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**In the wake of the giant: Conflicting ideologies and uneven
development in a New England community**

Kirsch, Max H., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1989

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**In the Wake of the Giant: Conflicting Ideologies and Uneven
Development in a New England Community**

by

Max Kirsch

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York.

1989

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Preface

The inspiration for this work comes from varied sources, but not the least from the memories of my father's lectures predicting the coming depression that was an inevitable result of the capitalist mode of production. Although that depression didn't occur in his lifetime, I now find myself making the same predictions, even if the scope has now widened from the United States to the entire world system. Inspiration also comes from memories of his work in a Borg-Warner plant that disemployed him shortly before he reached the required number of service years for a pension -- moving production out of the area to sunnier climates. Cleveland, Ohio, as I was growing up there, was "deindustrializing" -- the steel and other plants representing basic industry closing up shop and leaving vast areas of the downtown region empty and depressed. While the City now claims to have made a comeback, it will never reach the heights of industry that made the robber barons wealthy and the City the home of some of the richest cultural institutions in America today.

The specific inspiration for this dissertation came from June Nash, who had begun thinking through a research project in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, when I approached her with a proposal for fieldwork in Latin America. She convinced me

that the problems I was interested in pursuing were better served in the United States and with that engaged me in the discussion of her research. Somewhat skeptical at first, the idea of exploring what people *do* when faced with economic disaster stirred up the questions I had been carrying around for a very long time.

Conducting anthropological fieldwork in the United States presented unexpected problems that I had not encountered before in brief fieldwork excursions to Latin America and Japan. Assuming I knew the language, it would be a while before I realized that I was ignorant of many meanings. Growing up in the mid-East, I discovered, was indeed different than experiencing the Northeast of the United States, which sometimes felt stranger, and more alienating, than foreign soil. Abroad, anthropologists are often a novelty, sometimes coveted, sometimes feared, but mostly engaged in one way or another. Anthropologists conducting research in the United States are simply ignored or an object of curiosity, if not hostility, when informants wonder why one should be asking such questions. More than a few informants were lost when less than personal questions were considered crossing the boundary of civil conversation. An anthropologist doing fieldwork in his or her own culture is often simply seen as inappropriately prying -- for what must be no good reason.

Despite these difficulties, however, people did talk, discovering after initial conversation that we were probably as harmless as this confusing study of community restructuring sounded. I hope that they have not been misrepresented here. I particularly want to thank the City's administrators who agreed to talk to me time after time, raising uncomfortable discussion and prodding into their personal lives.

There are many people who helped along the way of this dissertation and patiently waited out fits of peeve and disorientation. My beginnings of anthropology were nurtured by my undergraduate advisor, Judith Friedlander, who heroically rescued me from the depths of hard science, for which I was being actively groomed. Ethel Tobach at the American Museum of Natural History's Department of Animal Behavior supported my interest in humans and provided an alternative framework for viewing not only animal behavior but the construction of all behavioral science. She introduced me to Eleanor Leacock, who convinced me to abandon my plans to attend other graduate schools, where she told me, they would not tolerate my views, and to enroll at the City University of New York. Happy, and her family, provided more than a supportive niche for me throughout most of my graduate school career, grounding me when necessary and integrating me into the anthropological sphere as well as her house in the country and her loft in New York. I am

only sorry that she did not live to see the completion of this work, which is dedicated to her memory.

My fellow students at the City University have provided support and backboards for years. Many are certainly friends for life as we continue our discussions, arguments and trips through the life cycle that characterize successful relationships. Joan Turner, Elizabeth Brusco, Xavier Totti, Franco Raynauld, Donna Kerner, Margo Matwychuk, Liz Sheehan, Gerald Creed and others I have momentarily forgotten helped in the indiscernable ways of friends. I particularly want to thank Margo Matwychuk for actually reading most of the dissertation, and Donna Kerner for helping out over the particularly rough spot that was Chapter Two, written last. Anne Archer, Marcia Van Wagner and Joe Ricciardi, colleagues in arms and the oldest of friends, collaborated over the years as we developed survival strategies for a process in our various graduate institutions that we were not in complete agreement with. We have all survived, older and perhaps more jaded for the time spent.

My colleagues at the City University of New York's Central Office witnessed the evolution of this work over my graduate school career. I started working at the University's Office of Academic Affairs during my second year at the City University, continuing off and mostly on in various

capacities for the years since. I particularly want to thank Deans Mary Rothlein, Madleine Adler, Marie Jean Lederman, Bill Myrick, Rita Terdiman and Mike Ribaud. Mary Rothlein, Leon Goldstein and Madleine Adler visited me in the field providing support and encouragement. Rita Terdiman, no longer a Dean but now a friend, provided her companionship and her house in Massachusetts. Mike Ribaud proved to be an exceptionally tolerant and understanding supervisor as he supported the behavior that saw this dissertation completed. Merlin Fahey and Rosanne Italiano contributed to this work by both proofreading parts of it and by leaving me be, for which I am grateful. Harvey Weiner, a relatively "new" Dean at the Central Office, and quickly a friend, prodded, nagged and pushed me to finish this work. Particularly frustrated with a Chapter that I could not edit, I dropped it on his desk and asked him to fix it. He did, without complaining.

I owe a debt that I cannot repay to June Nash and her family, who included me as one of their own. Laura Nash and Matthew McCaslin spent a fall season up in Massachusetts, entertaining me and providing a distraction to the work underway. Herbert Menzel, up until his untimely death, welcomed me and supported my presence. June Nash should recognize the intellectual debt to her in this work, although she is obviously not responsible for its shortcomings.

The other members of my committee, Eric Wolf and Edward Hansen, supported me in this work and provided useful comments on its progress. I am grateful for their input and their encouragement. I asked Shepard Forman to be my outside reader because of his interest in the area -- he has a house nearby -- and because of my respect for him as an anthropologist concerned with human rights. He has been a source of prodding and support over the years of this work and I have been grateful for his presence. Last, but certainly not least, Terri Vulcano as the department administrator and student protector maneuvered me through the program, picking up the slack where my lack of respect for bureaucratic procedure tangled my progress. I could not have negotiated the program without her help, which I hope she knows.

The research for this dissertation was made financially possible by funding from the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded to June Nash as Principal Investigator, and which she generously shared with me, and from an award from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. I am grateful to these institutions for their support and their confidence in a topic somewhat outside the traditional anthropological realm.

My family has been a source of support over the years of my graduate school tenure and have witnessed all of the stages and pitfalls of higher education in a capitalist society. To them I owe a debt of perspective and a hope for the future that we share.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This work is about the restructuring of industry in a New England community and the reactions to that restructuring by various segments of the community's population. Specifically, the work concerns the community's attempts to adapt to the restructuring and to "redevelop" the area. The thesis is that this process of restructuring is occurring throughout American society and is intertwined with the needs of capital accumulation. I believe that the differences in the ideologies of development and redevelopment are direct outcomes of power and class relations, mediated by the historical forces of the community and the environment.

The process of economic restructuring has transformed the physical face of the community that is the subject of this study as well as the lives of its inhabitants. Too, this economic restructuring is not bounded within the city limits. The main corporate employer is multinational; the tourists who come to the area for skiing and summer lakes and the second home owners that are buying available land come from regions and States far beyond the City's territory. It is because of the unbounded nature of contemporary American life that this thesis is informed by a

"new" tradition of urban anthropology, which, as Hannerz (1980:4) observes, "originated in the other side of academic boundaries, congenial as the ideas in question may now seem to be an anthropological perspective." This work is therefore informed by history, political economy and political science, which provide an interdisciplinary flavor to the more traditional anthropological approaches to specified populations. To the extent that urban anthropology "is that anthropological subspeciality which deals specifically with the development and context of social relations in industrial society" (Susser, 1982), it is still concerned with relationships among people rather than the individuals or "units" preferred by sociologists to amass statistical data (Hannerz, 1980:6). In complex society, and particularly in urban settings, the social relationships require the broader context of regional, state and international systems for a coherent analysis to emerge.

The community that is the subject of this study is Pittsfield, a town of about 50,000 nestled in the Berkshire mountains of western Massachusetts. Pittsfield is one of two cities in Berkshire County, with North Adams, about 25 miles to the north, its considerably smaller sister. Incorporated in 1761, most of the non-indian (Mohegan) settlers were anglo saxon, with names like William Williams, Samuel Taylor, Josiah Wright, Herzekish Jones and David Bash (Smith, 1869:475). The settlers interacted well with the

Mohegans, allying with them in the battle against the Peguots and Narragansetts (Nash, 1989). By 1774 most of the allotted lands were sold to a population of about 1500, many of whom were immigrants from Westfield and lived among the 300 indians (Smith, 1869:475, Nash, 1989). The immigration patterns of the late 1800's and early 19th century transformed the population of this city with large ethnic enclaves of Italian, Irish, French Canadian and Polish workers. The varying strengths of these communities has effected the weight of which each has participated in the processes of restructuring and their involvement in discussions concerning "redevelopment."

Manufacturing is the County's primary mainstay, with electrical, electronics and paper products the largest employers. The second major industry is tourism. Equidistant from New York and Boston, the area sports over 100 lakes and ponds, including almost 85,000 acres of state reservation. The interaction between these two mainstays of the economy has long been a source of tension as the varying requirements for each collide in a clash of interests.

Until recently, a tourist could drive down the main street of Pittsfield and assume that the area was thriving. For those coming from New York or Boston, the downtown streets appear exceptionally clean, the only homeless person in sight a baglady who sports L.L. Bean luggage as her

receptacles. The City has the appearance of many towns in upstate New York and Southern New England: its low buildings of brick and wood built in the 1930's have a feel of Norman Rockwell's paintings of small town America. It is not surprising that the painter was a resident of Stockbridge, in Southern Berkshire County. The east side of town is dominated by the General Electric plant which since the early 1900's has been the largest employer in the area. Its facilities span one whole side of the City, and the smaller Shaeffer Eaton plant to the South pales in comparison. Smaller textile manufacturing plants now occupied by plastics firms dot the landscape around and in Pittsfield as reminders of the City's history.

The significant change in the past five years is the appearance of North Street, the city's main shopping district. The promise of a new mall that has been debated in one form or another for 40 years, encouraged store owners to abandon the storefronts they occupied. With the opening of the long delayed mall in the fall of 1988, North Street began to have the look of Cottrell's (1951) description of Caliente, the town that became obsolete with the development of the diesel locomotive engine. Englands' department store, a symbol of retailing dedication to a community (the store granted long term credit to GE workers during strikes), closed its doors in 1988, leaving the largest store on the street empty and abandoned. Although still a

hangout for teenagers in the area, a Saturday morning finds the street, (indeed the entire downtown area) with few pedestrians on its thoroughfares.

The physical changes that took place in the downtown area belied other transformations taking place: one old movie house ran into a state of disrepair; another was turned into the Berkshire Public Theater. An abandoned store in an alleyway off mainstreet was turned into an art gallery, as was an old candy store. The second floor of one of the largest downtown buildings was turned into studio space for the artists who now exhibit in those galleries.

This is not the first time that structural changes in the look and physical use of buildings has taken place in Pittsfield. The city was transformed from a dying textile town into a thriving industrial center at the beginning of the century when the General Electric Corporation moved in and bought out the Stanley Works in 1904, sustaining a dominant economic presence with the provision of jobs and a tax base up until the present day. The structural changes which have occurred since then -- along with the international development of the corporation -- have affected the town in dramatic ways. Old mill factories became the sites of small competitive capitalist production firms, and later retail outlets. General Electric paid the highest wages for industrial work in the area, attracting

the families of immigrants and providing the health care and other benefits won in the union struggles and strikes during the past eight decades.

While the evolution of life in Pittsfield is unique to the population that lives there, it is similar to changes which have taken place in cities and towns across the country. As industry has restructured on a global scale, communities have been faced with what Bluestone and Harrison (1986) have called "deindustrialization" -- that process which is manifested in the loss of industrial jobs and the consequent lower paid service opportunities which become available -- if any become available -- in their place. It is significant that there are now more people cooking hamburgers at McDonalds than there are working in the steel industry in the United States (Davis, 1984).

As E.P. Thompson notes, economic change necessarily implies cultural change. The paternalistic firms that arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries replaced some of the more "traditional" roles played by the patriarchal father figure in American families (Ewen, 1977). While the ideology of the employer as protector and provider still exists -- a good example is the *Prudential Rock* -- for the most part the rise of multinationals and other fiercely competitive firms oriented solely towards profit have eroded the basis for the

maintenance of family life by the corporation and in some cases, of communities themselves.

While the relationship of industrial firms to communities has clearly shifted during the twentieth century, the cultural changes which follow are not always immediately evident. The structural relationship between industry and community may shift before the perception of that change becomes clear. The community's unconscious -- those perceptions of reality based on the experience of the past -- may be rooted in a vision of the community no longer in sync with corporate planning. In the same way that Malinowski referred to "cultural survivals", Sahlins (1984) argues that "the past is not dead -- because it is not past. The radical distinction we make between past and present, hence in theoretical practice between diachrony and synchrony is in symbolic activity an indissoluble synthesis." (Sahlins, 1984:22).

As industries restructure their production or entirely leave geographic areas, communities are faced with voids in the structural accomplishment of daily living. Often what was adaptive behavior in the context of past experience no longer serves to appropriately deal with current problems (Nash, 1970). Moreover, the economic crisis which is created is not understood as different segments of the population are differentially affected and independently

react to the changes taking place. The differences in experience provide varying options and responses by the varying classes of the community.

The thread that permeates through the changes occurring in Pittsfield is dependency. The community is dependent on the corporation for the tax dollars which support the city infrastructure developed to house the plant and its workers; workers are dependent on the corporation for jobs, families on wage earners and secondary industries on the wages which the worker's generate. With General Electric the largest employer in the area, Pittsfield can comfortably be called a "company town." Even the proliferation of the small industrial firms which produce plastics in various forms are linked by their history and their workers to the General Electric plant. The current emphasis on redevelopment of the area is intricately linked to the role the corporation plays in the economy, and the role of the corporation in its own worldwide context.

The effects of this process on individuals and their families are processed through the atmosphere of uncertainty which permeates the community. Children of long term workers at the General Electric plant can no longer depend on employment through family ties. Many heads of households are forced to swing between periodic employment at the plant and work at much lower paid service jobs, while

contemplating whether there is a chance that a stable lifestyle can be obtained in the area at all. Even the workers with the most seniority are no longer assured security. While attempts are made to place laid off workers with seniority into other positions in other divisions of the corporation, the closing down or restructuring of major areas of production leave many skill-specific workers without recourse. The uncertainty about employment has created a strange reliance on "luck" : workers see themselves as lucky to have jobs, families are lucky to have the money to pay their mortgages, individuals are lucky to be in good health.

The strong ethnic communities which exist in Pittsfield, particularly the Italian community, have in the past solidified their kin based ties through employment in the plant, and where possible, entrepreneurial activities. The expectations that children would follow in the footsteps of their parents coincided with the fact that the corporation paid the highest wages in the area. Even when large divisions of the plant did restructure or close down, as was the case with the "chemical" division in the 1950's, the strong community ties fostered by ethnic identity facilitated adaptations. From the starts of one entrepreneurially operated small business grew a network of over 25 small, competitive plastic injection and molding

operations, enough to label Pittsfield the "Plastics capital of America."

The more dramatic changes which have occurred recently reflect a gradual erosion of a community base. The population has steadily been declining during the past decade; rumors of a major part of the plant closing down have been realized; the hope of the community--the plastics industry,-- has been plagued with foreign competition and reduced sales. The City government has been divided with conflict over development issues and is now employing its third development officer in five years. Issues concerning the use and abuse of the environment, as well as the effect of chemicals used in the production process on the population have come to a head as segments of the community are pitted against each other on fundamental issues of human health.

The City's struggle to restructure its economic base embodies the conflict among the various sectors of the community. General Electric maintains that it is still committed to the area, citing the placement of its international plastics headquarters there in the mid-1980's. The fact that the center is based on research and development and employs only a marginal number of workers is overshadowed by the public relations text generated for the community. The conflicts created among the various sectors

of the community become more apparent as economic stability erodes. The Chamber of Commerce promotes the area as one of scenic rural beauty and rare cultural opportunities. The literature designed to attract industry to the area describes the lush hills and crisp air which has long attracted summer residents to Lenox and Stockbridge in the South and Williamstown and the hill towns of the north as well as recently to the City of Pittsfield. Cultural institutions such as Tanglewood, Shakesphere and Company, Jacob's Pillow and the Williamstown and Berkshire Theater festivals draw substantial numbers from New York City and Boston, just as the fall foliage and winter skiing jam the roadways into the growing number of resort towns.

There is a realization by city government and development agencies that tourism alone will not solve the problems with the City's budget. There is also a desperation inherent in current planning: a need to quickly generate money to offset the sudden tax decreases caused by General Electric's scaling down of production. New industry which will potentially pollute the environment is resisted by those who profit from the tourist and second home industry, just as any open confrontation which might further compromise the community's relationship with the corporation is avoided. It is not surprising that the major fights which have evolved are not over how to attract industry but rather about the placement of income generating parking garages and

the building of shopping malls within or outside of the city limits.

The thesis will explore the processes of change which have transformed the community by looking at the underlying nature of economic change and the community's as well as individual strategies related to the changing circumstances of adaptive response. It is important to emphasize that this thesis is *not* a community study or even an overview of community response. This fieldwork was conducted as part of a larger study conducted by June Nash, and frequent reference will be made to her work. Rather it endeavors to look specifically at one aspect of the community's recourse: that of development, defined by community leaders as economic growth, and issues concerning the hope of redevelopment and the creation of economic stability.

Organization of the Thesis

The organization of the thesis reflects the major factors and issues in the community as they relate to development and redevelopment issues in both local and wider geographic contexts. An attempt is made to present these issues through the voices of the participants and to portray present circumstances in the community as a result of individual experience and the history specific to the area.

Chapter Two presents a theoretical argument and review of the literature for looking at deindustrialization and relations of dependency. It is posited here that *deindustrialization* is an inadequate concept to understand the experience of communities which are losing an industrial base and does not accurately explain changes taking place on a global scale. This chapter also argues that the role of ideology is primary in the seduction of the community to maladaptive responses to the current crisis.¹ It is argued here, following Nash (1979) that while it is difficult to justify a position of "false consciousness," the experience of the community in relation to the corporation posits choices for government leaders which may not, in the long run, benefit economic stability.

Godfrey (1987) argues that the division between the first and third world is blurred as capital internationalizes irrespective of national boundaries. An argument can be made that what has happened in Pittsfield and other industrial communities in the United States does resemble the third world circumstances of dependent development (see Cardoso, 1973). The similarities and differences of these two contexts are explored in this chapter.

¹Ideology is defined here broadly, following Hall (1977) as making "a direct reference to the role of *ideas*," and "entails the proposition that ideas are not self-sufficient, that their roots lie elsewhere, that something central about ideas will be revealed if we can discover the nature of determinacy which non-ideas exert over ideas" (Hall, 1977:10). Combined with the elements of economic and social power, ideology becomes the way in which perceptions of reality are forced onto others, and the means by which consensus is constructed.

Chapter Three provides a brief history and general overview of the community. The intention is to describe a context for the following chapters which focus more narrowly on development issues. Here the umbrella of the United States economy is depicted and some generalizations are made about American and New England culture as they can be observed in Pittsfield. Chapter Four specifically discusses the economic and social context of Pittsfield at the time fieldwork was done. The outlook of the community is presented as it is depicted by individuals in different sectors of the economy, including voluntary organizations, agents of the major corporation and workers.

A more general and detailed history of Pittsfield along with a concise history of the area can be found in Nash (1989). Where appropriate, reference to that work is cited to substantiate statements made.

Chapter Five outlines the history of development planning in Pittsfield. Development as a major area of planning is a twentieth century phenomenon, and in Pittsfield it takes on significance more specifically during the past 20 years. The need for planning correlates directly with the community's experience with the largest corporation and with decisions made by the corporation in its own global context. In Pittsfield, a commercial and marketing study had not been

performed since 1967, and the city leadership found itself trying to reconstruct the past as well as predict the future when it did begin the study in 1986. The results of the city governments research, as well the results of studies done by "non-native" sources is analyzed, and the assumptions inherent in each are depicted.

The responses by individuals and differing sectors of the population are analyzed here to show how structural positions reflect the ideology presented. Older industrial cities and regions in the United States are faced with the task of redefining their relationship to the local, regional and international economies. As different sectors of the community realign resources in an effort to adapt to these relationships, conflicts arise around the direction and implementation of development strategies. In Pittsfield, these conflicts have centered around the building of a mall and a "bypass" which development officers hope will create an "industrial revolution." Native community residents differ with those who have recently arrived or who have been consulted from the outside. The process by which these conflicts are played out are a result of both a chaotic environment where a definitive leadership has not emerged and by conflicting messages sent by the corporation concerning its role in the community. Reactions and concerns about development from development officers, local and regional politicians, corporation management as well as

the area's workers and entrepreneurs point to the conflict created by the differential power resources attached to the ideologies presented. There is an assumption in the development literature that what is *good in general* is good for all, following an older assumption that postulated that what was good for GE was good for the community (this belief brought about the adage that when GE sneezes, Pittsfield gets the flu). These assumptions are based on economic indicators which ignore individual experience and relate only to the abstract expressions of statistics steeped in their own justification.

The role of the environment in this process takes a decided turn as it operates to impede efforts to redevelop industry and as concerns are raised about the effect of past industrialization on the health of the area's residents. This last aspect is considered in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six outlines a major response by the community to industrial restructuring by General Electric: the plastics industry. Starting from the entrepreneurial activities of one individual, this industry has spawned offshoots and products that have made it the major non-General Electric growth industry in the area. What is significant about this development is that it is an example of resistance by individual workers to multinational restructuring -- its

outgrowth is a result of the sale of the chemical division in the 1950's -- and its incorporation by an Italian American kin-based community.

The growth of this industry and the changes which are now affecting them have produced contradictions in belief and lifestyle for both the employers and employees of these firms. Even while at their peak, employers could not afford to provide the pay and benefits comparable to their own as union members working at the General Electric plant. There is a competition for the higher skilled employees and for sales accounts which provokes an atmosphere of secrecy and urgency. Movement to acquire these firms by outside conglomerates has produced its own set of schisms, just as competition on the international level has placed these community and kin based firms in a precarious position.

Chapter Seven specifically considers the role of the environment and industry as health issues and the consequent influence on redevelopment efforts. Health has emerged as a major issue in Pittsfield as the extent of toxic wastes in the area is discovered. This issue serves as a case study in the role of ideology and discourse. This chapter explores how these issues effect the different sectors of the community and the roles of corporate responsibility and community action.

The last chapter, Chapter Eight, serves as a summary and conclusion of the issues presented by the dissertation. It considers the loss of the "American Dream" as it is presented in popular ideology and examines the issues of redevelopment in the context of the options presented by recent history and past experience. Some concrete implications are drawn for policy considerations and a discussion of the basis for policy construction is presented.

Chapter Two

Deindustrialization, Megacorporations and the Restructuring of Communities

There was this Englishman who worked in the London office of a multinational corporation based in the United States. He drove home one evening in his Japanese car. His wife, who worked in a firm which imported German kitchen equipment, was already at home. Her small Italian car was often quicker through the traffic. After a meal which included New Zealand lamb, California carrots, Mexican honey, French cheese and Spanish wine, they settled down to watch a programme on their television set, which had been made in Finland. The programme was a retrospective celebration of the war to recapture the Falkland Islands. As they watched it they felt warmly patriotic, and very proud to be British.

Raymond Williams, *The Year 2000*

Anthropologists have a long history of involvement with societies undergoing rapid transformation. The impact of colonialism and European expansion set the stage for a discipline concerned with the stability and destruction of communities. The current emphasis in the social sciences on deindustrialization is a result of processes of change which are transforming regions and communities in the United States as restructuring in the global economy reorients internal and external capital investment. This chapter will review the theories of deindustrialization and the literature concerned with this topic while posing an alternative view of the problem and its consequences.

Anthropology and the Analysis of Deindustrialization

My proposal for research in Western Massachusetts called for an analysis of the role of small industries in the redevelopment of an industrial town undergoing economic restructuring. There was an assumption in the research that differences between the town's largest employer and the smaller entrepreneurial firms which were offshoots from the main factory could point to differences in the evolution of planning priorities as well as the differing approaches to economic stability undertaken by the various segments of the population. The larger study described in Chapter One endeavored to explore the issues generated by economic restructuring on a working class community; this research promised to look at "redevelopment" as it was experienced by community members.

The concept of redevelopment as it is used in American cities implies that a degeneration in the industrial base has taken place. The flight of industry from northern to southern cities and ultimately to other parts of the globe has devastated the infrastructure of entire regions and unemployed entire segments of the population dependent on industrial work. The hardest hit are the old, northern, industrial cities that flourished during the industrial revolution and survived the restructuring of industry after

the Second World War. The phenomenon has most popularly been referred to as "deindustrialization."

The American City

The rise of the modern American city is closely bound to the fluctuations of capitalist development during the last half of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Gordon (1984) posits that American cities have passed through three stages of development -- the commercial, the industrial and the corporate -- and that each of these stages corresponds to dynamics of capitalist accumulation during that period (1984:22).¹ The commercial city, based on merchant accumulation, used the city as trading centers for the exchange of commodities. Political capitals or colonial control centers served to regulate market privileges and housed the entrepreneurs and craftspeople who migrated to produce the luxury goods consumed by capitalist traders. Ports served as transportation centers. The early development of these cities were regulated by the British crown which "feared that British merchants would be unable to control commercial transport if too many port cities developed" (*Ibid.*: 25). With the establishment of

¹The following summary of evolution of the American city is based on David Gordon, (1984), "Capitalist Development and the History of the American City," in Williams K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, *Marxism and the Metropolis* (Oxford University Press).

independence, American merchants took control of the commercial functions of the cities and the number and size of port cities expanded rapidly, along with a distinct urban population.¹

Gordon places the transition between the commercial and the industrial city and its corresponding forms of accumulation between 1850 and 1870. Cities became the center of industrial production because of their access to markets and their ability to employ the propertyless laborers and unemployed craftsmen who had migrated out of the countryside. The first industrial cities were centered on the riverbanks of New England, tied to the use of water as the main power source.² With the transition to coal and the development of railroads and a major source of transportation between 1850 and 1870, industry became located in large cities with ample labor to meet the growing demand for factory production. Large cities, Gordon tells us, functioned to better control the labor force, a factor which had become increasingly difficult in small and medium sized cities.³ Smaller cities contained militant pockets of

¹"The urban population increased from just over 200,000 in 1790 to more than 6 million in 1860. More important, the urban share of total population *reversed* its decline during the colonial period. Relative urban population rose from one-twentieth of the American population in 1790 to one fifth in 1860." (Gordon: 1984:26).

²For a discussion of the role of water in the development of industry in Pittsfield, see Nash (1989).

³While in smaller cities, apparently, the "the non-industrial classes saw no necessary contradiction between private enterprise and gain on the one hand, and decent, humane social relations between workers and employers on the other" (Gutman, 1963:48,

resistance to industrial discipline while the greater physical separation of workers and owners and the increased impersonality of the city worked in favor of the capitalist industrial enterprise. With factories located in the center of the urban areas, the upper classes, with more access to transportation and leisure time, moved out of the cities into newly developing suburbs (*Ibid.*:36). At the same time, however, the concentration of industry in the urban areas was creating contradictions for capitalist accumulation. The rapid rise of factories created a demand for labor which increased wages and worker organization. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, resistance to capitalist discipline grew and substantially threatened capitalist control over production. The corporate city developed in response to growing instability as manufacturing migrated from central cities to the outer rings around the urban areas. As Gordon tells us, "Between 1899 and 1909, central-city manufacturing employment increased by 40.8 percent while ring employment rose by 97.7 percent" (1984:40). With the movement of manufacturing out of the city, central city areas were reorganized as business districts coordinating the administrative aspects of capitalist trade.

quoted in Gordon, 1984:33),...In the largest cities, it appears, relationships among the several classes were different. Workers were, in the transitional years, at least, no less likely to strike than workers in smaller cities. But the various strata of the middle class were much more hostile to the workers than their peers in smaller cities. Newspapers, politicians, and the middle classes usually opposed workers on strike. Facing such hostility, workers found it more difficult to fight their employers" (*Ibid.*).

Corporations, after World War I, were large enough to separate administration from the sites of production and skyscrapers housing corporate headquarters flourished in the major cities around the country. The dispersal of industrial production also dispersed working class neighborhoods effectively militating against the community based organization which had been occurring during the later nineteenth century.

The form of the corporate city took shape in the first half of the twentieth century and became solidified with the hegemony of the United States after the Second World War. Defense spending and the growth of transportation increased the strength of corporate holdings and allowed the expansion to new cities while decapitalizing the old. The move to new cities was both the result of aging physical plants and increasing union organization. New cities were loci of non-union labor and wide open space. With hegemonic control over vast areas of the world system, United States based corporations also started to expand their operations overseas. Increasing improvements in technology allowed for the organization of production around the globe with unskilled or semi-skilled labor and opened up new arenas for capitalist control. Along with these developments, however, came major changes in the economic structure of United States cities and regular cycles of crisis, particularly in the older cities, but expanding to the new as well. These

changes prompted growing social problems and challenges to large segments of the populations dependent on factory production and its offshoots.

The Growth of Urban Anthropology

Wolf (1974:251) argues that "in the period of the last hundred years there have been three major phases of American anthropology, and that these three phases in the development of our discipline correspond largely to three phases in the development of American society." He refers to these three phases as "the period of Capitalism Triumphant, lasting roughly from the end of the Civil War into the last decade of the nineteenth century; second, the period of intermittent Liberal Reform, beginning the last decade of the nineteenth century and ending with the onset of World War II; and third, the America of the present, characterized by what President Eisenhower first called 'the military-industrial complex'..." (*Ibid*). These three phases can be roughly correlated with Gordon's taxonomy of American cities. Capitalism Triumphant saw the rise of cities as factory production "took off" and capitalist owners solidified control over factory production; Liberal Reform witnessed the restructuring of the city as problems with labor control forced a rethinking of the production process, and the America of the present that is currently witnessing

a restructuring of the military industrial complex as capitalism continues its world wide expansion of the industrial base. Each of these periods,

has been characterized by a central problem and a central set of responses to that problem. There were, of course, numerous subsidiary and peripheral problems and subsidiary and peripheral responses to them; and there were more often than not divergent and contradictory responses. But I want to argue that even the divergent and contradictory responses possessed a common denominator in that they addressed themselves to the same central issue for the day and that they were marked by a common intellectual mood, even when directly opposed to each other in suggesting possible solutions (Wolf, 1974:252).

Wolf sees the current period as

...characterized by two opposing and yet interconnected trends. The first of these is the growth of a war machine which is becoming the governing mechanism of our lives...On the other hand, the pacific or pacified objects of our investigation, primitives and peasants alike, are ever more prone to define our field situation gun in hand. It speaks of "imperialism," "colonialism," "neo-colonialism," and "internal colonialism" rather than just of primitives and civilized, or even of developed and underdeveloped. Yet anthropology has in the past always operated among pacified or pacific natives: when the native "hits back" we are in a very different situation from that in which we found ourselves only yesterday. Thus the problem of power has suddenly come to the fore for us; and it exists in two ways--as power dominated exerted within our own system and as power exerted from the outside, often against us, by populations we so recently thought incapable of renewed assertion and resistance" (Wolf: 1974:258).

Although the study of communities is a hallmark of anthropology, the growth of urban anthropology occurred in the United States during the 1960's. The expansion of the discipline and higher education in general during the 1950's and 1960's and the skrinkage of research dollars during the 1970's and 1980's encouraged American anthropologists to look to their own culture for their dissertations and research projects. Political and practical considerations also encouraged American anthropologists to "come home" as foreign governments discouraged research clearances and residence by foreign researchers. The accusation that anthropologists were often apologists for neo-colonial governments focused attention on the role of anthropology in the face of mounting social problems around the world and particularly in the urban areas of the United States.

The growth of urban anthropology rekindled a debate concerning the focal points of research and the units of analysis. The use of the community as a unit of analysis has been a point of debate in anthropology for decades, culminating in the discussions of the community as object or sample discussed by Arensberg (1962). Leeds (1973) points out that communities are often assumed to be "complete" and "total cultures" (1973:16) and he suggests that what are taken for communities are often simply localities which specific histories. He states that:

...neither anthropologists nor anyone else has presented models of an entity, for example, the United States, the community studies of which were supposed to constitute societal representatives or microcosmic reproductions of it. Far less have they presented what the relationships among the communities studies might be. For instance, what kind of structural, dynamic relationships might be said to exist between Plainville, U.S.A. and Yankee City or Middletown or Elmtown or even Hollywood? Where is the locus of such relationships? Are they to be studied in the respective localities? Are they, indeed, exemplified in the internal relationships of the obtensible "communities/" If so, how? are the only constraining parameters governing the organization and characteristics of these "communities" the local ecological conditions and the internally self perpetuating cultural values and options, or do the constraining parameters stem from a more comprehensive order, in fact, that order which includes locality A - Plainville, USA and locality B - Yankee City, U.S.A. - in a single system? If the latter is the case...then we have, as anthropologists, virtually no extant methodological tools to deal with the relationships between Plainville and Yankee City, because we have not dealt anthropologically with the empirical social structure of the state and other large-scale orders in modern complex nations (1973:17).

American communities are currently facing crisis which threaten the infrastructure of facilities and services to support production. As Castells (1980:5) suggests, this crisis is not simply economic but political and ideological as well:

We are not living in the midst of social disruption caused by the economic crisis. On the contrary, we are living in an economic crisis caused by a general process of social disruption in most capitalist societies, which has called into question the structure of social relationships underlying the patterns of capital accumulation (*Ibid.*).

Deindustrialization, Megaindustrialization and the Expansion of of the Service Sector

Current studies of deindustrialization tend to use the community as the unit of analysis, neglecting the relationship of the community to larger economic and political forces, including these that emanate from the state, the nation and the international system of capitalist production.

The basis for deindustrialization, Bluestone and Harrison (1982:6), tell us, is the way "capital -in the forms of financial resources and of real plant and equipment- has been diverted from productive investment in our basic national industries into unproductive speculation, mergers and acquisitions, and foreign investment". The switch from corporate investment in basic production to investment in financial speculation has forecast the shutdown of factories in United States' regions dependent on factory stability and growth. As Bluestone and Harrison note, the process of deindustrialization in the United States during the 1970's cost American workers some 38 million jobs, and the chance of a large, established plant closing down during that period in the United States reached 30 percent (*Ibid.*: 9).

Deindustrialization results when capital investment is shifted away from the industrial sector to other sectors of the economy or overseas. Whether through the closing down of plants or the disinvestment in constant capital, large multinational corporations have decapitalized basic industry during the last twenty years in the United States. These companies have not, however, discontinued investment in production. As the author's show, the lessening of production in areas of the United States has increased the total investment by companies in other regions:

During the 1970's, General Electric expanded its worldwide payroll by 5,000, but it did so by adding 30,000 foreign jobs and reducing its U.S. employment by 25,000. RCA Corporation followed the same strategy, cutting its U.S. employment by 14,000 and increasing its foreign work force by 19,000. It is the same in the depressed automobile industry. Ford Motor Company reports that more than 40 percent of its capital budget will be spent outside the United States (*Ibid.*).

Deindustrialization is a direct result of corporate managerial attempts to deal with international competition and class struggle. Demands for an increased share of the profits by American workers were met with the movement of capital to areas with lower labor costs. International competition in areas such as electronics led to the abandonment of production by American companies in favor of more lucrative investments in finance capital and the service sector areas.

The loss of industry and the growth of the service sector has led researchers to view American society as "post industrial." This view, however, neglects to account for new forms of industrialization. Following Mandel (1972), I propose that the analysis of deindustrialization is better understood as as industrial restructuring linked to cycles of capitalist development. The restructuring of industry is not a new phenomenon on the American economic scene, as the history of New England economic development attests. Mandel (1972) states that what has occurred in Late Capitalism is a process of *megaindustrialization*--where "Mechanization, standardization, over-specialization and parcellization of labour, which in the past determined only the realm of commodity production in actual industry, now penetrate into all sectors of social life" (Mandel 1972:387):

It is a characteristic of late capitalism that agriculture is step by step becoming just as industrialized as industry, the sphere of circulation just as much as the organization of work. The industrialization of the sphere of reproduction constitutes the apex of this development. Computers calculate the 'ideal' share package for the private capitalist rentier and the 'ideal' location for the large company's new plant. Television mechanizes the school, i.e., the reproduction of the commodity of labour power. Television films and documentaries take the place of books and newspapers. The 'profitability' of universities, music academies and museums starts to be calculated in the same way as that of brick works or screw factories (*Ibid.*).¹²

¹By extending the boundaries of commodity production, the exchange of individual services and private revenues is replaced with the sale of commodities containing

The growth of the service sector is rationalized by economists as a process of making efficient industrialization on a world scale. As Levitt (1976:63) summarizes: "the underdeveloped countries of the world progress and gradually catch up with the more established nations, conventional wisdom has it that the advanced nations will lose their competitive advantage. The shift in the developing nations from craft to industrial labor, and from hand to machine work, produces increases in productivity." In order to maintain competitive in the world market, the industrialized nations are therefore branching out to new forms of industrialization. Levitt continues, stating that "The supermarket represents the industrialization of an ancient retail service, much as the assembly line represents the industrialization of ancient craftsmanship" (*Ibid.* :65).

surplus value: "The housemaid, private cook and private tailor do not produce any surplus value, but the production of vacuum cleaners, central heating systems, electricity for private consumption and industrially produced pre-cooked meals are a form of directly capitalist production of commodities and surplus value, like any other kind of capitalist industrial production"(Mandel, 1972:389).

²See also Raymond Williams' discussion of 'Industrial' and 'Post-Industrial' Society in his *The Year 2000*. He states, for example, that "To begin with, the society that is now emerging is no sense 'post-industrial'. Indeed, in its increasingly advanced technologies, it is a specific and probably absolute climax of industrialism itself" (1982 :93).

The growth of the service sector follows from the growing specialization of the world division of labor. Mandel states that "a growing division of labor can only be combined with growing objective socialization of the labor process by an extension of *intermediate functions*, hence the unprecedented expansion of the sectors of commerce, transport and services generally. *Economically*, the process of centralization can only find expression in a growing centralization of capital, among other things, in the form of vertical integration of big companies, multinational firms and conglomerates" (1972:383). He continues:

The separation of previously unified productive activities makes the extension of intermediate functions indispensable. If handicrafts become separate from agriculture, peasants must be guaranteed the mediation of work-tools and consumer goods which they previously made by hand, and artisans must be assured of the mediation of previously self-produced foodstuffs through trade...The separation of agriculture and handicrafts leads ultimately to the insertion of independent trade between the two. The more generalized the production of commodities and the more advanced division of labor becomes, the more to these intermediate functions have to be systematized and rationalized in order to insure continuous production and continuous sales (*Ibid.*)¹

¹As the international division of labor becomes more specialized, there is an increasing need for improved transportation and the intermediate functions of trade, such as credit systems. The expansion of the credit system has resulted in its expansion into private consumption, and hence the growth of usury (see Mandel, 1972:385-390).

Mandel argues that the growth of the service sector is in part, due to the growing problems presented by the "realization" of capital -- the continuing expansion of capital and its realization into profits and surplus value. The creation and production of new commodities requires that needs be created in order to motivate consumption. Thus, while intermediate functions are required to administrate new forms of capital intervention worldwide, the functions of sales and advertising are also needed to convince people to consume new products. There has been an enormous expansion both of selling costs and consumer credit. By 1972, the costs of sales, administration and distribution had already reached close to 50% of national income in the United States (Mandel, 1972:349).

With the industrialization of service, the deskilling of work Braverman (1972) describes as characteristic of capitalist enterprises extends to new areas. The electrocardiogram, for example, allows the employment of a lower paid technician rather than a doctor; automated credit machines replace manual checks; Polaroid cameras do away with the need for the manual processing of film. Even finance companies have improved ways to manipulate capital: the development of mutual funds make obsolete the need for one-at-a-time stock transactions. In short, the private relationships between the seller of labor power that

constitutes a service and the buyer of that service becomes a specifically capitalist phenomenon.¹ Levitt tells us that in order for this kind of industrialization to succeed, all you need is the mindset to produce the accomplishment. The rationalization, very reminiscent of modernization theory, posits that productivity is situated in the aims and ambitions of the producers:

So it may very well be with the concept of industrialization. It is an explanation of what the historic and now accelerating specialization in service is, practically speaking, all about. Man lives not by greed alone, but mostly by catch words. What he believes and feels in his mind and emotions are more deterministic than what is in his physical possession (1976:740).

MegaIndustrialization and Merger Movements

As the further "rationalization" of capital and service industries takes place, small industries are incorporated and replaced by large conglomerates that more "efficiently" manage capital from the various sectors of the economy. The enormous increase in corporate mergers reflects attempts to "rationalize" the manipulation and investment of capital. Bergensen (1982) shows how the long waves or cycles of

¹The private tailor is replaced by the ready made clothes industry, the cobbler by the repair division of big department stores, shoe shops and factories, the cook by the mass production of pre-cooked meals in self-service restaurants...the housemaid or charwoman by the mechanization of these functions, in the shape of the vacuum cleaner, washing machines, dishwasher, and so on (Mandel, 1972:386).

capitalist expansion and contractions necessitate adjustments:

During periods of economic upswing and boom, such as the mid-nineteenth century boom of 1848-1873 and 1945-1973, the capitalist enterprise expands through enlarging the basic form. During periods of downswing and economic bust, such as the Great Depression of 1873-1896, the enterprise also grows, but through mergers of a number of different forms. During these years we saw the appearance of the modern corporation and a transition from the more competitive capitalism to the earlier nineteenth-century family form to the monopoly capitalism of the large-scale, multi-unit corporation (Bergensen, 1982:27-28).

The up and down swings of capitalist expansion are caused, as Bergensen notes¹, from excessive competition and overproduction: "The resolution to this blockage in the accumulation process is crisis and downturn, where the failure of individual firms and the elimination of others through mergers allows the accumulation process to move forward again" (*Ibid.*:28).²

¹An analysis of these long swings and the cycles of capitalist expansion and crisis can be found in Mandel, 1975; Weisskopf, 1979; Castells, 1980, and Gordon, 1980).

²It should be noted that the rationalization process does encounter resistance and can be counterproductive. "It appears that the leading national economy at the time of the overall downturn is the most resistant at being penetrated by the downturn and hence engages in less merger activity...the general merger movement that brought about multinational enterprises administered through managerial hierarchies in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century acted more to reaffirm the traditional family form in Britain. It appears that their hegemonic position in world production impeded their structural reorganization necessary to emerge strengthened on the other side of the nineteenth century downturn"(*Ibid.*:32).

Bergensen places 1945-73 as the locus of another long swing of expansion which witnessed the growth of multinationals and over-seas development and the recession of 1974-75 and 1980 as a period of sluggish growth. He predicted at the date of his writing that a general crisis of accumulation would result in a new round of mergers, a prediction that has been borne out in the last half of the 1980's. If the analysis of long swings is correct and successful new mergers do not occur within the leading capitalist state, then the present crisis in the U.S. economy should find it ill adapted to respond to new forms of merger movements. In fact, this seems to be the case. The overspecialization of corporate strategies has prevented multinationals from competing with a new form of mergers -- the state owned enterprise. Bergensen provides as an example the 1982 state-ordered consolidation of three auto plants in South Korea, positing that "If we argue that the leading capitalist state will not be able to adjust successfully to the present downturn, nowhere is this failure better seen than in trying to imagine how the American Government could "order" the merger of, for example, Ford, GE and Chrysler" (Bergensen, 1982:35). The state owned enterprises are now competing with multinationals.¹²

¹²If the present downturn generates a wave of mergers, the result for the United States will be to reaffirm the "traditional" private multinational rather than move on to the state owned firm. Chrysler provides a good example. The government "bail out" of Chrysler allows it to continue in a world auto market where it appears certain to fail. Rather than making Chrysler a state firm, possibly in combination with other auto manufacturers, the American solution is to prop up the private multinational, and as such preserve what may be an increasing outdated form of industrial enterprise--

As the industrialization of service and the intensive capitalization of all sectors of society takes place, Mandel observes, it expands areas of investment while containing arenas of class struggle. As multinationals confront increased competition from state owned firms around the world, increasing attempts are made to lower the labor cost through the movement of firms or the lowering of wages and the negation of entitlements. While administrative structures or divisions concerned with research and development may remain in the United States because of the need for specialized knowledge and facilities, those multinationals unsuccessful in renegotiating class struggle will attempt to move production elsewhere.¹ The end result is the creation of a new labor force that is more highly bifurcated on both ends of the spectrum. By 1977 the class in the United States that is comprised of professionals, salaried managers and credentialed technicians made up 23.8%

outdated in that the addition of the state will give the state owned enterprise certain competition advantages over the more traditional multinational--such as the ability of the state to absorb losses allowing the firm to continue without having to show immediate profits or fear immediate bankruptcy, and the obvious preferential access to state financing and hidden subsidies"(Bergensen, 1982:37).

²A direct example of this kind of competition between private enterprises and state owned firms can be found in Pittsfield through the analysis of the Plastics industry, discussed in Chapter Five.

¹For a discussion of the role of research and development in the dissemination of new technology, see David Noble, *America by Design* .

of the labor force -- "a higher proportion than any other OECD country except Sweden" (Davis, 1984: 23)¹.

This change in the structure of the labor force has changed the habits of consumption, reflecting the new hourglass characteristic of the labor force: "Middle class families--truly in the middle--are disappearing, displaced by two-income, two-person households...on the top of the hourglass, and single-earner blue-collar families, clerical singles, women in many jobs, the welfare poor, then the retired on the bottom" (Parker, 1981:11, quoted in Davis).

Correlatively, as *Business Week* notes, a more sharply bifurcated consumer market structure will emerge, with the masses of the working poor huddled around their K-Mart's and Taiwanese imports at one end, while at the other there is a (relatively) 'vast market for luxury products and services, from travel and designer clothes, to posh restaurants, home computers and fancy sports cars (Davis, *Ibid.*)²

¹"In per capital terms, the United States is monumentally overstaffed with line managers and foremen (twice as many as Germany), salesmen (two and a half times as many as France), and lawyers (twenty-five times as many as Japan). ..of the 3.6 million manufacturing jobs added to the American economy since 1948, 3 million were filled by non-production employees and at least half of those were managerial posts. Likewise, although blue-collar employment has fallen by 12% since the onset of the recession in 1980, by Christmas 1982 there were nearly 9% *more* managers and administrators working in the US economy" (Davis, 1984:23). Davis argues that much of this increase is due to the hegemonic position of the United States in the World economy, with large numbers of transnationals headquartered in the United States and an unusually large number of research other institutions of higher education.

²Davis goes on to note that "Already California, where 9% earn over \$50,000 annually, prefigures this polarized market configuration; nationally it is estimated that by 1990 some 23 million households earning more than \$35,000 a year (in 1980 dollars) will provide the affluent market-sector capable of sustaining the projected trends in low-wage service and trade employment.

The rapid proliferation of malls around the country with upper income stores and gourmet restaurants during the last half of the 1980's is a clear indication that a substantial market does exist for luxury items. In Pittsfield, this picture is mitigated by the specific nature of the community's history as well as its geographic placement between a major world City (New York) and a large Northeastern financial and educational center (Boston). The mall which was built in the Pittsfield area¹ could not attract the upper scale stores that it desired -- much of the shopping for luxury goods is done outside of the area.

The bifurcation of the labor force in Pittsfield, however, is clearly evident. The placement of the International Plastic's Headquarters in Pittsfield has accentuated the change in production from basic industry to research and design on the one hand (a process June Nash [1989] has labeled *From Tank Town to High Tech*) to the proliferation of service sector jobs on the other. As mentioned in Chapter Four, The Mall, despite its inability to attract up scale stores, still had trouble finding enough individuals to work for the wages it offered as sales and maintenance personnel.

¹A full discussion of the mall is included in Chapter Four.

The transfer of capital by corporations searching for lower labor and production costs has produced a competition among communities for attracting industry. Communities threatened with the loss of jobs due to corporate restructuring are attempting to win corporate moves to their area or keep local industry in tact by offering tax "vacations" or abatements that limit the corporations responsibility to the community and well as their financial contribution. While this tactic does sometimes succeed in convincing companies not to relocate, the tax burden necessary to maintain the infrastructure of the community becomes the additional problem of already over-burdened government budgets. The threatened or real movement of capital overseas has generated a new wave of hostilities by American workers against foreign governments and peoples who are perceived to be taking the remaining jobs that are fast disappearing from the American scene.

The loss of jobs caused by the movement of capital out of the United States is multiplied by other industries that are affected by industry shutdown and by the tax losses on the community. As Bluestone and Harrison (1982:71-73) show, "the 8000 jobs potentially lost nationwide in the automobile industry ultimately cause a decline in employment among all industries of more than 20,600. In other words, more than 12,000 non-auto industry jobs would be affected...The Massachusetts Office of Economic Affairs has developed a

rule of thumb according to which every 10,000 salary level job lost to the state costs it about \$1,336 in foregone state and local taxes" (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982:71-73).

This reorientation in capital investment has produced a shift in employment rates within the global economy. Godfrey (1986) argues that unemployment in the most industrialized countries has overtaken those of developing nations. Neo-Keynesian predictions for full employment (defined as unemployment rates between 4 and 7 percent) appeared to be reaching reality during the 1960's in the most advanced countries, only to quickly fall as off shore sourcing became the favored method of reducing labor costs. Table One shows unemployment rates for selected OECD countries between 1933 and 1982.

Unemployment Rates, Selected OECD Countries (% of Total Labor Force)¹

	1933	1959-67	1973	1975	1980	1982	1983
Belgium	10.6	2.4	2.9	5.1	9.0	18.1	14.5
W. Germany	14.8	1.2	1.0	3.6	3.0	6.1	8.0
Italy	5.9	6.2	4.9	5.8	7.4	8.9	9.7
Japan	--	1.4	1.2	1.9	2.0	2.4	2.6
UK	13.9	1.8	2.5	4.7	7.0	12.3	13.1
USA	20.5	5.3	4.9	8.3	7.0	9.5	9.5

¹Sources: Freedman, Clark and Soete (1982); OECD Labor Force Statistics, Quarterly Labor Statistics and Employment Outlook, 1983 and 1984, from Godfrey, 1986.

It became clear early on in our fieldwork that the issues of "redevelopment" and economic restructuring are integrated through the processes of capitalist accumulation on a world scale. For the residents of Pittsfield, divestment in basic industry by General Electric had drastic effects on the community. General Electric workers specifically trained for industrial work found themselves transferred to jobs outside of their speciality or laid off altogether with little chance of finding work paying the same wage; city leaders faced with lessened tax revenues scramble with contradictory development orientations and a fragmented city government (discussed below and in Chapter Four); the downtown area of the city degenerated. Deindustrialization in Pittsfield is further complicated by quickly rising land values -- the result of the "overconsumption" Davis (1984) describes as characteristic of a new middle class of managers, professionals and credentialed technicians that are being hired by General Electric and are coming into the area from New York and Boston to buy second homes. Many long time residents find that while the value of their homes has increased exponentially, their real incomes have fallen.

Specific results of the restructuring processes -- whether it be the increased alienation or disemployment of labor in the General Electric plant or the production of chaos in the planning arms of city government -- are linked to the

activities of the corporate mechanism of the corporation at its headquarters in Fairfield Connecticut, its world plastics headquarters in Pittsfield, or one of the many subsidiaries around the globe. In a world where sovereign nations represent, for multinational corporations, not much more than the equator for demarcating boundaries, the analysis of crisis has become surprisingly localized in the social sciences. To analyze the local scene without the acknowledgement of these pressures and mediations would result in a myopic view of social processes.

The members of the community interviewed for this study -- the workers at the plant, the owners of the plastics firms, the members of city government and the heads of social service agencies -were well aware of the global scope of the corporation if not the direct effects of global strategies on the community. Workers involved with the union tend to be more aware of the global workplace than do those who have lost faith in union activity or found themselves employed in service sector jobs. The owners of the small plastics firms (discussed in Chapter Five) seemed to be the most aware of the global nature of production -- a result of the direct competition they were experiencing from off shore sourcing.

These interviews convinced us that the theoretical construct of deindustrialization did not provide adequate tools to describe what was happening in Pittsfield, or for that

matter, other communities in the United States. The use of a broader category, such as "restructuring" is more descriptive of the processes of change involved in capitalist accumulation, but does not provide a framework to describe what is being restructured and why. The most significant problem with the concept of deindustrialization as it is being currently applied is that it is not holistic -- it describes only one side of a complex process that is reshaping the everyday lives of community residents. The contribution anthropology can make to this discussion is the analysis of the relationships among people which include the elements of power that structure the lives of individuals in the community. Rather than viewing the 'individual units' of deindustrialized communities, the scope of anthropology should entail relating the forces of society which form to intersect the whole.

Constructing Consensus in Late Capitalism

Wolf argues (1974) that anthropology, following the dominant intellectual themes of the period, has not incorporated aspects of power into analyses of social systems and organizations. I will argue here that under that capitalist mode of production the idea of 'power' has become so intertwined with notions of 'property' that the relationships of dominance inherent in ownership have become

subsumed under a rubric of 'the right to own.' An ideology of the freedom of labor which capitalism accomplished allowed a control over production by individuals with capital to buy labor power. It also allowed individuals to sell their labor with the freedom of movement that labor as a commodity provided. Thus workers were free to sell their labor while capitalists were free to buy it -- a facade of equalitarianism prevailed. In the United States, this ideology of equalitarianism was backed by the fight for independence from a colonial power and the right of all to own property formerly held by the colonial forces. All were thus free to become rich -- As Warner shows in his analysis of Memorial Day (1953), the central symbols in this "American Sacred Ceremony" are those of equalitarianism and a rags to riches motif which has become central to American life.

Williams demonstrates in *The Year 2000* (1983) that the evolution of capitalism brought with it an idea of labor in market terms. The industrial revolution began an association of work with employment and has solidified since the Second World War. As Williams notes, as unemployment has become endemic to the older industrial states, so has mass employment -- the majority of individuals in the United States are involved in the labor force and that participation is still at historically high levels. An interesting corollary is that those who employ labor are

said to be 'self employed'-- a sentiment which again places the owner of labor on the same equalitarian plane as the worker.

The ideology of work as employment is a tenet of American life. Failure to gain employment and a decent wage is necessarily the problem of the worker, not the system or owner who employs the labor. In his handbook for American workers assigned overseas, Arensberg (n.d.) counsels that foreign conceptions of work may not be the same as our own that are tied into ideas of success and achievement:

Coming from an 'open class system' (as the sociologists call it) where status is achieved rather than inherited or automatic and both privilege and authority have to be 'deserved' or 'justified' or 'won' (by merit, not force), Americans have woven effort, achievement, and success through and through the fabric of their culture and their lives. Activist, pragmatic, moralizing values (rather than say, contemplative, theorizing, rhetorical, or sensual, ascetic, or mystical ones) are interconnected and integrated in the American character. 'Success' in 'serious effort' is both a personal goal, an ethical imperative, and the mark of a man (or a woman).¹

The logical outcome of this ideology is modernization theory, used to justify the intervention of capital overseas during the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties, although it is now readily used by corporations in the U.S. as well:

¹Conrad Arensberg, n.d. "Assumptions of American Culture" (All rights reserved to Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State --for Private Circulation Only).

So 'development', in practice, meant on one side of the fence developments in terms of the global system: exploitation of raw materials, specialized food export crops, available migrant labour, in the 'developing' societies; finished manufactures, advanced technology, employment of immigrant labour in the 'developed'. On the other side of the fence, it was just this inherently unequal 'division of labour', leading to new kinds of economic advantage and disadvantage, which it was the purpose of any full sense of development to overcome and surpass.

Thus 'development' became an inherently ideological term. The processes instituted in name, which should need precise assessment in terms of the advantages accruing to each 'developing' society, were bundled together as if any or all of them were unproblematically advantageous and 'natural'. (Williams, 1983:205).

The way this ideology is played out is dependent on existing social relations of production. In 'Third World' regions with a history of exploitation and colonial rule, the military plays a prominent role in enforcing ideological standards. In 'more developed' countries such as the United States with a history of worker organization, ideology has a more social face, with attempts at consensus constructed through ideas of right and wrong and the creation of needs as a consumer.

The schism between the moral tone attributed to employment and the realities of the laws of capital are striking. While the drive for profit by which capitalism depends necessarily ignores human needs beyond consumption:

Both in its initial creation of a domestic market, and in its later organisation of a global market, the capitalist mode of production has always moved in on resources and then, necessarily, on people, without respect for the forms and boundaries of existing social organisations. Whole communities with settled domestic forms of production, from farming to brewing and clothmaking, and from small manufacturing to local services, were simply overridden by more developed and more centralized and concentrated capitalist and capitalist industrial forms. Communities which at simpler levels had relatively balanced forms of livelihood found themselves, often without notice, penetrated or made marginal, to the point where many of their own people became 'redundant' and were available to new centres of production. Capitalist textile-production, ironmaking, mining, grain production and a host of other industrial processes set in train immigrations and emigrations, aggregations and depopulations, on a vast scale. Typically, moreover, people were moved in and out on short-run calculations of profit and convenience, to be left stranded later, in working-out mining valleys or abandoned textile towns, in old dockyard and shipbuilding areas, in the inner cities themselves, as trade and production moved on in their own interests (Williams, 1983:185).

For company towns such as Pittsfield, that function almost literally as single-commodity cities, the failures of the relations of production to satisfy human needs are attributed to individual failure or community 'backwardness.' Here the construction of consensus is approached through the discourse of successes and failures of the community and its members to respond to market trends and the needs of the capitalist enterprise. The results of these discussions are the subject of this thesis, and extend from the production of chaos discussed in Chapter Four to

the cost accounting approach to American health discussed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Three

The Region and Industry in Historical Perspective

The unifying theme among Pittsfields residents is economic security. Workers who have been laid off or face lay-offs from the General Electric plant hope for increased sales of their product or defense contracts from the Federal government; government leaders and bureaucrats express hopes for the attraction of industry to the area and store owners hope that the influx of tourists and second home owners will stimulate sales of their merchandise. Most importantly, economic security means the successful maintenance of the family and property. In Pittsfield, as in much of the United States, the protection of a secure economic base for the security of family and community life is an ideology which is at odds with the process of industrialization. From the early years of factory life, the family became increasingly de-emphasized as a driving force in the economic life of communities, and structures to replace it or maintain its integrity have figured high in resistance to the capitalist mode of production. Union organizations became important as the reaction to the separation of emotional and material security, as "satisfaction that comes from recognition, opportunity to exercise judgement in making decisions, and warmth of *whole person* relations

cannot be successfully left to ties with kin and neighbors" (Keesing, 1957:20).

This chapter will explore the historical context of the industrialization of the region as well as the current economic and social milieu in which Pittsfield is situated. We will discuss industrialization in the Northeast region of the United States in order to show that economic restructuring, economic decline and its consequences are not new phenomenon, but rather represent cycles in the process of capitalist development which have continually transformed the area since the 18th century. While not an attempt to place Pittsfield on an historical continuum, the chapter is intended to show that employment, family life, class struggle and local response to industrial restructuring have histories which shed light on present circumstances.

Trends in Early Industrialization and New England Social Structure

The history of New England demonstrates that economic productivity is not necessarily the result of natural resources. Eisenmenger (1967) in his study of the dynamics of New England's growth, notes that the area has limited resources (primarily of pulpwood, limestone and granite), its land is not inherently productive, and wide temperature variations result in fuel costs which are substantially higher than in the rest of the country. While the region's

ports were a major factor in shaping the economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ports of New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore took over the majority of shipping business on the eastern seaboard during the twentieth century (Eisenmenger 1967:3).

The transformation of New England in the 19th century came with textile manufacturing, and the seaports provided access to raw materials and overseas markets. In the early 1800's the international economy was the main impetus for United States economic growth as the war of 1812 relaxed the mercantilist restrictions of European powers. Cotton played the decisive role in the development of the Atlantic trade which financed much of the American industrialization:

In 1815 the international context was still critical. The expanding industrialization of England and Europe in the years after the Napoleonic wars was accompanied not only by the gradual relaxation of restrictions on trade and factor mobility, but the resultant structural changes accelerated the movement of productive factors in response to differential rates of return. While the immigration of people and particularly capital into the United States played an important part in our growth in the thirty years after 1815, it was the growth of the cotton textile industry and the demand for cotton which was decisive... The West was still largely unintegrated into the national economy. The United States was left with cotton as the major expansive force. The vicissitudes of the cotton trade- the speculative expansion of 1818, the radical decline in prices in the 1820's and the boom in the 1830's- were the most important influence upon the varying rates of growth of the economy during the period. Cotton was strategic because it was the major independent variable in

the interdependent structure of internal and international trade (North, 1966:67).

United States inter-regional trade grew substantially with the introduction of the steamboat on the Mississippi in 1816, opening up affordable trade between the South and the West (North, 1966:102). The initial result of this expansion of trade was a solidification of the division of labor among the regions of the West, South and Northeast. A process of uneven and combined development took hold as U.S. industry adopted technology and adapted relations of production from England and factory work was organized and labor recruited in accordance with the needs of particular commodities (Burawoy, 1985:100). An expanding national market and an intensification of agriculture depopulated the countryside and brought farmers into urbanizing settlements where even the famous New England town meeting would disappear (Fink: 1987:251). The roots of sustained industrialization in the United States have been dated to the 1830's (Montgomery, 1985). From 1820 to 1860, the American workforce was quickly transformed from agricultural pursuits to industrial concerns and an increase from 28 to 41 percent of the United States population became employed outside of agriculture during this period (Dublin, 1979). New England would gain the distinction of having the longest history of wage labor in the States as internal migration and external immigration filled the growing towns and cities.

New England had a dramatic shift to employment in textile production with an increase from 7 to 36 percent moving into cities during the mid 1800s (Ibid.:4). Dublin has described the effect of this transformation of an agricultural population and the effect of preindustrial cultural traditions on the development of the workforce. These workers confronted a class of textile manufacturing owners who were both closely allied with one another¹ and astute to the lifestyles and needs of their workers. Paternalistic practices in New England served to provide rhetoric and incentive for the disciplining and the socialization of the workforce as owners provided cash gifts, responded to family crises, and allayed the natural suspicions towards manufacturing owners, as well as insured the reproduction of the workforce through family ties (Prude, 1987:93). Families also acted as a haven and "a continuing refuge against the pressures of factory discipline" (Ibid.:95). This adaptation by mill owners did not prevent the new emerging working class from adapting

¹ "The willingness of millowners and managers to cooperate so fully with one another undoubtedly stemmed from the fact that the textile firms in this period were owned and directed by a narrow circle of capitalists known as the Boston Associates ..The bonds of common interests among the stockholders and directors led to a sharing of technology, resources and information that was remarkable. Companies routinely shared architectural drawings, wage lists, figures on cost of production, even prices of equipment and extra cotton stock...One Nashua, New Hampshire agent cautioned against a proposed wage cut by noting, 'for us to think of reducing wages before they do at Lowell would in my opinion be bad policy...Taken together, the evidence provides assurance that in examining the experience of women workers in the Lowell mills we are also addressing broader trends and issues relevant to working women in other factory towns of New England during this period'(Dublin, 1979:11).

their own traditions to the workplace and community. Hareven (1975) shows how family traditions and corporations interacted to produce viable economic projects, while rejecting the "revisionist sociological view" of the family as an independent unit in the process of industrialization.¹ The work of Herbert Gutman and his peers has shown how "traditional" styles of behavior were integrated or acted as cataclysts of resistance to industrialization in the United States in the same way that anthropologists have demonstrated this phenomenon for other areas of the world (cf. Nash, 1979).²

In Hareven's Amoskeag Mill located in Southern New Hampshire, the largest ethnic groups taken into the workforce were French Canadians who also had the highest birth rate of all industrial workers in the United States (1975:45), and Scotch workers who were recruited directly from their home communities in the 1870's. For the workers

¹Hareven and Langenbach note that the Amoskeag workers experienced a close integration between the family and the factory. "Husbands and wives, or brothers and sisters, often toiled in similar or related occupations. Most important, except for the mechanical departments for the dye houses, workrooms were not segregated by sex. Hence, members of the same family often worked together, carrying their friendships and family ties with them. It is therefore not surprising that many of the workers viewed the factory 'like a family'(1978:118).

²As Gutman tells us, "Even though American society itself underwent radical structural changes between 1815 and the First World War, the shifting composition of its wage-waring population meant that traditional customs, rituals, and beliefs repeatedly helped shape the behavior of its diverse working class groups. The street battle in 1843 that followed Irish efforts to prevent New York City authorities from stopping pigs from running loose in the streets is but one example of the force of old styles of behavior (Gutman, 1977:63).

of the period, the plant became a living entity which hired, fired, fed and clothed its workers.

The success of the textile mills may have as much to do with cultural traditions as manipulated work ethics. The large families of the French Canadians worked well in farm as in factory work, and the work ethics of the migrants of the time blended easily from family time into industrial time. As one of Hareven and Langenbach's informants who came to Amoskeag and was employed as a weaver commented:

When I came in 1900, we worked from six in the morning till six at night. I worked solid. My Aunt, she wouldn't allow any gallivanting around. Even on the weekends I worked. But I liked it from the start. The ups were all right, and the downs were all right. I liked weaving (Hareven and Langenbach, 1978:44).

It is worth noting that references to Amoskeag were made as to an animate object.¹ The paternalistic operations of the company gave it a personality. Hareven and Langenbach's same informant later states that:

One day the Amoskeag fired me. I didn't watch the loom, and it was running away from me. They fired me for that. I got another job weaving the same day. I was young at the time, about eighteen. Aunt Susan used to get after me. She'd say, 'You don't keep your mind on your work. Your mind's somewhere else, and of course you get confused.'

¹This is true in present day Pittsfield as it was then in New Hampshire. There is a tendency to refer to the corporation as *the GE*.

If you were fired, you'd have to go to some other mill--Amoskeag had twelve mills you know,--but you'd find another job. You see, your old boss wouldn't hire you back right away. If he had a recollection of firing you, he wouldn't do it for quite a while. (Ibid. 47).

In the work world of Amoskeag, the tasks performed were diversified so that there was a knowledge of the overall process. Entire families worked in the same factory; the family unit acted as housing coordinators and labor recruiters. The workplace engendered comradry among employees that heightened their sense of community responsibility and stretched beyond domestic ties. The demand and competition for labor meant that the corporation was more open to worker's demands, and Amoskeag in 1910, well before other American corporations, instituted benefit plans that allowed workers to own homes, keep their teeth in order and care for their children. At the same time, however, scientific management was streamlining the production process, a process of class struggle which would spark mass resistance in the twentieth century.

The period between 1830-1850 was one of sustained growth in the textile industry -- the introduction of the power loom from England generated a period of uneven and combined development. The wool industry became highly localized in New England, with Massachusetts assuming the premiere role for cotton mills (North, 1966:163). The characteristics of the milling technology and a market for coarse fabrics

induced industries to organize by an economy of scale, and the organization of the work force as a result of the technology differed from other American industries because of its reliance on female labor. Manufacturers actively recruited the labor of single women who could be housed together, paid less than men¹ and reliably socialized as a workforce (Burawoy, 1985:101). Dublin tells us that women had a "respected place in the pre-industrial economy of the north, but [it] placed severe limits on their independence" (1979:3). Work for females was much like migration for men, allowing for a self sufficiency and access to commodities unavailable in their non industrial lives. As he states:

Diaries of American women suggest that daughters living at home often kept a portion of their earnings, indicating that they were not totally subordinated within the family economy even when living at home...As New England daughters sought mill employment they generally left home and accepted a considerable separation from their families, in terms of both time and distance. The physical separation of women and their residence in a peer-group community of other young, single women further encouraged their social and economic independence. Finally their correspondence

¹In general, the physical arrangements of home and work were arranged by the company to maximize control: "Workers were isolated from the larger world while on the job; outside influences were not allowed to 'intrude' and disturb the work. The arrangement of buildings thus reinforced the control that machine technology and an inflexible work force timetable gave management over the work process and the worker (Dublin, 1979:61), and "Housing for female workers kept wage levels down, but there was also an instrument of social control. For women boarding houses were part of a broader version of corporate paternalism...Twice in the 1830's, however, mill management took a course of action that led women workers to rebel. In February 1834 and October 1836, women workers struck to oppose first reductions in wages and then increases in the board rates charged in company housing (*ibid.*: 77-78).

suggests that they did not have to buck very strong parental counterpressures in this regard (*Ibid.*:42).

What then, reinforced New England as a productive region was a tradition of family and community that transformed and integrated into an industrial mold. Historians have surmised that the social structure and sanctions of the period made the U.S. particularly hospitable for the pursuit of economic gain through manufacturing (North, 1966:vi). The commitment of the labor force to the area and the willingness to work allowed New England to dominate the commercial economy of the country in the early decades of the 19th century. By 1840 Massachusetts stood third in per capita income at \$107, with the national average at \$65, and the other southern New England states of Rhode Island and Connecticut ranking first and fourth, respectively. A third of United States manufacturing employment was in this region (Eisenmenger, 1967:18).

A lack of capital for good rail connections, the discovery of gold and expansion of the west proved a disadvantage to New England manufacturers as the region was limited to costly overland commodities trade after 1850. A revolution in the design and manufacture of textile machinery freed manufactures from their reliance on New England labor (Harrison, 1982:16). With the standardization and interchangeability of parts, "the intimate locational connection between the tool makers and users thus became

uncoupled" (*Ibid.*). In much the same fashion that Hobsbawm's (1964) managers reacted to gas workers in late 19th century England by transforming the organic composition of capital, New England manufactures confronting unionized shops and seeking cheaper labor deskilled production tasks and moved to the Southeast United States. Owners no longer needed the paternalistic practices to keep their workers engaged in plant productivity-- the proverbial stick and carrot was replaced by the proverbial threat to close down and relocate.

Relations of Work and Unemployment

Despite the atmosphere of relative calm which characterized the early mills, unemployment was a continual problem. Steady work was a rarity for mill workers, who experienced over a 30 percent unemployment rate as early as 1885 in Massachusetts (Keyssar, 1987:233). Craftsmen and women banded together to protect their interests in their work and to protect their families against the vagaries of industrial employment. As Montgomery notes:

Labor organizations of the late nineteenth century struggled persistently to transform worker's struggles to manage their own work from spontaneous to deliberate actions, just as they tried to subject wage strikes and efforts to shorten the working day to their conscious regulation...Only through 'thorough organization,' to use a favorite phrase of the day, was it possible to enforce a trade's work rules throughout a factory, mine or construction site. Despite the growing number of strikes over union

rules and union recognition in the late 1880's, the enforcement of workers' standards of control spread more often through the daily self-assertion of craftsmen on the job than through large and dramatic strikes (Montgomery, 1979:13).

Organized labor became institutionalized between the civil war and World War I, giving Massachusetts the longest history of labor unions in the United States (*Ibid*:234). The radicalism of the working class, however, was dampened by the shortage of available jobs, and Keyssar estimates that between 1881 and 1900 "roughly one out of every six strikers in the Commonwealth lost his or her job to a new employee" (*Ibid.*: 236).¹ The availability of new immigrants as a constant source of cheap labor together with the expansion of the West and the importation and development of technology militated against the radicalism the workers and conditioned the character of the U.S. labor movement in a way in which European workers would not experience until the late twentieth century. It has in turn provided fuel for debates about "why the U.S. working class is different." Workers were well aware of the sources of their fluctuating security and some advocated the abolition of capitalism.² In

¹The availability of male immigrants as cheap labor, particularly those from Ireland who had the experience of the famine behind them, blurred the traditional line between male and female labor: With the entry of male immigrants at wage levels considerably below those of native-born men, the wages of the lowest paid men and the highest paid women overlapped for the first time"(Dublin, 1979:142).

²"There is only one remedy, and that is government control of the means of production and transportation" (William B. Adams, a carpenter from West Quincy, quoted in Keyssar, 1987:237).

areas such as Fall River, Massachusetts, unions were successful enough to determine wages and close down plants, leading one treasurer of a Fall River Mill to comment during a strike in 1870 that "the question with the spinners was not wages, but whether they or the manufacturers should rule. For the last six or eight years they have ruled Fall River" (quoted in Montgomery, 1979:18). Unions acted to redistribute wages through union benefits and often to regulate the pace of work in an effort to preserve jobs. The plumbers union, for example, ruled that bicycles were forbidden as a means of transportation between jobs in their belief that there was not enough work to go around (*Ibid*,:246), while the moldmakers union "legislated" that their members were not to report to work before seven in the morning (Montgomery, 1979:16).

The decline of textiles in the late 19th and early 20th century generated unrest even in the communities which formerly had almost unconditionally supported the textile firms. The family units which worked so well together in the factories also found themselves out of work together. At Amoskeag a non violent strike in 1922 escalated and turned violent in 1933, necessitating the engagement of the state militia by the company. By 1933 as the third generation of immigrant families had workers in the factories, the deterioration of labor relations had proved unworkable for smooth factory operations:

The strike occurred after demobilization and the curtailment of production that followed World War I. Having experienced a period of temporary prosperity, ample work and relatively high wages during the war years, the setbacks of 1920-22 were particularly dramatic. The shrinking number of jobs and the resultant layoffs and firings were further aggravated by increases in work load and speed. The records of the adjustment board for the period 1918 were replete with worker's complaints about speedups, ruthless firings, and 'being worked to death' (Ibid.:296).

The fate of Amoskeag was similar to many of the textile mills in New England. The number of manufacturing jobs in Massachusetts dropped significantly between 1920 and 1929, with shoes and textiles the hardest hit. The increased competition from plants in the Southern United States forced the closing of plants all parts of the State, leaving tens of thousands of workers unemployed¹. Workers were forced to seek work by running ahead of the plant closings in the hope of getting employment. As Hareven and Langdenbach reported, "Each time a new textile plant opened, former Amoskeag workers would rush to the gates, hoping that some of their former bosses would recognize them and hire them. Many got

¹Keyssar (1986) notes that the connotation of "unemployed" in the late 19th century took on moral overtones, and labor leaders therefore urged the use of the term "disemployed": "We have used the term dis-employed as more expressive and true...than the ordinary, and more general term un-employed- which includes not only this class but all who are voluntarily or involuntarily without employment; the sick and the incompetent, the thriftless, the lazy and vicious, the willing paupers and the professional beggars-- all belong to the comprehensive and motley crowd of the un-employed; and we protest against the injustice of associating-even in idea- the honest, industrious workers - who are idle from no fault of their own- with the same motley crowd. (1877: *The Vindicator*, quoted in Keyssar:3).

into a mill only to find themselves outside again. Lucille Bourque summarized the long history of uncertainty: 'After the Amoskeag I went to the Raylaine and the Raylaine closed. I went to Textron, and that closed. And then I quit. I used to go in and out. I'd quit and go back'" (Hareven and Langenbach, 1978: 306). By the mid 1930's, a full one quarter of the labor force in Massachusetts was unemployed, while an additional ten percent were working part time (Keyssar, 1986:289). The real crunch for the textile industry, however, occurred after the Second World War. While temporarily revived by orders during World War II, employment in textile industries in New England dropped from 280,000 in 1947 to 170,000 in 1954 and to 99,000 in 1964 (Eisenmenger, 1967:9).

The Region After World War II

Despite the relative collapse of the New England textile and shoe industries during the 1930s, in 1940, two out of five employed people were still either working in textile, shoe or paper industries (Harrison,1982:1). Dramatic changes took place after the Second World War when the United States became the center of an increasingly internationalized economic system. The demand for military and scientific equipment associated with the position of the United States in the World Economy restructured the area's economy. Taylor's scientific management countered union radicalism

and reduced the need for highly skilled workers while transforming the productive base from mill based consumer goods to a different set of commodities: parts for jet engines, computer hardware and software and the growing industries of education and medical care. As Harrison states, "Small businesses unable to continue operating with aging plant or trying to market obsolete products, runaways to areas with a labor climate more favorable to business, corporations branching out of the region, and conglomerate acquisition and subsequent milking and divestiture of established enterprises all contributed to the wave of plant and shop shutdowns that swept New England after World War II.¹ For textile manufacturers in particular, the radicalism of the labor movements, born in the 19th century and in full maturity in the 1930s, provided the basis for a class struggle which initiated the historical trend of corporate moves to areas with "better business climates."

And as Harrison summarizes:

Employment in New England's mill-based industries declined precipitously after World War II, partly through business failures, partly through corporate reallocations of activities among their plants in different parts of the world, and to some extent through actual physical relocations from one region to another (Harrison, 1982:43).

¹According to the figures compiled from Dun and Bradstreet's Business Economics Division, business closings through failure have been higher in New England than in the South Central States, the South Atlantic Region and the South Central Region in very year since 1955 (Harrison, 1982:35).

Although women played a prominent role in industry in the 19th century in New England, their entry into the world of white collar work in the region after the War resulted in the further lowering of their wages. Women office workers in New England manufacturing firms after World War II earned "well below the national average" and even "below those prevailing in Southern States" (*Ibid.*).

Trade Union Erosion

The restructuring of industry after the war resulted in the erosion of trade union power. Spurred on by governmental policies and committees during the Cold War which purged union leaders from their constituencies and buoyed by the relocation of industries with the most unionized workforces, New England business owners were able to describe their workforces as "cooperative" by the 1950s (Eisenmenger, 1967). While in 1950 unions in New England succeeded in organizing 70 percent of the shops they entered, by the 1970s that rate had been cut by 50 percent, well below other parts of the country (Harrison, 1978: 53).

The decline of successful union activity occurred despite their success in improving the relations of work. The effects of union organizing during the early part of the century improved the conditions for those still employed in

the major manufacturing that has stayed in the area. One retired worker in the Pittsfield GE plant described his entry into the union and the long term changes the union produced:

I worked as a winder in the General Electric Company from 1926 until 1970. I worked for part of that as an apprentice. I started as an apprentice. I was going to become a draftsman but I couldn't draw a picture of anything so they told me that I had to make a change from that and go to something else. So I left and went down to Columbus Avenue and worked there for two years and then I came into the main plant...

In the beginning, there were no unions. But, I was lucky that the man who was my general foreman was also my neighbor, and I could do things that other people in that department couldn't do. They use to tell me 'You can't talk to that person on the machine next to you,' when I first went in there. But I said 'The hell I can't, I'm going to,' and I did. And the fellow would say, 'go back to your machine. Don't get me in trouble.' But then they started to see that I wasn't worried about anybody getting into trouble and nobody was getting into trouble...And then the UE came in, the organizers, and somehow they got ahold of my name, and they came up to the house, and stayed for about an hour. And I said 'Yes, I'm interested in unions.' I thought it would be something to get people to join up, but I found out that people were more scared then of joining a union then anybody I'd ever seen. That at the mention of 'union' their foreman might fire them, that's what they thought. So we had ten of us, we met weekly, we did everything we could. Secretly, myself and Mr. Ross went and organized the winders. We got them all set to take and sign cards. We were going to do it all at once when we did it. Then we'd have somebody...if they did something to one of us, they'd be doing it to all of us. So when 1937 came, I said to Mr. Davis, the organizer: 'Come on in and sign us up at noon.' Then the General Electric Company got ahold of it...I was working under contract myself, because they wanted me to come back and wind and there was only a certain two men who could wind the job they wanted to get out that time, and I

says 'No.' I was working in Plastics, the dirtiest job in General Electric, but they told me they'd like to have me stay there because they thought they could use a man like me. So when I went back, the superintendent, my foreman, said, 'You're coming back to wind,' and I said, 'No, I'm not,' He said, 'Well Bus, somebody's got to wind these transformers.' I said, 'Well, I'm not going to.'...So then he got the superintendent, Mr. Hubb, and he said that if I didn't come back I would never work in the GE again.

I said, 'that's what you say, but your counterpart in the Plastics Department says that I've got a job there as long as I want it, and you've got to fight that out with him.' So then they got the manufacturing engineer up there, and he wanted to know why. I said, 'Hell, I'll come back here and work for five weeks and get laid off again and be on the streets.' I said, 'Over there I get 36 hours a week, a minimum of 80 cents an hour.' And he said, 'Why did you fire him?' And he said 'I had to lay him off because he's not married, he's got no dependants.'

In them days that was the thing that they based it on, whether you were married and how many dependents you had, they didn't base it on your service or anything like that, because I had 8 years seniority at the time. And I was quite an example for some of the younger people.

So anyway, Mr. Young said 'We will give you a minimum of 80 cents and hour, 36 hours a week, guarantee it to you, if you will take and come back here and wind. He said 'the only thing is ...if there's no work in winding, you'll have to go all over the department and work there where ever we think we can use you.' I said, 'I'll take it.' So I took and worked with that until the morning when I was going to sign up all the guys and they caught me.

They said, 'you're going to join a union?' I says 'yes.' They said, 'What are you joining a union for? You've got everything you want anyway.' I said "That's just one individual. But wait until I get 5000 people behind me and then see what I'll do.'

So that was the start. The winders all signed up at noon. I lost my guarantee. I started to work three days a week, one week off every four.

That's the way it went...until the War broke out. Then they needed everybody.

When asked about the decline in union membership, he responded:

I think the union improved conditions of the employees at least ten thousand percent, that's the way I look at it. People were free and everything like that. They had coffee breaks. We never had a coffee break. We never knew what it was. I never had a coffee break until five or six years before I retired. Then I began to see that they were getting a coffee break. They certainly negotiate alot better pensions today than we went out under...people take unions for granted and they think that the conditions are there and that they don't have to pay somebody to get those same conditions.

This particular union leader's recollection of the days of union organizing and his comparison of the current conditions are local and specific. As with many of the union and non union workers in the General Electric plant, the conditions which exist are assumed rather than attributed to specific struggles which took place during the decades of the twentieth century. The ideological level at which management is able to convert entitlements won in union struggles to benefits provided by the corporation serves to present ideological screens to those who have not directly participated in the struggle. There are, of course, union members who are aware of the mystification which takes place and who remain dedicated to the education of plant members. Ironically, many of the younger workers in the region are

from families who were participants in these struggles. The discipline and work ethic which is passed down through generations benefited the corporation, while the system of "negotiated class struggle" acted to hold down formal confrontations between management and labor.¹

¹Metzgar (1980) has argued that the red baiting and union challenging of the 1950s led to a period of accession by unions in exchange for the institutionalization of benefits through the collective bargaining system. Harrison (1982:47) comments that this "social contract" was to last a quarter of a century before it was challenged by management in the 1970s.

The Service Sector

The fastest growing sector of the economy in New England since the Second World War is service. A full two thirds of New England's labor force was employed in this sector by the late 1970's.

The New England Economy project under the direction of Harrison defined five classes of services:

- 1) Infrastructural services: transportation, communications and utilities.
- 2) Distributive services -- wholesale and retail trade, facilitating the sale of commodities to local workers and their families.
- 3) Business services. (e.g. financial and legal).
- 4) Recreational and Repair: motion pictures, theaters, restaurants, auto repair shops, etc.
- 5) Reproductive Services: health and education.

From the 1950's on, it is this sector which has shown the greatest amount of growth in employment. Along with these five sectors, the researchers stated five consequent propositions about the "new" New England Economy, drawn from the U.S. Social Security Administration's Longitudinal Employer-Employee Analyses Data File (LEED):

- Wage levels have fallen, relative to other regions (including the South) and especially in terms of purchasing power. This is true even for people

who work year round, and for skilled systems analysts as well as for factory workers.

- Earned income is becoming more unequally distributed among the region's workers over time, both between and within (most) industries, even among those who work year round, and within as well as between the sexes.
- Employment in the region is highly unstable in several respects: There is a growing incidence of part-time or part-year jobs; the degree of employee attachment to the companies for which they work is lowest in precisely those industries which are growing most rapidly; service-intensive regional economies such as New England have shown themselves not to be recession-proof (as was widely believed); and the region's highest-paying manufacturing companies --the aircraft and metalworking industries -- are subject to sharp 'boom-bust' swings in employment.
- There are significant barriers to upward mobility for many of the region's workers, including those who were employed at one time in the old mill industries, and women and minorities employed in the service sector.
- The developmental tendencies toward rationalization and geographic restructuring, which underlay the erosion of the old economic base of the region, are still operative, even in the most rapidly growing industries.

Particularly between 1973 and 1977, real wages dropped sharply in New England relative to the country as a whole (Browne, 1980:44, quoted in Harrison, *ibid*: 71).

The data presented by Harrison's group clearly shows that the restructuring of employment in New England has had dramatic effects on the population. Many of the workers who were employed by the mills were not able to transfer their skills to the new manufacturing or "high tech" industries. Of the 833,000 employed by mill industries in 1958, 674,000

left mill employment. In 1975 only 18,000 of this cohort was employed in the high-tech industries of the region (Harrison, *Ibid.*:89).¹

Philosophers of "post industrial society" have contended that the growth of the service sector is an inevitable part of economic growth and beneficial to the hiring of sectors traditionally discriminated against in the labor market (*Ibid.*: 114). The growth of the service sector has shown that as Harrison states, "the color of the collar does not particularly correspond to the nature of the organization of work. Many white collar employees -- professionals as well as clericals -- now share with factory workers the loss of autonomy and the boredom associated with extreme fragmentation of tasks as well as insecurity with respect of job stability and even the presence of serious job-related health and safety hazards. What is more, service sector jobs now appear far more likely than manufacturing to pay low wages and to offer inadequate hours of work for people who financially must support themselves or their families.

¹He goes on to summarize that "we find that few of those who leave the generally declining, older mill-based industries of the region are able to move into the reactively good job in growth sectors such as high-tech (or even into the still higher-paying jobs in the older, established capital goods industries such as aircraft), Relatively few of the mill workers move away from the region, whether they move or not, they tend not to be hired by high-tech companies. The lesson seems clear: The region simply does not hold enough new, well-paying jobs in the growth industries to absorb those displaced by industrial disinvestment, and the jobs created in sectors such as high-tech are in any case going to other people, including many recruited from outside the region altogether (*Ibid.* 95).

Finally, we have learned that a regional economy built largely on service is not even recession-proof, as was once widely believed" (*Ibid.*).

Chapter Four will examine the Pittsfield community in light of the economic history presented above and contextualize the area for the discussion of development strategies and economic responsibility that follows.

Chapter Four

The Pittsfield Community

A useful way to examine the Pittsfield Community is through the history of its industry and the transformations that have taken place to provide the current context. This chapter will explore Pittsfield's past and its effect on the current social relations. The restructuring of the major industry and its lessened involvement in community affairs has had dramatic consequences in all aspects of the community as residents adapt to changing circumstances. The willingness of many residents and smaller industries to commit to the area despite an unfavorable economic climate testifies to the strength of community organization and the willingness to take on the uprooting effects of restructuring.

Early Industry in Pittsfield

The history of the Pittsfield textile industry predates most of New England. Unlike the town's counterparts in the Eastern part of the State, local entrepreneurs originally capitalized most of the mills. As Nash writes,

The very isolation of the area promoted infant industries. Cut off by mountain ranges from the Hudson River on the west and the Connecticut river on the east, these Berkshire towns developed their own local mills and urged 'non consumption of British manufacturers' at the Stockbridge convention in 1774. This patriotic zeal in the face of the struggle for independence was an important ideological support for entrepreneurial advances. Patriotism remained linked to industry, and after the Revolutionary War many of those who received water privileges were veterans. Zenas Crane's exhortation to 'Americans! Encourage you own Manufactories, and they will improve; Ladies Save your Rags,' when he set up his paper mill in 1800 reflected the spirit of the age (Nash 1989).

The early mills in Pittsfield relied on water power, which remained in the control of the city fathers¹. The earliest textile mill is dated 1801, a woolen mill established by the entrepreneur Arthur Schofield. The War of 1812 brought orders from the United States Army for blankets, uniforms and sails, as well as for iron goods produced by other entrepreneurs who were involved in both textile and iron forging. The end of the war put the mills at a disadvantage as materials from England provided for cheaper and better quality cloth. The mill owners succeeded in 1824 in the campaign for a tariff law, and the mills continued to prosper until their demise in the twentieth century.

By 1800, Pittsfield was the largest town in the area with 2261 registered residents. By 1875, it had a population of

¹For a complete discussion of early industry in Pittsfield and the reliance on water power and rights, see Nash, 1989, *From Tank Town to High Tech*, Albany: State University Press.

12,267, more than five times that of its closest neighbors. Textile manufacturing, however, was not the only industry. Manufacturers included

a wide variety... producing paper, metal holloware, saddles, harnesses, railroad cars, coaches, chaises, wagons, and buggy whips. Hat manufacturing and tanning persisted, shoe manufacturing was introduced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and there were increasing number of seamstresses, usually self-employed or working in small shops. Small, self-sufficient farmers were still an important part of the economy, and large firms producing sheep and cattle provided some of the basic raw materials for the factories. Paper manufacturing persisted, with Crane buying out other companies as he expanded his production to include government bills (Nash, 1989).

While the mills in Berkshire County were founded on a different footing from the rest of the state, Berkshire industry was not immune from the relations of production which dominated wool and cotton production at the time. In the early days of industrialization, Pittsfield did differ in its retainment of long term employees. The early mill owner William Pomeroy, for example, is commended by Smith (1876) in his history of Pittsfield for maintaining a stable workforce. He writes, "A peculiarity in the management of the Pomeroy Mills, which they share with that of other old Pittsfield factories, is the long retention of faithful employees" (Smith, 1876:479, quoted in Nash, 1989). The demands for cheaper labor and the competition from mills in other parts of New England, however, left the older firms in

decline at the end of the 19th century. Industries in all parts of the state fluctuated in employment and capitalization, with "acts of god" or consumer interests acting to stave off or produce unemployment. Workers who lived in North Adams, for example, enjoyed a high level of employment even during the depression years of the 1890s, because the Arnold Mills were making a popular brand of stuffed toy dogs and cats (Keyssar, 1986:119). Although there are no specific figures on unemployment in Pittsfield in those years, we can assume that cycles of unemployment were frequent. As the labor process was being transformed in the rest of New England after the Civil War so it was in Pittsfield. Nash (1989) notes that the consolidation of capital and the increase in capital intensive production changed the nature of industry in the area:

The Pittsfield Woolen Company updated its buildings and machinery after a fire in 1861. The owners were in a position to buy out the Bel Aire Manufacturing Company and replace their old building and machinery with new more sophisticated cards and looms. There were few women and girls employed in the new mills with only one-quarter to one-fifth of the workforce of about 150 being female. This seems to have been a response to the technical innovations that were deskilling the work process and reducing the jobs that women had held. New woollen companies were formed, with the S.N. and C. Russell Manufacturing Company in 1886 and W.E. Tillotson Manufacturing Company in 1889 coming into being at a time when these older companies were in decline. Their work force of 800 to 900 workers was twice the numbers employed in earlier mills. The A.H. Rice company began production of silk braid in 1887 using new complex machinery to turn out specialty products. Machine shops owned by William Clark and Company came

under the ownership of E.D. Jones who later became a producer of manufacturing machinery, some of which was sold to Crane's expanding industry. This company attracted a core of metal workers that expanded the skilled labor force (Nash, 1989).

The growth of the city brought with it the immigration of Italians, Poles and French Canadians. Like other areas of New England, the waves of immigration produced ethnic divisions and competition over work, which prevented the labor force from forging a cohesive response to exploitation. Immigrants were viewed by longer term residents as primitives willing to perform any work, and like the workers around Amoskeag, willing to travel to find work. As one writer of Pittsfield history noted about the Italians who dominated the workforce in the early 1900's: "They were a wandering tribe of people in those days...going wherever work invited. They were content to camp in open fields or deserted buildings on the outskirts of the city, cooking for themselves, gypsy fashion; sleeping on hay or rough blankets spread upon the ground after their day's hard work in ditches, or climbing ladders under the burden of mortar boards, and the heat of boiling sun rays" (Mullany, 1924:vii, quoted in Nash, 1989). These immigrants brought with them their traditions and cultures that bound them as a community but estranged them from the settled generations before them:

We all remember them flocking into town with their household belongings draped upon their backs, and all their other earthly goods in the roped black boxes carried in their hands; a nomad race, despised and suspected...They brought with them habits of settling disputes that have prevailed in their country for ages--as the code of honor, and these horrified us, naturally. They wrangled among themselves, and knives were in evidence at once -- sometimes with fatal results -- but not often. The wounded, however, barely escaped death, more frequently than we like to relate. This vengeful characteristic of a quick tempered Sicilian who formed the majority of these laborers gangs, make them a dreaded people everywhere, which is but natural (*Ibid.*).

Pittsfield, like Cumbler's (1979) description of Lynn, Massachusetts, was for the most part able to incorporate the immigrants into the area. Unlike areas such as Fall River, where mass waves of immigrants resulted in considerable clashes between groups, Pittsfield's residents forged a cohesive community able to live and work together¹.

¹Davis (1986) has argued that the difference between communities like Lynn, (and by association, Pittsfield) and Fall River was the ability to forge a working class culture and working class institutions outside of the workplace. He attributes this difference to the ways in which immigrants were incorporated into the community, largely dependent on the numbers of immigrants arriving at once. He furthermore concludes that "Unfortunately, most of industrial America was more like Fall River than Lynn. Whereas the Western European class struggles of the 1880s and 1890s had spun a web of integrating proletarian institutions (ranging from workmen's clubs, cooperatives, and 'labor churches' to *casas del pueblo* and workers' educational societies), the US labor movement of the late nineteenth century, as we have seen, failed to generate a working class 'culture' that could overcome ethno-religious alignments outside the workplace (Davis, 1986:41).

General Electric and the Growth of a Company Town

By 1895 Pittsfield had a diversified industrial base and the Massachusetts census of manufacturers listed 200 private firms as well as 21 corporations. The fastest growing industry in the area, with four firms, was electrical manufacturing. A major wave of industrial restructuring took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the electrical machinery industry took hold. Railroad transportation incorporated a national market and takeovers and the absorption of small firms intensified the capitalization of industry (Tractenberg, 1982, Nash, 1989). In Pittsfield, William Stanley ventured into electrical machinery in 1887. Nash tells us that

Stanley, a young inventor-engineer working for Westinghouse, failed to convince his employer of the superior efficiency of alternating current in power generation. He left Pittsburgh to go to Great Barrington, presumably for health reasons, and there set up a laboratory with some help from Westinghouse. He invented and applied the first polyphase alternating-current generator in a lighting system for the town in 1886. Soon afterward he was appointed an officer and stockholder in the Pittsfield Illuminating Company in 1890 and while there a Pittsfield financier assembled 27 subscribers to organize the Stanley Company and finance it with \$25,000 in capital (Nash, 1989).

The success of Stanley's operation and the need for further capitalization invited takeovers, which resulted in General

Electric's purchase of the plant in 1903. No longer a local industrial concern, when confronted with worker dissatisfaction the corporation threatened to close the plant down and 'disemploy' the 1500 trained workers the corporation inherited. The profitable market for power transformers, however, made continuation of the product line desirable until the late 1970s.

Labor unrest was prominent in Pittsfield during the early part of the 20th century, perhaps more so than in other industrial areas because of the community's cohesiveness. Even given this ability to organize, however, the unions faced formidable competition from General Electric. A major strike in 1916 solidified the division between management and labor, with the relations of power firmly placed in order:

The outstanding feature of this strike was the moderation of the union demands -- always referred to as requests -- and the apparently unchecked power of the corporation. Management could ignore the Massachusetts State Conciliation Board and use public funds and police to protect the strikebreakers brought in at the taxpayers' expense. The greater integration of the company, which had several different plants to which it could shift production, enabled management to hold out against labor, which could not gain the support even of the neighboring plant (*Ibid.*).

With the decline of the textile industries during the 1920's and 1930's, General Electric soon dominated employment in the area and provided the community's major tax base. World War II provided major funding for the area as the

federal government created the Defense Plant Corporation and publically financed General Electric's Ordnance plant in Pittsfield, as well as others in Lynn and Everett (Harrison, 1982:27)¹.

With General Electric assuming the role of the primary industry in the area, the corporation kept out other industry and maintained a tight control over a highly skilled labor force. Its dominance allowed it to maintain the upper hand in the "negotiated class struggle" of the twentieth century. Workers won major concessions from General Electric during major strikes during 1916, 1946, and 1969. The 1969 strike, however, dated a start in the decline of union power fueled by increasing threats by the corporation to relocate production.

The industrial restructuring that took place during the 1830s, the beginning of the twentieth century and after the Second World War, is again taking place in Pittsfield now. As Harrison notes, "Capitalist economic development is continually progressing through a dynamic interaction of the

¹Government spending figured high in the development of the entire region after World War II. Harrison states that "Government orders directly stimulated production in other industries which were either already important in the region (such as textiles in Nashua, New Hampshire and shipbuilding in Bat, Maine, Quincy, Massachusetts, and New Londond, Connecticut) or which would soon become so...The development of the (at first electromechanical, later electronic) computer industry grew out of the wartime military demand for precise calculations of shell trajectories and in connection with the Manhattan Project which produced the first atom bomb" (1982:27).

tendencies toward rationalization of the labor process (with its associated increases in productivity), further centralization and concentration in the control of capital (which increases the capacity of managers to coordinate production and finance among multiple locations and sectors), and the geographic dispersal of production (and therefore employment) over greater and greater distances, both within and across national borders" (1982:105).

Industrial Decline and the Emphasis on Development

The extent of the effect of restructuring on Pittsfield has been well documented by both local and state agencies. The Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation has produced the most comprehensive report so far, introducing its *Economic Base Study of Pittsfield and Berkshire County* with the statement that

Pittsfield and Berkshire County are experiencing a fundamental change that will affect the social and economic life of the region. Manufacturing, which provided the foundation of the region's economy, is in a state of serious decline. How the region responds to this change will determine the area's economic health into the next century. (PERC, 1988:1).

Summarizing the trends in the area's economy and its effect on its residents, the report goes on to say that

Changes in new employment and opportunities caused both wealth and poverty to increase. On one hand, wealth increased with the rapid increase in high tech and professional jobs. On the other hand, the rapid increase in low-paying service and retail jobs has caused an increase in the number of working poor. At the rate of economic change increased many workers lost jobs in what had been considered secure occupations and in effect fell out of the middle class. These economic circumstances have combined to create a large group of single mothers, young people, and displaced blue collar workers for whom there is little hope for achieving a middle-class lifestyle (Ibid.:1).

Statistics generated by the Bureau of the Census indicate

First, the increase in retail activity has partly been due to federal tax cuts and lower energy costs resulting in increased disposable income. The increase in housing costs have been largely due to the decrease in interest rates, the increase in the number of households, the demand for second houses, and the short term build-up of employment at G.E.'s Ordinance Systems. The unemployment rate has declined in recent years but this can be attributed to a decline in the size of the labor force. *The best indication of economic health is population migration. In the case of Pittsfield and Berkshire County, the population trends indicate that this region is failing to provide adequate opportunities for its citizens* (Emphasis mine, Ibid.:2).

Since the distribution of this report, General Electric has announced projected layoffs at its Ordinance Systems. Speculating that the federal government will tailor its defense spending, GE management at Ordnance systems is planning for the layoff of approximately 500 workers to

conform with the assumed cut in defense spending which produced the "Massachusetts Miracle."¹

Community Effects of Economic Restructuring

The Office of The Massachusetts Division of Employment Security provides to the State's communities detailed records of trends in the labor and manufacturing market. Its Annual Planning Information Report for the Fiscal Year 1982 reported that Pittsfield's peaked in 1980, and that the reliance on one major manufacturer would result in a continued "slippage" in the economy (1982:1). The General Electric Corporation lost 3000 jobs in the period 1974-1982, which the planning report states was "due to the energy price escalation, which has produced less demand for power transformers, the expiration of defense contracts, and appropriation cuts that effect ordnance"(Ibid:2).

The following tables summarize the industrial trends in Pittsfield and indicate a connected change in household status in the city.

¹Defense spending in Massachusetts in 1986 equaled \$1500 for every citizen in the state. GE Pittsfield received its share for high technology missile system development and the transmission for the Bradley Fighter Vehicle. The infusion of these monies softened the blow of the closing down of the power transformer division, when many of those laid off workers who had seniority were transferred to Ordnance.

Household Information, City Of Pittsfield¹				
	1970	1980	% Change	1990 ²
Population	57,020	51,974	(-9%)	49,328
# of Households	18,316	19,494	(+7%)	20,133
Avg. Household Size	3.1	2.65	(-14%)	2.45
Under 20	21,116	15,800	(-25%)	
Over 65	6,871	7,354	(+7%)	
Men	26,876	24,343	-10%	
Women	31,114	27,631	(-8%)	
Blacks	1,129	1,294	(+10%)	
Unrelated Individuals	4,344	6,55	(+51%)	
Fertility Rate	3.3	2.7	(-18%)	

¹Source: Bureau of the Census, Adapted from *An Economic Base Study of Pittsfield and Berkshire County/ Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, January 1988.*

²Based on Projections from BCRPC

Trends in Berkshire Manufacturing Employment¹					
	1967	1972	1977	1985	1990
Manufacturing	24,140	19,530	18,540	17,216	15,000
% of Total	41.3%	32.9%	31.2%	28%	
22%					

	1967	1972	1977	1985	1990
Manufacturing	24,140	19,530	18,540	17,216	15,000
% of Total	41.3%	32.9%	31.2%	28%	
22%					

Employment By Certain Specific Industries as % of Total Labor Force, 1985²		
	<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
Paper and Allied Products	3%	.7%
Printing and Publishing	3%	1.4%
Eating and Drinking Places	5.7%	5.4%
Hotels and Motels	4.2%	1.3%
Health Services	10%	6.5%
Non-Electrical machinery	2.6%	2.5%
Business Services	1.7%	3%

	<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
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Eating and Drinking Places	5.7%	5.4%
Hotels and Motels	4.2%	1.3%
Health Services	10%	6.5%
Non-Electrical machinery	2.6%	2.5%
Business Services	1.7%	3%

¹Source: County Business Patterns /*An Economic Base Study*

²Sources: County Business Patterns and U.S. Industrial Outlook Handbook/*An Economic Base Study*

INDUSTRIAL OUTLOOK¹

	<i>Indus. Outlook</i>	<i>MEPA</i>	<i>RSRI</i>	<i>DES Employ.Proj.</i>
Non-Elec.Mach.	SG	NG	NG	-15%
Elec. Equipment	Poor	-2,130	+50	31%
Textiles	fair to good	NA	NA	-18%
Paper	Good	+118	+200	-10.7%
Plastics	Good	NA	+27	+17%
Printing	Good	+10	NG	9.9%

LEGEND

MEPA Forecast (1981-1991): Mass. Economic Policy Analysis Model, Univ. of Mass.
 RSRI Forecast. (1980-1995): Regional Science Institute Study (Number of Jobs
 Needed to Fill Local Demand), 1981

DES: 1987 Massachusetts Division of Employment Security Employment Projection.

SG: Slow Growth

NG: No Growth

NA: Not Available

¹Adapted from *An Economic Base Study of Pittsfield and Berkshire County/ Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, January, 1988.*

By all indications, the economic forecast for the City of Pittsfield is grim. Three thousand manufacturing jobs disappeared in Berkshire County between 1984 and 1987, a loss of over 10% of income in basic employment (PERC, 1988:37). The labor force decreased by more than 2,268 members from 1984-1986, indicating that working age members of the community were leaving the area. The Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation's report concludes that with the increase in labor force participation by Pittsfield's residents despite the decline in the labor force indicates an even larger decline in the population. The report predicts an even larger out-migration as manufacturing jobs continue to decrease and produce overall larger wage decreases.

The most frequently cited reason for Pittsfield's industrial decline is the cost of labor. Research done by Texas A & M University on the cost structure of corporations shows a significant lowering of labor costs between 1970 and 1990 in the United States as a whole, as the following table indicates.

COST STRUCTURE OF CORPORATIONS

	1970	1990 (Est.)
Labor Cost	60%	48%
Transportation Cost	35%	44%
Electric Rate	1%	4%
Occupancy Expense	3%	3%
Local Tax	1%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%

INDUSTRIAL LOCATION THEORY 1982

The major change in costs relative to the United States as a whole in Pittsfield is in fact for transportation and labor. Although taxes are often cited as a problem, Pittsfield does not have higher taxes than other regions, and taxes are not a large part of U.S. corporation cost structures. Likewise, energy costs, which are also frequently cited as a problem in the area, are also not major cost factors. Unlike the nineteenth century when companies imported labor to lower wages, corporations now are now able to transfer technology and even whole physical plants to other American regions and overseas, thereby seeking out cheaper labor while increasing transportation costs for the products back to the primary markets. While citing the need for skilled labor, companies have long complained about the costs of labor in the area. With national trends declining, it is

not surprising that this cost has been a significant "problem" in Pittsfield.

One major result of the loss of manufacturing jobs and the consequent lowering of wages is outmigration. The Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation cites this trend as a factor in the diminishing labor pool:

Labor costs are often the most important factor in siting decisions. Traditionally Berkshire County has had higher than average manufacturing wages and lower than average wages in all other sectors. Manufacturing wages have been high because of the dominant place of G.E. and other large unionized shops in the local economy. The downward trend in manufacturing employment should eventually place downward pressure on wages.

This process is hindered when unemployed workers leave the area. Recent large increases in housing costs have priced some low wage earners out of the housing market. It is the exit of these workers from the area more than an increase in jobs that has kept the regional unemployment rate low. The lack of available workers in the low wage category is hurting the service and retail industries as well as making the area less attractive for industrial expansion. (PERC, 1988:41).

The study indicates the workers "are sensitive to living cost in much the same way industries are sensitive to labor costs" (*Ibid.*). But it fails to distinguish the differences between the two categories. Outmigration takes place because like the mill workers in the 19th century, members of the labor force are seeking perceived available jobs in other regions. This outmigration has produced a shift in

the population, particularly in the loss of males between the age of 15 and 65, with females taking up some of the slack in labor for lower paid jobs and thus increasing the gap in wage levels between men and women.

Projected Changes in Population By Age Group and Sex: 1985 to 1990¹

	<i>PITTSFIELD</i>	<i>BERKSHIRE COUNTY</i>
BY AGE GROUP		
Under 15	(-180)	(-470)
15-65	(-1,238)	(-3,292)
Over 65	+493	+1,751
TOTAL		(-918) (-2,454)
BY SEX		
Male	(-571)	(-1,467)
Female	(-347)	(-987)
TOTAL	(-918)	(-2,454)

Pittsfield Labor Force Participation: 1980²

Average Yearly Wage	\$12,295	\$4,919
% Full Time Workers	52.4	24.4
Avg. Full Time Workers	\$17,427	\$10,519
Labor Force	13,639	11,068
Total Working	12,489	10,181
Incr. (Decr.) from 1970	-1,130	+1,400
Participation Rate	75%	51%

¹Economic Projection to 1990, U.S. Department of Labor, BLS/ Reproduced from *An Economic Base Study of Pittsfield and Berkshire County/* Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, 1988.

²Source: 1980 U.S. Census, From PERC, *Ibid.*

For those who choose to stay in the area, a widening gap has developed between the rich and the poor, and for most, the standard of living has declined.

Certainly, production has dropped in the United States as a whole: "In 1960, the U.S. produced 15% more goods than it consumed. By 1984, it was consuming 25% more than it produced" (PERC:39). This change has had its most dramatic effect on the older industrial regions such as Pittsfield. Between 1970 and 1980, real wages fell by 15% in the area. During the same period, family poverty increased 108% in family poverty, with the largest increase in female headed households (PERC, 1988:11). The strain of unemployment and economic decline shows most profoundly perhaps in the doubling of marriage dissolutions between 1970 and 1980.

Marriage Dissolutions in Pittsfield

1970 and 1980¹

By Women

Separated	418	487
Divorced	823	1,668
Total	1,291	2,155
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Separated	281	487
Divorced	956	1,668
TOTAL	1,237	2,115

¹Source: U.S. Census, PERC, 1988:7).

Even with a job, Pittsfield's workers show stress. Many of the employed workers whom we interviewed in 1982 worked overtime and were left with little time for their families or leisure. At the same time that these individuals were accumulating overtime, however, the management at GE was busily planning and implementing layoffs. The seeming contradiction is the result of management economics: less employment means less capital outlay for benefits, while at the same time planning for production can be performed on an ad-hoc basis. The irony of this policy is not lost on the community: as one laid off worker commented: "I think it's all goofed up. They want to lay off a lot of people and those who remain work harder."

The majority of the workers we interviewed were connected to General Electric through family. One or both of their parents had worked in the plant and many of them also had siblings in the plant. None was optimistic about the future of the corporation in the community. As Redclift and Mingione (1985:5) might suggest, the effects of economic decline in Pittsfield is mediated by a class based tradition of self help and a domestic orientation. A history of a strong kin-based community and the experience of union activities have forged bonds, which act to provide assistance both inside and outside the family. While Paul and Wallace (1985) have documented that more sharing of

household and community labor takes place among *employed* workers, our interviews noted that a substantial amount of shared work was also performed by unemployed workers on family members' and friend's houses, businesses and cars¹. When asked about daily activities, one unmarried laid off worker responded:

Sometimes I get up early, sometimes I'll sleep till 10, 11 o'clock, I got an old jeep down the garage, I go out in it once or twice a week, my brother had an old station wagon, I just fixed that for him last week, my other brothers got an engine I'm rebuilding for his car. Fairly good at cars. What I do for a career, getting dirty all the time, once in a while I don't mind what we were doing today, cutting up some fire wood, cleaning out the garage last week, cleaning out the basement yesterday. I got a friend who waxes cars for a living, he's got a small business, so once in a while he gets a car, maybe once or twice a week I go down and help him, sit around alot.

Voluntary Associations , Community Organization and Corporate Morality

Voluntary organizations in late capitalism have come to play the dominant role in maintaining community viability and as buffers against economic decline in the same way that families, kin groups, and unions did in the 19th century.

¹It is important to note that as a trend, unemployed workers do not have the capital or the tools to increase domestic labor. Paul and Wallace (1985:223) note that households cannot really achieve independence from market services. They put forward a 'polarization thesis', which suggests "the overwhelming dependence on all forms of informal work, including self provisioning, on the money from formal employment" (1985:224). They note, however, that the level of cooperation is dependent on culturally derived values.

Pittsfield has an active roster of community organizations ranging from the Boy's Club to the United Way, along with community organizations such as General Electric's "Athletic Club" which primarily serves workers from the plant. In the early days of industrialization, it was the families that owned the mills who made the major contributions which kept the organizations alive. The Crane family, owners of the Crane Paper Mill that produces United States currency as well as fine stationary, endowed the boys club, now one of the largest in the country. More recently the community, even in a period of economic decline, keeps these organizations alive. In 1968, the Boys Club launched a fund raising effort that produced one million five hundred thousand dollars in 10 weeks. Still, the Boards of the Boy's Club, the United Way, the YMCA and YWCA, and other community organizations reads like an elite list culled from GE and the other major industries in the area. Particularly in periods of economic growth, it is important for the corporation to maintain the viability of labor reproduction through community organizations. As Gintis and Bolwes (1976) note, the decline of the family has required other institutions to take over socializing roles: "with the weakening of the family unit as society's central formative and restorative cultural institution, schools, hospitals, and clinics are now the most important places where people become socialized to their role as workers, and where their physical or emotional capacity to continue working is

restored when it breaks down (1976:64). As a result of community organization, the gross indicators of employment and income can misrepresent the state of community viability. The social reproduction of families and communities are a product of specific historical circumstances and cultural responses.

The major corporation's diminished commitment to the city appears clearly in its reduced participation in community events such as the halloween parade, where the size of its floats seem to be directly correlated to its disinvestment in major production. Even the Corporation's participation in community fund drives becomes perfunctory as its relationship with the community deteriorates and its interest in the labor force wanes. The community responds to these developments by increasing its already substantial participation in organizational efforts. The United Way drive in 1982, for example, was one of the most successful of its history, despite GE's decreased organizational participation. The use of voluntary associations to solidify community relations in periods of economic downturn softens the blow of the major restructuring taking place.

The corporation has planned its involvement with and support of the community on its own terms. When John F. Welch, a Pittsfield resident, became General Electric's Chief Executive Officer, he terminated 100,000 employees and

determined that each of the Corporation's businesses had to be first or second in its market to keep from being "shuttered." As Fortune reported in 1986, "In five years General Electric's perpetual motion boss has chopped 100,000 jobs, sunk billions of dollars in automated factories, overhauled the corporate culture, and picked up RCA in the costliest non-oil merger ever. He promises still more to come." Welch's actions have labeled him "neutron Jack" as he suggested that managers who did not agree with his statement of corporate values titled, "What We Want to Be," find other avenues for employment. This statement of corporate values, of course, reflects more than a simple corporate culture coming to the fore because "things are as I say they are." Corporate culture does not exist in a vacuum, but instead reflects the dominant ideologies of the power elite (Nash and Kirsch, 1987). Media attempts to personalize corporate changes (Fortune, July 7, 1987; Business Week, June 30, 1986) reify the personality of the individual while all but ignoring the consequences of corporate restructuring.

For Pittsfield, the ideology of the Corporation has had a dramatic effect on the community's citizens. The Corporation's history of core manufacturing in power transformers predicted future changes that were to take place. In a tradition that would do justice to Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "symbolic violence," the Corporation's

statements throughout the decade of the 1980's, until Power Transformer did close in 1987, were resplendent with quotes from Welsh about his love for the area and his commitment to the community. In good public relations fashion, the face of the Corporation was that of a "responsible" corporate citizen: explaining to the community that it would try to keep production going but making it aware that profits had to be made if the company was to survive in the present economy.

It is clear that keeping up the image of the caring company while cutting back on production takes its toll even on the highly skilled public relations personnel. As one Community Relations manager told us during an interview in 1982, GE could simply not play the role of "daddy warbucks" anymore. The ideology giving primacy to profits regardless of human costs has become the core of an amoral "modus operandi" of corporate functioning. It is a cost accounting approach that has influenced American cultural values and has even gained scientific credibility, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The Corporation and the Community: A Clash of Ideologies

Merry (1986) suggests that at least two kinds of ideology need to be addressed in the the "negotiated, constructed

reality developed in local social settings" (1986:255). The first is a "top-down elite-produced and disseminated ideology" and the second a "bottom-up, locally constructed one". Merry suggests that the coexistence of these modes of thought produces a kind of ideological pluralism "in the same way that subcultures are plural in complex societies". What she misses is the facets of power that determines the adoption of ideologies for economic purposes, the "things are as I say they are" that Wolf (1985) borrows from Alice in Wonderland to describe the sociopolitical domain.

The cultural values of Pittsfield's residents, the emphasis on marriage, the family and property are symbolic aspects of the community and lie at the foundations of its survival. Interviews with residents suggest an empirical base for David Schneider's (1968) *American Kinship*. Like Schneider's categories, the symbolic aspects of the family and kinship in Pittsfield represent how aspects of one's life *should* be conducted; they need not have any basis in empirical reality. The fact that these values exist unites families and kinship groups into a cohesive community that responds to threats from the outside even as its internal dynamics are being destroyed. Families chose to stay in Pittsfield because of its location, the stability of its community and the binding cultural values. Small companies chose to stay in the area for the same reasons, aware that their businesses would do better elsewhere but determined to

maintain a lifestyle to which they and their employees have aspired. This seeming contradiction in business logic provides an answer to Eisenmeyer's (1967) query as to why a majority of executives chose to stay in New England despite its "locational disadvantages.

Chapter Five

Development Strategies

This chapter will discuss development efforts in Pittsfield. Many of the "dilemmas" faced by development specialists are a result of the community's history, and account for the differences between "native" and "non-native" points of view. Specific ideologies that relate to the processes of development will be discussed in the context of development theory as it has evolved during the twentieth century.

The flight of capital and physical movement of corporation facilities have destabilized economic relationships that have been in place since the turn of the century (Yago, 1983:115). These changes have altered geo-political trade relationships and have resulted in profound structural changes on the local level. Particularly in cities such as Pittsfield where a multinational corporation dominates the economy, changes in world trade relationships has led to "the accelerated abandonment of past patterns of investment in the hope of obtaining competitive advantages..." resulting in "multinational corporate strategies [which] conflict with local requirements of stabilized economic growth" (Yago, 1983:115). The result in Pittsfield has been the creation of a leadership vacuum that can be observed in the attempts at economic development planning. As one city

official confided in 1987, "We're a community that's running around with blinders on poking around in the dark trying to figure out where we're going. We don't have the base information we need to know what's happening."

As localities confront the flight of capital and restructuring of industry, the concept of "development" functions as a way in which to rebuild destabilized inner cities and communities. The term has taken on mystical proportions signifying *the solution*. New development is understood by community leaders as an increase in economic growth and an assumed increase in the redistribution of capital. But the optimism associated with development often disappears when consensus becomes difficult if not impossible to achieve and the magnitude of competing interests are realized. This chapter will describe a process which, at best, has proved chaotic during the last twenty years in Pittsfield.

Defining Development

The primary objective of development in capitalist societies is the social and political stability necessary for private sector investment. Changes in the mobility and structure of capital produces social and political instability in communities that is countered by ideology and the structural relationship between communities and capital investors. In cities such as Pittsfield that have a history of a single dominant investor, and where "labor" and "management" are viable categories, the secondary role of government agencies to private industry is pronounced. While outright signs of class struggle are not evident in Pittsfield, the confusion and ambivalence towards the development process are an expression of differing class interests and orientations. The emphasis on the necessity of "changing local attitudes" put forward by business interests and parroted by government officials is a response to the social and political restructuring required for increased capital accumulation. This ambivalence, and the attempts to tame it, have resulted in a crisis of management in Pittsfield.

The discussion of development in Pittsfield is mediated by the realm of local definitions which differ by community sector and interest group and notably by those with a "native" point of view and others without a long residence

history. It is measured by the criteria important to the sector defining the phenomena and the relationships of dependency that permeate the discussion.

The primary sectors in the public discussion of development are the family, the community, city government, industry and tourism. While the interests of these sectors may overlap in some areas, their positions in the schema of "development" are often at odds. Families are concerned about housing costs and valuation, jobs and security for present and future generations. These concerns have become particularly prominent in Pittsfield as the children of long term workers at the General Electric plant follow the promise of jobs to other regions of the country. The contradiction presented by a tourist trade that is raising land and home values and a declining industrial base that is lowering real income is expressed as an ambivalence towards development strategies.

The ideology of the family is still strong in Pittsfield. While Goody's (1978) contention that the family has been dismantled under industrial capitalism may hold true as a unit of consumption, the family in Pittsfield still acts as a unit seeking to preserve continuity in rapidly changing circumstances. The community as a viable entity is composed of families and related kinship networks and the services which sustain them. The history and continuity of the community is particularly strong in Pittsfield as

generations found good employment. Even in the current crisis, the community remains a strong entity supporting voluntary organizations and fund raising efforts. Organized labor, traditionally strong in Pittsfield, serves as a means for community identification and as a reaction to the growing strength of the corporation. One of the prime concerns of worker's organizations is the trend towards the weakening of the labor movement as national and international economic trends strengthen the position of those with capital mobility and control. While labor is necessarily pro-development, it cannot be at the expense of its own membership and community base. City managers are primarily concerned with the maintenance of a tax base which can sustain the infrastructure of the community. These individuals are confronted with all of the conflicting relationships which define the phenomenon of economic development and are placed in the precarious position of negotiating the lines between business, industry and the need for tax revenues. The differing standards for these interests has generated a kind of development schizophrenia where positions are shuffled daily and the City's standards are in continual motion. The difficulty of defining development strategies has resulted in a high turnover for economic development officers who are thwarted in their efforts by changing allegiances and actions by the competing sectors.

Planning for industrial development in Pittsfield is mediated by the history of the largest corporation and its relationship with the community. General Electric has been in control of Pittsfield's development since its takeover of the Stanley works in 1904. The growth in the service sector of industry now overruns manufacturing, providing lower paying employment for members of the skilled labor force. Finally, tourism has become the fastest growing segment of the economy in Pittsfield. Although buoyed by the purchasing power of visiting New Yorkers and Bostonians, there is widespread apprehension about the ability of the tourist trade to account for the declining manufacturing sector, and the effect of increased population and development pressures on the environment.

Development Agencies

For a community of fifty thousand, Pittsfield has an impressive array of agencies and committees responsible for development issues. The Mayor's Office of Community and Economic Development is the primary arm of city government addressing these concerns and it interacts with others established both by private business, the Chamber of Commerce and research institutes. Along with the Office of Community and Economic Development exists the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, which produced the most recent report on the City in 1988, the Berkshire County

Regional Planning Commission, The Central Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, The Commercial Area Revitalization District Board, The Pittsfield Housing Authority (which designates developers for a large area of the downtown tract), the Berkshire Development Council, the now defunct Berkshire County Development Commission, the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security, which maintains a research division for planning purposes and outside agencies producing reports, such as the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. The *Berkshire Eagle* produces an annual report on the region's business and industry, and many of the commissions and agencies listed above have sub-committees that deal with issues under the development umbrella. To state that each of these agencies and committees represents specific interest groups would be erroneous. The major division in development planning is between "native" approaches to the problem and "outside" consultants and developers that will be discussed in more detail below.

Development Perspectives: Reports in Search of Problem Definition

The General Electric Corporation's lessened role in community and economic development during the late sixties and early seventies produced a crisis of information and planning that has lasted until the present day. It took almost a decade before the realities of the leadership crisis took hold and the City began its spate of development

efforts. These efforts have included reports and planning documents that agree in content but lack concrete political analyses of the current scene. The first major report on the Berkshire Economy was prepared in June of 1981 by the Regional Science Research Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts. Titled *The Berkshire County Economy: Problems, Potentials and Transportation Implications*, it was produced under the auspices of the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission, with help from Williams College, and was financed with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The introduction states that

The study for which this is the final report was undertaken in response to the concern of the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission, and other public and private groups and agencies, caused by the apparent stagnation of the County's economy. The slow growth evidenced in the late 1970's and the potential problems inherent in the population decline, as indicated by the preliminary 1980 Census figures, suggest that more vigorous public and private efforts may be needed to insure that sufficient numbers of jobs at decent wages will be available to the County's residents in future years.

Concern for the County's economic future has been precipitated especially by the cutback of employment at the power transformer division of General Electric during the mid-seventies. This cutback could have led to higher levels of unemployment in the County in the late seventies and during 1980 had it not been for the outmigration of some of the skilled General Electric workers (and their families) whose jobs were eliminated and for some growth in non-durable good manufacturing. The other mitigating factor appears to have been an upsurge in trade and service employment associated, in part, with more rapid growth in the tourist industry.

A later study initiated by the Berkshire County Development Commission and completed by two degree candidates at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government concluded that "everyone in development has the same goal; to create jobs in a way that does not destroy the beauty of the county. (Calahan and Watson, 1984:5, emphasis in the original), and the report went on to emphasize that

the economic development community is very divisive, and coordinated, county-wide development is unworkable. The county has three separate geographic locations which view development in different ways. The towns view themselves as autonomous and find it very hard to work within the artificial boundaries of a county line. The public and private sectors are often at war with each other and with themselves over development projects. The type of atmosphere does not lend itself to efficient or successful economic development (*Ibid.*)

Calahan and Watson's report chastises community leaders for a divisiveness at odds with the major goal, job creation, and warns that the economic scene is worse than perceived:

...a main reason for this fighting is that the towns are just not desperate enough to cooperate. The population and economic decline have been so gradual the county does not feel a sense of crisis. Yet there is cause for alarm. People are leaving at a rate much higher than the national average because they cannot find upwardly mobile types of jobs and the manufacturing base of the county is declining.

The Production of Chaos

The conclusions of the report were no surprise to those that have been working on economic development. One of the major recommendations, that the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission play a more active and visible role in economic development, was cut short when the Commission was abolished by the City of Pittsfield, a victim of the same fighting over turf that the report pointed to as a major impediment. The report refused to acknowledge that turf is political and that power relationships are inherent pieces of the development puzzle.

The need for the city government to maintain a responsive environment for capitalist accumulation and at the same time manage the political sensitivities of its citizens presents conflicting demands. Friedland, Piven and Alford (1984) argue that urban governments by necessity separate the economic and the political functions of government in an attempt to mediate contradictory interests.¹ While they put forward that this separation succeeds in facilitating the integration of political participants, the effect of the

¹They state, for example, that "Urban governments are organized in ways which allow them to absorb political discontent through political participation which is limited to agencies and issues which do not impinge upon economic growth" (Friedland, Piven and Alford, 1984:279). This separation can be seen in a concrete sense in Pittsfield by the many public forums available to citizens to discuss community issues, while the issues of 'tax vacations' and other concessions to the corporation are not subject to public scrutiny.

structural separation of the political and the economic arenas is less obvious in cities with a strong and organized labor force. City attempts to respond to the needs of the corporation and the demands of its citizens produces chaos in city planning. The commissioners of economic development, often not informed of deals maneuvered in the Mayor's office, for example, are unaware of how their own agendas fit into the City's political structure and were often frustrated in their attempts to negotiate development solutions. The lack of structural coordination between segments of the city bureaucracy is the chief source of need for new commissions and committees on development strategies and policies.

Although the studies and projections differ in format and direction, they all conclude that the City is in trouble. The *City Report* produced on a yearly basis by the Mayor's Office is by choice optimistic, concentrating on trends that put prospects for the future in rosy light. In 1986, then Mayor Smith noted that "Excitement continues to mount as the economy remains strong: Housing starts are above normal, businesses and industry continue to expand and unemployment remains low." The optimism was repeated in 1987, when Smith noted that

Pittsfield continues to grow and mature. Our priorities are clearer than ever. We have continually strengthened our image and are fast becoming known as America's finest community. The

quality of life, the beauty of our lakes and mountains, and the cultural and recreational activities offered here continue to attract new citizens second home owners and tourists. Our one flaw is not being able to hold our children because of a lack of good employment (1987 report to the City).

Mayor Smith believed it was necessary to promote a healthy image for the City despite reports to the contrary, including a New York Times report suggesting that Pittsfield was the third fastest declining city in the country. There is a belief held by City officials that the town has to be sold on itself. As Mayor Smith stated on the subject of economic development:

We're doing all the things we can to promote our city and to sell our city. I think one of the toughest things was to sell it to our own people. You know you have a tendency to take things for granted when you live here all your own life. You take it for granted that it's beautiful here, we have four seasons and beautiful recreation areas and all kinds of things. And after a while you take it for granted and you have to take and promote it to your own people in your community to give them a lift. Oh, we've done all kinds of things. We brought -- we've worked very closely since I've been in office with the arts to promote the arts in this city. We were very instrumental in getting Berkshire Public Theater under way. The arts center over here is operated by the city. We think that's very important to our city. And that brings industry in too because people in industry like to feel that everything is there for them. They like Boston and the big cities because they have all the concerts and theater. We need that here in order to assure people.

Development and Ideologies of Development

Streeten (1981) tells us that the subfield of economic development was created after the Second World War. Changes in the structure of the world economic system and the decolonization of "third world" countries resulted in new relationships between industries and state systems, fostering new strategies and new ideologies for capitalist expansion.

The dominant ideology of the 1950's and 1960's, in which all economies were envisioned to "travel along a linear path" (in Rostow's [1960] terms), has been replaced with theories of neocolonialism and interdependence in the literature if not the public policy statements of dependent economies. The assumption behind Rostow's "stages" was the "trickle down" effect created by successful capitalist accumulation and concentration, with states playing the role of redistributors to the poorer members of the economic relationship. Dependencia theorists also depended on the assumption of corrective action in the redistributive relationship, aptly expressed by President Nyerere's address to the Royal Commonwealth Society in November, 1985:

In one world, as in one state, when I am rich because you are poor, and I am poor because you are rich, the transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor is a matter of right: it is not an appropriate matter for charity...If the rich

nations go on getting richer and richer at the expense of the poor, and poor of the world must demand a change, in the same way as the proletariat demanded change in the past. And we do demand change. As far as we are concerned, the only question at issue is whether the change comes by dialogue or confrontation. (Quoted in Streeten 1981:106).

The lack of success by many if not most exploited economies to change the nature of their economic relationships is rooted in the ideologies that characterize the policies of redistribution. Because much of the development ideology fostered by modernization or dependency theory and championed by policy officials assumes that those with the highest concentrations of capital will redistribute wealth for human services including job promotion, the "confrontation" threatened by Nyerere's statement has rarely taken place.

The ideology utilized by economically dominant economies, including multinational corporations, promotes the ideals of redistribution and human equality. Warner (1953) in his analysis of Memorial Day shows how rituals of collective unity can be used to manipulate levels of class inequality. Dominant classes under capitalism, particularly through advertising (Ewen, 1978), emphasize access to resources through ability and determination rather than class based control.

Godfrey (1987) argues against the strict separation of the first and third worlds as many regional economies in "core" countries begin to resemble "peripheral" economies. Cardoso's (1974) "dependent-associated" development is seen in areas such as Pittsfield just as easily as it is applied to traditionally dependent national governments. While the hegemonic ideology provided by modernization theory was largely rejected by third world nations in the 1970's, its legacy remains in regional areas being transformed by changes in the world economy and the multinationals which direct those trends. Pittsfield's lack of success in redeveloping its industry is referred to by business leaders as a problem of psychological dimensions.

The development officers we interviewed between 1982 and 1988 stressed the discontinuity between business and the community. During our first interview with the director of the Chamber of Commerce -- an MBA who worked for the New York Bankers Association before moving to Pittsfield, he summed up the area's problems:

People in the Berkshires are individualistic; they are very independent. They are set in their ways about their basic concerns. Anything that brings about change they fear and resist.

The commissioner envisioned his job as pulling the various aspects of the community together in the development

process, and described himself as "a pimp getting people together in the right direction." He voiced concern about the long term residents of the community, who he felt were overly optimistic about the ability of General Electric to sustain an economic base for the city and about the second home owners and tourists who resisted change out of the fear that the natural beauty of the area would be destroyed:

In this area there are a lot of people with money, and they put their money where their mouth is, in resisting change. The Pittsfield population is 262nd in the country, while it is 62 in medium income. Pittsfield is not like a normal tourist area, it is an elite tourist area, with education and with money...What sets this community aside are neighborhood groups all over the area, representing a minority, but vocal enough to prevent development from happening.¹

Complicating the issues of consensus about development is the lack of leadership. The Commissioner complained that part of the problem was the two year term of the Mayor, which meant that he or she was running for office all of the time, and the low pay of that office which rendered it illegitimate. Business leaders, he complained, were not providing the leadership they could: "There are business leaders in this community who would have unbelievable power, should they choose to exercise it."

¹The view that the elites are obstacles to development is, perhaps not surprisingly, similar to the modernization theorists who advocated wide-spread entrepreneurship for the purposes of development.

The belief that the various sectors of the community are too mired in self interest to promote development is echoed by many of those in management positions. As the director of community relations at General Electric lamented, there are two general themes which provide impediments to development:

We are surrounded by mountains, and there is a general influx of two thrusts: First, GE brings people in and takes them out -- executives, like me who don't mind. I make the community wherever I am sent. Second, New Yorkers, those who come and stay and really think that this is beautiful, lets start up a restaurant, but quick, close the door behind us as we don't want this to be spoiled. West Stockbridge wants West Stockbridge the way it is. It [Pittsfield] was an isolated community for a long time; solely built in this century in pioneering work by GE. The work of transforming and GE -- the community hasn't ebbed and flowed with the rest of the world.

Native versus Non Native Views of Development

Differences between native and non-native views of development are based on views and experiences of the community. Long term residents are concerned about stability and the continued functioning of the community's structures. Many General Electric workers and others with a history of living with the Corporation are wary of private industry interests, exposing a belief, as Mayor Smith complained, "that private enterprise should be separate from government as church from state." The struggle to preserve

tradition among changing circumstance produces conflicts with non-native views that see opportunities for capital accumulation in national trends. Development specialists, whether they be developers or city managers, often fail to reconcile the values of the community with the behaviors and attitudes they are trying to change.

The belief that General Electric built the community is at the roots of the differences between native and non-native points of view. General Electric has been the major industry in the area since 1904. The Corporation prevented other companies from settling in the area, had considerable influence over the City Council, employed generations from the same family and provided a sense of security for its employees. When the umbrella of the Corporation started to break down during the 1970's, Pittsfield became analogous to a small colonial state which had just been granted independence: it had no mechanisms in place to deal with the new status.

For the generations of residents who live in Pittsfield, General Electric was an industry that was supported by the community and which was built on the community's labor. The difference in perspective has generated a "we" and "them" dichotomy appearing most vividly in the deliberations of city government. This "we" and "they" is not based so much on class in Pittsfield as it is a reflection of a battle

over turf and the perceived responsibility of industry to the community by management and labor. The defacto leadership -- those in political or appointed office who are responsible for the maintenance of community organization -- are torn between pro- and anti- development forces. The residents of Pittsfield reacted to the unsettling of the industrial scene in contradictory ways -- relying on the Corporation for guidance while aware that it was not providing the same leadership it has in the past.

The first economic development officer we interviewed (and Pittsfield's first Commissioner of Economic Development) described Pittsfield as "a community of fifty thousand run like a ma and pa grocery store." Born in Pittsfield but raised and newly replanted from Boston, she was openly frustrated by her inability to convince government officials of the necessity for a commitment to development efforts. The problem of attracting industry to the area was exacerbated by a feeling of many that the City was not committed to the effort, leading one reporter to note that "persuading the head of a growing company to locate a plant and high paying jobs here is similar in one respect, to training a mule: first, you have to get his attention. That can be difficult when other cities from Quincy to Haverhill are performing their own serenades" (Katz, *Berkshire Eagle*: 9/15/80). The then Mayor of the City, Charlie Smith, while believing that "Pittsfield's like a

bubble about to burst," was elected largely on his efforts in opposition to the Pyramid Mall, a proposed 600,000 square foot retail center. The successful opposition was backed by the community but branded the Mayor anti-business, a label which stuck throughout his term in Office despite his increasing cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. The belief that local residents are primarily anti-development is reflected in the choice of economic development officers who have all lived outside of the community. Disappointed by community infighting and unsuccessful attempts at industrial rezoning, This Commissioner resigned from her job to become a development consultant and finally left the region entirely to work in Washington. Mayor Smith commented upon her departure that "I've always known [she] was far too talented to remain for very long in the community development position," particularly "at the salary it pays." Her replacement was recruited from city management, a contract manager who supervised the demolition program that leveled a large section of the west side of town:

Q: What were you doing before you came here:

I was a contract manager for the city. And before that I ran a demolition program...The outlook now seems to be more of rehabilitation.

Q: Could you comment on that?

Well, you have to consider it in general terms. You have to relate it to the national economy ...Basically what we've done is clean up a lot of the undesirable buildings over on the west side.

That is basically what community development is about. We found that there were a number of buildings that made a dent in the city of Pittsfield. They've been condemned for years now. With one man the City had been chasing this man for 20 years just to get this building torn down. And finally, the city had no program for doing this, and finally we put together this program that said if you cooperate with the city of Pittsfield, we'll tear down the building and you will hold title to the land. If you don't want to cooperate, we'll take you to court, and finally we'll demolish your house and we'll put a lien on your property. Using that approach about two and a half years ago we started this demolition process. We've taken about 50 houses today, over on Dewey and Robinson and places like that...After tearing those houses down, in a very short period of time, it's turned those neighborhoods around. All of a sudden you have a vacant lot that is seeded over and they are taking pride in their houses, they've put fences up and they've started mowing their lawns. They have a real pride in the neighborhood because these real eyesores are gone. They don't have to live with it any more in their lives.

The emphasis on the cosmetic changes to Pittsfield's neglected houses reflected a concern by many community residents that the economic scene had deteriorated. It also reflected an attempt for City managers to generate enthusiasm among community residents who were becoming dissatisfied with city management. Faced with the problem of a small City government trying to bring redevelopment to an area long held in account by General Electric, the Mayor appointed the Fisher Group from Troy, New York as the developer for the large downtown parcel. The appointment caused concern that the Housing Authority's purview was being eroded and that outside interests were being favored. During the meeting held to discuss the issue, The Fisher

Group "urged" immediate action and when it was suggested that other developers be interviewed, told the assembled City administrators that "to come back, we had to put four other opportunities on the shelf...We have to know where we stand. If the City has any interest in us, say 'Come on, let's go' with all alacrity and speed" ¹(BE: 7/10/81).

The second Commissioner of Community and Economic Development saw his role as integrating industrial and community development, cooperating with the Chamber of Commerce while maintaining and improving the beauty of the area. The delicate balance between the City Council's mistrust of industrial development and the need for industrial zoning could be handled, he felt, by good planning and communication among the concerned parties. A major problem acknowledged by all development analysts was the lack of appropriately zoned land and the resistance by many in the community to change zoning standards. The Commissioner succeeded in rezoning 400 acres for industrial development. When asked how it was accomplished, he responded:

Well, I think it was the way it was handled and I think it was a question of timing, too. There was a need for it and I think that it was handled correctly. See we involved them in the process

¹Two years later the the City was to blame for the lack of progress on downtown development, complaining that "as of this moment, we're quite frustrated as to how this is going to happen...we try to be understanding" (BE, 7/15/83).

and we told them what we were going to do and why we were going to do it.

Despite efforts towards new industrial development, this Commissioner believed that it was the new directions at General Electric that would point to further development in the area, just as many of the community's residents believed that the corporation could "recover" from its scaling down of production. The building of the plastic's technology center was seen by the Commissioner (and by many others) as a cataclysm for offshoots in plastics and lighting technology, a hope which had its historical base in the branching out of the area's plastic firms in the 1950's. General Electric's employment of some fifty odd engineers gave fuel to directions that had a very limited base:

General Electric is bringing alot of high priced talent into the Pittsfield market and its a transforming effect. What's happening here now is that Pittsfield's population itself has been transformed from a tank town to a high collar, very professional yuppie type...And the whole outlook of GE and the City of Pittsfield in the support services, the educational system and so forth has changed. There's a great demand for artistic and cultural resources that we already had before. We have a community art center that ten years before we didn't. There's also a public theater in town. There's the Berkshire Ballet and other institutions.

The search for new directions in development was a response to a shrinking tax base, the unsuccessful attempts to lure manufacturing industry into the area and the ambivalence of

the community at large towards the need for development as the managers were defining it. Ideal types in both tourist, service and manufacturing development were often mentioned in interviews with city officials as occurring despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The net result was the burning out of officials in the scramble to prove progress, and the continual fights over turf. When we first visited the Director of the Berkshire Economic Revitalization Corporation, we noted that his offices were in the basement of a peripherally located building where he functioned with a half time secretary. The final demise of his organization was attributed by the City Council members who voted against the continued funding of the organization as a result of the failure to attract industry but was more widely attributed to the lack of political connections by the organization to factional city interests.

The second Commissioner of Community and Economic Development left in 1986 to work for the area's congressman. He did leave visible signs of city development: plans for an airport connector road and a designated industrial park. The City was still unable, however, to attract substantial outside industry to the area and had lost the only commercial airline which resided at the airport complex.

I joked with the new Commissioner of Community and Economic development that when I was told a new person had been hired

to fill the post, I wondered whether the job didn't have some hazardous aspects. The Commissioner laughed but knowingly related his background as a city planner and administrator from a neighboring state, stating that he could "assimilate what's going on and draw some very, what I think are very, valid conclusions, but I sure can't defend them in public, I sure can't prove them. The bulk of what I see happening, the public doesn't want to hear." Like his forebearers, this manager believed that industry can be attracted to the area, if firm owners and managers are treated right, and that the area can benefit from the State's prominence in the computer industry and General Electric's plastics division. When asked why he came to Pittsfield, he responded

Pittsfield is one of the few towns, few communities I looked at as having an interesting opportunity. Pittsfield is the type of community where it can balance the split between service industries and manufacturing and make a goal of it. Most communities I see now as a necessity making the economic transition into service industry, with manufacturing very rapidly declining. Pittsfield because of its central location among the computer firms and other related type industries, we need to clean up the issue of the bypass, get it linked to the interstate. I think you'd see Pittsfield blossom as an entirely new industrial revolution here.

/So you think the bypass is the main issue here/

Without a link to the interstate I don't think that will happen here, in any great or substantial manner. But if it does happen, you'll see it happen so fast it will be mind boggling to the people here.

Like his predecessors, this Commissioner believed that the only hope for development is in attitudinal changes on the part of the city's residents which will generate a "take-off" in the area's economy. Although he is more realistic about the role of the major corporation and the constraints under which the City operates, his optimism is rooted in the development strategies which focus on individual awareness:

You always have four, five, five basic issues to be balanced. You have tourism, industry, large scale commercial, housing, and I can't remember the fifth, oh, service industries as opposed to manufacturing industries. You have those basic competing uses. I would say as recently as five years ago, most people would consider them incompatible. Now days communities such as Pittsfield are beginning to realize that they are not only not incompatible, they are specifically in effect compatible. That is a key attitudinal change in Pittsfield. Without that attitude, I would have a gloomy forecast for the next five years. Because that attitude has change significantly and is still changing in a favorable direction, I see the growth potential there.

Uneven Development and Relations of Dependency

Uneven development, the process whereby one sector of the economy is developing or declining more rapidly than another, is witnessed in the extreme in towns and cities where the economy is controlled by a multinational. Bluestone (1972) has commented that the "dynamics of the American economy are best described by the law of uneven development. Those who control capital resources in the

economy will tend over time to reinvest in those particular product lines, machinery, geographical areas, and workers which promise the highest return on dollar investment" (1972:66). This process results in the concentration of industrial assets and wealth within a small circle of industrialists, and "the more concentrated economic wealth, the smaller the circle with disproportionate influence in government circles" (*Ibid.*:67). The consequence in Pittsfield, predictably, is the lopsided influence of General Electric in all development decisions. For multinational corporations, development is synonymous with an increase in capital accumulation. Unlike family, labor and community strategies, this development is unconcerned with human issues and focused on the expansion of capital.

For many years, power transformers were a profitable industry for the General Electric corporation and thus were a successful enterprise in the community. Even at the time the power transformer division was closed in Pittsfield, it was still profitable. When the division failed to keep up with the pace of capital accumulation in the corporation's other divisions, it was shuttered. The human interface between this decision and the effects on the community were not important enough to forestall the redirection of capital into more profitable concerns.

In areas outside of industrial development, however, the community has been the lesser player in development processes as well. Pittsfield has watched the tremendous growth in summer arts tourism -- music, theater and dance -- for years as tourists from New York and Boston have flocked to Jacobs Pillow, Tanglewood, the Williamstown Theater Festival and other cultural institutions. The community has tried to capitalize on this interest with the formation of the Berkshire Ballet and the Berkshire Public Theater, and City Government entered the ring with ARTABOUT, a short lived arts festival in the early 1980s. As with industrial development, however, the City has had to be a secondary player in the tourist development around it. Like industrial development, tourists tend to invest their time and capital into known quantities with a history and a track record. While the Berkshire Ballet and the Public Theater have survived they have not begun to approach the successful operation of their more mature cousins. ARTABOUT was discontinued after failing to attract significant attention and profit.

As the community attempts to find workable redevelopment strategies, the history of uneven development continually reappears in the form of reputation (companies wary of competing for labor with a multinational, for example, are hesitant to move in), or though infrastructures. While the corporation claims to have stopped playing the role of

community economic development director, its past practices and future directions, and even the physical presence of its buildings, have a major effect on the direction of redevelopment issues and strategies.

The General Electric Donation

The largest single effort at initiating an infrastructure for new industry was provided by General Electric. The City had proposed an innovative idea for an "incubator facility"-- a building that could be divided up into small spaces for startup companies that could share bookkeeping, a typing pool, copying facilities and professional services such as a lawyer and an accountant. The Commissioner explained that he didn't

know all of the details, the mayor was involved with GE, and what was actually taking place in the course of the conversations was that GE was going to vacate a number of buildings, GE was also looking at how to dispose of a number of buildings which were subject to being torn down because they weren't suitable for renovation, other buildings were considered feasible but weren't determined yet as to what their usefulness was. And of course over in Schenectady they had just done the thing with donating the building. I think that is what actually occurred or they were in the course of looking at it. But there was an idea that there was something that might work in Pittsfield as well.

Enthusiasm was tempered from the start by the condition that the building be accepted by the city sight unseen.

Pittsfield was in the middle of a major conflict brought about by retired GE workers concerned with PCB residues left from transformer production, (discussed in Chapter Seven), and was concerned about entering into agreements that might prove the City liable for cleanup efforts. Although there was general optimism about the donation, the Commissioner convinced other City administrators that it had to be conditional:

Did they know which building it was?

We have some idea of which building it might have been, but no confirmation from GE...I was one of the parties that made a very strong recommendation that if the building were offered, that the City's acceptance of it be contingent on a 90 day period in which environmental testing and several other works would be done in checking the feasibility of reuse of the building. If that were in fact found to be such that everything were found to be okay, there were no problems, maintenance of the building made sense, there were no environmental issues involved with it, all of the various things that might be potential problems if we moved an industry into it, everything came out perfectly fine, then we ought to be looking at accepting the building.

The City's reluctance came as a shock to the corporation, which was counting on the donation as a gesture of good will towards the City and a tax writeoff. It was clear that the tax aspect was, in the Commissioner's words, a "dead giveaway." Unused to the City government's assertiveness, a scramble ensued:

There were a series of management type analysis that were done by GE. We had input into them in

some respects, but mostly it was an internal matter. And there was a waiting period, I think it was mid December, before we were notified that GE for its own corporate reasons had some legal issues involved, I think one of the things that was cited was security within their own plant compound. But they had some serious corporate legal issues that were involved, there were some management decisions that were not able to be made in a timely manner. They didn't know themselves that they could safely give us a building, and therefore as it was important that it occur before the end of the calendar year they did not believe that it was possible. Then after the first of January we were simply verbally from an official source advised that the offer which was being considered was no longer open to discussion, It was a closed subject.

Although the problem of pollution was never discussed, when we interviewed the Commissioner six months later, the topic was more open:

Building one hundred as we discussed at the time has been resolved, its not available to the city or to anyone else for that matter, as is the case with a number of other buildings there which were looked at, because there was a concern that there might be the pollution problems, they were very carefully not stating that there was a pollution problem but concerned that there might be, and therefore did not want to raise the possibility of either inflicting that problem on someone else or incurring the additional liability as the case may be...its a very substantial area and they found various deposits of pollutants on an adjoining property, again a company that was in the process of a major expansion, the expansion process has been shut down for over a year now as a result of finding the pollution.

The influence of the corporation over current development efforts extends beyond the City's willingness to confront the issue. While claiming that they can "no longer be daddy warbucks", General Electric dismissed the fears of wide

spread pollution and made it clear that direct confrontations would threaten "the viability" if the corporation's ties with the area. Pressed to find alternative directions for development efforts, and hampered by a history of corporate control over community affairs, development planning is left to avenues that do not impinge on the corporation's dominance. The City's relationship with the corporation has been restructured to accept a lessened public presence of the corporation in community affairs, while still forced to play a secondary role in long term development efforts. The Commissioner's position as an outsider involved in local administrative efforts allowed him to take a harder line on General Electric's actions at the same time that it kept him from the internal dynamics of the City's relationships with the Corporation (as Commissioner of Community and Economic Development, he was kept unaware of the initial discussions about the building donation). It was perhaps the first time, however, that the corporation had openly questioned about the responsibility for its intentions, an action which marked a change in community affairs.

Bypasses and Parking Lots

Capital mobility in late capitalism has produced a culture which runs. Corporations and companies run to different

regions and offshore in search of cheap labor; like their counterparts in the nineteenth century, workers run from one company to another seeking employment, and stores run from one section of the city to another in search of customers. The mode of transportation differs, however, and is at the basis of the community's relations of power. While Corporations manipulate capital flight through microprocessor technology, individuals and the families are dependent on and are limited to their cars for movement. The development of a culture dependent on cars in the United States has been one of the most sustained reactions to capitalist development, encouraged by the car manufacturers and providing options to individuals that their pre-car counterparts were without.

Parking lots and the issue of parking have continually been an issue in Pittsfield, although one that is less contested than other issues around development. No one argues that more parking is needed -- the conflicts stem from how parking garages are to be financed and how much tourists and residents coming into the downtown area will be forced to pay for the privilege. Federal money first became available for a parking garage in the downtown area in the early 1980's when it was assumed that the Pyramid Companies would build a retail mall downtown. The plans for the garage were rejected with that of the mall (discussed below) and a new opportunity did not arise until 1985. Faced with declining

sales in downtown stores, and the movement of stores from the City's main street to the new mall outside of the city, one city councilman has suggested that the answer lies in providing diagonal parking instead of the traditional parallel mode. Parking has been used as a sign of deterioration or progress as conflicts around more substantial efforts have stalled. That the opening of the new parking garage, scheduled for the Spring of 1988, was also late in opening prompted the *Berkshire Eagle* to declare *Pittsfield: Where Bulldozers Just Doze:*

The announcement last week that the new \$8 million downtown parking garage wouldn't open on time had a sadly familiar ring to it...So it goes with at least half a dozen other major public works projects in Pittsfield: They seem to take years to materialize, if they happen at all. To newcomer and native alike, this city seems a place where ideas linger for decades, opportunities come and go and nothing happens fast.

The development of the urban renewal property behind North Street, vacant since the 1960s, is a good illustration of the phenomenon. After the Pyramid Companies, the developers of the Berkshire Mall in Lanesboro, abandoned their plans for a suburban-style shopping mall there in 1980, the city struggled for years to lure other types of development. It ended up building the parking garage as an enticement for office-building growth. Now even that will be late (*Berkshire Eagle*. 3/20/88).

The need to quickly generate cash revenues in a declining economy has generated symbols that encapsulate condensed versions of community conflict. It is not surprising that in a culture which has been transformed by the automobile

industry, the issue of a by-pass to provide access to the Massachusetts Turnpike while bypassing the downtown area has been a point of contention since the late 1940s.¹ Waves of support and opposition by community groups and political parties came and went depending on the political atmosphere and the trends in vogue among development specialists. Proponents of the by-pass argue that improved transportation in and around Pittsfield will encourage industry to expand and attract outside industries. Those opposed have argued that a by-pass for truck and other through traffic around Pittsfield will hurt the character of the Berkshires and encourage shopping centers around the highway, further discouraging tourists and local businesses.

The Bypass issue abated until 1981, when a community referendum was held on the issue. The vote passed in favor of a bypass road, only to be thwarted by the lack of funding to build it. Throughout the decade of the 1980s, discussions and debates continued on the federal, state and local levels concerning the financing of the road. Governor Dukakis campaigned in 1982 in support of the bypass and his election paved the way for state approval if funds could be found. By 1988, when it looked like funds could be allocated, another referendum was held. Unlike the first,

¹For an interesting discussion of the transformation of American society by the automobile industry, and the restructuring of corporate capital that this entailed, see Ronald Edsforth, *Class Conflict and Cultural Consensus: The Making of a Mass Consumer Society in Flint, Michigan* (Rutgers University Press, 1987).

this polling resulted in an upset victory for the by-passes' opponents, who have vowed to remain active:

You can have a referendum, but the state just seems to keep on rolling. They have time on their side, and they have method on their side. They wear people down.

The referendum was not binding and although the new Mayor campaigned against it during her election, the first stages of the road were being built by the late fall of 1988.

The issue of the bypass encompasses the contradictions of city government in their clearest form. There is an awareness that city government must be responsive to the community at the same time that it appeases the wishes of industry. Mayor Smith was clear in his assessment of the importance of the working population when he told us in in 1984 that

First of all, no one gets elected unless the blue collar worker is behind him. No one gets elected. I don't care whether it's here, or at the state level, or the president of the United States. If you don't have the working class people with you, you are not going to get elected to public office. The difficulty comes in when a major or a governor, or any elected official begins to work with Big Business. If you're not careful you can be tagged as Big Business oriented and that you're not taking care of the working man. You have to be able to relate to working class people, that everything that you're doing helping business and industry, and the large corporations, is that there is to ensure them that they have jobs and

that their children have jobs and that everything is directly for the working class.

Obligated to respond to both private and public sector interests, city managers are forced to compromise and defend their opinions. Although the Mayor and his staff operate within the ideology which business provides them, the attempts at consensus which reelection requires often thwarts previously planned efforts. The impression of utter chaos requires that social scientists studying the restructuring of communities go beyond traditional sociological analyses. The day to day working relationships the community requires militates against the "reasoning" proposed by academic planning experts (Friedman, 1987). The inability to carry out planning efforts, or to plan at all has itself become a major issue in Pittsfield. The Mayor elected in 1988 won on a platform that vowed "to restore 'vision' and long range planning to city government."

Mall Wars

Like the Bypass, debates over the existence and placement of a major retail mall has plagued the community for nearly twenty years. The height of the conflict occurred in 1981, when a plan for a downtown mall proposed by the Pyramid Corporation was rejected by the Mayor. The Pyramid Corporation sued the City, claiming that it had an understanding with the previous Mayor for the project. The

conflict between the Mayor and the Mall became a symbol of the differences between the private and the public sector, between businesses represented by the Chamber of Commerce and local government. Local residents were worried about the effect of the Mall on the downtown area, an already declining section of the City. The wish to keep the original street plans intact prompted City Officials to build a model of Pittsfield as it looked at the beginning of the century:

The reason we did that is that we wanted to show people what it looked like and how it evolved. In fact, the downtown has its own character and spirit. The idea is that the downtown will respond when the market is there. The Pyramid project was an ambitious project--what would have happened there is that it would have dwarfed everything around it...it would have annihilated all of North Street, and there would have been vacant stores all up and down north street. They might have busted and we would have had North street on our hands. But basically North street twenty five years ago, North and West streets were complementary to each other, like two limbs of a body...In addition to having a number of stores and shops down on West street, there were three major restaurants and a train station in a half-mile. It was a very, very beautiful quintessential New England type of town. That was destroyed in the old 1967 urban type of philosophy. And they took down alot of houses around there. They destroyed them--you can see the houses up on the hill. That was basically the economic base for downtown Pittsfield. They did their business downtown. They wiped them out of there and they wiped out alot of the stores and you are operating basically on one lung. Now it's coming back to a philosophy we think is appropriate to downtown Pittsfield. Shopping centers are certainly appropriate, there are plenty of them to go around. But Pittsfield is different. The per capital income of Pittsfield is about \$18,000. We're also in terms of surveys one of the highest communities for per capita

savings. So there's a great market here for a good quality store. It's going to happen and I think we've been on a 10 year decline primarily to the GE. But the decline has slowed up to nothing now and is practically at a breakeven (Angelo, July 5, 1984).

The Pyramid Corporation lost their suit and the Mayor was eventually able to convince the Chamber (at least publically), that it was his intention to work with them. The end of the lawsuit, however, was not the end of the mall story. What ensued was a seven year free-for-all where other developers saw opportunities open up for them and the city became mired in conflicts over the direction of development and the need for tax revenues. The Pyramid Corporation relocated the site of their mall outside of the City limits and commenced building without permits. Two other developers, Melvin-Simon Associates and Shopco proposed plans for Malls, the permits for which were deadlocked in the city council. The Commissioner's analysis of the situation in 1987 was that

Pyramid is going to get built, unless Shopco or Coltsville does. Pyramid already started construction without legal permits. That's stopped, but they'll be back in business before too long, given the chance. Pittsfield holds one vital card on Pyramid. They need a sewer connection. They have to come to Pittsfield. So far they've been told what they can do with their sewer connection. Put it to use early. Shopco has been denied its curbcuts. No curbcuts, no stores. That leaves Shopco remaining. The city, for fiscal reasons has a desperate need to assure that the shopping mall ends up within city lines, Pittsfield, any one of the three, Pittsfield is going to have all the impact, negative fiscal

impacts. No matter how you slice it, Pittsfield will get virtually one hundred percent. There'll be some spillover, maybe Lanesboro, other towns in general, but the severest impacts will be on Pittsfield. Pittsfield already has been headed for fiscal problems, without or with any mall being built...The City has a need to see an additional set of values that range from 30 to 50 million dollars.

As the Pyramid Companies did begin construction, the stores on North Street in downtown Pittsfield began making plans to relocate. The largest department store in the area closed its doors in 1987, citing financial difficulties. The fight between the Pyramid Companies and the City continued as permits were denied and environmental impact statements enforced. Pyramid had constructed the shell for the mall on wetlands purchased from a local family in what was deemed the most expensive land deal in Berkshire County history. The land was bought for \$12,368,743 or \$108,498 an acre. The *Berkshire Eagle* and other local papers, as well as the *New York Times* followed the progress of the fight between outside developer and City, prompting daily stories that took on a ring of soap opera politics. In its news analysis of the mall war, the *Berkshire Eagle* noted that the Pyramid Companies of Syracuse had a history of building without permission and overriding local concerns: "For years, the Pyramid Companies of Syracuse have quietly altered the physical and political landscape of New York and New England, building huge upscale shopping malls and shaping the local governments that permitted them" (BE:3/20/88). The Company apparently had a history of choosing

"environmentally sensitive properties" and then "hired ex-governors, environmental agency lawyers, a town judge and a local legislative leader to plead its construction cause" (*Ibid.*). The company is now under investigation in three states, accused of buying elections by the New York Commission on Government Integrity. As *The Eagle* reported, "The commission last year uncovered evidence that Pyramid and the New York Republican State Committee joined forces to finance a 1985 town council race in Poughkeepsie at the time Pyramid needed a pro-mall council to approve plans for its 1 million square foot Galleria there" (*Ibid.*).

The dispute over the Companies operations gave local officials fuel in their dispute, and as of the summer of 1988, the Mall which had been fought over in one form or another for years and intensely disputed for two years stood finished but idle. Unable to open because of disputes over water rights, the mall was having major difficulties attracting workers who were unsure of its stability. The Mall finally succeeded in obtaining water rights by offering a two million dollar "hook up" charge, the first installment delivered after the new Mayor secretly provided water. The move was hotly contested in the City Council, one Councilor accusing the new Mayor of incompetence and selling out to powerful developers: "What this means is that Pyramid is in control of the City...It shows how they corrupt the governmental process...They created an invisible, secret

government to achieve what they could not achieve above board."

The other two developers are still eyeing construction in Pittsfield despite the fact that the Pyramid Companies could not attract the upscale tenants they had envisioned. The upturn in tourism in the area continues to attract retail hopes as the fears for the downtown area become realized.

Ideology and Community Crisis

Ideology has a major function in the maintenance of social order in class based societies. Marx asserted in *The German Ideology* that the ruling class is expressed by ruling ideas, "ideas which become the ruling ideas of an epoch" (Ricoeur, 1986: 254). Besides the simple expression of dominance, however, ideology has three important functions. As Ricoeur (1986) states, ideology serves as systematic distortion, as a mode of the legitimation of power and as a mode of integration. The schemata of ideology as integration Ricoeur borrows from Geertz, who tells us that "it is through the construction of ideologies, schematic images of social order, that man makes himself for better or worse a political animal." (Quoted in Ricoeur, 1986:218).

By all considered accounts, Pittsfield is a community in crisis. The genesis of the crisis is international as well as local; it reflects a basic restructuring of the capitalist system on a world-wide scale. The means by which Pittsfield's population has adapted to changes in the economic scene are both contradictory and acts of resistance. Hoping that the economic status quo, in this case, the corporation, can maintain community viability as it has in the past, there has been no active signs of struggle against the company. The "negotiated class

struggle" is still taking place in the context of union and management, although little real negotiation can take place when entire divisions of production are closed down. What is more complex is the relationships of economic viability by which the community functions as a corporate entity. Worldwide restructuring has forced community management to confront issues of employment and tax revenues. The context of the battle, however, is in the realm of ideology. Ideology in Pittsfield serves as distortion as it positions the corporation in a place without alternatives, "responding to the market," "keeping the corporation economically viable." The corporation is presented as an entity simply doing what it has to do. It functions as legitimation as in Ricoeur's terms, "a claim to authority made by all forms of authority." City managers and development specialists, whether they be public or privately oriented, struggle to have their directions accepted as correct. Reactions which are not in keeping with stated goals are by necessity rejected and labeled as counterproductive. The insistence in Pittsfield that "attitudes need to be changed" is a direct reflection of opinions and actions which run counter to development strategies. The ultimate goal is the provision of an atmosphere conducive to the attraction of private industry and the investment of their capital.

The resistance expressed by homeowners, workers and families to the development process are not clear indications of

class struggle but adaptive strategies for the maintenance of community. As Brook and Finn (1986:125) write, "We would not argue that certain aspects of working class ideology are representations of the ruling class, though we would take issue with any suggestions that this is done conspiratorially. But even here, the ideas of the ruling class are endorsed, modified, or rejected according to certain material conditions". A large majority of the Pittsfield population does fit into Stearns (1980:626) description of working class culture as "a preservation of tradition amid admittedly changing circumstances." The material conditions of restructuring in Pittsfield are lowering the standard of living. Even while unemployment is increasing, service sector industries are finding it difficult to recruit the workers they require. Workers who have been laid off from the General Electric plant as well as others unable to find jobs are leaving the area rather than accept employment beneath the standard the area has enjoyed. The new retail mall which recently opened has found it so difficult to staff its establishments that it has asked the federal government for permission to recruit labor for Mexico and Latin America.

The development strategies proposed by managers and specialists for Pittsfield have not been successful and the ambivalence on the part of the population has frustrated

capital investors. More significantly, union members have refused to accept lower standards for companies being recruited to the area than those that they have won in years of struggle. One relatively large company, for example, had planned to move into the area but finally decided against it after statements made by a local union leader and the Mayor regarding their labor practices. The Commissioner of Economic Development related the story in 1987:

We just tried, we just lost a large firm, looking for 128,000 square feet. We had everything put together, they took a union vote, the union voted it down, head of one of the local labor union and the Mayor both made some statements, caused the company great upset. They were all set to lay it to rest, to sign the dotted line to move here. The combination of the two statements in quick succession led the company to say wait a minute, let's rethink this.

The labor union leader's at GE comments were that there was absolutely no question that in their opinion that industry was trying to bale out of a union situation and when they hit the ground in Pittsfield they're going to be unionized and it's going to be a tough stand. That scared the hell out of the company. And the Mayor's comment was to the effect that the company had used Pittsfield, had not dealt with us in good faith, had used us.

They were looking at confronting a union issue, not a tough stand. What the union did was instead of essentially serving notice that we do anticipate unionizing you, but being reasonable about how we do it, they took the position that we're going to union you, we're going to be very tough about it, you're going to pay a price for having screwed the union down in Waterbury.

The inability of city management to achieve consensus on the development process and the pull of City government between public and private concerns has led to attempts at "quick fixes" such as the parking garage. The first priority is the generation of tax revenues that can sustain the infrastructure of the community. More recent community planning attempts have encompassed what some experts have long proposed: that development strategies concentrate on what already exists in the community, the small industries which have sustained growth during a period of major decline. The next chapter will discuss the genesis and evolution of one group of small business entrepreneurs who have been pointed to as the hope of Pittsfield's future, and who have succeeded in having the area recognized as "the plastics capital of America."

Chapter Six

Uneven Development and Community Response

The restructuring of industry presents challenges to localities struggling to maintain the continuity of communities. Community responses to economic change encompass all of the features of kinship, friendship and trust available to counter the increased alienation that restructuring presents. This chapter will explore responses to a multinational's evolution and the adaptive strategies which, so far, have provided a limited alternative to the domination of production by a single company.

In her work in a Bolivian tin mining community, June Nash (1979: 325), pointed to the three sources of alienation by which Marx analyzed capitalist production:

Marx pointed to the sources of alienation in capitalist society as 1) separation of the producers from the product, or the alienation of surplus value; 2) Separation of the producers from the means of production, which forces them to become dependent on the owners of capital to make a living; and 3) Separation of the producers from the source of meaningful self-involvement in the work process.

To this definition Nash adds a fourth component, "the separation of the worker from the sense of identity with a community" (*Ibid.*). The struggle to maintain a community in

the face of industrial restructuring posits adaptations which can strengthen kinship and friendship ties and the cultural identity necessary to weather fluctuations in the workplace.

The legacy of modernization theory in regions undergoing economic restructuring has led to a renewed interest in the place of entrepreneurs in development strategies. Unlike the proponents of modernization theory who focus on individual actors in the market place, recent theories of entrepreneurial activity analyze the social relationships in the context of the "opportunity structure" (defined as the economic, social, technological and political conditions) that exist in any given historical period (Greenfield, Sticken and Aubrey *et. al.* 1979). Benedict (1968) showed how families are factored into the development process as claims to kin based loyalty work to the advantage of new enterprises. In Pittsfield, kinship and friendship have figured largely in the development of entrepreneurial activity.

The major portion of the sustained entrepreneurial activity in Pittsfield has occurred as a direct reaction to corporate decisions made at General Electric. The activity is an attempt to maintain community while furthering economic and family goals and has led to a new industrial base.

Plastics Firms and Uneven Development

The operative word in Pittsfield during the early 1980's was plastics. Reminiscent of the industrialist's advice to the college student in *The Graduate*, plastics operations are still seen by community residents as the wave of the region's future. Many of the new plastics firms occupy abandoned mill sites, symbolically voicing their ties to the community. While in appearance the development of the small firms parallels that of its predecessors a century or more before, the differences are striking.

In 1987, there were twenty six plastics firms in the Pittsfield area employing 1,200 individuals, roughly the same number that worked for the GE plastics division in the late 1940s. These firms are an outgrowth of the GE plastics moldmaking division which ceased production in 1953 and that saw the last vestiges of it's plastics operation, Genal, dismantled in 1983. The plastics firms in Pittsfield are viewed by optimistic residents as the Berkshire's answer to route 128 around Boston or to California's Silicon Valley. They represent an independent proliferation of industry not financially dependent on the dominant source of industrial development, General Electric. Development planners claim that the corporation's "commitment" to the area by placing the international plastics research and development

headquarters in Pittsfield will encourage industrial plastics growth, although it is equally obvious that these two industrial complexes have very different resources and aims and operate on very different ideological levels.

The first industrial plastics moldmaking plant, Moldmasters, was established in 1946 by Tom Kushi in a shop near a grocery store in the Lakewood area of Pittsfield. Kushi had worked in the GE plant as well as the local high school and his first customer was the Sprague Electric plant in North Adams. He benefited from his association with General Electric managers who sent work his way. Soon after the establishment of Moldmasters, a group of tool makers from General Electric's chemical division (as the plastics division was then known) left to establish Marlin Mold, a larger firm that has spawned the majority of subsequent development.

There are sixteen independent moldmaking companies that trace their roots to General Electric (*Berkshire Eagle Review*: 1/28/84), branching from General Electric and "Marland College" as many of the firm owners refer to the operation where they served their apprenticeships. As one mold operator told us:

In the 1940's, General Electric plastics included 100 employees making molds. When they closed down production, some of the men who had been trained in GE plastic opened up their own shops: Marland

Mold, Modern Mold, Moldmaster Engineers. Others evolved into mold making in the late 1940's as a result of the spurt in local companies with the departure of GE. I was at GE and left in 1953.

There are ten firms in the Berkshires that use the molds produced by the moldmaking operations to produce plastic products. These companies also trace their evolution from the General Electric plant and the training which the founding fathers received there. Unlike the mold producing companies, however, these firms are likely to be allied with large conglomerates who purchase the large quantities of "widgets" made (by blowing, injecting or stamping plastic materials into mold cavities) that become the property of the purchasers.

Kinship, Friendship and the Entrepreneurial Spirit

The role of kinship and friendship in the evolution of the small firms in Pittsfield is recognized by the participants who built the industries, just as it is recognized that a common workplace generated the skill and knowledge that grounded the new industry.

The background of both the moldmaking and the plastic injection firms are traced through General Electric and to the Lakewood area of Pittsfield, where many Italian workers found their homes before, during and immediately after the

Second World War. When we asked one of its residents and a former Mayor of Pittsfield what it was like to live there, he responded that

In the Lakewood area, most of the people work for the General Electric...It is an older area, many of the homes are old, but they are very well kept. Lakewood has always been a community, like the North End of Boston. We have some problems but everyone knows who they are. You don't even have to say anything; its just -'watch that fellow' and that takes care of it. Back ago, you didn't have police coming down here; they wouldn't come down here. We had our own police. Everyone knew what was going on.

There is an atmosphere of obligation and trust in the community which parallels Stricken's (1979:160) findings among entrepreneurs in rural Wisconsin. He writes that there was a "relationship with their own people based upon 'trust,' a concept which they themselves articulated and which remains within the contemporary community as an understanding necessary for business activity...crucial to this concept of trust is the related concept of honoring one's word, of meeting one's obligations and responsibilities, without the need to force compliance. This is not to say that no sanctions are involved. Rather, failure to fulfill one's obligations is met first with internal sanctions, the rupture of social relations, and the loss of reputation in the wider community which will sharply strain relations in the future. To go beyond informal

sanctions and to appeal to impersonal agencies represents a total breakdown in a relationship based on trust."

There still exists a "Plastics Alumni" Association that represents present and past workers from Marland Mold as well as the Chemical Division at the plant. The firms have bowling teams that compete on Friday nights, throw summer clambakes and are active in industry-specific self-help alliances that monitor markets and available technology. These ties are reinforced by friendship and kinship ties that extend beyond the present generation. Kinship has served as the basis for new industry as sons, brother and inlaws are trained and branch out into their own businesses. Members of the the Rufo family, for example, which started Lakewood Mold after George Rufo's apprenticeship at Marlin, opened the injection firms of Polymatrix and Syntronics and secured a market to which the parent firm could distribute their products.

The office where Bill Rufo spends his days at Polymatrix is large, carpeted and filled with the heads of moose he has bagged during hunting season. The size and furnishings of offices at the plastics firms are directly related to the age of the firms and the position of the owners in their extended families. This office offered musak as white noise to complement the wood paneling which gave the office a den-like quality. George grew up in Pittsfield, although not

in the Lakewood section. His first job was with a brother who owned an auto body business and he then worked at the plant in Distribution Transformers for thirteen years before leaving to join another brother's company, Lakewood Mold, presently located across the street. He is now the sole owner of Polymatrix, which he started with three partners in 1975. The business started with five women assemblers and three men who functioned as the molding managers. The plant now has a shifting population of 85 employees, the majority of them women who assemble the cassette boxes that supply one quarter of the United States market for audio tape housings. The seven men are the shift managers and mold engineers. The company had initial customers in Maine, and as Bill told us, "Our market exposure in tooling gave us a sense of its future. We actually underestimated the demand." At the time of our interview, the firm was in the process of expansion with funds from the Massachusetts Industrial Finance Association, tax bonds which have no restrictions on their use. Polymatrix, like most of the small plastics firms in the area, has never asked nor received funds from the City of Pittsfield or other Massachusetts agencies established for development purposes.

The diversification of Lakewood Mold into plastic injection businesses preserved kinship ties by offering opportunities to siblings and offspring. It provided an incentive for family members to stay in the area when they might have been

forced to leave in search of employment. Asked what he considered to be the advantages of operating in Pittsfield, the son of the founder, George Rufo Jr., laughed. He explained to us that the business did not depend on the local economy: their market stretched from Massachusetts to California and they did not use General Electric products. Furthermore, he stated that the infrastructure of the town mitigated against attracting industry and was a disadvantage for the industry located there:

Taxes are on the high side, and there is no incentive for the companies to locate in Pittsfield. There is no stimulus for business in general. The area is kind of depressed. If you get on a plane and travel for an hour in any direction, you see industry developing and happening, while that doesn't seem to be going on around here. The road system in Pittsfield is less than desirable, there is still no bypass, which they have been talking about for the past thirty years. The water system here is marginal; the sewer system is overtaxed -- you need facilities to attract people.

Relationships of trust bind families together just as they close out those from the outside. Most of the people who work at the plants were raised in Pittsfield. There is a code of secrecy regarding current and potential clients, employment and the technology used to make the products. Information is not freely offered to non-kinship allied firms or to outsiders. We found that it was easier to obtain information from newer businesses struggling to become established. Reasons for this secrecy encompass the

fear of union organization and the competition for customers. There is a myth generated by development specialists that the firms do substantial business with General Electric. The opposite is mostly the case. Firm owners, mold makers and injection alike, comb the country for potential sales and deal competitively with their geographic neighbors. Lakewood Mold, for example, does some limited work for General Electric, but survives largely on its relationship with such companies as IBM, Memorex, Bell and Howell, RCA (now owned by General Electric), Proctor and Gamble, and Westinghouse. For its part, General Electric has more often contracted outside the community for the testing and production of plastic products than it has relied on the sources at hand.

The entrepreneurial spirit comes from a sense of knowledge that is supported by generations of work in the General Electric plant. Nearly all of the owners we interviewed cited knowledge of the work process, products and potential markets either through personal experience or that of family members as the basis for starting their own firms.

It is a side of the class struggle which is not often recognized: the gaining of experience in the workplace and knowledge of the work process that lessens the alienation of labor. George Rufo pointed to his father, who worked at GE ordnance as his inspiring guide, while others saw the profit

to be made while working at the General Electric plant and noted the marketing techniques that the division employed. The support of kin and friendship groups works against Nash's fourth source of alienation, that of the worker from the community, as the two become intertwined.

We talked with the owner of one of the newest firms in the area who while not related by blood kinship to other firm owners, grew up in the area and was part of the extended kinship network that makes up the community. Richard Rilla worked for George Rufo Sr. at Marland Mold. Part of the "second generation" of firm entrepreneurs who were at Marland (along with Pyramid Mold Inc. and DAP Tool in Biddeford, Maine) we asked him to tell us how he came to start his business:

My experience began first of all in the local high school, in the vocational education department, taking the machine shop course in the early fifties, graduated out of there in 1956, and took an apprenticeship at Marland Mold College, which was then located on Newell Street...My experience grew with them and two other companies I went to Lakewood Mold as a supervisor, and there I saw a need, or a recognition of my own personal worth and decided to start my own company. I had an opportunity four years ago to buy American Mold and Tools out. At that point he was just a one man operation and he just wanted to retire, I bought all of his equipment, fixtures, and mold tools. With that came an immediate purchase order work, an existing customer that was located in New Jersey. Now I have seven full time employees and three part time employees...One woman who happens to be my wife, she does part time secretarial work, keeping the books, doing the taxes.

Q: Are any of the people you employ your relatives or your neighbors?

Some neighbors, they happen to live in the area that I live, down in Lakewood off Newell Street. It was handy for me [when I started to work] I could walk to work in the morning, and being a 16 year old kid, that was very easy to do.

Q: How much of your business is local and how much of it is out of town?

Out of town business comprises about 85 -90%. The local GE plastics operation does have a need for mold makers or tool makers. Through experimental or test work they are totally involved with all the time, developing different tensile strengths for their materials, which they need to have molded and tested. The primarily go out of the area to get this work done. I know quite a few people, personal friends and relatives that work in GE plastics, and they say that there's no way that they can get the local manufacturers to do that work because they've got people that just constantly go outside. For whatever ideological reasons they do it. They could, with what they do yearly keep five of these mold shops in Pittsfield easy, keep them totally booked.

Firm Ownership and Relations of Work

The labor intensive character of mold making and injection molding presents contradictions in the relations of work for the employees as well as the owners of the firms. The workers are overwhelmingly female performing low skill assembly jobs that consist of a monotonous routine with little required concentration. The relations of work in plastics are the result of the processes of technological deskilling. Women work quickly in brightly lit cubicles listening to the music of their choice on headphones,

militating against collaboration in the work process or communication that might lead to unionization. As National Public Radio reported in 1987, "In 1962 we told college graduates that their future was in plastics. Now its time to tell that to High School dropouts." The men are the skilled laborers who build the molds and manage the shops, often related by the kinship network that is Lakewood.

Beyond members of the Lakewood community however, the men who started these firms were active in the union at General Electric. The union protected employment and entitlements and served as a further basis for strengthening the community through voluntary association. Yet as one owner told us,

There is no union at Polymatrix, although there was some talk about it four years ago. Ethyl is the only local plastic molding firm which has a union--they can better deal with one because they are a larger, nationally based company. They have the where withall to contend with unions. For a small company like Polymatrix, the union could be very harmful.

The position of the firms owners in the class structure of Pittsfield is thus contradictory, analogous to Engel's description of small employers in England:

Quite as badly off under the small employers as under the manufacturers, with the single difference that they, in turn, may become small employers, and so attain a certain independence - that is to say they are at best less directly

exploited by the bourgeoisie than under the factory system. Thus the small employers are neither genuine proletarians, since they live in part upon the work of their apprentices, nor genuine bourgeois, since their principal means of support is their own work. This peculiar midway position (of such small employers)...is to blame for their having so rarely joined wholly and unreservedly in the...labor movement.

The American based ideology of egalitarianism and upward mobility has worked, to a certain extent, for these small shop owners, who are less alienated in the workplace if not more so at home. Eighty to one hundred hour weeks are normal working hours and firm owners do not have the time to enjoy the rewards of their labor. The owners are aware of the contradictions between their present and past positions, justifying the adoption of non-union stands on the basis of the size of their plants and the family nature of their operations. There is a sense of pride in the quality of the work produced. One of the owners of the oldest firms told us that:

We are competing with shops that hire minorities. We do our training and want workers we train since we work with expensive materials. We don't make junk. Some of the materials cost four to five dollars a pound, and our customers know what's good. They are mostly industrial concerns that are quality conscious. They check us out very carefully. We give a very thorough training.

Yet there is still a strong belief that unions should play a part in determining economic policy. The owner of a business that makes encapsulating molds told us:

I think the unions are very negligent today in not jumping on the situation, just with this yen thing, you know, a couple of weeks ago every time you turn the TV on, they had some economist, and I don't know where these guys come from, the woodwork, but talking about the evils of the weak dollar and the strong yen, causing inflation, causing interest rates to go up, none of them talk about the fact that it could create some jobs in this country. Cheap Japanese televisions going up in price. So what, maybe we ought to take them here, you know. It's not the unions pushing on that aspect at least so the common guy could know that with those prices going up it could mean employment. I don't know, to me they are very negligent in that.

The differences between the entitlements won as union members and their reaction to the "negotiated class struggle" that would provide benefits to their workers is illuminating. The problem of class relations is disguised by the competition among countries and the realities of local economies. Referring to a bill Senator Kennedy introduced into legislation, the same owner told us:

Right now the big buz word is competitiveness, blah blah it goes on and on, they talk inherently about the currency exchange, now with the Yen and wage rates abroad and what not. But you just stop and look at the mandated costs of doing business in the country. For instance, you take things for granted, we have minimum wage, today, who can survive on that anyway, but minimum wage, we have OSHA, we have the EPA, you know when I was an apprentice, I worked in places where you could have been killed, we were stepping over power lines that were just laying on the floor. I can remember a friend of mine just plugged something into an outlet and the thing exploded and he got third degree burns on his arm, and OSHA has done away with this. OSHA is good, and the EPA is good, we need minimum wage, we have to have health

insurance -- but, the fact of the matter is, we're being asked to compete against people who have none of these. These companies out of South Korea, and third world nations, they're doing business like we did back at the turn of the century. I think we're cooked, right at that level, even before you get the currency exchanges stuff. To me, that is a fundamental thing, I don't see anybody addressing themselves to that...And this gets back to the mandated benefits problem. To me its a fundamental problem that is really in the beginning. Just this year they tried to push through this parenting law, which means that I think that an 18 week leave of absence, for male or female, and not only for a child, I think it involves if you have an elderly parent you got to take care of, you have to continue the benefits, and then at the end of that period they can come back and say hey, I found another job, goodbye. All of these things they keep coming out with. Kennedy is trying to push mandated benefits. The intent of all these things is great, we just cannot afford it, its killing us.

By far the largest shop in the area and one of the largest moldmaking concerns in the country in 1983 was Ethyl Marland employing 150 people. The Ethyl company of Richmond, Virginia purchased Marland Mold and Greylock Plastics, consolidating a mold making and a plastics injection firm in Pittsfield in 1974, the same year that it closed one of its own plants in Puerto Rico as a result of labor problems. By purchasing the firms Ethel guaranteed production of its tamperproof bottlecaps, a highly technical operation which forced the corporation to double the capitalization of the plant. The International Union of Electrical Workers unionized the plant in 1976, and it is still the only plastics firm which is organized. We were told that the unionization was successful despite the threats of layoffs

and plant closing because the company eliminated Blue Cross medical coverage and thereby crossed the boundary of acceptable management relations. Greylock Plastics was later closed by the company in 1986. The selling of local concerns to outside corporations is a new phenomenon for these kinship based businesses and points to the contradictions in the ideology of the owners. The larger firms are subject to unionization by its members who, against all odds, react to the low wages and benefits which are offered. The separation of workers and the owners introduces the standard categories of class struggle, that of workers and management. Once paternalistic ties in the workplace no longer function to provide a family atmosphere, the commitment on the part of the owners to maintain production lessens. Like Warner and Low's Yankee City, the community realizes the loss of its own power when locally based concerns are sold to outside corporations. This process becomes more acute as competition from abroad undercuts the stability of the market. Asked if he thought the era of firm generation by family ties was coming to an end, one manager told me:

I think to a large extent, I don't think it can be what it used to be...It's too tough. Financing is tough, just getting the work is hard, you know, the conditions are not there anymore, there will still be people who'll try it...I think that we're all vulnerable now. You take Polymatrix, George Rufo, he's done a hell of a job with that whole thing, started out as Lakewood, and from there, Poly and Syntronics and a couple more, but I think

that the product that he is involved with is proprietary, and I think he's vulnerable to being undercut, you know from abroad or wherever. I have to give George alot of credit, he's done alot of great things over there and seems to be continuing to do them.

General Electric Plastics

The plastics operation at General Electric contrasts sharply with that of the small plastics firms and reflects the uneven development characteristic of the multinational and the local economy. The new international plastics headquarters looms over Plastics Avenue, built from steel, lexan and glass on land that could not be excavated for existant indian artifacts because of the dangerous levels of contamination found in the soil. The 25 million dollar building was designed as a sales tool. Joseph G Wirth, general manager of GE plastics technology, told a *Berkshire Eagle* reporter that "We wanted a building that would look distinctive...GE is a world leader in thermoplastics development and [the technology center] has to look like a world headquarters and express the state of the technical art" (7/24/84). The corporation hired a local artist with a national reputation to design a large sculpture for the atrium, an eight and a half by 6 foot piece made from GE Lexan and aluminum, steel and neon. The atrium of the 125,000 square foot building is roughly the size of most of the smaller plastics firms. It is designed to look like it houses the work preformed there-- the research and design

strategies accomplished with computer simulations and telecommunications.

The invention of Lexan in 1953 revolutionized the plastics industry and catapulted General Electric to the top of the field in international plastics technology. General Electric plastics production in Pittsfield had been deteriorating during the 1940s, prompting the employment of an efficiency expert during 1948. It's said that the "local definition of an optimist at that time was a GE plastics worker who brought his lunch to work" (BE: *Ibid.*). The consultant reorganized the business and sold off the moldmaking and molded plastics operations, displacing almost 1000 workers. John F. Welsh Jr. was then the head of the plastics division and the subsequent success of its international marketing propelled him up the corporate ladder to Chief Executive Officer, a post he has held since 1981. In 1983, the plastics division accounted for over 1 billion dollars in sales, or 8 percent of GE's total market. Under the new plastics manager, Glen Hiner, General Electric opened new plants in Japan and the Netherlands in 1982 and acquired an Australian affiliate.

David Noble (1979) has described the process of technological innovation by which research and development

is performed in major technological centers and then transferred to areas with lower labor costs for production. A major focus of the research phases of the production of new materials is the deskilling aspect noted by Braverman (1974). At the same time that General Electric was expanding its research development efforts, the company opened up GE Plastics Japan, formed a joint venture in Mexico and expanded its facilities in Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands, for production of the materials. The worldwide expansion of GE plastics prompted some observers to predict "A Renaissance in the Berkshires" and the *Berkshire Eagle* quoted Herb Rammath, vice president and general manager of the Plastic Sales Division, predicting that "Because we are both on the cutting edge of the future both in terms of plastic research and applications development, our facility will attract to the Berkshires mold makers, design engineers, and the ends users of plastics from all over the world" (*BE* 9/1/84). Rammath failed to mention the concentration of moldmakers and design engineers already in the Berkshires and the difference between plastics and the electronics production which has been built up around Boston and the Silicon Valley. As Snow (1982) points out, the success of Silicon Valley is largely due to the fact that a large percentage of the electronics industry's products are purchased by the United States military and by law must be produced in the U.S. Too, unlike plastics, electronics

technology changes rapidly and requires close contact between engineers and producers.

The existence of the Plastics Technology Center has not produced the groundswell of industrial immigration hoped for. Because the Corporation has contracted outside of the community for the testing of its resins and molds, local industry has not benefited to the extent promised both by General Electric planners and development specialists. Local manufacturers could benefit from the technology being created at the Center if there was capital to utilize it. Commenting on the differences in the level of technology utilized by the Corporation and local firms, we were asked:

How do we take advantage of today's technology? It would probably cost me a million, a minimum of a million to put out a CAD/CAM [computer assisted design/computer assisted manufacturing] system, to put in the machinery to take advantage of that, then with no guarantees that I'm going to have enough work to make this thing pay. Especially when you're sitting here, waiting for some engineer over at GE who's playing with this computer to develop a part, and meanwhile the payments keep coming in, and you know, so really its challenge for the small guy, how do you cope with it.

Development Efforts and the Plastics Industry

There is widespread frustration on the part of plastic's entrepreneurs concerning the role of state and city planners in development efforts. Most feel that they are invisible in the planning strategies used for expanding industry and note that a code does not even exist for their businesses in the state's lexicon of manufacturing industries. Concerned about the importation of plastic molds from abroad, a group of the shop owners went to the commerce department for import statistics, only to discover that there were none. As one of the men told us, "There was nothing, absolutely nothing on plastic molds, being imported, going out...Where's the hell the data? Well, it was with the rubber molds, we're lumped in with the rubber industry and we have nothing to do with the rubber industry." Many feel that city managers are insensitive to their needs, concerned more with abstract concepts of increasing employment than helping local concerns expand their own facilities. Commenting on the local efforts, one informant complained "that's another thing that bugs me about [their] economic development approach. I don't think it would bother people who are doing it at all to bring another firm in to compete with [us], maybe even put [us] out of business at some

point. I don't think that would bother them too much. They're looking at employment, and to me that's not right."

The growth of the plastics industry in Pittsfield slowed in 1983 after a boom period of twenty five years. When I asked one of the "second generation" owners how the industry had changed, he told me:

Well, you know historically, at least in this area, you get a couple of guys who work next to each other in a shop and they get talking, and say hey, lets start our own shop, and they would do it, and in three or four years, they'd have 10,12 maybe 15 people working for them, and they're off and running. But no more, the last two guys who did that are still two guys still struggling, in fact one of them is working without medical benefits, so they are not booming by any means. But what the offshore thing has done is not only going abroad, but its made domestic competition much fiercer. Now even in the midwest its like that. You've got a shrunken piece of pie and everyone is going after that piece so, it ripples right down.

When I told him that I had heard the biggest competition was coming from Portugal, he continued:

It depends on what area you're talking about. around here it seems to be Portugal, the fact of the matter is if it wasn't Portugal it'd be somebody else and after Portugal it will be someone else, so its something that's going to keep going on. You've got Korea, you've got Taiwan, its going on forever, you've got half the continent of Africa starving to death right now

and someday they're going to come on-board and all of China that's still fumbling around, so to me, there are very many fundamental problems that I don't think politicians in this country are addressing themselves to...

Dissatisfaction with the way in which development was addressed by the City led to the formation of the Plastics Association under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce. The director of the Association said that it was started when

I organized it. It was just that there seemed to be a need to promote the industry not only to make people in the area aware of what they had, but to try to promote ourselves as an industry outside the area. And I think what really did it in a big way was the impact of offshore sourcing on us. Up until five years ago, plastics was a real growth industry. We didn't have to sell much. we didn't have to do much marketing, they were pounding on our doors. All the sudden that stopped.

The uneven development of production between General Electric and the local industries was aptly summed up by the same informant:

People here are still locked into the 1950's type thinking. In that back then you went into a shop and you had a row of machines and at guy looking at the machines says this business is booming. You might be looking at a company that's going down the tubes. The thing of it is, that if you're in a business that's labor intensive, then you're probably going to be heavily impacted by offshore sourcing. There is nothing, to me, from reading different periodicals, and from just being, there's nothing in manufacturing today that

calls for more people, the whole trend is less people. Automation. Your big companies, they either automate or they go offshore. One of the other. When it comes right down to the small guy, if you cannot become more efficient machinery wise, then you're in big trouble.

This the owner was able to automate some production, but is forced to live with another ever present contradiction: while supplies of minimum wage labor has been plentiful, the demand for skilled moldmakers and engineers far outpaces supply. He was forced to resign as the director of the Plastics' Association as a result of the resignation of one of his key employees who left to join another company. "With him gone I've got to put my apron back on and go back onto the floor, I just cannot devote the time to these other things."

There is a good deal of hostility towards General Electric as a result of the Corporation's lack of support for local firms. Because the Plastics Association was organized through the Chamber of Commerce, which has General Electric as its most prominent member, the attempts to initiate Association meetings was met with resistance by its members. The ambivalence of the shop owners towards the Chamber and its orientation is expressed by their lack of active participation. Describing a development function which he

planned with the Chamber and General Electric, the Plastic Associations's director related what followed:

I think that out of 20 firms, and these were just for plastics, out of 20 firms, 13 responded and 3 of us showed up. At let me tell you, I was one of the three and I was embarrassed, and mad, and if there had been a hold big enough I would have crawled into it. But I know the people who are in this industry and they don't deserve to do that to themselves. People who were there, these were noted people in the community, and they were saying who are you people, we put something on like this, and you don't respond, and when you do, you still don't show up, and I thought, we don't deserve to do that to ourselves. And that's what got me to write a letter and to start to organize this thing.

The Chamber of Commerce now has a special section for small business. It is chaired by the proprietor of a small monument making business who maintains a cheery outlook on Pittsfield's economy and the place of the major corporation in development efforts. When I mentioned that we spoke with the Director of the Chamber and that he commented that the community was much more positive then the last time we interviewed him, she responded:

Well, you know, sometimes a community becomes aware of what's happening considerably later than it actually has begun to happen. So that while the trend was upward a year and a half ago, people really were not aware of that, and they were pessimistic, extremely pessimistic, the whole

economy was down as far as the people were feeling, and that was true for small business, and all business, and GE too.

The chair was raised in Boston and came to the area as an administrative aid to Congressman Silvio Conti. She said that it was while working with him that she became interested in the fate of small businesses and was made directly responsible for decisions affecting that sector. When I asked her how she thought the area had changed, she voiced the ideology of the Chamber and other outside-oriented visionaries with a particularly poignant perspective:

Well, I think its been an awful lot of work on everyone's part. And...its taken alot of growth and development and maturity on the part of individuals to recognize that it is a bigger world out there. Its been very insular. I can remember when I first came here, there were people who had never left Pittsfield, you know a trip to Dalton [an adjoining town] was an adventure, and I think it was a very secure and pleasant community, and I think probably always has been, but its taken awhile to realize- to update it...There is an invasion happening, and its interesting because the local people are aware of this. There is an invasion from New York City that has really affected the areas around Pittsfield...you're finding farm property going for a hundred thousand dollars that used to go for a thousand dollars for twenty acres. And all of a sudden people in Pittsfield are saying 'What is happening around us.' And it is happening, and it is very real.

While almost 500 of the 700 members of the Chamber are small businesses, the small business committee consists of 12 members who plan functions and organize meetings. Many of the meetings are jointly sponsored by GE and the flavor of the committee suggests an orientation that comes from the Corporation. When I asked her about the outlook for Pittsfield's development, she replied:

I think Pittsfield is a fairly solidly based community, and if you're doing a small hardworking business, you do well here. I think Pittsfield is hesitant to accept entrepreneurs, they need to be convinced that this is a good firm, but all those mold makers that spun off from GE and so on, we local people that have started on a shoestring and have done extremely well, and now they're taking on work which is far beyond the local level, but they work very hard, and they were all very well trained, this is what is very interesting. There is a lot of skill in Pittsfield, the training that GE did that actually is to the advantage of other firms, the trends in the plastics firms, the mold firms, the computer services, is reflected in the strength of the insurance companies, the number of lawyers that are doing business, the number of bankers, it's an asset to the community.

Q: How do insurance companies become a reflection?

Just because the businesses abound, and don't forget with a small business, just to exist it must have certain kinds of insurance, a lot.

This section leader thought that there was an unfair distinction in the community between big and small business and that the mistrust of large business was unjustified. From the Chamber's point of view business attracts business and large facilities feed small facilities. While her

position in the Chamber directed her to view the corporation and big business in a favorable light, the lack of success in attracting another large industry to the Berkshires forced her to voice support for those in favor of concentrating on locally based growth, in name if not in deed. Her statements often came back to the issue of making the State more attractive to outside industry -- a position favored by General Electric because of the tax abatements it implies.

The decline of the plastics industry is internalized by the shop owners as a problem of attitude as much as it is blamed on the contingencies of off shore sourcing and the planning perspectives of those responsible for local development efforts. The self blame presented by community residents is in line with one of Arensberg's "Assumptions of American Culture" (1956): the association of failure on the part of individuals when jobs cannot be found or endeavors do not succeed. Unlike England, for example, where employment is viewed as a right rather than a privilege and the failure of small industries is rooted in the class relations of the country, Americans tend to see themselves as the cause of disappointing results. The director of the Association described the lack of statistics by commenting that "The fact that like Berkshire County where we employ about 1200 people, and pump about 20 million into the economy a year,

and Marland Mold over there is probably one of the most sophisticated tool shops in the country and they don't know that. This is a strength in the community and they don't even know that. A lot of it is our fault." The problem, as he sees it, involves the same qualities of the community which allowed the firms to thrive: the secrecy and dependency and self-reliant pride that has been a hallmark of the industry. The same entrepreneurs who refused to be dependent on General Electric for their livelihood also resist organizing for lobbying efforts. It is interesting to note that General Electric is a member of the Association, but has not paid its dues.

Corporate and Community Ideology in the Development of Industry

The existence of the Corporate Plastics facility has not fed the smaller facilities, an issue which encapsulates the differences in the ideologies of the community and the corporation. Jack Welch made his name in the industry by raising profits and eliminating jobs. In the same year that the plastics technology center was announced, creating twenty professional jobs, Genel closed its doors and dislodged over 100 workers.

Unlike community organizations and associations, the ideology of the Corporation is direct and intact. In 1986, 112 Corporate officers were called on to comment on a draft of company values drafted by Welch titled *Where We Want to Be*. In it, Welch stated that the Corporation's businesses would have to maintain first or second place in their markets or be closed down, and he suggested that employees who were not comfortable with the Company's values find work elsewhere (*Business Week*: 6/30/86). Welch's open insistence that profits be placed above all other concerns has placed the Corporation at the center of a number of scandals, including an accusation by the federal government that

General Electric knowingly overcharged the defense department in 1980. Locally, the company has been involved with debates over pollution and its effects. The lack of commitment to the community is not fully comprehended by the residents who depend on their past experiences to interpret present circumstances, although it is better understood by the small companies who see work that could be performed locally farmed out to other regions and countries. The contradictions inherent in formal planning policy was aptly summed up in a statement by the Plastics Association president who noted that at the same time General Electric was moving production offshore, local retired executives were being used to train and organize foreign small industries:

What happens with GE, is that they just look at their dollars and cents and their numbers, and if that means the cost is going to effect the product then maybe that product is going to go offshore. Losing jobs. It seems that people in government today, the politicians, the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. Nobody knows the cause and effect of things. Here's a good example. [Shows me a brochure by the Organization of Retired Executives]. Its a function of our foreign policy. They're funded by AID, which is a government funded organization, and they do good work throughout the country...Here's an example. 'Mr. Ellis in Lumnister, Massachusetts, advises a toy manufacturer in dyes and molds for the Korean Trade Manufacturer's Association in Seoul. As an IECS volunteer Mr. Ellis aided the client in all areas of mold making for plastics.' Great. Don't they know what they're doing? What does this mean for us here? Don't these people know the cause and effect of what they're doing?...It probably helps GE because they can get cheap tools built overseas.

The dominant ideology presented to the community is interpreted and mediated by the constraints of the alternative possibilities. The ideological confusion between past entitlements won by the union and the provisions provided by the Corporation is contrasted with the distancing from the community the Corporation now actively encourages as it attempts to relate to a labor force it no longer requires. The Chamber of Commerce fought for and convinced the City to grant a large tax abatement for the Technology Center -- an act that awed even Jack Welsh, the former Pittsfield resident and head of the corporation. Local residents interpret the contradiction in terms of their own values instilled by ethnic communities and encouraged by the Corporation's past behavior. One new shop owner described it in this way: [Our view] is primarily from our New England Ideology, the way we were brought up, taught to live, taught to experience, and taught to love what we are doing, where we are and who we are and the work ethic that is instilled in us--work hard, push ahead, just keep on working."

The entrepreneurial activity which is the hallmark of the community's reaction to a history of restructuring at General Electric occurred in the span of one generation,

from the 1950's to the 1980's. This kin-based adaptation is now being destroyed by offshore sourcing and competition in the world system and has not been alleviated by the planning mechanisms in place or even the designation of Pittsfield by the current governor of Massachusetts as "A center of excellence in Plastics Technology." As part of the crisis in Pittsfield there is a contestation over responsibility for development and for past actions by the corporation that have influenced the present position of the community, including the health of its workers. This debate over responsibility and the community reaction to the Corporation's denial of accountability will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven

Economic Development and Social Responsibility¹

This chapter explores the relationship between economic development and the satisfaction of community needs through a case example of a health crisis in Pittsfield. It is intended to show how the requirements of corporate capital accumulation influences the structure of city government in ways that diffuse challenges to the corporation's hegemony. The example of corporate and community responses to a health crisis shows how differences in power and access to information structure the direction and substance of discourse and result in a construction of consensus beneficial to the corporation. By channeling discussion of potential hazards away from the experiences of community residents, the corporation's control over the direction of economic planning succeeds in lessening potential threats to the accumulation of capital.

¹This Chapter is a condensation of three papers written with June Nash: 1987. "Polychlorinated Biphenyls in the Electrical Machinery Industry: An Ethnological Study of Community Action and Corporate Responsibility" *Social Science and Medicine* 23(2):131-138; 1988. "The Discourse of Medical Science in the Construction of Consensus Between Corporation and Community" *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 2(2):158-171; n.d. "Corporate Culture and Social Responsibility: The Case of Toxic Wastes in a New England Community" Paper Presented at the 1987 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Philadelphia

The Cost Accounting Approach

Discussion concerning economic development and planning in Pittsfield is guided by General Electric to include the maintenance of acceptable rates of profit. These rates are defined by strategies developed at the corporation's headquarters in Fairfield Connecticut, which do not include a consideration of product use or community input. When Jack Welch, a Pittsfield native, became General Electric's chairman in 1981, he announced that divisions of the corporation that did not perform first or second in their competitive field would be closed down. Nicknamed "Neutron Jack", the new chair eliminated 100,000 jobs from the company's payrolls during his first year in office.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the ongoing concern in the community is that General Electric will decide that its divisions in Pittsfield are not profitable enough to continue operations. Actions taken by local corporate managers are governed by the decisions regarding acceptable rates of profit by the company's divisions and their subsidiaries. Direct challenges to the corporation by the community are met with vague or implied threats to relocate or close down. Community administrators respond to these threats by mediating discussion between the corporation and community groups, and where necessary, procuring the

concessions needed to stabilize relationships with corporate managers. Where real conflicts of interest appear, city managers define their role in relation to state and federal agencies to minimize conflict that could develop into schisms between the corporation and the dependent community.

The corporation defines its role to the community by repeated reference to economic necessity. Where implied consequences are not been enough to placate pockets of dissatisfaction, the corporation relies on more sophisticated levels of ideology that include the manipulation of law and science.

The case of a conflict over environmental contamination in Pittsfield illustrates the way in which ideology defines the direction of negotiation. In the case of scientific discourse, often wedded to corporate funding and channeled by environmental agencies influenced by political appointees, any impending sense of danger as it is experienced by those who live in work in affected areas is subsumed and negated under skillfully manipulated statistics. Given the intimate connections among that part of the scientific establishment that carries out studies of risk related to industrial operations, the government agencies that set rules and standards based on those studies, and the corporations that monitor and often fund

such research, industry spokespeople appear to be one step ahead of their critics while they simultaneously subvert the discussion of recognized danger.

Thus the recognition that a danger exists and the action necessary to stem potential damage is mediated by the ideology fostered by the corporation that places costs above human consequences. This ideology is formulated and disseminated by the needs and structure of corporations that make decisions based on capital accumulation and expansion. The realities of potential danger are translated into cost accounting principles -- costs of cleanup and retribution are compared with rates of profit and reconciled with jobs and corporate investment. The approach dictates that humanitarian concerns over employment, health hazards and the survival of the community are subservient to the dictates of the market and corporate profits.

The ideology giving primacy to profits regardless of human costs has become the core of an amoral "modus operandi". Daniel A. Koshland, in an issue of *Science* takes this approach to its logical conclusion by coining an "undesirability principle" that states relative costs should be adjusted to include corporate desires to dump toxic wastes at the lowest possible cost, environmental group demands to place severe restraints on dumping, and consumer desires to obtain products at the lowest costs available.

He proposes that the principal be enacted by a law that requires protagonists to state clearly to society the undesirable aspects of their proposal.¹

Koshland's principle does not acknowledge the profound differences in the degree to which different populations are subjected to the hazards of toxic substances in the workplace and in the home, or the relations of power that define those differences. Production workers immediately exposed to harmful substances are equated in the analysis with the executive who sit at their desks. People of moderate or low incomes living on love canal are put on the same plane as those living in secluded villages. Gersuny (1981) sums up his analysis of *Work Hazards and Industrial Conflict* with the realization that differences in power and privilege go along with differences in the hazards to life and limb. The issues involved with toxic wastes are clearly demarcated by class lines and involve moral determinations on the part of decision makers regarding the protection of human health.

¹It is interesting to note that as with all cost accounting principles, the salient feature is obtaining the lowest possible cost rather than regulating profit.

The Concern Over Industrial Wastes

The health crisis that occurred in Pittsfield concerned the discovery of toxic wastes and a recognition by community residents that the incidence of cancer among friends and neighbors appeared to be at an alarmingly high rate. The differences between corporate and community approaches to this issue produced a disjuncture that had not been witnessed since the last major strike in 1969. Because the issue did not involve worker participation against the corporation, however, the disjuncture was mediated by the corporation with tactics that appealed to a logic presented and justified by the tenets of scientific thought controlled by corporate strategists. The fear that the community would be responsible for cleanup efforts combined with the reluctance to confirm fears about toxic wastes contributed to the influence of corporate ideology. The employees who were the main victims of toxic substances used in their work were the least likely to take action because of the dependence on the plant for jobs.

The disjuncture in Pittsfield took shape in the early 1980's after large amounts of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) were discovered in residential basements and sewer lines. The PCBs were leftover wastes from the production of the power transformers that were the mainstay of production in Pittsfield until the middle 1970s, when production began to

restructure from basic industry to research and design based defense contracts. The PCBs were part of a compound that comprised pyranol, a fire resistant insulating agent used in the production of, and sealed inside, power transformers.

Contamination in a neighborhood adjacent to the plant was discovered in 1977 when pools of the substance were found in three basements and a bakery. General Electric quickly bought and demolished the houses, placing no trespassing signs on the landscaped mounds of dirt that were used to cover over any evidence of the sites. Also concerned about issues being raised in New York State, where it had been discovered that PCBs had contaminated large sections of the upper Hudson river, General Electric quietly took the position that it would buy any houses where PCBs were discovered.

The community did not become concerned until 1980 when news of the discovery became known and residents of the Lakewood neighborhood witnessed crews making test digs on their streets. One of the residents described her reaction to the digging:

One day that started drilling on Lombard Street which is right over here. The men were around, and you know, if you see a gas company truck, you think they must be putting in a gas line, or if you see an electric company truck, they're putting electric in, or whatever. It so happened, that two or three people, not knowing what was going

on, said 'What is this?' I was going out myself one day, and I said to one of the workers, 'What are you doing? No answer. That's crazy. I said 'I hope it's not gas or it will blow up my house.' He said, 'I don't know.' That's how it started. When anyone asked any questions, they didn't answer. We went directly to Ray.

Ray Del Gallo was a resident of the neighborhood who had also been a Mayor of Pittsfield. Known for his outspoken manner, he owned a popular neighborhood Italian restaurant where the workers drilling the test digs went to eat. When he asked them what they were doing, they answered that they were checking the water level. But the drilling of 200 wells had raised suspicion. After talking with public relations officials at the company, he discovered that the tests uncovered PCBs in 18 residential gardens and in 20 cellars. The company later put dyes into the pipes that discharged wastes into the lake behind the plant, obviously looking for the source of the contamination. Ray commented that:

I went over and told them, 'I'm going to be cooperative and show you some places where you dumped the stuff, You're talking with a native!' They didn't appreciate that. All along the river bank are dump sites: Merrill Road down New York Avenue -- when you have a heavy downpour, that stuff all just goes into the river. And they wonder where it comes from! I took them to a place on Newell Street where there were hundreds of barrels. I said, 'If you doubt me, I'll bring you the individuals who dumped it!'

Ray continued:

You see there above the railroad? General Electric used to have tanks with a capacity of 275,000 gallons. Those tanks leaked oil for years -- since the early thirties. When the trains used

to go by, you could see the oil squishing up under the wheels. But they way we have no problem! In the old days, they used to bring in grapes in those oil tanks for the people to make wine.

The State Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) entered the investigation shortly after the discovery of PCBs, as is required by Massachusetts law. In examining samples from the Housatonic River, the Lakewood Area, and East Street, the Company found more PCB traces than did the State. The DEQE spokespersons agreed with the Corporation that most of the oil that leaked from underground storage tanks on GE property was isolated in a "plume" on the GE side of East Street. An executive committee was formed with representatives of city government, including the Mayor, the health commissioner, the Executive Director of the Berkshire County Regional Planning Association and residents of the Lakewood neighborhood.

The corporation had not factored into their response the strong and established community in Lakewood. The residents reacted early on the contamination. When we asked Ray Del Gallo about the deliberations of the committee, he told us that:

The consulting firm that handled Love Canal was called in. The Vice-President told us that it was fortunate for us that the oil flowed along that plume instead of following the water line. But we were afflicted no matter what he said about the

miracle plume. We fought them all the way, since we are the natives. We have our own contacts in Boston. I have a cousin who is an engineer and knows the language. We went to a law firm in Boston with Representative Shelsy, a top law firm in the field of toxic wastes. And we fought with them in the council.

When the issue was raised in the council, Ray Del Gallo showed up with a bucket of oil containing PCBs that he had taken from the basement of a bakery in Lakewood. The consultants asserted that there was little danger from the PCBs because the land in Lakewood was so closely knit that it wouldn't penetrate. But as Ray pointed out to them, "Lakewood was called Lakewood for a reason: when there are floods, that miracle plume floods also and the entire area is covered with it."

Community Response and Corporate Responsibility

From the beginning of the investigation, General Electric played down the significance of the problem. A spokesman for the office of community relations at General Electric responded to our inquiry about the PCB problem in the Lakewood neighborhood by stating that

In Lakewood, there is a well defined, tight-knit community bounded by the river when the people began talking that GE had underground storage leaking PCBs. We did tests and were well satisfied that they remained on the east side. There we found several cellars above the FTA limits. We offered to clean up some more. Some people felt that they lost real estate value. Some have had

difficulty selling their houses, so we bought three of them. You've got to take what they say with a grain of salt. I've been amazed how many will say they remember when they put in so and so many drums at a certain place, and when you ask them to go down and show you, they can't find anything. I eat Housatonic fish. Those who work with it have elevated levels of PCBs. The highest level in Pittsfield was 200-300 level. In the City Council, they issued a consent agreement. I went down there to discuss it with them. I asked my doctor what the danger of 200 PCB level was, and they had no idea of the significance. We talk about it with the proper amount of respect.

When the environmental chief at the plant was told of hazardous materials including PCBs and arsenic were found in a landfill site in the summer of 1980, he joked that "I looked at some 400 drums at the dump. It's an exotic occupation. Some I took out because of some intellectual curiosity about them." The company quietly initiated an epidemiological study in 1979, funding researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health after they had independently noted a higher than average rate of cancer among General Electric workers in Pittsfield.

The concern voiced by the corporation and repeated by the researchers during the course of the study was the quality of the data and the validity of impressions voiced by the community. Corporate policy was reacting to concerns voiced not only by community members, but by its own employees.

Attempts to diffuse concern started as early as 1969¹, when the corporation circulated a manuscript by an engineer in the Schenectady plant, who wrote that

Our knowledge of chlorinated biphenyl formulations and possible deleterious effects is not as complete as is desirable in today's climate of concern for maintaining and improving the quality of life in its environmental aspects, with regard to worker protection, and in terms of product safety. Nevertheless, it is not responsible to suggest that "other materials be substituted" until all doubts are resolved. It must be remembered that virtually all applications of Pyranol are the end product of intensive research directed toward finding the best material for the application, that substitution would involve tradeoffs, not only with performance factors and other economic factors, but with product safety considerations themselves- i.e., flammability and explosion possibilities.²

The justification of inaction by the corporation was discussed in terms of an assumed superiority by the company to judge product safety, and therefore potential danger. These judgements were made despite increasing evidence that PCBs were causing health problems around the globe and were particularly dangerous to the workers who were in direct contact with the substance.

¹This reaction by the corporation followed the banning of PCB's in Japan, after workers who had eaten contaminated rice became ill.

²Nelson, J.S. n.d. "PCBs: an Industry Problem?"

A follow up report of the victims of the Japanese incident showed an excess in the rate of cancer, particularly of the stomach and liver (*USA Today*, 1980). A study done at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York found that workers who "swallowed, inhaled or absorbed the chemical" experienced skin disease, jaundice, and liver damage Fischbein, et.al. 1983). The New York Academy of Sciences reported (1979) that workers exposed to PCBs showed a decreased vital capacity similar to workers who were exposed to asbestos, manifested in eye and upper respiratory irritations and tightness in the chest. By the mid 1980s, even the popular press was referring to PCBs as cancer-causing substances.

Pittsfield's Lakewood residents and workers exposed to PCBs were becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of the substance on their health. When we asked a Lakewood resident whether she thought people got sick from PCBs, she replied:

I think if I'm not mistake, they have a suit going on because we've been talking an awful lot about cancer in this area...we older, we people that have been here a long time could tell you that in almost every house, someone died of cancer. Now they don't want to hear about it. They say that in any other city, the percentage is just as much.

She continued:

My mother was 61 years old. She had cancer. Across the street, the older ones, one of them had cancer. The next house was were the Magis, he had cancer. He's find right now, but he was in his early thirties when he got it. The next house

over there, there's a woman upstairs who also had, well, Lil has had alot of things the matter with her, really a lot of things. Downstairs, the man has cancer at the moment. He's almost 57 or 58 years old...The colon seems to be the most affected. We all had a tremendous scare. We all had gardens here. The majority of everyone down here is Italian, and behind every house there is a garden. Its part of the house.

While residents of the neighborhood were noting an increase in sickness, a retired engineer at the plant, Ed Bates, began quantifying cancer related deaths with those workers who had direct contact with pyranol. As part of management he tried to work with the company in proving that there was a correlation, but was dismissed with a "golden handshake" and treated as a quack by members of the union who attributed his concern with boredom associated with early retirement. Yet Bates' concern was motivated by his feelings that he was responsible for these deaths, and his willingness to fight brought results. He told us that:

The guys who worked for me, and I remember this, they were saying, 'Jesus, I'm getting headaches and I don't feel good.' And I'd say, 'Look, I sympathize with you, but there's nothing in the GE records that say that this is bad. You have got to apply for another job.' And they go down maybe five steps and 60 cents an hour, the union couldn't help them. The union says, 'Hey, we're going strictly by seniority, you got to go down to the bottom if you want another job.' So the guys would stay out there (in testing). I was essentially sending guys to their death.

Able to convince the influential retirees group of his findings, they supported him with more data. The group

began to put together their knowledge of who had worked with the substance and who was sick and who died. They found that those who had worked on repairs where the PCB laden oils spilled out on them as they reassembled the transformers seemed especially liable.

The sustained efforts resulted in an allocation from Senator Ted Kennedy to study environmental contamination and health problems in Pittsfield. Blood tests were taken from volunteer community residents by the University of Massachusetts, which found that while work at General Electric was highly correlated with blood PCB levels, residence in the Lakewood neighborhood did not seem to result in higher levels than that of residents in other areas. A later Massachusetts COSH study showed PCB levels often 15 times that of the general population: the average level in the population was 20 or 30 parts per billion while their sample of 43 General Electric workers found 9 with more than 100 and 3 over 300.

The Construction of Science

General Electric responded to these findings by emphasizing the "complexity" of the problem and the potential consequences of "precipitous" action. Corporate spokespeople took a noticeably harder line toward the issue as concern grew in the community. As Ray Del Gallo reported,

When the former heads of relations were here, (before 1982 when many left because of the downscaling of production in the Power Transformer Division) they sat down with us, discussed problems and offered to buy property if people were uneasy, although they kept telling us that there was no danger. Now with the new management over there, they are playing hardball. 'Your property is not a problem,' they say, 'We don't want to hear about it.'

A corporate spokesperson with whom we spoke in 1982 similarly downplayed the role of PCBs as an occupational or environmental health problem, stating that:

Our experience in nearly forty years of use here in Pittsfield is similar to medical records over the country during the period. This record shows that the only adverse health effect experienced by workers exposed to PCBs have been limited to occasional skin irritations which clear up quickly.

The epidemiological study that was commissioned by General Electric in 1979 was repeatedly delayed as requests for more

information and claims of insignificant findings were issued by both General Electric and the study's researchers. A major caveat pursued by the researchers and the corporation was the effects of other health factors on cause of death statistics. The tactic by the corporation to separate health issues from work experience served to segment and narrow the field in which health risks could be viewed. The point that workers spent most of their waking life in the plant setting where hazardous materials were present and went home in environments also contaminated by waste materials became easily overshadowed by the presence of individual risk factors such as smoking and problems with weight control.

Ed Bates and an associate from the testing division continued to encourage legislators to act on the issue of the research and in 1987, succeeded in convening a meeting with a state representative, the head of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), General Electric officials and the principal investigator of the study, Dr. David Wegman. The meeting was scheduled and then cancelled by GE, not to be rescheduled until the state representative threatened to have the federal government audit the data. At the meeting Ed Bates and his associate presented their case concerning a special study of Buildings 12 and 100, where final assembly of power transformers took place. There were the sites of maximal exposure to PCBs, as

well as to solvents, benzene, asbestos and machining fluids. A list they compiled showed 85 deaths from cancer in buildings 12 and 100, 62 of those in Building 12 where men in testing worked directly with PCBs. In Dr. Wegman's review of these buildings, he used information supplied by GE and found only 36 cancer victims in the list of 173 deaths of long-term employees of Building 12. When we asked Bates about the discrepancies in the data sets, he told us that:

I think that there have been certain exclusions from the data -- that modify the results. The thing that bothers Charlie and me is that they've had all this data and everything for four and a half years and they haven't included them. One of the reasons that they said they didn't include all those who have died is that four or five of them were from North Adams or Adams, and they died up there at Fairview Hospital. Then there was one from Savoy and two from Great Barrington, but all these were people that worked in this area. But they had worked for me for 15 or 20 years. That's when we drove them into the wider study for Berkshire County. There were 168 codes on their list of people working in Building 12, and there were only 15 of those codes actually working there. All the others were from Ordnance or something, and they were pouring them all into Building 12 to them them dilute the whole. The GE's got billions and billions of dollars, and they do down and give this story to the medical people. I'm not saying its incorrect, but its adulterated so that it looks fine.

Bates' claim that the researcher's data included workers who had never been assigned to the designated buildings was never resolved. The director of NIOSH expressed outrage that the data sets were not reconciled and demanded that a

recheck be made. Convinced by the State representative (who also chaired the legislative committee charged with funding research) to incorporate Bates' data into his own, Dr. Wegman later rejected General Electric's contention that his study was flawed in the way that risk assessment had been assigned to each job.

In October, 1987, Dr. Wegman was invited to speak at a dinner party that included the Pittsfield medical establishment. About 75 doctors showed up at the Pittsfield Country Club, where General Electric's medical director, Harold Stein, introduced the talk by joking that he was going to sue GE for breach of contract for the delay in the results of the study that held up his retirement as medical director. Dr. Wegman explained how the data records were compiled:

We were able to come up with about two-thirds of the work history records, with the major failures being in the earlier studies in 1969 at a period of time when there was no reason except inertia to keep the records of that type for people who were pensioned and left the company. So we went for those work records, and we did another analysis looking at major occupations during the lifetime. That gave us some additional clues. It also indicated that there was enough variability in the way that they were distributed, and some new confusions, so that we decided to go the full mile and address the question in the most comprehensive state-of-the-art way that we could. I think that's one of the strengths of the way the study is structured now. It's also one of the reasons why Harold is suing me for breach of contract.

Completed in 1987, six years after its scheduled release, the results concluded that PCBs had no significant effect on Pittsfield's population. Speaking at the General Electric Company's Ordnance facility with the GE logo displayed prominently around the room, Dr. Wegman repeated in October of 1987 that the number of specific kinds of cancer was too small to be statistically significant under recognized statistical procedure. Because of the statistical problems, Wegman reported, there might never be concrete cause and effect statement possible. (*Berkshire Eagle* 1987:2). The problems with the data and the inferences drawn from statistical correlations became mute issues as conclusions were given the weight of scientific validity. At this stage, the onus of proof became the victims, since employees with cancer cannot make a claim that their illness is occupationally related on the basis of the study. Simply stated, the ability to direct scientific inquiry toward proving that materials such as PCBs are hazardous, rather than that they are safe for human ecosystems, places the onus on the people affected by the hazard (the workers and the local community). Since few workers have the knowledge and background to undertake a study that would be accepted by the scientific community, and since the engineers and managers who do have sophisticated understanding of statistics are not legitimated by the academy, the present arrangement concerning the burden of proof is unworkable in local settings. The corporation, as a final result, was

given another reprieve in extending medical coverage to its employees following their retirement.

The Structure of Health Administration in Pittsfield

The structure of health care in Pittsfield militates against the confrontation of major conflicts of interest between the corporation and the community. Issues of toxic wastes and other issues that may significantly impact the community are relegated to State agencies that do not have a specific interest in the local population. The placement of the health department as a minor agency within the structure of the city government acts to subvert claims by the community that inadequate public health care is being provided while providing a disclaimer by city officials that they can influence or change policy regarding the community's relationship to the corporation.

Pittsfield has two major hospitals that service the area between Stockbridge and North Adams on one side, and Northampton on the other. Hillcrest Hospital, founded in 1908 as a voluntary, non profit community hospital is the smaller of the two institutions that are active competitors for patients and medical services. The Berkshire Medical Center is the result of the merger of two hospitals in the early 1970's: Pittsfield General and the House of Mercy, the

first merger of a religious and non religious hospital in the country. It is now the second largest employer in the area, far surpassing its competition in the number of hospital beds and ancillary services that include three nursing homes, a retirement care community, a proprietary laboratory mental health facility and home care services. The hospital in 1988 completed a 3.5 million dollar radiotherapy facility that was the result of a major fund raising drive supported by Pittsfield's residents.

The hospital's role in public health is, as a senior administrator put it, "tangential":

We operate a number of clinics, those kinds of things under the eegis of the Department of Public Health, but our work in this hospital is primarily acute care. I suppose that one can argue that some of the education programs that we put on, prenatal education and that kind of thing, begins to move in a public healthy kind of direction, but it isn't seen as a large part of our mission here.

The administrators and medical staff at the hospital were not involved in the PCB issue and do not focus on issues of potential conflict among interest groups in the community, which it depends on for clientele and donations. The administrator I interviewed was concerned about the direction of the city's administration in economic development. He predicted that a further drop in population would jeopardize some of the programs it ran if not the

recruitment of medical staff from New York and Boston that it has been fortunate to attract as a result of the hospital's location. Stating that "the wind does change too often, this is crazy, absolutely crazy, you can't get anything done" the administrator worried that tension in the community would continue to work against a sound plan for economic development.

Public Health in Pittsfield is regulated through the Office of the Commissioner of Public Health. There is a Board of Health whose members are either elected or appointed and an additional advisory board that sets agenda items for the monthly meetings. Statistical reports are compiled for annual publication. When we asked the health commissioner what his mandate was within the city government, he replied:

Very basically and briefly it is to be diligent for the health of the community in whatever way that means. Here in Pittsfield, our structure is a little different than other communities, our department also delivers school health services, so our, we have seven nurses and three part time doctors, two dental hygienists, so we run standard programs, somewhat standard.

When we asked him how the department had changed over the years, and whether environmental issues were part of his purview, he continued

There was a major change when I came on board, I've been here since 1959, I was late getting a

college degree and that when I graduated. In 1973 the commissioner at the time resigned, and he was a physician, so I was the major change at that time. City ordinances were changed to allow a non doctor...most of the environmental that we do are governed by the state sanitary codes, and they were changed, that state health department used to have jurisdiction over most of our programs when I first started public health in 1959, over the years the state changed its structure, and the State Department of Environmental Quality Engineering was created, and they took several bones from the State Department of Public Health...That for many years caused confusion, poor communication in local, and because there as a poor understanding in small communities with no staff, it caused no enforcement...Now with the DEQE so much larger than it was in its infancy, and with its responsibility so much more than it was in its infancy the staffing of programs hasn't caught up and its just been growing so rapidly that they are having growing pains. And some of the results of that is miscommunication, and the regulations, we get so tied up in regulations that you don't know where you're turning...

The creation of the State Department of Quality Engineering had the opposite effect of its creators' intentions. Instead of providing an umbrella that could monitor industrial effects on the environment, the agency functions to tie up complaints and potential hazards in bureaucratic scheming over territorial waters. The city chooses to stay out of the loop in the hope that potential conflicts will not further harm its relationship with the corporation. As the Commissioner of Economic Development told us when asked about the responsibility for toxic waste cleanup:

In the case of GE property itself, they are being held accountable by the state and federal government. The city is simply attempting not to become a party that for some reason forces

something to happen in a sequence that results in a major portion of the company leaving the community--because there are social consequences as well as environmental.

Thus the bureaucracy of environmental control and the narrow scope of jobs in city and state government militate against these agents taking full responsibility for all health problems in the environment. The administration of public health in Pittsfield suffers from the same crisis of leadership that govern the functioning of all aspects of city government. While the community is forced to walk the tightrope negotiated in the developing discourse between the corporation and government agencies, they have neither the resources nor the knowledge to play an effective role in changing the course of the policies that are developed within that framework. The negation of responsibility by the corporation, the business orientation of the medical infrastructure and the fears that militate against the community's confrontation of the corporation result in severely compromised public health activity in Pittsfield. There is no agency or individuals who monitor the environment and act as advocates for Public Health. Those individuals who take on that responsibility are left to negotiate and fight the system by themselves. As Ed Bates lamented, "The thing that really bothers me...I know 4 or 5 guys that have died since and they exceeded their 90 days on Medicare where they got syrum. They had to sell their houses and it took every cent they got. I get going on this.

Some months my telephone bill is astronomical... and then you say, 'Hell, I'm going to give up'...And you know,...you get so tired and beat and then I get mad at myself for quittin."

The role of the environment in the city's struggle to restructure its economic base embodies the conflict among the various sectors of the community. Chapter Four discussed the process of a building donation by General Electric that was terminated because of concerns over environmental contamination and the responsibility for clean up. Small business plans to expand were also hampered by the possibility of contamination in areas where expansion was planned. The corporation's public position on its relations with the community is one of support while asking to be understood as a company undergoing changes because of its need to be responsive to a volatile economic environment. Privately, the change in focus has meant a negation of its responsibility to be accountable for a history that it has created, and in corporate terms, a claim that it has no long term responsibility to the community at all. The community has had to adapt to the changing role of the corporation by generating new sources of tax revenue and hoping that the public statements made by General Electric will result a secure economic future. While the administration of the City is divided and forced to respond to many different interest groups, the structure of the

corporation is not. The chaos generated by the scrambling for revenue and directions for economic planning further weakens its position with the corporation that can support its positions with the dissemination of ideology that advertising budgets allow and the full extent of the law when the ideology is challenged.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This dissertation has been concerned with the processes of development in a New England community. It has maintained that the current restructuring of industry in the United States is not a new phenomenon. Capitalist development requires periodic restructuring in order to confront class struggle and to renew and expand the avenues of profit required for the system to operate. I have argued that the success or failure of community development efforts are rooted in ideologies that are representations of uneven development between corporate and community interests.

The city of Pittsfield, Massachusetts was chosen as a field site because it embodied all of the conflicts between industry and communities generated by the capitalist enterprise. As an older industrial region controlled by a large multinational, the community was confronting, for the first time, the need to piece together its economic infrastructure and to take charge of development efforts. For a community that was, since 1904, largely directed by corporate managers, the challenge proved ominous.

The physical changes that have taken place in Pittsfield along with the myriad of committees formed to address development issues reflect the ideological conflict present

among and within various segments of the area's population. While stores are abandoned in the downtown area in favor of a large retail mall, committees debate alternate uses of vacant space and the attraction of outside industry without reaching consensus. The belief by many that the General Electric corporation will provide leadership is still strong despite evidence to the contrary; hopes that increased tourism and service industries can compensate for industrial loss are stated while reports generated by planning commissions prove the opposite. The subtext of disappointment and conflict with the corporation is symbolized by the public debates concerning parking restrictions at the plant, while knowledge that any substantial confrontation with General Electric will only engender threats to relocate existing production and thus produce an even more insecure economic environment.

The City's administrative community has dealt with the chaos produced by corporate maneuvers by brainstorming about development efforts. Others, notably ex-GE workers allied with a strong Italian kinship network, have branched out on their own in an attempt to free themselves from the restrictions of corporate cost accounting. The unbridled success, until recently, of these entrepreneurial firms has been a tribute to the independence that can be generated by community and kinship organization.

Summary of the Dissertation

An underlying assumption in the thesis is that the analysis of local level development cannot be adequately described without the broader context of regional, state and international systems. Particularly where multinationals dominate the local economy, any attempt to maintain geographic boundaries for the purposes of analysis distorts the processes of change in arenas that directly effect community functioning.

To the end of providing a global framework for viewing the Pittsfield community, Chapter Two presents a theoretical argument and review of the literature on deindustrialization and the restructuring of communities. It is argued that the concept of deindustrialization poses a narrow unit of analysis, using the community as a starting and an end point rather than looking at the complex nexus of interactions and relationships among the community and other economic and social structures. Because the community is placed as a passive object bombarded by deindustrial winds, workers, managers and their families are not read as actors in the ongoing processes of restructuring. It is argued, following Mandel (1972), that megaindustrialization rather than deindustrialization is occurring, and that these processes are a result of class struggle and uneven power relationships, including changes in the world division of

labor. The holistic orientation of anthropology can contribute to the analysis by showing how relationships among people conform and conflict with economic forces and decisions made by managers in multinational corporations, leading into the complex processes that are reshaping the everyday lives of community residents.

Chapter Three provides an historical overview of the region and its industry. It is here that evidence is presented to show that industrial restructuring is not a new phenomenon, having occurred in cycles since the early 18th century in an area lacking in natural resources but rich in community life. The chapter explores how immigrants maintained their sense of community and labor independence in the face of capitalist development, setting the stage for the beginnings of worker organization and the resistance to capitalist production. After a discussion of the unemployment that has been endemic to the area since its industrial origins, the Chapter ends with a discussion of the transformation of the region after World War II and the erosion of the trade union movement that began during that period.

Chapter Four summarizes the present state of the Pittsfield community in light of its industrial history and the present industrial restructuring. It presents an overview of the trends that were emerging at the time of fieldwork and the consequent emphasis on development planning adopted by

community managers and social service agencies. Statistics generated by research committees show that while taxes and fuel costs are often cited as reasons for industrial relocation, they are not major factors in Pittsfield. Labor costs, however, are. The statistics show that there have been major changes in the composition of the population during the past two decades, including a significant increase in female headed household poverty and a doubling of marriage dissolutions between 1970 and 1980.

The development strategies pursued in Pittsfield are described in Chapter Five. Without established mechanisms for planning, the community embarked, during the late 1970s, on economic development activities that did not have broad support and did not generate consensus among labor and business leaders. The dominant but silent role of the corporation played havoc with the city's administrative leadership as they were forced to work around multinational planning taking place in other parts of the globe. As committees and strategies fell out of favor, new committees were formed and new directions pursued. Ultimately, the city's inability to confront the corporation and its need to quickly generate tax receipts led to the quick fixes described in this chapter. Attempts at industrial planning led to what I term the production of chaos-- a situation where the ideological fighting over priorities led to a

structural free-for-all, with developers and sectors of the city administration fighting with and among themselves.

It is significant that unsuccessful attempts at formulating economic strategy led to a belief by many business leaders that the community was not primed for development. The similarity between positions taken by, in particular, the Chamber of Commerce and the General Electric Corporation, and the tenants of modernization theory as it was posited for the third world during the 1950s and 1960s is addressed. The community is here compared to a newly independent state and differences between "native" and "non-native" views on development are discussed. It is argued that modernization theory has become a dominant mode of discourse in the planning literature and among business leaders in American communities because of its tendency to blame the victims for the failure of planning strategies. Rather than look at the processes of uneven development that characterize the area, modernization theory is able to focus attention on individual resistance to capitalist expansion, ignoring the relationships of dependency that predominate.

Chapter Six describes in more detail the processes of uneven development in the community and the response of a sector of the community to the dominance of the General Electric Corporation. It is posited here that a strong community allowed the growth of small competitive capitalist

enterprises that released a segment of the population from dependence on the corporation. The success enjoyed by small plastics moldmaking and injection firms were a testament to the entrepreneurial possibilities of ties based on kinship and friendship. With the advent of competition from abroad, however, the viability of these firms came into question. While many are still thriving in 1989, the hope placed in these firms to make Pittsfield "the plastics capital of America" and to provide an industry that could follow the path of the electronics growth around Boston or Silicon Valley became dimmer as the firms found themselves in increasing competition with other multinational firms, and unable to deal effectively with their own workforce.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides a case study of development and social responsibility. Focusing on a health crisis in Pittsfield generated by the past uses of PCBs in the manufacture of power transformers, this chapter endeavors to show that the needs of the community have not been considered in the corporation's pursuit of the smooth accumulation of capital. It is shown here that the corporation's cost accounting approach does not include community or human health factors.

It is further argued here that community resistance to the corporation's stand on toxic waste contamination succeeded in raising health issues as a major concern, employing state

and federal agencies on their behalf. The chapter shows how science can be constructed in favor of those with the funds to direct research and the discourse that accompanies it. It also addresses the role of the environment in economic planning activities in Pittsfield, embodying the conflict among the various sectors of the community.

Implications for Public Policy

As indicated in Chapter Five, the concept of "development" has been used by American communities, and in popular American culture, to signify an economic growth pattern that benefits all concerned. The question of development for whom, or at the expense of whom is rarely debated, particularly in communities in chronic need of tax revenue and jobs. Questions may arise around the kind of development that takes place -- for example, wealthier land owners may succeed in zoning industrial and/or residential growth from their neighborhoods, but this judgement does not mitigate the belief that economic development is inherently beneficial, leading to improved housing, education, health, welfare, and educational opportunity. With economic growth as a desired end, planners take the focus off the unequal redistribution of income with the implication that future growth will be better or more equally distributed.

Berry (1973) points to four styles of urban planning, which include 1) Ameliorative Problem Solving, or "the natural tendency to do nothing until problems arise or undesirable dysfunctions are perceived to exist in sufficient amounts to demand corrective or ameliorative action"; 2) Allocative Trend Modifying, which he calls "future oriented visions of reactive problem solving"; 3) Exploitative Opportunity Seeking, where an "analysis is performed not to identify future problems, but to seek out new growth opportunities" and 4) Normative Goal Orientation, in which goals are set based on images of a desired future. As we have seen in Pittsfield, categorical planning is never as clean as the analyses done after the fact. Pittsfield's planning efforts, like all cities, contains aspects of each. In older industrial areas, however, it is the first category that takes precedent because of the immediate financial needs of the community.

As Yago (1983:115) tells us, the emergence of global cities, that are internationally rather than nationally oriented, conflict with stable economic growth in local areas. The strategies of multinationals ignore the needs of communities in favor of competitive advantages in the global marketplace. What emerges is a basic schism in orientation between corporations and communities along with the differing ideologies concerning the construction of development policy. Economic development is not performed

"as if neighborhoods mattered" (Schwartz, 1981:64). While community leaders may realize, for example, that strong neighborhoods are needed to prevent crime and provide welfare for its citizens, corporations are concerned only with the provision of a labor force necessary to maintain their accumulation of capital.

The literature on city planning shows that the creation of jobs is primarily a result of the expansion of small businesses located near urban neighborhoods, rather than the intervention of large companies. The 1979 survey by the federal Economic Development Administration, for example, showed that small firms (20 or fewer employees) generated two-thirds of all new jobs in the United States, as well as almost all new jobs in New England. As Birch (1979:8) writes, "It appears, that it is the smaller corporations, despite their higher failure rates, that are aggressively seeking out most new opportunities, while the larger ones are primarily redistributing their operations."

The differences in ideology and orientation between corporations and communities is, of course, bound to the resources and structural power available to construct consensus. It is not enough to state that prudent planning requires the support of local businesses without the realization that the capital may not be available to support their expansion. Community businesses may also, as is the

case in Pittsfield, face competitive disadvantages beyond their control. While as short term solutions, the energy expended on the support of small businesses is more productive than the attempt to attract large industry, and should be pursued, the larger problem remains of the distribution of capital and its consequences. It is here worth restating Castell's (1980) observation that the current crisis in American communities is not only economic but political, and ideological:

The economic crisis, which has developed as a consequence of structural conditions triggered by the process of capital accumulation, results from the contradictions that are an expression of social relationships of production, distribution and management. The policies that will be used to deal with the crisis will be determined by the political processes of American Society (Castells: 1980:138).

For the population of Pittsfield, a strong community has continually confronted the structural changes within the corporation by adapting its resources to meet changing requirements. The current restructuring of the world system, however, has meant that new directions are needed that are indeed outside of the community's immediate arena. Communities have no chance when at war with multinationals - the resources are simply too differentiated in structural power. Attempts to deal with the planning difficulties associated with multinational restructuring necessarily lead

to the production of chaos, and the further masking of the relationships of class and power that define the discourse.

It is clear that what is good for multinationals is not necessarily good for the communities they occupy -- it is clear that what is a profitable strategy for General Electric in Pittsfield has not been good for Pittsfield, despite any advertising to the contrary. Longer term solutions to the crisis created by restructuring are tied to the confrontation of multinationals on their terms -- multinationally as well as nationally. National policy that defines solutions by what Safa (1981:433) calls "narrow protectionism" -- the "buy American" campaigns and the attempts at tariff laws on foreign products -- does not succeed in providing a basis to confront the issues at their determining basis -- the point of production. Some communities, as Safa notes, have instead urged their governments to work towards minimum International Labor Organization standards on wages, working conditions and free trade unions in less developed countries. Compliance would better the living conditions of workers in third world countries, while lessening the competitive disadvantage of workers in the older industrialized nations. The possibility of this strategy being freely adopted by competitive capitalist states, however, is minimal without the kind of social reorganization that is necessary to change the structures of power. The only real solution is the

organization of unions on an international basis that recognizes the way in which working nationals are pitted against each other and can challenge the global hegemony of corporate multinational structures. It means, ultimately, that development processes have to be restructured to emphasize human needs, as Leacock (1981:311) argues: "To talk of development means to talk of bringing an end to the present system of profit-making with its ever present threat of war. It means talking about the desperate need for a peaceful and economically secure world in which people, not profits, are the central social value."

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