusioned with the political process. Perhaps realising the feebleness of his own defence of New Labour's performance, Giddens notes that poor electoral support is a problem not confined to Britain, but is a feature of late-modern polities — to which the

best reply is Tom Nairn's observation that '[c]ut price universalism of this sort is a standard last refuge for scoundrels hoist upon their own petard'.[7]

While such a poor performance might give pause to reflect and reassess the wisdom of the Third Way, Giddens instead urges a redoubling of efforts to further the 'modernisation' begun by New Labour in its first term.[8] *Where Now for New Labour?* is an upbeat endorsement of New Labour's modernisation program, accompanied by a lecture to critics of the Third Way for what Giddens regards as their narrow-minded ideological rigidity and an obsession with statist approaches to governance. Based on the ideas advocated in *Where Now for New Labour?*, the likely outcome of Giddens' proposals is a thoroughly meritocratic society, in which a majority of people are employed in low-paid jobs (ameliorated only by promises of government support for retraining — subject, of course, to changing electoral and economic fortunes), and are forced to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to their selves and lives.[9] Aside from some brief, general comments on the possible role of mutuals and co-operatives in private-public partnerships, Giddens is all but silent on the role that civil society or ethical relations might take in governance, or concrete steps taken by New Labour to facilitate such a role. Changing economic conditions, namely the spectre of a global economic slowdown in the near future, have, it would seem, made community, ethics and civic participation peripheral concerns to the Third Way.

Others have suggested that the failure of the Third Way has permitted a return to traditional social democracy. Some commentators have, for example, suggested that New Labour has shrugged of the Third Way, citing the Party's belated announcement of increased spending on public services and infrastructure in 2001. This, it is claimed, demonstrates that the aversion to tax-and-spend approaches to government is at an end, marking a move back towards a more traditional conception of progressive, social democratic governance.[10] While this may be the case, increased spending is not sufficient to indicate that New Labour has set itself free of the ideology of social abstraction. Interestingly, the spending increases have gone hand-in-hand with increased monitoring of public services against measures of efficiency.[11] While service standards are important, the emphasis given to them by New Labour suggests that the meaning and well-being of community is to be understood through the cultures of benchmarking and the audit and the intellectual practices that underlie them. The more general point here is that the faltering of the Third Way does not mean that the processes of which it

is both an ideological naturalisation and an agent have, or are likely to disappear in the near future. Indeed, the network community advocated by the proponents of the Third Way has found a new champion in their conservative successors. As noted, the Bush Administration in the US and the Howard Government in Australia, have been able to use the same ideology to their own advantage. The importance of community can thus be stressed while simultaneously being reconstructed via socio-material abstract relations.

This is not to say, however, that there is no alternative to the Third Way. The notion of 'frictional community' outlined in the last chapter is an attempt to think about community in a way that simultaneously avoids the debased form of the network community, as well as a nostalgic retreat to community constituted through relations of embodied extension. At the core of this is an attempt to think about how different dimensions of community constituted across layers of the social, from the least to the most abstract, might be realised. In other words, the frictional community is an attempt to provide some kind of framework for thinking about community that understands social life as lived in different ways, across different levels of the social. As such, it attempts to avoiding a reduction of community to any one of its dimensions. In short, it is no more than an attempt to take the Third Way's concern with political renewal seriously.

ENDNOTES

[1] Michael Jacobs, "Blair's Britain" (paper presented at the Lecture to the Australian Fabian Society, Melbourne, June 2001).

[2] Will Marshall, "Third Way Will Rise Again," *Blueprint Magazine*, July/August 2002 URL: <http://www.ndol.org/ndol_ci.cfm?contentid=250672&kaid=128&subid=187> Consulted 8 August 2002.

[3] See Australian Labor Party, 'Committee of Review', URL:<www.alp.org.au/features/cor.html> Consulted 11 July 2002.

[4] See Seumas Milne, "Declaration of war on asylum," *Guardian*, 23 May 2002 URL: < http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,720553,00.html> Consulted 18 August 2002 and Patrick Barkham, "Howard's Way is the Wrong Way," *Guardian*, 30 May 2002 URL:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,724384,00.html>. Consulted 18 August 2002.

5 "Turnout 'at 80-Year Low'." BBC News 2001 URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/newsid_1376000/1376575.stm>. Consulted 9 July 2002.

6 Anthony Giddens, *Where Now for New Labour?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 77.

7 Tom Nairn, *Pariah: Misfortunes of the British Kingdom*, (London: Verso, 2002), 59.

8 Anthony Giddens, *Where Now for New Labour?*

9 Polly Toynbee, "The Third Way is Dead and Labour can be Itself at Last," *Guardian*, 9 January 2002 URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,4331640,00.html> Consulted 8 August 2002.

10 Polly Toynbee, "The Third Way is Dead and Labour can be Itself at Last".

11 Malcolm Dean, "Labour Enters a New Era of Spending," *Guardian*, 8 June 2001 URL: <http://society.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,4200307,00.html>. Consulted 8 August 2002.

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