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Macfarlane, Alan, in collaboration with Sarah Harrison and Charles Jardine. *Reconstructing Historical Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 222. Illustrations. 21 figures. \$8.77

Egmont Lee

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In sum, Warner and Fleisch have demonstrated that for the urban system -- just in studies of particular cities -- the use of different data and different techniques destroys many of our earlier preconceptions and raises fundamentally different issues in their place. Questions concerning growth and city size, and the nature of frontiers are quickly dispensed with, and debates about family structure, acculturation and industrialization -- all the processes of social change -- have only just begun. One senses that Warner feels a bit uncomfortable in the midst of such an exciting chaos. He begins bravely with some highly quotable phrases in the introductory section, but in the conclusion he retreats into a pitch for the BEA units. He neglects the fundamental advantage of multivariate analysis: it provides several different answers all at once.

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Macfarlane, Alan, in collaboration with Sarah Harrison and Charles Jardine. Reconstructing Historical Communities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 222. Illustrations. 21 figures. \$8.77.

Appropriately produced as something less than a fully developed monograph, this book is in fact an elaborate report on a mammoth research project in progress. In brief, Macfarlane's study proposes to gather all documented aspects of the lives of two small English communities from a range of disparate sources, and to link these through an elaborate indexing system in order to reconstruct to the fullest extent possible the life of both communities between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth. The book's major divisions are determined by the need to set the project into context; although lengthy, the more general sections are neither sufficiently systematic nor detailed enough to carry much independent value.

A critical introduction to community studies, and to network analysis, is followed by chapters discussing the nature of Macfarlane's sources, and his methods of collecting and indexing the material. These key chapters are mostly devoted to describing the twelve classes of records, manorial, juridical, and ecclesiastical, on which the project is based, and to a summary of experience gathered in their transcription and breakdown in a series of interrelated indices. The purpose, here as elsewhere, is not only to describe, but to encourage other researchers to pursue studies along similar lines, to argue their feasibility, and to describe methods which have proved workable in the experience of Macfarlane's team. The final chapters give a frankly impressionistic first attempt to evaluate results which are beginning to emerge, and to assess candidly the limitations of community studies in general.

As far as it goes, this is an honest book, filled with a catching enthusiasm. The promise of an enormous wealth of material, both dependable and easy of access, is no longer remote; several man-years spent in laboriously digesting small mountains of difficult source material are beginning to pay off. Especially striking, and convincing, is the way in which the various classes of documents supplement one another and can be used to answer more questions more reliably than could any single series of records. The breadth and depth of personal and collective experience which it seems possible to grasp grows further if, as Macfarlane suggests, the documents are placed in relation to narrative sources, especially diaries and local chronicles. It is refreshing that Macfarlane is also aware of the limitations of both his data and his methods. Clearly, no histoire totale can be written merely from local sources, and the compounded data retain some of the biases of their component parts. But the balance is positive. Macfarlane's admission of shortcomings does not invalidate his study; it merely means that its limitations must be kept in mind.

As noted, this is a book of promises. One looks forward to, first of all, its sequel, which proposes to describe the ways in which the authors feel the computer can assist in the analysis of their data. Even more, one looks forward to the results of Macfarlane's project, results which go beyond the tentative and as yet ill-supported suggestions which illustrate this volume.

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Gurr, Ted Robert, Grabosky, Peter N., Hula, Richard C. The Politics of Crime and Conflict: A Comparative History of Four Cities. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977. Pp. xii, 792. \$35.00.

Historians with an interest in crime and conflict will pick up this large volume with keen anticipation. A co-operative venture headed by the distinguished political scientist Ted Robert Gurr, whose Why Men Rebel won him an American Political Science Association Woodrow Wilson Award and established him as a major authority on the process of social conflict, the work promises a comparative history of four cities, ranging in time from the late eighteenth century to the present. Concerned primarily with the decline of public order in the large cities of the West, and the institutional efforts to combat this drift towards disorder, The Politics of Crime and Conflict desires acceptance as "a contribution to a new, or at least rare, species of interdisciplinary study in which historical materials are used comparatively to formulate and test general theories germane to critical social issues." (ix) Focusing upon individual crimes such as theft and murder, "victimless" crimes such as