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THE COMMUNITY STUDY:

A DISCUSSION OF THE METHOD WITH MODIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH IN SINGAPORE*

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I. INTRODUCTION

> A community study is not a branch of sociology, such as ecology, demography, and social psychology. Rather, it is a form of sociological research that is useful for a variety of research purposes.
>
> (Havighurst and Jansen: 1967: 7)

> Community study as a method has been so varied and eclectic , and so determined by the object of study, that some doubt must be cast on whether there is a single community study method.
>
> (Bell and Newby: 1971: 54)

These remarks by Havighurst and Jansen, and Bell and Newby indicates the ambigious position of the community study. On the one hand, as Havighurst and Jansen noted, the community study has come to be known as a form of social research rather than as a sub-discipline of sociology. Yet as a form of research, it has become quite difficult to specify what this form actually is. A variety of methods have been used under the umbrella of community study. What is termed as community studies in the social science literature is therefore an eclectic approach evolved over many decades of use by community and rural sociologists, as well as anthropologists in studying what has been ambigiously termed as communities.

This raises several questions. Is there a definitive area of community study? This question has special relevance in Singapore, since conventional definitions of community do not usually apply. Given the eclectic approach, is there a definitive method, or at least a clear set of guidelines on conducting community research?

The focus of this paper is therefore to:

1. explore the definition of community, what this means in Singapore, and the aims of community study within this context. This will be covered in section II of the paper.

2. specify in greater detail and more formally, the procedures or methods used in community research, as well as discuss some guidelines to selecting from this variety. Appendices B and C, which are lists of procedures complied by community researchers, are reproduced to facilitate the discussion. These will be referred to in section III of the paper.

   Also of concern in this section is the relevance of these procedures to Singapore. What procedures needs to be highlighted, modified or dropped altogether when doing a local community study?

3. evaluate community research as a general method of doing social research. The paper will close with section IV which discusses the strengths and weaknesses of community research with regard to four methodological issues in social research.

II. COMMUNITY STUDY AS AN AREA OF INVESTIGATION AND FOCUS OF RESEARCH

The community study method, as the name implies, implicates the community as the focal unit. The concept of community is the first problematic we have to encounter in developing an understanding of this method of research. From Hillery's (1955) review of 94 definitions (see appendix A) of community, Havighurst and Jansen (1967) identified six key community characteristics. According to Havighurst and Jansen (1967:7), a community is characterised by:

1. A group of people living within a relatively small geographical area.

This is perhaps the most common element found in the 94 definitions that Hillery surveyed, as 70 out of the 94 definitions surveyed contained a spatial element in the definition.

2. A group of people who interact socially.

This has to be understood in terms of varying levels of intimacy, depending on the size of the community. At the lowest end of this continuum is the acquaintanceship of fellow community members, or at least some recognition of their existence.

As an area of research, this second characteristic of community has generated much of the more recent work in community research. In particular, the notion that members of a community interact socially and that social differentiation results from this interaction has been subjected to much description, testing and discussion by network analysts, notably Laumann and his colleagues (Laummann [1967], Laumann and Pappi [1976], Laumann, Marsden and Galaskiewicz [1977]).

3. A group of people which is self sufficient in that they meet most of their material and social needs within the community.

People in a community therefore are able to find work within their community and have friends and relatives living in that community.

4. A group of people who share a common set of economic and social institutions-market place, religious organizations, educational and political systems.

This is linked to point (3) above in the sense that self-sufficiency depends to a great extent on a set of local organizations that are in place. We can also think about the presence of some local institutions like political and educational systems as an indicator of local independence from the wider environment, while the presence of certain economic institutions reflect links with and some degree of dependence on to the external environment.

Two avenues of community research arising from a focus on community organizations have been Warren's (1963) analysis of horizontal (ties local community units have with each other) and vertical (ties local units have with external organizations) linkages, and Hillery's (1969) approach in studying the community by focusing on its organizations.

5. A group of people who share common ends, norms and values.

This reflects the rather conservative orientation of Havighurst and Jansen's writings in the sixties, when structural functionalism was still very much the dominant paradigm. To counter this consensus view of a community, we need to be aware that while it is important to find out what the areas of consensus are, it is equally important to discover the point of conflict and along what lines (ethnic, religious, etc).

6. A group of people who are conscious of their common life and common goals.

This last characteristic is commonly operationalized in community and neighbourhood studies as the perception and feeling of community. The legacy of this peculiar aspect of community research is the numerous scales of community identification and solidarity, some of the more famous reproduced in Miller's (1983) <u>Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement</u>. Besides the community solidarity scale, Miller has included scales on community attitude, rating of community, community services and community leadership.

A community, defined by these six characteristics, is best approximated by a village or small town, where physical and social proximity are intertwined with a fair amount of internal self-government and economic independence. The moment we move away from this type of social grouping to consider other types of social groups, then one or more of the six traits highlighted by Havighurst and Jansen (1967) will not apply.

In Singapore, a combination of factors such as the small size, the entrepot, manufacturing and service economic base, a massive urban renewal and public housing programme[1], and a multi-ethnic situation work towards separating physical from social proximity, as well as promote economic interdependence rather than independence. The local political system is also highly centralized, with a hierarchical system of organizations (community centers, resident committees) linking the neighbourhood with the state. Given this set of conditions, one would be hard pressed to find a "community", in the sense defined by Havighurst and Jansen, in Singapore, other than a handful of villages in the smaller islands off the main island.

There must therefore be a revision of this concept of community to account for the very different set of local circumstances. The idea of community and community study in Singapore has been taken to mean the objective of attempting to study a social group in order to understand various aspects of its organization, interaction among members and its core values and norms. To this end, many of the local sociological and anthropological community studies have been focussed on the analysis of ethnic and dialect communities, neighbourhood communities, and religious communities.

The study of such communities is typically intense and aimed at a general understanding of social life and dynamics in such communities. To this end, a varied but specifiable set of guidelines, procedures and techniques have been used. The next section attempts to outline the various methods used in community research and discuss the comparative efficiency of these methods.

III. COMMUNITY STUDY AS A METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

A. Procedures in Studying the Community

Early community researchers, in their efforts to develop a more exact approach to the study of the field, have left behind lists of procedures[2]. The lists developed by Taylor (1945), Arensberg (1954), and a more recent one by Crane and Angrosino (1979), are selected for discussion because of their varying degree of comprehensiveness and their emphasis on different aspects of the community study. We begin with the list by Carl Taylor (1945), which consists of four points.

1. Collect and analyze all documentary data available on the areas. Taylor actually used the phrase 'statistical data'. A more encompassing term would be 'documentary material' since the researcher's search of written material should not only be statistical material but all sorts of documentary sources related to his field of interest. As Poplin (1979: 310,312) points out, the use of documentary sources is of paramount importance in community research and can greatly reduce the amount of time and money spent. In some cases, as in historical studies, statistical and non-statistical material may be the researcher's only source of information. In the case of statistical material particularly, the coverage (geographical as well as population wise) is much more extensive than when other methods are used. Historical material (statistical and non statistical) enables comparative analysis which is a trademark of a stronger piece of research. Using historical sources also gets around what Robert Bierstedt (1949) calls 'temporocentrism'.

Availability of such documentary material is naturally a function of how "advanced" the community is. The more simple hunter-gatherer and agrarian communities that anthropologists are interested in will have few written records. Even in such places, simple and fragmentary records of geneologies and other cultural materials have been put to great use.

On the other hand, in more industrialized, "modern" societies, formal and complex organizations - public, business and civic, is a basic form of organizing activity. Weber (1947: 322) argues that such organizations find it imperative to keep records of some sort as part of organizational "memory" and as an impartial mechanism to arbitrate decisions. Such organizational behaviour works to the advantage of the community researcher in providing comprehensive (both in terms of time as well as the population coverage) data. Local government agencies are particularly useful in that they keep all types of records (for example, births, deaths, marriages, property transactions, arrests) that may be made available to the researcher upon request.

This call to begin community research by first hunting for documentary sources is crucial in Singapore given the prominence and proliferation of public agencies and various formal organizations. The first door to open, when doing research in Singapore, is more often than not, a door leading into an organization rather than a community.

Local researchers should therefore pay as much attention to cultivating links with various organizations as they would towards potential informants. The difference between informants and organizations should be reflected in a modified approach that is oriented towards the organization. Contrary to the notion that public agencies are unsympathetic to social science research enquiries, these organizations are generally responsive if:

(a) The researcher does the preliminary research work in matching his intentions with the proper human agency within the organization and approaches the right department, section or person in the organization for help. This is especially the case for larger bureaucratic organization and when several departments are involved. The onus is on the researcher to initally sort out the right persons to communicate his enquiry to.

(b) The researcher initially writes rather than telephones to communicate his research enquiries. Organizations typically requires a written record of enquiries. The letter provides the receiver with documentation should he need to check with his superior or have a contact person to call or write to should there be a subsequent need. This letter can then be followed up by a telephone call requesting for an interview or meeting with the person(s) concerned.

(c) In the letter and subsequent interview or meeting, the researcher is very specific about how the organization or its representative can help. When that particular organization is handling the affairs of the communty under study or even when the organization's business is indirectly related to the researcher's aims, the researcher would want to interview organizational representatives. Given the more formal interview situation, questions should be framed before the actual interview.

If possible, the questions should be mailed to the interviewee. This is very important within an organizational context because organizations are typically afraid of revealing too much. Unlike the informant, organizational representatives are in a more difficult position as far as release of information is concerned, since ownership of information is not personal but collective. Organizational representatives are therefore more comfortable if they know in advance what the interview agenda is. Having received a set of questions some time before the meeting also allows the more conscientious organizational representatives to check up certain facts, figures, and potential material and data sources (he thinks is related to the objectives revealed in the questions) that the researcher can turn to. This obviously works in favour of researcher.

To the novice researcher who is faced with the daunting task of initiating and maintaining organizational contacts for data gathering, it worthwhile remembering that all formal organizations, especially government departments, have a reputation and an image to upkeep. Responding to public enquiries, of which research enquires is a subset, is part and parcel of maintaining this image.

2. Identify and delineate all neighbourhoods and communities in the area.

Taylor's second step requires another modification. Since our definition of community no longer matches physical with social proximity, the imperative is to delineate the boundaries of the community rather than just the spatial limits. In some cases, this could be spatially determined, as Taylor suggests. For ethnic and religious communities, however the researcher has to determine what the relevant boundaries of the communities are.

This mapping exercise is important for a couple of reasons. Firstly, getting the boundaries of the community provides an objective indicator of the scale of the research endeavour, since information that is recorded as a result of this mapping exercise includes variables such as the number and location of households.

Secondly, the mapping exercise is a first step towards establishing ties with the members of the community and the various institutions and practices. This then becomes the foundation for other procedures that follow. For example, this step, if done properly, gives the researcher a systematic way of selecting informants for more intensive consultations. For this reason, this step is vital to the community research endeavour and should not be rushed through.

3. Gather, by schedules, information on the form, nature, and extent of social participation, including formal and informal groups, leadership, etc.

With reference to this call for gathering information about groups within the community, the reader should note once again Hillery's (1969) approach of studying the community via its organizations. Also relevant at this point is Margaret Stacey's (1969) suggestion to study the community as a local system and analyze the interrelationships between sub-units. One growth area in community studies is network analysis of inter-organizational linkages of local community organizations. The interested reader could look at the study done by Knoke and Wood (1981). Knoke and Kuklinski (1982) provides a very good introduction to network analysis and some of the examples found in their book pertain to community inter-organizational linkages.

Aside from determining the range of community groups, clubs and organizations, another useful exercise is to work out the major socio-economic, ethnic and religious divisions in the community. As mentioned earlier, knowing what these divides are is essential to understanding community conflict.

4. By means of repeated and detailed interviews of a carefully selected sample of informants, assemble information on values with respect to the following matters.

   (a) cultural patterns having to do with land use, economic (production) techniques, attitudes towards work etc.

   (b) formal and informal organizations of the local community.

   (c) community leadership in various organizations.

In line with our broader definition of community, the various issues mentioned by Taylor can be extended to cover issues of particular importance to the community the researcher has selected for analysis.

How should informants be selected? An ideal way of going about selecting informants would be to:

(a) begin an general tagging of various persons in the community according to the major roles these persons play in the community, indicating their specific location in the social structure of the community and their degree of involvement in managing the affairs of the community.

(b) select the sample based on a match between his research intentions and the informant's role in the community.

(c) begin casual conversations with a sample to gauge their information quality and quantity.

(d) continue adding and dropping informants until the researcher comes to a manageable sample size, according to his resources.

The more specific issues involved in selecting respondents will be elaborated in the next section when specific methods used in community research are discussed in greater detail.

While the list provided by Taylor has to do with substantive research areas and use of a number of methods to achieve such ends, the next list by Crane and Angrosino (1974) in appendix B focuses on the life cycle of a community research project and the social and methodological concerns to be dealt with along the way.

The questions asked under parts I to III of Crane and Angrosino's list have to do with getting a general idea of the community and settling down in that community. One of the most important elements in a traditional community study has to do with the fact that community researchers are expected to live in the village or town that they are studying. It is from this living experience that researchers experience the totality of the enviornment that they are interested in as well as share some of the experience of some of the residents of that community. Living in the community for an extended period of time also means that the researcher has the option of using a variety of research tools.

In the Singapore context, this living arrangement seems impractical in several instances, since many of the communities under consideration do not live in a particular area, given the policy of ethnically integrated public housing estates. The small size of the island also means that many of the activities of various communities interpenetrate. Community boundaries are therefore much more likely to be open and permeable compared to more isolated or work-based physical-social communities. Given these factors, it is appropriate for the local researcher to make repeated visits to observe various community gatherings.

When the researcher is constrained by making repeated visits to a community, he may lose some of the intimacy, empathy and flexiblity gained by physically living there. This loss has to be minimised by making greater efforts to establish a researcher role and identity within that community to compensate for the "natural" resident identity that evolves from living in the community, and by extending the period of study to balance the less intense strategy of repeated visits.

Another interesting note about Crane and Angrosino's list is the kind of relationships or contacts that the researcher needs to establish with various officials, social leaders, and so on. Included under this consideration is the possibility that some groups and specific individuals may be avoided initally. Comments on part IV (methods) of this list will be deferred until the next section.

Parts V and VI involve the final stages of the community research cycle. Research etiquette implies that the researcher properly expresses his gratitude to informants and the many persons he received help from. Another consideration at this point is the dissemination of information collected back to the community. The anonymity of informants and groups becomes an issue when various community groups and agencies want to get a copy of the report. When certain information is deemed "sensitive" by the researcher and anonymity cannot be assured because the readers have an intimate familarity with the subject matter, the researcher may have to censor portions of the report to ensure the protection of the sources.

The importance of protecting the confidentiality of your sources can be seen from an actual case whereby the Institute of Survey Research at the University of Michigan once had to send all the files of a research project to Canada when it became apparent to the project administrators that these records were going to be taken by the government to be used as evidence in an investigation. In this case, not only was the confidentiality of respondents at stake, but also the reputation of the Institute in protecting its respondents.

The list by Arensberg (1954) is reproduced in appendix C as a reference source to the reader because it probably contains everything a sociologist would want to study in a community. This also includes a number of methods, scales and tests (some outdated), and a number of documentary sources. The best way to use this list is to first decide on the area(s) for study and then consult this list on how to go about studying the area(s) identified.

B. The Comparative Efficiency of Various Methods

In the course of going over the list of procedures involved in doing community research in the last section, we were introduced to a number of methods and a number of research areas. It is now time to go into greater detail regarding research areas and the relative efficiency of a particular method in obtaining information on these areas.

Let me underscore the importance of this discussion in the following way. We recall from the quote of Bell and Newby (1973) produced in the beginning of the last section, that the community study approach is characterized by a variety of methods. It is therefore important to be aware that certain methods work better in obtaining certain kinds of information. Table 1 will focus our discussion somewhat. In the table, I have listed four methods which are most commonly used in community research: survey, participant observation, informant interviewing, and document analysis.

TABLE 1

THE COMPARATIVE EFFICIENCY OF FOUR MAJOR

METHODS OF COMMUNITY STUDY

ISSUE/FOCUS	SURVEY	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	INFORMANT INTER-VIEWING	DOCUMENT
I. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF VARIOUS METHODS				
ADVANTAGES:	COVERAGE	EMPATHY	INSIGHT	ECONOMY
KEY PROBLEM:	STANDARDIZATION	SCALE	LOCATIONAL BIAS	AVAILABILITY
II. COVERAGE OF VARIOUS METHODS				
VALUES, MEANING	Only if meanings are clear (scales)	Meaning Inferred	Insight	Personnal letters diaries
ACTIVITIES ACTIONS TRANSACTIONS	Efficient	Efficient	As initial guide	Newspapers statistical sources
EVENTS	Perceptions (needs standardization)	Efficient	Insight	Newspapers
PROCESSES (DIFFERENTIATION, COOPERATION, CONFLICT)	Inappropriate	Chronological limits	Insight	Newspapers archival data
COMMUNITY GROUPS & ORGANISATIONS	Attributes	Scale limits -sub sections of organisation	Potential locational bias	Minutes of meeting files and records

1. Survey

Of the four methods, the social survey is probably the most familiar. This is such a popular instrument in social research that almost everyone would remember participating in a survey. It is important to note that while the survey is popular among researchers, it is not without its faults. The key advantage of the survey is the generalization (if it is done with a random sample) it gives and the fact that the data collected can easily be subjected to statistical analysis. The key problem of this approach is that because of the difficulties involved in handling open-ended questions, most surveys have closed-ended questions which mean that answers have to be standardised. Because of this limitation, meanings behind questions have to be clear and relatively simple, and subjective phenomena cannot be adequately be dealt with a survey questionnaire. If you look at the table, I mention that the survey can only handle values and meanings, if these "things" are clearly established in the mind set of the respondents. The survey does very well on information related to activities, actions, transactions and attributes of people and organizations. It can handle people's perceptions of events, while it is inappropriate if processes are involved.

2. Participant Observation

According to Poplin (1979:291), participant observation is more closely identified with the study of communities than is any other method of research. This is understandable. Since researchers are expected to stay in the community, observing and participating come naturally. The key advantage of this approach is empathy. The researcher sees and participates in events as they happen, and record people's reactions to these events. Some years ago, one student wrote a paper on the dynamics of a recreation club. Her best analysis was on the game of tombola; (a lottery game played almost exclusively in clubs) because she used to work in this club as a caller in the game. Standing before the audience and playing the game with them, she became a part of what she was studying. This sounds a bit mystical, but when she was writing about the social structure of the game, she knew what she was writing about, all the subtleties and intricacies that went on in the game, because she was there when it happened, because she played it, and because she had a major role in the event and other players reacted to her in that fashion.

The key disadvantage of this method is the scale of research. Participant observation is time consuming activity. As a result a study that relies too much on this method suffers from limited coverage. This method has also been criticized by Poplin (1979:299,300) for not yielding quantifiable data and for being too subjective. I would however submit that having quantifiable data is a function of research technology and is not an inherent problem with participant observation. Observation schedules for example can be structured to produce quantifyable data. The argument about subjectivity should be viewed in terms of a tradeoff between insight on the one hand, which means that you have to get close to what you are studying and somehow altering the phenomenon under study by being too close, and being "objective" about things on the other hand, and only tapping the surface of the phenomenon you are studying. This conflict is unavoidable and one must choose between having more of one and less of the other.

Given these advantages and disadvantages, with reference to the table 1, participant observation does particularly well when it comes to activities, actions, transactions and events, that is, micro-sociological phenemenon. There are chronological or scale limits on observing processes, large groups, and organizations.

3. Informant Interviewing

Informant interviewing often goes so often hand in hand with participant observation that many writers do not make a distinction between the two methods. The distinction is made because there are several important points to note about informant interviewing that are best introduced separately.

Community studies which are one-man operations are forced by available resources to depend on a combination of observation and informants to gather information. In such cases, the quality of the study depends to a great extent on the kind of informants the researcher has access to. Here we are talking about sponsorship into the area of study. In the most famous example of sponsorship, William Foote Whyte was getting nowhere in his doctoral study of Boston's East End until he met 'Doc', a local gang leader. Doc brought Whyte around with him and introduced him to various people in the community. Whyte finally had access to the kind of data which would later make his book Street Corner Society a classic because of Doc. Specifically, Whyte's credibility and role in the local community was established because of his association with Doc, and locals then started talking to Whyte. Doc and his gang also provided insights into local processes and events.

In my own study of real estate clubs in Chicago, I gained access to these organizations due to my friendship with J, a part time student at the University of Chicago and a long time member of one of the clubs. J's business partner, Sam, was, at the time of the study, the president of another club. The third club was a new one. By the time the first meeting was scheduled, I had already been acquainted with members of the two older clubs and was able to attend the inaugural meeting as a member of the contingent invited to attend the opening. The important point to note in these two examples is the importance of personal relations in securing access to the objects of study and in providing insight into the phenomenon under analysis.

It is important to realise that the insight from informants is insight from a specific location in the social structure. The researcher may end up with a locational bias if he depends on a few informants or if his informants are clustered around a certain segment of the community. Thus we will do well to follow Bell and Newby's (1971: 69) advice and pay attention to the representativeness of informants, and not overly depend on 'good' informants, those who are friendly and have the time and inclination to chat.

With reference to the table 1, and bearing in mind the key advantages and limitations, informant interviewing is effective in understanding about values and meanings, events and processes. Such a method is useful as an initial guide to information on activities and transactions. A survey may prove more effective in gathering such data later on. The problem of locational bias may be greater when large groups and organizations are studied. In conflictual situations, either in groups or organizations, using informants from one side can potentially close contacts with persons from the other side. Researchers of labour unions have this perennial problem with management.

4. Document Analysis

We spent some time talking about the use of documents in section III.A.1, and need not spend much time on this. The most famous study that comes out of this tradition is Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) The Polish Peasant, which was based on the study of personal letters written by Polish immigrants in America and their relatives in Poland. The reader might not be aware that this technique, which was pioneered by Thomas and Znaniecki, came about quite by accident. As Coser (1971: 533) tells it:

> "One rainy morning, while walking down the back alley behind his house, Thomas had to side-step to avoid a bag of garbage which someone was throwing from a window. As the bag burst open at his feet, a long letter fell out. He picked it up, took it home, and discovered that it was written in Polish by a girl taking a training course in hospital. It was addressed to her father ~~and~~ mainly discussed family affairs and discords. It then occurred to Thomas that one could learn a great deal from such letters. Let no one be tempted to interpret the incident as a confirmation of the "accidental theory of history." It took a very peculiar kind of man with very special gifts and training to pay attention to a bag of garbage thrown at his feet."

The interested reader might want to look up Crane and Angrosino's (1974) book, which contains a chapter on collecting life histories and using personal documents. A more systematic and quantitative method called content analysis has also been developed to study documents. For a more detailed discussion of the method, see Holsti (1969) and Weber (1985).

Note that a study need not be based entirely on documents as the primary source of data. As a supporting method, the use of documents as data is applicable to almost all types of community studies. Table 1 gives examples of several types of documents for studying various types of sociological phenomenon.

IV. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

I will conclude this paper with a discussion of several issues that the researcher has to deal with in doing community studies or for that matter any type of social research. I am presenting these issue as sets of contrasts with the warning that these are tradeoffs and that there are no hard and fast rules.

A. Inductive versus Deductive Logic

This issue has to do with the place of theory in research. Most conventional social research adopts a deductive approach in that the specific aims of the study are deduced from a body of theory that the researcher is interested in. The study then becomes an extension of that literature by suggesting arguments that have either not been looked into, or rejecting certain hypotheses in the existing literature. While such an approach guides the researcher in collecting the relevant data, it has also been criticized on grounds that it prevents the researcher from looking for alternative explanations and other things of interest. The survey approach as a method has to adopt the deductive approach because it is usually administered once, which means that some form of theory or underlying logic must guide the formulation of the questions.

At the other end is the inductive approach. Glaser and Strauss (1967) achieved their fame by championing this cause which argues that one must go into the field with only very general ideas of what to do. Issues, variables, relationships and explanations will "pop out" in the course of doing the research, thus giving rise to the term grounded theory. Bailey (1979:46) points out that this philosophy matches well with participant observation.

The relative merits of the two approaches can therefore be debated at the level of survey versus observation. The best solution of course is to utilise both methods.

B. Surface versus Deep Phenomenon

The issue of surface versus deep phenomenon can also be discussed with reference to survey versus field methods (which includes both observation and informant interviewing). Logic indicates that field methods are more efficient when it comes to deep phenomenon, because of the experience that arises out of involvement and because of the insight provided by informants. Bear in mind that what the survey lacks in depth, it makes up for in breadth.

Another aspect of this issue has to do with what Douglas (1976:57) classify as misinformation, evasions, lies and fronts. Douglas devotes over twenty pages to the discussion of this problem, and the interested reader will find this discussion rewarding. The essential point is that as researchers, we commonly assume that the respondent or informant is telling us the truth. What we often overlook or do not want to admit is that there are many occasions when the respondent wants to tell less than the truth. Instead of providing the "right" answer, the informant will either (1) say something that they don't really know about or what they think is true (misinformation); (2) say something else or keep silent (evasion); (3) lie outright; (4) provide a false but desired image of self (front).

How does one recognise and probe beyond this layer of half- and non-truths? The survey approach cannot effectively get around this problem, beyond using limited strategies like assuring confidentiality and using non-threatening/sensitive words. The best the survey researcher can do is to avoid the more sensitive topics that evoke such behaviour and to carefully train interviewers to recognise such behaviour and provide assurances on the spot, as the Kinsey studies claimed to have done.

Field methods using a team of researchers provide the best way of countering such tendencies. I include in appendix D an account of an interview with Doc (not the one in Whyte's study), a longtime member and a central figure in a nudist camp studied by Douglas (1976) and his associates. The point to make from studying this account is that Douglas was able to penetrate Doc's veil because the method he used enabled him to cross-check the interview account with other researchers in the team, with other camp members who knew Doc, and from other interview and conversational accounts with Doc. Everyone would probably agree that this is time-consuming, tough detective work.

C. Stationary versus Evolving Insights

Common wisdom would tell us that when faced with this issue, we should always go for insight that evolves through the involvement of the researcher with the subject matter. This is in part the philosophy of grounded theory.

The survey approach, which usually is one-shot, provides a stationary perspective on things. There are however a couple of ways to avoid sinking too deep into the mud. First, a defence of sorts. In survey research, relying on the literature is in a way relying on the wisdom of accumulated knowledge. Some of this wisdom can overcome some pitfalls of the stationary perspective. Therefore, conscientiously reviewing the relevant literature on the subject to see what it has to offer should be observed religiously. Secondly, the pilot test, often overlooked in survey studies, is actually the most critical stage because it provides a limited but essential foray into what reality is before the big test (survey). Respondents for the pilot study must therefore be carefully selected to be as close to the actual survey respondents as possible. Given the typical bureaucracy of survey research, this phase, if not overlooked, is often rushed through[3]. It is essential to carefully check findings of the pilot group to see if revisions are needed. Thirdly, when a survey is used with other methods, always put the survey at the end, that is, the last method to be used. In this way, the survey can build on insights gathered from the other methods, and the researcher can then see if these insights are applicable to the general population. This is actually the best use of the survey method because its key advantage is maximized while its disadvantages are minimized through the use of other methods.

D. Single versus Multiple

If there is one thing ~~the~~ reader should remember about this paper, it should be this: more is always better than less. Always use several rather than one method, and try as far as possible to work with a team instead of going solo.

In a way, a lot of what is presented here is presented as ideals, but as teacher at the Institute for Social Research told the survey research class, always aim for ideals, ~~but~~ be willing to settle for realities.

NOTES

1. The urban renewal and the public housing programme which incorporates an integrated settlement policy has in fact broken down all major ethnic residential enclaves. As Hassan (1977:75,76) notes, "settlement in a new public housing estate is no longer based on ethnic affliation but on economic status, that is the ability to pay for or rent an apartment".

2. According to Gettys (1934:70), the attempt to move from the realm of "pre-sociology" to that of a scientific sociology in the field of community study began in the the 1910's.

3. The pilot stage is often rushed through because it is incorrectly perceived as the most flexible of the stages in the survey research calender. Designing the questionnaire, more often than not, takes too long and eats into the time alloted to the pilot test. This time lost in the pilot stage cannot be made up by delaying the survey period, because the survey period is typically the most inflexible stage as interviewers (in many cases students on vacation and other part-timers) are committed for specific periods.

APPENDIX A

HILLERY'S (1955) CLASSIFICATION OF 94 DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY

CLASSIFICATION OF SELECTED DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY ACCORDING TO CONTENT

Distinguishing ideas or elements mentioned in the definitions*	No. of Defs.	Authors
I. GENERIC COMMUNITY:		
A. Social Interaction		
1. Geographic area		
a. Self-sufficiency	8	Wilson; Hobhouse, Wheeler, & Ginsberg; Sanderson; Zimmerman; Fairchild; Davis; Landis; Hawley
b. Common life	9	MacIver and MacIver & Page; Morse; Park & Burgess; Kinneman; Snedden; MacClenahan; Zorbaugh; Wirth; J. Bernard
(1) Kinship	2	Tonnies; Heberle
c. Consciousness of kind	7	Jackson; Gillette; Brunner; Lindeman; Cook; Nelson; Anderson & Hill
d. Possession of common ends, norms, means	20	Ward; Hieronymus; North; Dunn; Pirenne; Lundquist & Carver; Wood; Lundquist & Moore; Burr; Steiner; North; Osburn & Neumeyer; Gettys; Ginsberg; Panunzio; Hoffsommer & Pryor; Homans; Hiller; Bennett & Tumin; Hillman
e. Collection of institutions	2	Park; Ogburn & Nimkoff
f. Locality group	5	Galpin; Burgess; Rich; Sanders & Ensminger; Warner
g. Individuality	2	Howe; McKenzie
2. Presence of some common characteristic, other than area		
a. Self-sufficiency	1	Butterfield
b. Common life	3	Small; Sims; Park
c. Consciousness of kind	5	Cooley; Cole; Diffendorfer; Allport; Hayes
d. Possession of common ends, norms, means	5	Russell; Pettit; Panunzio; Morgan; J. & J. Ogden

3. Social System	1	Hill & Whiting
4. Individuality	3	Hart; Liao; Bews
5. Totality of attitudes	1	Fairchild
6. Process	2	Follett; Case
B. Ecological Relationships	3	McKenzie; Hughes; Hollingshead
II. RURAL COMMUNITY:		
A. Social Interaction		
1. Geographic area		
a. Self-sufficiency	1	Gillette
b. Common life	3	Henderson; McClenahan; Sorokin, Zimmerman, & Galpin
c. Consciousness of kind	3	Thompson; Ensminger; T.L. Smith
d. Possession of common ends, norms, means	3	Burr; Lantis; Sanderson
e. Locality group	5	Wilson; Galpin; Vogt; Sanderson; Kolb & Marshall
Total Definitions	94	

* Descriptions of the definitions' content are to be read by combining all categories specified under each roman numeral. Thus, MacIver and Page's definition contains the following ideas: generic community, social interaction, geographic area, and common life. Cooley's definition contains the ideas of generic community, social interaction, and the presence of some common characteristic other than area - namely, consciousness of kind.

** For bibliographic references to authors, see bibliography at end of Hillery's (1955) article.

APPENDIX B

CRANE AND ANGROSIN'S (1974)

PLAN FOR A COMMUNITY STUDY*

* Modified and shortened for this paper.

I. DELIMITING THE COMMUNITY FOR STUDY

1. What are the boundaries of this community?

   (a) Geographic boundaries (e.g. rivers, mountains).

   (b) Demographic or ~~other~~ human boundaries (e.g., the communication ends along a religious or linguistic barrier - in the community people speak Italian and attend a Roman Catholic church, while across the street people speak Greek and attend an Orthodox church).

   (c) Official boundaries (e.g. governmentally sanctioned town or township lines).

2. What specific factors make this community different from others in the same vicinity

3. What factors link the community to others in the same vicinity?

4. What the facilities for getting to and around this community?

   (a) Transportation.

   (b) Communications (telephone, telegraph, short-wave.)

II. ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

1. Are special arrangements neded to enter the community?

   (a) Permission of the local sheriff's office or chief of police.
   (b) Cooperation of village elders.
   (c) Passports and visas (if out of the country).

2. What is the best way of getting to the community (fastest and least expensive)?

3. Is there some time of year when it is better to arrive than any other? If so, why?

4. What special clothing or other equipment will be needed for living here for an extended period?

III. ESTABLISHING THE RESEARCHER IN THE COMMUNITY?

1. Whom should the researcher contact first?

    (a) Officials.
    (b) The social leaders.
    (c) The ordinary folks.

2. Is there anyone to avoid initially?

    (a) Groups.
    (b) Individuals.

3. Where should residence be established?

    (a) Buy own home?
    (b) Rent home, or apartment, or room?
    (c) Board in someone's house?
        i. With a single person or family?
        ii. With what kind of people?

4. How should the researcher explain what he is doing?

5. Should the researcher seek work in the community as a "cover" for his research?

    (a) If so, why and what kind? If not, why not?
    (b) Should the researcher join, or attend the meetings of, local organizations (churhces, clubs, etc.)?

6. Should the researcher, if single, date locals?

7. If the community is large and has many people living in it, whom should the researcher seek out to be his key informants?

    (a) How would he best cultivate their friendship and cooperation?

        i. Should informants be given a regular salary? Periodic gifts? Or whould any giving be considered inappropriate?

        ii. If something needs to be given, what is the best thing to give (money, food, favors)?

IV. METHODOLOGY

1. Are certain techniques more approapriate to use for certain people than for others?

2. Are certain techniques more appropriate to use for collecting certain types of data than others?

3. Are there any situations in which using a camera or a tape recorder would be considered either offensive or otherwise inappropriate? If so, how can the researcher compensate for this, if necessary?

4. How should field notes be kept and stored? How is it best to organize them for efficient retrieval?

V. LEAVING THE COMMUNITY

1. Should the researcher report to anyone officially about his departure plans?

2. Should the researcher give going-away presents to informants in the field?

   (a) Should the researcher expect many going-away presents from his informants, and if so, what should be his proper response to such generosity? (That is, will he be expected to continue to reciprocate even after leaving the field?)

VI. THE POST-FIELD PERIOD

1. How should the researcher organize the analysis and writing up of his data?

2. Presuming it is advisable for the community to be aware of his analysis, should the researcher seek their approval before having it published? If so, whom should he ask? How?

3. Once it has been published, how should the researcher disseminate copies to members of the community? How many? To whom?

APPENDIX C

ARENSBERG'S (1954) PLAN FOR COMMUNITY STUDY

GATHERING AND ANALYZING DATA FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES

POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES FOR THE STUDY OF D--- (POP. 20,000)
(Four Persons Full Time; One Year in Field, One Year Write-up)

I. SPATIAL-TEMPORAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY D---

1. Spatial description:

   a. Topography, regional position, access, subordination
   b. Form of settlement: street arrangement, business and housing concentration, etc.
   c. Quasi-organic forms; e.g., the mine as a nucleus
   d. Questions of accessibility: Who may go where? Which areas are open to all? Which to officials alone? Young? Old? Women? etc.
   e. Historical displacements and changes; eg., location of farmers' market, old commercial centers, new settlements.
   f. Community self-descriptions: what sections are distinguished, what names and nicknames applied.
   g. Land use: forms of fields, dwellings, gardens, commons, private plots, properties; also, as distated by divisions and restrictions of living space.
   h. Communication and traffic: spatial movement within and betwee settlements, mine, center, peripheries, delineation of trading area, marriage radius, etc.

2. Temporal description:

   a. Traffic flow and communications activity: daily, weekly, seasonal, yearly rounds.
   b. Work-round: production, employment, work cycles, punctuations, full and slack times.
   c. Eu- and dysphoric cycles: communal and ceremonial calendar rounds, festivities, opportunities for personal life, etc., leisure, recreation.
   d. Family cycles: meals, work, sleep, festivities, birth, marriage, life-cycle, age-grading.
   f. Recurrent crises: sickness, dejection, etc.
   g. Sporadic crises: mine disaster, fire, epidemic.
   h. Economic and budgetary round: periodic income, employment statistics and records (NOTES 1,2,3).

The results of this typological exploration should supply answers to the question: What is D---?

II. DIRECT AND INDIRECT TECHNIQUES FOR OBSERVING FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ITS RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY, WITH RELATED TOPICS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

1. Direct observation: participant observation, biographical interviews (life-histories), family questionnaire sample, perhaps school essays, used for determining family structure and internal relationship patterns.

   a. Roles of family members: participations, relationships in behaviour and effect.

   b. Patterns of conditioning of members (socialization, child-rearing) by other members, including disciplines and taboos.

   c. Education and vocational training: training methods and contexts, within the family, inside and outside of school; school system and content of education; school and family contact; vocational and cultural aspirations; training contents, contexts, and methods (NOTES 4,5).

2. Indirect observation: use of attitudinal and value materials, including individual psychology, ideological matters.

   a. Study of sanctions and social control measures through:

      i. Collection and analysis of court, police, and relief records
      ii. Open-ended interviews with doctors, priests, mine officials, town and government officials and institutional officers, school and sports officials, union, club, associational officers, fellow-members, neighbours, particularly round family and individual crises (NOTES 6,7).

   b. Study of local evaluations of local types of persons, e.g., moral and aesthetic attitudes and beliefs about persons, classes, groups, etc., by means of:

      i. Free interviews based on provocative materials, chance events, daily contact, or incidental description.

      ii. Content-analysis of newspapers, speeches, public and ceremonial utterances.

      iii. Biographies and local personal histories, letters, essays, personal documents.

   c. Study of individual and community psychology, attitudes, values, collective myth, through:

      i. Clinial observations, records, or doctors' and specialists' analyses of "deviant personalities", criminals, neurotic and psychotic distortions of local values.

      ii. Formal testing and projection methods: Rorschach, Hellersberg, etc., according to opportunity and training.

iii. Content analysis of school, training, and other instructional materials.

iv. Institutional and personal documents and utterances as in II, b, i, ii, iii, above.

v. Myths and ~~history as~~ locally accepted and transmitted, also songs, folklore, popular folk literature.

vi. Attitude survey and scales., formal attitudes survey methods, perhaps constructed on local cliches and fixed beliefs, after Adorno et. al, The Authoritarian Personality.

III. DIRECT DESCRIPTION OF INSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL PATTERNS, ROLES, AND STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIPS IN LARGER AGGREGATES: TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH THE COMMUNE (GEMEINDE), THE PARISHES, AND THE SETTLEMENTS (SIEDLUNGEN), TREATING COMMUNITY RATHER THAN FAMILIAL LIFE.

1. Cultural, institutional patterns of interpersonal and intergroup interaction, ordination and deference, interactive behaviour, attitude, and moral education.

2. Role analyses, formal and informal statuses, and sanctions thereupon.

3. Sociometric and interactional-relationship mapping of sample groups of varying sizes.

There to be used for:

4. The settlements (residential and neighbourhood groupings) and class segregations (middle-class business center), to establish, delineate, and describe:

   a. Age groups and age-grade patterns, including youth activities both informal and organized; adult, old age, and childhood groups, patterns, activities; with mechanisms of transition, control, exclusion, sanction, etc.

   b. Intersexual patterns outside the family:

      i. Adolescence and youth, including courtship, mate search, sex education and experiment, taboos, family and community controls, exo- and endogamic tendencies or restrictions.

      ii. Adult sexuality, with control of sexual relations in marriage; prudery; sex morality; institutional and informal sanctions; class variations and differences.

   c. Ritual and ceremonial interpersonal interaction, transition and expansion of familial relationships, kinship, godparentship, neighborly and friendship patterns, inheritance and ritual and social obligation, mutual aid.

d. Secular and casual interfamily relationship, visiting, gossip, quarreling, display.

e. Informal communal regulation and social control over.

i. Space, as gardens, streets, animals, vehicles, and contrasts with official institutional controls over same.
ii. Time, as sleep, ~~s~~ickness, life-crises, etc.
iii. Interpersonal relationships, disputes, etc.

5. The formal religious Gemeinden (parishes) and the secular commune, described through:

a. Inventory of formal offices and organizations.

b. Analysis of community participation, membership in formal statuses and organizations and associations, residence, occupation, social class, etc., using official statistical and demographical sources.

c. Investory and analysis ~~of~~ associations and their membership through study of overlapping membership, rules, functions, leadership, activities, rituals, purposes, histories through interview (NOTES 8,9), and documents.

d. Interactional analysis, through records, observation, and anecdotal descriptions, of all official-private contacts, over sample times, at each level and in all sequences: Who brought what to whom? When? For what purpose? With what outcome?

e. Both content analysis and the above interactional analysis should be used on ~~i~~nterviews and documents referring to local functionaries, characterizing them or giving local attitudes toward them, as well as on formal records of official projects and proceedings as city reports, court records, etc., including newspaper files (NOTE 10).

IV. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, CLASS STRUCTURE, AND OTHER CATEGORIC ORGANIZATION LARGER THAN THE COMMUNITY (NOTE 11)

1. Statics

a. Content analysis for class and prestige values, terms, categories, scales, or recurrent life or interaction patterns, to be made on all materials, especially on biographical, anecdotal, and case records.

b. Statistical correlations from official records (e.g., parish rolls, mine rolls, tax rolls) over time of parent and child positions, other family members, or use of school records, correlating performance and social origin.

c. Positional analysisi (Warner), sociometric choices, clique studies; among membership groups in associations, occupational groups, other defined categories; with construction therefrom of measures of relative cohesion, solidarity, or social distance.

d. Value scales, survey or scales of variant reactions to common stimuli (political theories, cliches, consumption standards), taste and preference inventories; also household and possessions investories, scaled.

e. Analysis of deviants, status maintenance, sanctions, studies of cross-class marriages, households, etc.

g. Matched rankings, ranking by representative members of the population of themselves and others.

2. Dynamics and external relations: principally the mine and the community interrelations and mutual effects, including mobility outward of miners' children away and the attraction of new and refugee miners into the town (NOTE 12).

a. Statistical materials, employment, wages, etc., commissariat (perquisites), personnel turnover, in- and out-migration to mine and town over the years.

b. Company and mine histories, officials' biographies.

c. Tabular and interview investory of mine-community contacts, by persons, ages, classes, etc.; in personnel policy, public rélations, social security measures, including informal controls over persons.

d. Study of trend and process in mine-community relationship: situational analysis through measures of institutional equilibrium:

i. "Down the line" pressures, company initiative, company-tradesmen relationship.
ii. "Up the line" pressures, individual and informal channels of upward communication, worker-foreman and official relationships in town and at work; tradesmen as middlemen.
iii. Use of political channels, church channels.

iv. Use of union channels, union organization both formal and informal, internal union policies and pressures.

v. Sophisticated interviewing for conscious and unconscious attitudes in management personnel, officials of town and state, associations, including motivations and rationalizations about mine-town equilibrium.
vi. Connections with internal mine organization, changes, disciplines, pressures at work as established by in-mine "human relations" study.

e. Intensive study of crises, if any: eg., strikes, crucial or hot elections (NOTE 13).

NOTES TO ABOVE LIST OF POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES FOR D---

NOTE 1

Owing to the importance of rent and wages and the necessary frugality of proletarian existence in a monetary economy, one should establish the budgetary round with great care. The amount is unessential in this study and can be got from official and union budget studies and is useful principally for comparison among social classes. But temporal incidence and variability are important: When paid? When spent? When without credit? When without resources? When on savings? On garden produce or animals? Most important also is the division of funds among persons of the household or family connection: Who contributes? Who disposes? In what funds?

NOTE 2

Maps and tables useful here. Official sources to be supplemented by on-the-spot mapping and checking.

NOTE 3

List both the facts here, by categories of persons, and the controls on these: What confines them so in space and time? Who reacts to violations? How?

NOTE 4

Family is to include, where necessary, all kindred.

NOTE 5

Cases needed from each social class, and including past generations.

NOTE 6

Both official and informal or private values to be sought here.

NOTE 7

Cases gathered here should be worked into scales of motivation and reaction intensity after being subject to institutional and interactional analysis.

NOTE 8

Content analysis of members' speeches and of the minutes and transactions possible. Also sociometrics of meeting participations.

NOTE 9

Attitudes of participating and nonparticipating community persons (not members or officials) also to be got by interviewing.

NOTE 10

Records to be content-analyzed.

NOTE 11

This theme should be treated both separately for itself and through reanalysis by various means of all materials gathered with other purposes in mind.

NOTE 12

Both influences from the larger society and those from the mine and company are in point.

NOTE 13

Cases and work histories are best sources here, besides interviews. Minutes of mine company's internal meetings got through the mine study can be analyzed, as from personnel department, works council, etc. Both interactional and content analysis needed.

APPENDIX D

AN EXAMPLE OF CROSS CHECKING INTERVIEW ACCOUNTS

Doc: I've been discussing with you where as I was taught that sex was a "no, no", that it was bad and it was wrong and it was sinful and all these things. I raised my son and my daughter 360 , or 180 degrees, if you should choose, in the opposite direction. My son has brought girls home, takes them in his bedroom and does his thing, since he was 14. And my daughter, I guess I must have started her at 13 with birth control pills. She and her boyfriend are all living here with us for quite some time. Both have been around ~~when~~ things were going on but they do not participate. They go into their own bedrooms and do their own thing. I am very much aware of contributing to [the delinquency of] minors...

Researchers' Comments:

Several things here were simply not true. While Doc's son was a free-wheeling sex participant, his daughter was not. She was very much opposed to their parties and their friends and always made it a point to be absent when the orgies were taking place. The son on the other hand was very supportive and on occasions actually took part in the parties. These facts came to light when Denise and Doc were discussing just how two people brought up in the same environment could be so different.

Doc: When I was a youngboy I had established sex as a goal in life and that I wanted to sleep with as many women as Solomon had wives.... I kept a diary until I passed 15,000 and then I figured it was kind of foolish and I threw it away...

Researchers' Comments:

While Doc was anything but celibate, and he did spend a great deal of time trying to recruit new girls, it is clear that he could not have had that much sex. With all of his recruiting, it's safe to say that he was doing well if he could average one different girl a week. While he may have had sex with as many women as Solomon, he would have also had to have been as old as Methesula to have reached 15,000...

Doc: And I'm that serious about nudism. I have allowed my membership to expire last March and haven't renewed it. I don't know whether I will or not because I'm very, very much involved in the nude beaches. I love the beaches far more than the camp...

Researchers' Comments:

According to Doc's later statements, he got into some kind of political feud at the camp and was asked not to return. According to Denise and Lola, he was asked to leave the camp because he had become too aggressive sexually and the members got together and asked him to leave.

Doc: My present wife and I lived together for about a year and have now been married about seven years. And we've been avid nudists before and since our marriage. I think truthfully that probably there are two things, and I'll put them in order, that my wife and I share in common that keeps our marriage together: (1) Sex, we are very compatible, and (2) our love for nudism...

Researchers' Comments:

At this point in time, Doc's and Denise's marriage was anything but together. She had just returned from a six-month vacation with her boyfriend and there had been doubt that she would ever return. In fact, Doc was so certain that she would not return that he had given some of her clothes to Lola, which was a source of conflict between them when Denise returned.

Doc: I think that swinging will destroy a weak relationship, whether it be marriage or whatever. I think that it will strengthen a strong relationship. I think that swinging in many cases will revitalize the marriage as far as your sexual interests and desire [goes]. I think that everything is comparative. I think that in order to know how much you enjoy each other physically or sexually that it is absolutely necessary sometimes to compare. I think that variety truely is the spice of life. And I think we accept this in everything other than sex...

Researchers' Comments:

Doc may or may not have believed this at the time, but in later private statements to me Doc explained that Denise had failed to keep up with other people and had let herself go. That he looked at swinging as a way to get rid of her without telling her flat out to leave. Further, after we'd been studying him for about eight months, Doc fell in love with a beautiful 19-year-old, Darlene. He was terribly possessive of her and jealously guarded his "rights". He would hardly even share her conversation with the young men; he most definitely had no intention of "sharing" her so they could "compared". Doc also gave up his free sex life and played it 100 percent straight. No parties and no cheating.

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