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## *The transition from school to work in the Durham coalfield*

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## in the Durham Coalfield

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## Abstract

This study examines via questionnaire and interview data, various aspects of the transition from school to work experienced by young people in the Durham Coalfield during the 1980s. The aspects covered are those of education and careers guidance, unemployment, occupational choice, experience of work and its financial rewards, trade unionism, changes in family and leisure patterns, migration and certain political issues relating to youth unemployment. Analysis of data from prospective school leavers and young workers relating to these areas form the bulk of the study, but the context(s) for analysis are also of crucial importance.

Data are analysed within two related contexts. The first is that of the history of the Coalfield - its economy and culture, class structure, sexual divisions and internal spatial variations. Particular attention is given to the decline of an economy based on coal and steel, and the rise of a 'branch plant' economy where factory employment suffers from considerable instability. The recent collapse of the youth labour market and its progressive replacement by state sponsored schemes provide the immediate context for the study. A second concern is to relate study of the transition to three major debates with industrial sociology, namely those relating to orientations to work, to labour market divisions and the issue of a 'dual labour market', and to the arrival of a 'post-industrial' society.

Throughout, a critique is offered of empiricist and reductionist accounts of the transition and an attempt is made to provide a more adequate analysis based on concerns with structure, consciousness and action as catalogued in the testimony of prospective school leavers and young workers. It is also argued that the exchange of labour-power provides a crucial element in the framework for understanding the transition.

This thesis is dedicated to Linda and Betty
and to the memory of Tom and Lyn

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## Introduction

Over the past decade or so, one of the most dramatic social changes in Britain has been the collapse of the youth labour market, and its transformation into an area dominated by state-sponsored schemes. Jackson (1985:35) reports that between 1976 and 1984 unemployment for those under 18 years of age rose from 8.5% to 23% and from 9.5% to 27.2% for those aged 18-19. By summer 1984, it has been estimated that school leaver unemployment would have reached 400,000 but for the presence of state-sponsored schemes (Finn (1987:3)).The level of state intervention to 'combat' youth unemployment has provided clear evidence of the political importance attached to the transition from school to work (hereafter transition). As an OECD report says of young adults,

> their entry into working life, far from being a marginal
> aspect of the employment situation, is the central
> mechanism by which the workforce is renewed, (1977:11)

and while the emotional attachment to 'our children' and 'future generations' lends itself to rhetorical flourish, deeds as well as words have demonstrated the importance of a 'smooth' transition.

Details of state measures, and the background to them, appear in the following chapter. At this point, however, it is important to note a 'paradox', namely that the political importance of the transition is rarely explicitly acknowledged in the majority of academic studies. Few treatments of the transition either operate within or attempt to evolve a clear theoretical framework. Rather, the majority are

'unashamedly' empiricist, utilising an inductive logic to produce discrete 'theories' to explain similarly discrete phenomena.

In this introductory chapter, it is intended to offer a relatively brief survey of transition studies, highlighting certain weaknesses within them, before attempting to set out the framework for a more adequate treatment.

As a preliminary step, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by study of the transition from school to work, no easy matter due both to the variety of approaches among studies of the transition and the proliferation of material which might be considered relevant to certain aspects of it.

One of the reasons for such proliferation has been the changing labour market position of young people and, in particular, the recent growth in unemployment and policy measures, such as training schemes, introduced to cope with its effects.(1) This development has also been associated with debate on the purposes of education and especially its duty to meet 'the needs of industry'.(2) Many of these studies will, where appropriate, receive mention in later chapters, but will be excluded from review at this point because of their limited scope. Instead, attention will be focussed on those works which deal fairly broadly with the transition, covering a number of facets both in and outside of work and/or relating the transition to the passage from childhood to adulthood.

Even narrowed down in this way, there are perhaps twenty or so studies from the past two and a half decades which 'qualify'. Given the size and diversity of this group, a thorough treatment is beyond

our scope and purposes here. It should, therefore, be pointed out that the brevity and critical nature of the following review inevitably entail a dilution of the complexity and sophistication shown by many investigators, and perhaps a failure to accord them due recognition for their contributions to the topic. Hopefully, however, any 'distortion' can be kept to a minimum - with apology tendered for the remainder. That said, it is intended to concentrate on theoretical issues, with critique of methods, findings and recommendations subordinate to that purpose.

We begin the review of transition literature by looking at studies where the predominant focus is psychological. This is followed by those broadly from within the field of social policy and the review is completed by consideration of sociological treatments of the transition.

Hill and Scharff (1976) use a Freudian perspective to analyse transition, depicting it in maturational or developmental terms bound up with progressive replacement of fantasy by realism and the resolution of adolescent crises. The authors argue that transition outcomes depend largely upon the development of 'underlying processes ...in the individual child' (:54), which while not independent of environmental factors, rest primarily upon 'inherent personality structure' (:56). Not surprisingly, the individual version of this psychological reductionism is supplemented by the familial variety. School is seen as a 'mothering institution' (as is the army), and leaving school as a loss which produces reactions of grief and mourning (:235-7).(3)

In brief, the gross inadequacy of this approach stems from its over-simplified account of society, with the reduction of its structures and dynamics to those of the family, and the depiction of individual development as transhistorical and transcultural, a matter of inherent personality and 'familial' interaction.

In addition to Hill and Scharff's Freudian approach, there are also studies focussing on the psychology of personality, of which the most general example is provided by Fleming and Lavercombe (1980) (see Clarke (1980)). The authors seek to profile (via teacher ratings and self-completed exercises) the psychological characteristics of those 'at risk' of unemployment, looking at areas such as self-esteem, locus of control, leadership, trustworthiness, maturity and so on. Assessment occurs without reference to context (1980:123-4), doubtless in the curious belief that context, as provided by institutions such as school and workplace, merely create a backcloth against which 'inherent' qualities emerge. A second key feature of this psychologistic approach is that data generated within this framework are used to explain social phenomena. Correlation having been found between poor self-image and unemployment (:111), it is advocated that ways should be sought to boost self-confidence and offer experience of success in order to increase employability.

This line of reasoning embodies the notions that (un)employment can be explained by the characteristics of the (un)employed rather than in terms of opportunities and that 'winning' qualities can be extended to all participants without apparently changing the rules of competition. This provided a classic example of what Elster (Giddens

(1979:139)) has called the 'fallacy of composition', namely the assumption that what one actor can do in certain circumstances is possible for an indefinite number.(4)

Despite the temptation to label a majority of 'social policy' transition studies as 'atheoretical', such a designation is misleading in two ways. First, as the 'no facts without theory' (Shipman (1981:13) slogan has long signalled, even strongly inductive methods must operate with certain ideas as to what is to be investigated and how, and that these in turn rest on certain theories, however loosely formulated. Methods of investigation and analysis may also serve to exclude particular areas from scrutiny, and thereby rule out certain possible conclusions. Secondly, it would entail accepting the investigators' image of themselves as 'impartial' and 'objective', rather than as informed by a particular political perspective.

In fact, most transition studies could be characterised as 'social democratic' in outlook. Thus, they exhibit little faith in the 'free market' yet also reject any view of society as riven with class conflict and 'contradictions'. The state is seen neither in terms of creeping socialism nor as an instrument of class domination. Instead, the state is regarded as playing a regulatory and planning role which secures both the 'national interest' and protection for those who might suffer in a 'free-for-all'. As far as possible these aims are to be viewed as complementary, with welfare an investment yielding higher productivity from a healthy, educated and contented workforce.

Within this framework, structural conflicts between capital and labour tend to be reduced to problems of communication or

co-ordination within and between institutions. Reforms in these areas can help to realise the near-unity of interests which arises from the interdependence of capital and labour, although there are wide variations on the degree of reform required. The power of capital can largely be taken for granted insofar as it frequently operates in the national interest, and if not can be 'persuaded' to do so by state reform, obviating the need for any major challenge to its prerogatives. We shall be looking in more detail at the 'atheoretical' studies later, but at this point it is useful to consider the extent to which they derive from the assumptions of the social democratic perspective.

The 'national' standpoint is frequently in evidence among transition studies, whether in the form of 'national advantage' (Bazalgette (1978:130)), 'national manpower requirements' (Carter 1962), or the implicit expression of common interests in notions of what 'society' or 'we' must do (Ball and Ball (1978:8,13). Here the appeal to consensus is rarely straighforward and often highly critical. Nonetheless, problems are generally constructed in terms of failure of reason and communication, or inability to comprehend the benefits of 'genuine' consensus, rather than as arising from any fundamental conflict.

Suggested reforms fall into three main categories, relating to preparation and guidance services, entry to work and work itself. The areas of preparation and entry to work are dominated by concerns for smooth transition and ease of adjustment. There are calls for a more vocationally oriented education (Moor (1976:131)), less arbitrary

means of occupational 'allocation' (Simon (1977:57)), greater provision of counselling help and support during the transition (Hill and Scharff (1976:258)), and the development of skills for employability and/or coping with unemployment (Fleming and Lavercombe (1980:113)). Wherever possible, these largely conservative proposals are portrayed as reflecting the wishes of young workers as well as being of benefit to them.

Recommendations are often couched in progressive, even radical terms, although the ends they serve remain explicitly or implicitly conservative. Bazalgette writes of the role of a 'creative careers service' in helping

> young people to gain control over their own future, as well as to tackle problems in schools including truancy, vandalism and even classroom violence, (1978:124)

making it 'potentially a most radical organisation' (:125). There are numerous other examples of progressive imagery, with references to 'self-determination' and provision of 'creative atmosphere' (Pollock (1978:91-2)), boosting self-esteem and confidence (Fleming and Lavercombe (1980:111)), and the developmental vocabulary of growth, maturity and autonomy (Hill and Scharff (1976), Bazalgette (1978)).

Explanations of what is meant by these terms are decidedly thin on the ground. Suspicion that this is not accidental and that the rhetoric of sought change goes well beyond the reality is scarcely allayed by, for instance, Bazalgette's assertion that

> it is the systems which need radical modification, not young people, (1978:146)

when the key role given to his favoured 'industrial coach' revolves around 'getting down to it' (:144).

At their mildest, proposals for changes in the workplace appear almost as products of reverie rather than of analysis of power relations. Moor (1976:119) poses the question 'people for jobs or jobs for people?', while Keene (1969:63) muses

> perhaps it is the jobs themselves that should be changed and not the people.

More specifically, there is support for greater participation to improve job satisfaction (Simon (1977:57)), with more information and knowledge about companies available and wider involvement throughout the enterprise. Carter (1966:169) favours 'job enlargement' as a means of reducing boredom and allowing workers fuller use of their talents.

The social democratic tenet of 'welfare as investment' is usually well to the fore, with the protection of young workers from disillusionment and the like set fair to be repaid in terms of increased productivity (Ashton and Field (1976:149) Carter (1966:171)). Simon offers reassurance that a multiplier effect can be used to good purpose, with minimum adjustments leading to maximum changes in attitude (1977:57).

Most transition studies make no serious claim to radicalism and address themselves primarily to issues of 'adjustment' (Ashton and Field (1976:11) Hill and Scharff (1976:2). The two notable exceptions are provided by Ball and Ball (1979) and Maizels (1970).

The former link cure for unemployment to critique of state institutions in advocating the deprofessionalisation of public services and their devolution to local community control. In turn, this could open up opportunities for young workers to participate in service provision and to gain more intrinsic satisfaction through a

continuous system of 'learning and earning'. In preparation for this new role, Ball and Ball argue that schooling should be less cut off from the adult world and less dominated by a professional, institutional approach. Together, these changes are said to constitute nothing short of 'cultural revolution' (1979:130).

Whatever the merits of the scheme, it suffers greatly from a lack of any coherent analysis of the nature of capitalist society. Oddly, civil society is largely (and conveniently ?) ignored as the cultural revolution is confined to the state sector. Certainly what the authors advocate goes beyond an embellished 'community service' programme. Yet the flavour of such lingers in the absence of consideration of the state-civil society relationship and adequate examination of what deprofessionalisation might entail.

Maizels (1970) offers a damning indictment of prevailing working practices, noting

> the apparent requirements of the labour market for young
> hands rather than young minds, (:311)

which stand in direct contrast to the needs of young adolescents for jobs with greater intrinsic interest, use of capacities, training and career prospects. With her own survey showing three fifths of jobs deficient in at least some of these areas, she acknowledges that correction

> would inevitably pose critical problems for the present
> economic and social structure, (:320)

but offers no view as to the potential for resolution of such problems.

If a social democratic framework cannot account for the

prevalence of empiricism within transition studies, it can be argued that there is a high degree of affinity between the two.(5) Whether as efficiency experts or champions of the dispossessed, social democrats may find an inductive approach useful. 'Letting the facts speak for themselves' helps to avoid any charge of political axe-grinding. In the words of Mishra (1977:18)

> appeal to facts has a ring of political neutrality and impartiality that ideological positions lack.

Although a focus on the observable and measurable may serve to create an air of thoroughness and practicality, it also tends to preclude analysis of wider structural issues.(6) Thus, while such studies may or may not 'blame the victim', they are at most likely to blame his/her immediate assailant or the latter's sponsoring institution. Where present, wider analysis is often reified, thereby highlighting the separateness of the (almost invariably disadvantaged) group studied and increasing scope for 'pathological' explanations.

Having levelled the charge of empiricism at much of the writing on the transition, and briefly considered its political utility it is time to conduct a closer examination which might both substantiate the charge and trace its implications for comprehension of the transition.

In their comparison between science and the pseudo-scientific 'systematic empiricism', Willer and Willer (1973) argue that science entails rational connections which correspond to observable connections. Abstraction is not simply generalisation or the summing of past cases but is dialectical between thought and observation, a matter of selection and interpretation or of

establishing an isomorphism between theoretical

non-observables and empirical observables. (:26)

In contrast, systematic empiricism links observation to observation, its 'abstraction' based on statistical aggregation and correlation. The authors contend that it is inherently conservative, tied tightly to what 'is' (as measured), only generating independent bits of knowledge with common sense explanations because it lacks the rational component which allows interconnection and transcendence.

This picture of empiricism bears a remarkable likeness to many, perhaps a majority of transition studies. Their empiricism revolves around the collection and manipulation of two main forms of data - classificatory and attitudinal. Presentation of results is often descriptive, whether informing of wage levels, incidence of union membership or the percentage of young workers who look favourably on work or their local careers office. Concern to explain findings, or even to set them in some form of context, appears rare,(7) although this does not always dampen the ardour for polemic.(8)

Such explanation and analysis as occurs tends to rely heavily on correlation between classificatory and/or attitudinal variables. The format of correlations and their interpretation amply testifies to the empiricist framework. Measured attitudes, for example, are not usually 'explained' with reference to structural location or the logic of situations but by their aggregative comparison with other data, similarly wrenched from their social context. At its simplest, this may entail a straightforward reporting of relationship between variables and the probability of their being 'associated'.(9)

Even when some explanation is offered, it usually remains firmly

within the expiricist framework with variables largely 'taken for granted' rather than probed. It is noteworthy that, despite the number of studies dealing with family, school, work, trade unionism and so on, there is negligible attempt either to draw on more specialised literature relating to these areas or to evolve alternative conceptualisations. The 'taken for granted' nature of variables severely limits explanatory potential and reinforces the empiricist framework. Relationships simply 'exist' and without further illumination, remain mysterious or to be explained from 'self-evident' features of the variables and/or by 'common sense'. The work of Maizels, one of the most sophisticated and critical writers on the transition, is nonetheless instructive in demonstrating the limitations of an empiricist perspective.

Treatment of gender issues will be dealt with more fully below but two examples serve to show the results of failure to consider the context and meaning of findings. From statistical evidence that girls were less likely than boys to relinquish their original job choices, Maizels concludes that the former felt more strongly about the type of job they wanted (1970:138). There is no attempt to set this (natural ?) propensity for attachment within the context of a limited range of normative options or to consider the impact of perceived differences between, say, clerical, shop and factory work.(10) Similarly, the verdict that for girls promotion and prospects have little impact on job satisfaction is simply stated (:263), without references to the working experiences of women, organisational hierarchy and gender relations, the material and ideological significance of promotion and

so on.

The empiricists' concern for 'staying close to the evidence' can transform correlation into explanation, frequently with near-tautological results. Having used positive and negative checklists to adduce respective views on the qualities of employment, Maizels writes (:274),

> the differences between the views of employers and their
> young workers arose mainly because of a tendency for
> employers ... to place more emphasis on positive features
> and relatively less on negative features.(11)

Laughable as this may seem, there are serious points at issue, relating to the ways in which abstract concepts are 'operationalised' for empirical investigation and the interpretation of evidence subsequently generated.

In brief, we would argue that empiricist examinations of the transition are dominated by the use of somewhat crude 'common sense' categories whose vagary is blurred by pseudo-sophisticated quantification. The latter comes in various guises but is usually based on responses to check lists, attitudinal scales, rank orders and the like. While it is by no means suggested that such methods are intrinsically worthless, it is clear that transition writers make little or no attempt to tackle the problems of quantifying concepts, whether directly in data collection, or indirectly in interpretation and analysis.

To facilitate 'sophisticated' analysis, respondents are often invited to express attitudes numerically by choosing values from lengthy scales,(12) or to complete a 'rank order' for factors influencing, say, job choice.(13) The assumptions required by such

methods are numerous and frequently dubious. One is that respondents have a high (and comparable) degree of self-awareness which can be successfully translated into numerical terms. So long as the exercise is completed, the problems inherent in the process can be conveniently forgotten, the 'meaningful' response equated with the 'arbitrary' and so on. Invariably, such methods are used without reflexivity, or sense of how these abstract schema (fail to) relate to actual thought and practice. Such lack of concern is implicit in studies such as Moor's (1976) where the rank orders are extremely lengthy, bringing not only greater overlap and confusion between items but also growing arbitrariness of response.(14)

Separation between items can be problematic due both to difficulties of 'fine tuning'(15) and conceptual (non)correspondence in the minds of researcher and researched. In her rank order of desired qualities for occupational choice, Moor finds skill and qualifications ranked at the top with security much lower down. This imposed distinction may not have been so clear in the minds of respondents, one of whom is later quoted as saying, 'be a fully skilled man, so you're never out of a job' (1976:71).

Statistically-based sophistication also sits uneasily with uncritical use of common sense categories. Fleming and Lavercombe happily use teacher ratings of pupils' 'dependence' and 'maturity' to correlate with unemployment, its duration and so on. The question of 'psychologism' has been considered earlier, but it is worth noting here that the vagueness of such concepts, and their evaluation independent of interactional context, scarcely justifies the precision

attributed to their findings.

Operation within a 'common sense' framework can also lead to crucial omissions. Perhaps the most important element in occupational choice is that of gender which neither appears on lists, nor would probably evoke much interest if it did.

Check lists are widely used within transition studies (Venables (1968), Maizels (1970), West and Newton (1983)) but despite their greater flexibility relative to rank orders and scales, give rise to similar problems. Categories, such as teachers or supervisors, are homogenised for labelling, while labels are often vague, overlapping and unfailingly tied to common sense conceptualisations. Yet the empiricists' handling pays scant regard to such hazards along the quantitative road to knowledge.

To cast light on factors affecting job satisfaction, Maizels (1970:256-7) compares the number of mentions given to check list items by the 'very' and 'moderately' satisfied respectively, expressing the result in ratio form. Setting aside the question of how far frequencies reflect willingness to participate rather than simply measuring attitudes, there are considerable problems in the logic of such enquiry, deriving in particular from the 'common sense' nature of list items. Many of these items are linked too closely to the concepts of (dis)satisfaction which they are supposed to explain and, as noted earlier, the results are often semi-tautological.(16) While it can be argued that associations - such as those between interest and satisfaction, monotony and dissatisfaction - should be demonstrated rather than merely assumed, the elaboration of concepts is extremely

shallow and unenlightening.(17)

The most serious deficiency of the 'check list' approach relates to its implications for the treatment of structure. Studies relying heavily on this form of investigation tend to yield data resistant to structural interpretation and analysis. Social relations, such as those between pupil and teacher, young worker and supervisor, are generally treated without reference to the structural location of the participants. Instead, the focus is on individual qualities, whether professional or personal. Although the overall frequency of (un)favourable references could conceivably serve as a measure of harmony or conflict within relationships, the wording of items lends itself more readily to the provision of a yardstick against which performance can be measured. On offer are itemised 'common sense' profiles of good or bad teachers, firms and so on, formulae abstracted from qualities assumed to account for these ratings. In the main these qualities revolve around notions of competence, character and communication, and are assessed in the manner of an opinion poll, without reference to the structural relationship between participants. Problems are thereby reduced to shortfall of requisite qualities which within the logic of investigation, is only explicable in terms of the pathology of those concerned. A firm may be 'only out to make money' or a supervisor 'nagging' but this is apparently due to their own failings rather than imperatives such as profitability or labour discipline.

Predictably, perhaps, for a method firmly rooted within industrial psychology, the check lists overwhelmingly 'take for

granted' the structures and relations supposedly being examined and offer comparison only within narrow parameters. Relations are assumed to be 'essentially' harmonious (marred only by 'individual' weaknesses) and while the means may be subjected to some scrutiny, the ends of education and work are treated unproblematically, without consideration of organisational hierarchy, work processes, competitive practices(18) and the like, let alone wider issues of social formation. Prevailing structures are simultaneously taken as given and obscured from view.

The compatability of these characteristics with the requirements of a modest 'piecemeal engineering' approach is all too obvious. This is equally apparent in the selection as in the treatment of problems. As noted earlier, the primary focus is one problems of adjustment which, in turn, are seen in 'common sense' terms. Gaps between aspirations and outcomes receive considerable attention but there is rarely concern to explain either the elements in the equation or the relationship between them. Instead, efforts are devoted to empirical demonstration and measurement of gaps.

'Subjective' and 'objective' factors are rarely related and as the latter are generally assumed to be immutable, adjustment is regarded almost exclusively in subjective terms, to be dealt with, say, by instilling greater 'realism' in education and guidance. Even where changes in the workplace are deemed necessary they are generally minor but aimed at sparking major changes in attitude (Simon (1977)).

Many of the weaknesses recounted above are readily apparent in the treatment of gender relations within transition studies, where an

uncritical acceptance of 'traditional' roles prevails, including a 'common sense' acceptance of male 'breadwinning' (Clarke (1980:27)). Moor (1976:31) justifies an all-male study on the grounds of low female employment levels locally and the widespread view of work among women as a pre-marriage stop-gap. In Simon's study (1977) the ratio of male to female respondents is 10:1 with evidence from the latter 'seen off' in a page.(19)

Female 'invisibility' is not, of course, primarily an empirical matter. Originally, Ashton and Field's tripartite theory (see below) was explicitly based on the labour market experiences of young men (1973), yet with minimal modification came to encompass all young workers (1976). Similarly, despite his sampling, Simon writes throughout of the views, experiences and needs of 'young people', while Moor expresses a desire to provide guidelines for policy makers but has nothing to say about the position of young women. Given her reasons for omitting women from the study, it seems unlikely that this subsumption of female interests is due to egalitarianism but rather to a view that work is so unimportant for them that, at least in policy terms, young people means young men. Likewise, with their uncritical acceptance of the sexual division of labour, and failure to account for changes in labour market and family, it is more plausible to explain the 'androgynous' tones of writers such as Maizels (1970), Hill and Scharff (1976), and Bazalgette (1978) in terms of hegemonic subsumption then egalitarianism.(20)

Empirical confirmations of 'common sense' gender roles often provide a platform for the latter's reinforcement, as in the case of

Venables' concern that young women must look to future roles as wives and mothers (1968:38), or Carter's empathetic account of the damage to male pride whenever women are involved in scrutiny of their work, however minimal (1966:171).

Empiricist studies usually treat sex as a variable and generate substantial amounts of information on 'sex differences'. Typically, however, findings are simply reported or explained within narrow confines.(21) Observations on unequal treatment (Carter (1962:46), Maizels (1970:107), West and Newton (1983:40)) are neither developed into, nor located within any coherent theory of sexual inequality, and while results are not portrayed as 'natural', the absence of alternative formulation leaves ample scope for such interpretation.

Ashton and Field (1976) offer a sociological theory of the transition which revolves around the role of family and school in preparation for entry into the labour market. Using a threefold typology of occupations - careerless, short term and extended careers - they contend that the majority of young workers are well prepared by 'correspondingly divided' family and school life. Thus for the future careerless, family life is characterised by its immediacy and authoritarianism, which together hinder the development of long-term horizons and powers of abstraction. The absence of such qualities is likely to lead to poor performance in school, a negative self-image as 'not brainy' and mutual hostility between school and pupil, which may well be compounded by parental indifference or antagonism towards school. Transition from school to work sees a convergence between subjective and objective factors, antipathy towards school producing

more positive evaluation of those 'dead end' jobs which are also the only ones available. There is similar convergence for those entering short term and extended careers, with their experience of family and school having given them self-imagery and orientation appropriate to those careers.

While this pattern makes the transition fairly smooth for the majority, problems may arise for those young people who find themselves in 'unexpected' positions, requiring adjustments which go against the grain of their respective self-images and orientations. The two most common such positions are those of downward mobility, representing failure to reach or maintain a career in line with expectations, and blocked upward mobility, where prospects do not fulfil their initial promise. Problems also beset the careerless, left to cope with boredom and tight discipline and progressively losing the 'safety valve' provided by job-changing.

The strength of the Ashton and Field study lies in its holism, its sense of interrelationship between structures and concern to look beyond the 'problem category' of early school leavers. Full weight is given to the objective realities of the labour market and their impact on the transition. Yet there are also a number of weaknesses.

Some derive from the ideal typical form of the model with its tendency toward a stereotyped, cyclical presentation of class reproduction. Its generalised nature and lack of empirical reference mean that the model does not offer explanation of the transition beyond a surface plausibility. In addition, little attempt is made to explain the different position of men and women in the transition and

the typology is essentially 'male'.(22)

Perhaps the most theoretically sophisticated study within the transition literature is Willis's 'Learning to Labour' (1977), which uses ethnographic material to cast light on the nature of class relations, ideology and practice as they affect the transition. Willis attempts to avoid one-sided interpretation of the relationship between the individual and structure, and reduction of cultural forms to the level of structural epiphenomena. More importantly, labour itself is not simply taken for granted but explored with regard to its symbolic importance, the mental/manual division, the relationship of concrete to abstract, subjective to objective and the question of gender. The study's major limitation is the narrow focus on rebellious young men 'destined' for unskilled manual work, which is clearly not intended to provide a general theory of transition.(23)

Griffin's 'Typical Girls' (1985) provides a welcome corrective to the prevalent tendency for transition studies to focus on male young workers. As well as concentrating empirically upon the experiences of young women, she draws attention to numerous effects of patriarchal structures, whether in school, work, family or leisure. Like Willis, Griffin raises issues of race and class but makes little attempt to relate them to gender in any systematic way, settling for the statement that such relation is 'complicated and not always consistent' (:190). Thus, while generating a great deal of interesting and valuable data, the study remains too frequently at a descriptive level.(24) Unlike some of the predominantly (or exclusively) 'male' studies, Griffin makes no attempt to generalise from the experiences

of one sex.

The critique offered so far has focussed on a number of inadequacies in the transition literature. Clearly the proof of a more adequate pudding lies in future chapters, but at this point it is useful to outline briefly the main ingredients.

Implicit throughout the above review has been a plea to locate actors' accounts within a context of social relations, which has to be explained more fully, not least because of this study's reliance on actors' accounts. A useful starting point is the relationship between structure and action.

The concept of social structure rests on the existence of relatively enduring patterns of interaction, or what Giddens has described as 'the fundamentally recursive character of social life' (1979:69). Pattern depends on a combination of values, beliefs, rewards, sanctions and habits, the strength of which varies, rendering structure always a matter of degree, usually dependent on the extent to which interaction is governed by explicit rules and sanctions.

Structure and action are mutually dependent. The former can only 'exist' through the latter giving expression to its recurrent nature, but dependent on such recurrence for its own existence, action is itself continuously 'structured'. Patterns may, of course, be broken temporarily or permanently so that structure becomes transformed, with new patterns established. For its part, action occurs under conditions set by structure, both in the sense of biographical development and present interactional context. Thus, while it is only actors and not systems who can have purposes, needs and so on, such purposes and

needs are inconceivable apart from the structures in which they
emerge. As Wallis and Bruce (1983:108) write,

> beliefs and intentions are formulated and mobilised within
> a context which sets constraints upon what may be done.

This raises the question of awareness of structure and of whether
reproduction and transformation are conscious affairs, the answer to
which must be both affirmative and negative.(25) As Giddens points
out,

> every social actor knows a great deal about the conditions
> of reproduction of the society of which he or she is a
> member

but at the same time

> the consequences of actions chronically escape their
> initiators intentions in processes of objectification.

Thus,

> all social reproduction occurs in the context of 'mixes'
> of intended and unintended consequences of action.
> (1979:5,44,112)

Explanation of social (and individual) behaviour must concern
itself with reproduction and transformation, with actions, their
conditions and consequences. In this endeavour actors' accounts are
necessary but not sufficient. If structure exists only through agency,
and the latter cannot simply be reduced (as extreme structuralism
attempts) to mechanical relection of the former, then it is vital to
provide what Goldthorpe has termed an 'action story line' (cited
Wallis and Bruce (1983:106)) to explain social activity and the
development of structure. If actors do have knowledge of the
conditions of reproduction then it is important to understand both the
extent of such knowledge and the basis of its evaluation and

utilisation. However, limited knowledge of both conditions and consequences of agency means that social explanation cannot rest solely on any combination of action story lines, but must also examine the ways in which structure operates (albeit through the agency of others) 'independently' of the actors in question.

Thus subjective testimony must be set alongside the 'objective' aspects of structure (prescribed and proscribed activity), both as these aspects are seen by the actor and by the researcher.(26) In turn, this entails some consideration of what is and is not done, known, believed or valued and of the relationship between these elements. It also requires some sense of both immediate and more distant interaction.

The relationship between 'words and deeds' is notoriously complex (Deutscher (1966)) and beyond our scope here.(27) Suffice it to say at this juncture that heavy reliance on actor testimony for information on activity and more so knowledge and beliefs necessitates an appreciation of the processes involved in its generation. As Hughes has observed,

> the description of an action is an occasioned event, in itself an action done for some purpose, informed by some interest, done in some context. (1976:83)

Similarly important is the relationship between consciousness and articulation. Giddens has usefully drawn the distinction between practical and discursive consciousness, describing the former as

> tacit knowledge that is skillfully applied in the enactment of courses of conduct, but which the actor is not able to formulate discursively. (1979:57)

Location of experience and its recounting within social relations and

structures also demands their setting within wider social formations. Without losing sight of the mutual dependence of structure and action, adequate study requires a focus on reproduction and transformation of social formations through the collective activity of social groupings. Lukes has emphasised that individual behaviour is incomprehensible apart from the collective (1977:181), while Mills insists that

> neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both ... social science deals with problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within social structures. (1970:9,159)

Social relations are frequently hierarchical, and never free from the influence of hierarchy, and consequently their reproduction and transformation depend crucially on the bases of power within and between structures. As Giddens argues, resources and their command (authorisation, allocation etc) are vital to the exercise of power, asymmetry of resources vital for patterns of domination and subordination. Thus, command of resources, in its widest sense, is central to the conduct of social relations and should be accorded its due importance in any analysis. In the case of advanced capitalist societies this means study of the nature of civil society, its competitive basis, patterns of commodity exchange, including the sale and purchase of labour-power, and its relationship, economic and political, to the state.

Access to and control over resources co-exist with, and require for their operation particular forms of behaviour - initiatives, acquiescence (often institutionally enshrined) - and these, in turn require particular knowledge and values, rationality and affection. A

satisfactory location of experience within social relations must also, therefore, concern itself with material and ideal reproduction and transformation, and their historical interrelationship. At a macro-level, this needs to relate to the social formation itself, the consciousness and action of its major constituent groupings. Of particular interest is the question of reproduction and transformation of relations of dominance and subordination and there are numerous relevant theorisations upon which to draw.

Most are concerned with both the extent of domination, resistance and revolt, and the forms taken by all three. In advanced capitalist societies, the pre-eminent feature requiring explanation is their relative stability and the absence of endemic, protracted or revolutionary struggle waged by the oppressed. There has long been recognition that rule depends to (however limited) an extent upon its being made to appear 'legitimate' and consequently gain acceptance by the ruled. In the words of Green (1981:2),

> the ideas by which a ruling class justifies itself to society as a whole must also seem to speak to the needs of society as a whole if the ruling class is to be allowed to continue its rule.

Whether it is seen as the outcome of an essentially equilibrial society or as mystified exploitation and oppression, the notion of social stability through normative consensus or a 'dominant ideology' is a powerful one.

Apart from those of the structural-functionalist school, most theorists have seen consensus as resting, at least in part, on mystification of power relationships (Mills (1970:187), Gouldner (1971:294)) and it is on the latter group that we concentrate. Some

have adopted a weak version of the thesis, suggesting that while dominant ideas may not be accepted in any straightforward way, they nonetheless exert a strong constraining influence. Hall et al argue that although class dominance does not mean the 'disappearance' of the subordinate classes, their autonomy is partial, because

> ruling ideas tend to form the outer limit and horizon of thought in a society. (1978:154) (28)

Parkin talks of subordinate values as a 'negotiated form of dominant values', not a fully-fledged oppositionist alternative. Subordinate values emerge from

> the tension between an abstract moral order and the situational constraints of low status (1972:95)

and Parkin contends that human ability to compartmentalise beliefs ensures that

> what might appear to be logical or intellectual inconsistencies in ideology are neither interpreted nor experienced as such. (:76)

The twin themes of ideological (in)consistency and its roots in the relationship between abstract and concrete are taken up by a number of writers. Fox describes ideologies as a

> ragbag of assorted notions to suit various exigencies, sometimes quite incompatible with each other, (1971:125)

while for Swingewood (1977:83),

> consciousness is riven with contradictions, and the ideologies which structure consciousness at the level of ordinary, everyday experience are quickly transformed from a formal coherence into a practical incoherence.

This incoherence has important implications for notions of 'acceptance', and especially the possible differences between abstract and particular 'acceptance' of ideas. Hall et al write,

> the difference between 'corporate' and 'hegemonic'
> cultures often emerges most clearly in the contrast
> between general ideas (which the hegemonic culture
> defines) and more contextualised or situated judgements
> (which will continue to reflect their oppositional
> material and social base in the life of the subordinate
> classes. (1978:155)

They also emphasise that subordination is never simply a mental

phenomenon, observing that

> ruling ideas are embodied in the dominant institutional
> order: subordinate classes are bounded by these dominant
> relations. Hence in action as well as thought, they are
> constantly disciplined by them. (:154)

Mann (1970) has argued that acceptance may be 'pragmatic' rather than

'normative', a view supported by Abercrombie et al (1980). The latter

draw

> an important distinction between the acceptance of social
> arrangements because they appear just, and acceptance
> simply because they are there, or because they appear as a
> coercive external fact (:166)

and claim that

> habituation and realistic appreciation of the strength of
> the existing order do not add up to any form of
> commitment, nor even to a decline in workers' awareness of
> alternative and more desirable systems. (:122)

Rather than ideological incorporation the chief stabilising mechanism

is, following Marx, the 'dull compulsion of economic life',

specifically the need for access to resources and economic

interdependence through the social division of labour.(29)

Others have seen quiescence as the result of a seductive

consumerism which progressively reduces human values, desires and the

like to the purchase of commodities. This process forms a crucial part

of Marcuse's 'one-dimensionality'.

> People recognise themselves in their commodities; they
> find their soul in their automobile, hifi set, split level
> home kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the
> individual to his society has changed, and social control
> is anchored in the new needs it has produced. (1968:24)

With rather less sophistication, similar ideas have been advanced by Hoggart and more recently, Seabrook. The former writes of life becoming increasingly vicarious, of the cultural robbery of the working class and of a new subjection worse than the old economic variety (1958:232,243). Seabrook depicts a situation where consumerism has wrenched all appetites and desires from the context of human obligation and commitment. Children, he asserts, tend

> to be stripped of all influences but those of the market
> place ... what children first hear from the television is
> the desirability of everything, a hymning of commodities.
> (1978:95-6)

Analysis of any social formation also entails assessment of the basis for conflict and co-operation within it and the extent to which it is 'contradictory'. Giddens has defined social contradiction as

> an opposition or disjunction of structural principles of
> social systems, where those principles operate in terms of
> each other but at the same time contravene one another.
> (1979:141)

This suggests that the three main elements are those of mutual definition, antagonism and holistic interdependence. In the case of (advanced) capitalism, a number of major contradictions have been noted and considerable debate has ensued over which of these might be considered primary.(30)

Capital and labour are mutually defining and their interests at all levels are characterised simultaneously by antagonism and interdependence, through exploitation and competitive co-operation

respectively.(31) Mann talks of the resultant

> profound dualism of the workers' situation and
> consciousness. (1973:68)

Under the imperatives of competitive accumulation, contradictions are generally taken to operate 'blindly', with the participants either unaware of, or unable to avoid, the consequences. The most important of these consequences relate to breakdowns in economic and socio-political order, and so the resolution or containment of contradiction is an important facet of order. In this endeavour, the role of the state is of particular significance. Apart from its wide-ranging policing activities, the state as 'collective capital' has a major part to play in carrying out necessary but unprofitable tasks, correcting market imbalances through taxation, subsidies and so on. Hirsch contends that

> the development towards the modern interventionist state
> is to be understood as the development of a form peculiar
> to the capitalist system within which the contradiction
> between the growing socialisation of production and
> private appropriation can move. (1978:82)

Yet the provision of this space is not itself without contradiction.

Habermas (1976:62) writes,

> The state apparatus vacillates between expected inter-
> vention and forced renunciation of intervention, between
> becoming independent of its clients in a way that
> threatens the system and subordinating itself to their
> particular interests. (32)

Ideology is another major factor in the containment process. It refers, according to Larrain (1983:27),

> to a limited material practice which generates ideas that
> misrepresent social contradictions in the interest of the
> ruling class.

In offering 'solution' at the level of consciousness to contradictions

which are real in practice, ideology is always vulnerable to penetration, however partial.(33)

The relationship between contradiction and conflict is made more complex by the ambiguity of the latter, which can refer to opposed interests and/or overt struggle. While the antagonistic element of the contradiction is always a likely source of conflict (in its second sense) the two are by no means co-terminous. Larrain (1983:160) sees contradiction as a permanent underlying feature of a mode of production, struggle as a variable manifestation (periodic, sporadic, latent).(34)

The question of overt struggle is itself rendered problematic by the relationship of consciousness and action. Must overt struggle, its rationale and objects correspond to the 'objective' opposition of interests?

Hopefully, these examples give some, albeit brief, insights into the kinds of issues which must come into play in any analysis of social behaviour, including that involved in the transition from school to work. Adequate linkage of 'micro' empirical data with issues of reproduction and transformation is notoriously problematic, but the difficulties do not simply disappear if ignored. As has been argued, the empiricist solution of reliance on the readily observable and measurable and an inductive logic which will 'speak for itself' leads to superficiality, which grows with stricter adherence to these principles. Yet the more 'theoretical' accounts tend to be pitched at levels of abstraction which do not address themselves to the activities and meanings of everyday life. As Beynon remarks

(1982:285),

> in political and theoretical discourse, working class life
> is, most often, sloganised or interpreted through highly
> formalistic and simplified frameworks. These frameworks
> rarely take issue with the daily lives and felt experience
> and ideas of people. (35)

However plausible, they can only provide an investigative starting point; a context within which to examine the conditions and consequences of action and structuration.

'Local' or immediate explanation of conditions and consequences will not alone suffice in a social world characterised by wide-ranging interconnection. People's lives may be drastically altered by events across the globe and their responses conditioned by 'global' concepts, however simplistic.

In the preceeding ten pages or so, an attempt has been made to highlight the most relevant features of a more adequate theoretical framework within which the transition might be analysed. Additionally, however, it is worth noting certain debates within 'industrial sociology' which can be seen to raise important issues for study of the transition.

A common thread running through these debates is that in the postwar era, important structural shifts have taken place within the labour market, creating new divisions and promoting changes in attitudes towards work.

Goldthorpe et al (1969) set out to examine the concept of 'embourgeoisement' (most closely associated with Zweig (1961)), which suggested that as (sections of) the working class became more affluent, they increasingly adopted the values and orientations of the

middle class. In their study of 'affluent' male workers, Goldthorpe et al conclude that while there had been some movement away from 'traditional' working class values and some 'convergence' with the middle class, there were sufficient significant differences to render the notion of 'embourgeoisement' untenable.(36) One of the crucial differences lay in their respective orientations to work. Whereas middle class men were thought to see work in terms of a 'career' or 'vocation', for Goldthorpe et al, the predominant attitude among affluent workers was an 'instrumental' one. Faced with a low level of job satisfaction, they were prepared to sacrifice concern for intrinsic interest and accept more money in exchange for more unpleasantness (1969:56) (Salaman (1981:101)).

Questions of changing class structure and orientations to work are also central to studies by Blackburn and Mann (1979) and Nichols and Beynon (1977). The former, in examining the regulation of labour markets, offer a critical analysis of 'instrumentalism' and indeed, the wider issue of 'orientations to work'. Without denying the existence of the latter (deriving from both work and non-work influences), they argue for a 'weak' version of the concept (:167), not only on the grounds that workers find it difficult to form a mental map of the labour market (:130), but also because,

> it may be argued that ... (attitudes) ... are purely a
> response to their work experience. (:17)

The authors contend that

> orientations can only operate within each hierarchical
> stratum and financial specialism (:18)

and that workers are generally unable to choose employment according

to their priorities (:155). They do note, however, that even limited choices are usually taken seriously (:287-8). Like Salaman (1981:107), they comment on how meanings change according to context, and warn against attributing too much stability to orientations (Blackburn and Mann (1979:167)).

In their analysis of technological change and the 'new' working class, Nichols and Beynon claim that Goldthorpe et al's notion of orientations proffers a simplistic consistency which belies

> the essential complexity of people's thoughts and experiences ... and by extension of class consciousness. (1977:172)

The evidence of their study also highlights continuity in the ways in which, notwithstanding 'affluence', society is structured by the same inequalities as the previous generation. 'In many respects it is the same society' (:170). Alongside debate on the effects of 'affluence' and possible 'embourgeoisement', there has also been considerable discussion of the impact of changes in the labour process - and in particular of 'deskilling' and 'proletarianisation'.

Braverman (1974) in his influential 'Labour and Monopoly Capital', depicts the path of twentieth century capitalism as being towards the erosion of craft skills by increasing (sub)division of labour (:73), and sharpening divergence between conception and execution of work tasks (:126). He also argues that similar processes are in operation in relation to white-collar work, many sectors of which increasingly resemble factory production, with the workers 'proletarianised' (:ch.15). Braverman's thesis has, it should be noted, been extensively debated and criticised, but the details of the latter are beyond our scope here (Littler (1982), Thompson (1983),

Crompton and Jones (1984), Phillips and Taylor (1986)).

The relevance of all these studies (and many more!) for study of the transition derives from the questions they raise about advanced capitalism, its changing labour processes and class structure and the responses and contributions of workers to these changes. For it is this labour market that young workers (attempt to) enter and towards which they display their 'orientations'.

A second important area within sociological literature has been that relating to labour market segmentation, and in particular the debates stimulated by Doeringer and Piore's concept of the 'dual labour market' (1971). They argue that western labour markets may be divided into two sectors. The primary sector comprises large, technologically advanced and profitable firms or industries, where jobs offer high pay, security and good working conditions and are generally strongly unionised. By contrast, work in the secondary sector (small, labour intensive firms) is relatively low-paid and insecure, taking place under poor conditions and without union support.

In ideal typical form, division between sectors is fairly sharp and enduring, as advancement within the primary sector is largely internal - confined to those already within the firm/industry. In terms of recruitment, 'stability' is the crucial characteristic sought by primary sector employers, whereas the opposite is true for the secondary sector, with turnover expected and 'dispensability' welcomed. Of particular importance is the degree of congruence between these requirements and the perceived characteristics of groups likely

to face discrimination or disadvantage within the labour market.

As Blackburn and Mann observe, the theory must derive its adequacy not simply from the degree of inequality in the labour market but also the extent of segregation between groups of workers (:23). They argue that the 'dual' model is rather simplistic, and that there are several hierarchies which cross-out each other (:27). From a review of relevant studies, they conclude that

> Only segregation between the sexes reaches the proportions envisaged by dual labour market theorists - and this is, of course, traditional.

Of the other most likely 'secondary' group, ethnic minority workers, they write that despite the existence of powerful discriminatory forces

> the competitive, and often chaotic, forces of the market and of the firm prevent these from ossifying into dualism. (:28)

For Barron and Norris (1976:58), sex is crucial as a criterion for labour market segregation and hierarchy. They write,

> it seems to us that women are the main secondary workforce in Britain and the fact that the primary-secondary division coincides with sexual divisions in the labour market has obscured the existence of dualism in the British labour market. (:64)

Their argument rests heavily on the 'attractiveness' of women to employers as cheap, expendable, non-militant workers. Feminist critics have challenged the adequacy of this explanation, based on economic rationality deriving from external (domestic) factors (Scott (1986:158)). According to Beechey (1986:157), there is a need

> to develop a theory whose central concerns are occupational segregation and which does not see this as merely a by-product of employers' strategies to maximise profitability.

She goes on to argue that this must include consideration both of the conditions under which women sell their labour power and the construction of gender within the labour process (see Cockburn (1985:168)).

Garnsey (1982) also criticises the neglect of gender issues within theories of stratification, and stresses the importance of not simply taking the division of labour as a 'given' structure into which workers are then 'allocated' (:44). In similar vein, Scott (1986:181) attacks the notion that the market is 'sex-neutral' in terms of either the construction of jobs or occupational placement of workers. Gender may be important in areas such as lines of authority and supervision or indeed for the categorisation of skills (:157). Of the latter, Beechey notes that

> women's concentration in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations stems as much from the social construction of men's jobs as skilled as from the exclusion of women from skilled jobs. (1986:155)

Given the central place of 'aspirations and outcomes' within the transition literature, theories of labour market divisions are clearly of great relevance. Quite apart from more enduring forms of division, adolescence is, as Blackburn and Mann (1979:29) note, often linked to 'secondary' status, even if only on a temporary basis. Similarly, with the massive growth in youth unemployment in recent years, there is an obvious case for some re-examination of labour market divisions and the place of young workers within them.

A third relevant area within sociology is that broadly linked to theories of 'post-industrial' society. In a review of such theories, Kumar (1978) comments on how various changes within postwar western

society came to be interpreted as indicating the arrival of a 'new order', as different from industrial society as the latter was from the pre-industrial. Central to the thesis was a belief that 'scarcity' had been overcome and that this was reflected in labour market changes, with rapid growth of the tertiary or service sector and of professionalisation within it. For Bell, the high priest of post-industrialism, the shift in emphasis from manufacture to services could be characterised as a move from a 'game against fabricated nature' to a 'game between persons' (1974:117). In the new order 'what counts is not raw muscle, or energy, but information' (:127).

Reference to information leads on to another vital aspect of post-industrial society, namely the importance of scientific and theoretical knowledge. According to Bell (1974:112),

> the concept 'post-industrial society' emphasises the centrality of theoretical knowledge as the axis around which new technology, economic growth and the stratification of society will be organised.

Thus, knowledge is important not only in terms of technological innovation and the like but also in the principles around which the new society is to be organised. Implicitly or explicitly, the notion of post-industrial society denotes a decisive move away from 'traditional' capitalism, with its emphasis on property and entrepreneurial acquisitiveness, towards a society where concerns for social integration and planning are as important as the yardstick of profitability. Touraine characterises this shift as one from 'societies of accumulation' to 'programmed societies' (1974:72). He notes that while economic growth remains a major goal, its pursuit occurs increasingly within a context of economic and political

'technocracy' (:53).

> It is much more accurate to view growth as conditioned by the entire political process that to conceive it as simply dependent on economic processes operating almost independently of social control. (:6)

The supercession of capitalism is also espied in the changing basis of conflict within post-industrial society. Put briefly, it is argued by many writers that a combination of a less exploitative capitalism, working class affluence and the latter's representation in economic and political decision-making has led to a situation where class conflicts are both more muted and 'institutionalised'.(37) Touraine considers that firms and unions have moved irreversibly away from the centre stage of social conflict, increasingly focussing on issues of the organisation of production.

> Their arguments and struggles are more concerned with decision-making than with power. (1974:17)

For Bell this change is captured in the phrase 'end of ideology' (1961), signifying a decline in fundamental antagonism and concentration on issues of distribution, culture and status. Touraine protrays the new basis of conflict as being between 'central' (technocratic) and 'peripheral' segments of society explaining that

> rather than simply a conflict between capital and labour, the new conflict is between the structures of economic and political decision-making and those who are reduced to dependent participation (1974:129)

while Bell maintains that

> the clash between capitalist and worker has been replaced by that between professional and populace. (1974:129)

Neither Touraine nor Bell believe that the new pattern(s) of conflict necessarily mean its diminution, with the latter observing

the increasing questioning of corporate power and rationality (:272), and the growing tensions between politicians and technocrats over who holds power (:ch.6).

In his book 'Prophecy and Progress', Kumar finds the evidence offered in support of a move to 'post-industrial society' wanting. He argues that such evidence is both extremely selective and frequently misinterpreted to support the case for change. Thus, elite sections of the service sector are depicted as typical or prefigurative, while the effects of global division of labour are ignored. More importantly

> the 'agenda of questions' for post-industrial society
> seems remarkably like that for the industrial society.
> (1978:230)

Without denying the significance of postwar changes, Kumar rejects the idea that they amount to the arrival of a 'new order'.

> Far from being departures from the main tendencies of
> industrialism ... these developments only too clearly fall
> within them. (:232)

Debate about 'post-industrialism' has been given a new twist by the onset of large-scale unemployment. For whereas earlier theorisations dwelt on the changing pattern of work, the more recent focus has been on the decline or even 'collapse' of work. As Kumar (1978:185) notes, themes such as

> the decline of 'the Protestant ethic' which had underlain
> the whole industrializing effort of the past centuries,
> the retreat from the world of work, and the corresponding
> increase in the importance of 'leisure' and cultural
> activities

were all embodied in the post-industrial idea. However, the issues thereby raised have been given added impetus by the (perceived) scale of technologically-based job losses within both manufacturing <u>and</u>

service sectors. Offe (1985:64) writes of the 'looming obsolescence' of the labour market as the primary allocation mechanism within society and of the declining importance of 'work' per se in explaining social structure, action, consciousness and so on (:132). In 'Farewell to the Working Class', Gorz (1982) regards as inevitable the disintegration of work under technological change. He poses the twin alternatives of socially controlled emancipatory abolition of work or oppressive anti-social abolition (:8). With the rise of mass unemployment Gorz sees polarisation between the permanently unemployed and an 'aristocracy' of tenured workers (:3), and the emergence of a large 'non-class of non-workers' - an un- or under-employed stratum

> that experiences its work as an externally imposed obligation in which 'you waste your life to earn your living. (:7)

He advocates the development of an 'anti-work' consciousness and a 'dual' society with a minimal central state performing essential functions and what Keene and Owen describe as 'a multi-centred, self-governing civil society' (1986:167). Keene and Owen note the historical specificity of 'full employment' and its synonymity with male workers, and attack what they regard as a narrow identification of work with employment in a labour market (:11-15). Such identification not only neglects the importance of domestic labour and 'self-directed' activities, but is particularly oppressive, both materially and psychologically, towards those outside the labour market (:14). For the authors there is a

> need to move towards a type of post-employment society, in which individuals would be able to choose freely whether or not (or how much) they wished to engage in paid work. (:26)

As in the cases of literature on 'instrumentalism' and 'dual labour market' theory, that on post-industrial society is relevant in the issues raised for the transition. In particular, it poses questions on the nature and direction(s) of the labour market, and of orientations to work. If regular work, let alone 'careers', becomes the preserve of a small minority, what changes will occur in the consciousness and action of young workers? How far, and in what forms, will such changes be resisted or adapted to?

Against the empiricists' conception of a 'given' labour market, it is necessary to consider these issues in the light of structural changes occurring both inside the market and in the wider social formation. Likewise, it is important to examine young workers perceptions of, contributions and responses to, such changes. How is the labour market viewed prior to entry? How do such views relate to particular courses of action and how do both change in the process of labour market participation?

As new entrants, school leavers are particularly vulnerable to any changes in access to the labour market. Thus, in periods when rapid transformation is clearly on the agenda, their fate becomes something of a 'critical case' for the outcome. In the youth labour market, major transformation has been manifest in the progressive decline in 'traditional' access and its replacement by state-mediated forms. For study of the transition, this shift requires incorporation at different levels. Not only is it necessary to examine the pattern of decline and replacement and its 'immediate' effects on occupational choice, work experience, unemployment, trade union membership and the

like, but also to consider the impact outside the labour market - most obviously in the preparatory role  of education and careers  guidance, but also in areas such as  the family, where contacts and  connections were, for many,  a key  aspect  of  'traditional'  recruitment,  and patterns of leisure and consumption. Examination of such areas has, of course, always occurred  in transition  studies. This  study  differs, however, in two main senses; first in  its setting in the 1980s  youth labour market with its preponderance of schemes and consequent  degree of 'politicisation'; second, in the attempt to locate empirical  study within wider sociological theory.

A further  important dimension  which  requires mention  at  this point is the study's location in the Durham Coalfield. The  particular historical characteristics  of  the  Coalfield  will  be  explored  in Chapter 1, but it is  necessary, in concluding  this introduction,  to acknowledge the importance  of the  'spatial division of  labour'.  As Massey argues,

> geography matters. The fact that processes take place over space, the facts of distance or closeness, of geographical variation between areas, of the  individual character  and meaning of specific  places and  regions - all  these  are essential to the operation of social processes themselves. (1984:52)

Thus to talk  simply about  advanced capitalism may  be to  over-homogenise,  glossing  over  the  question  of  spatially  uneven development, of 'the development of  new areas and the abandonment  of old' (:49). There is  little doubt  that the 'core'  of capitalism  in Britain is situated firmly in the south-east of England and that areas such as the  north-east (more  so the  Durham Coalfield)  have  become increasingly 'peripheral' or marginalised (:274) (Nairn (1981:386)).

Spatial divisions give an important twist to the issues under scrutiny, requiring consideration of historical and current local context for the development of 'orientations' and the fit between spatial and other forms of labour market division. The question of spatially uneven development might also be regarded as crucial to that of any movement towards a 'post-industrial' society. What will be the regional distribution of decline in manufacturing and/or service sector employment? If Gorz's notion of 'polarisation' is correct, how will this be spread across different areas?

It is not suggested that in this study, such matters will be 'resolved' in any sense. Rather, their relevance lies in the context set for the consciousness and action of young workers in the Coalfield, whatever their level of awareness of these issues.

Having laid out key aspects of the study's 'frame of reference', attention is now turned to providing some historical background and outlining the basis and design of the study itself.

<u>Notes</u>

1    This literature includes treatments of youth unemployment (Sawdon
     and Taylor (1980), Short and Taylor (1982), Mungham (1982),
     Casson (1979), OECD (1980), Showler (1977), Baxter (1977)); job
     creation schemes (Loney (1979), Markall (1982)); YOP/YTS
     (Youthaid (1981), Morgan (1981), Finn (1983), Fiddy (ed) (1983),
     Cohen (1982), Stafford (1981)); social and life skills (Davies
     (1979) (1981), Shone and Williamson (1982)).

2    Although there are many educational studies dealing, however
     indirectly with the preparatory role of education for work, see
     in particular Reeder (1979), Finn (1982), CCCS (1981).

3    Thus, one important factor in explaining job dissatisfaction and
     turnover is the displacement of anger from the lost school onto
     the job and employer who 'most probably will not know what
     appears as a withdrawn, depressed or unmotivated young worker is
     suffering from aspects of incomplete and unfacilitated mourning'
     (:249).

4    For example, the right to withdraw money from a bank depends on
     other depositors not simultaneously exercising the same right.
     Similarly, if 'employability' is defined in terms of the
     possibility of actually obtaining employment rather than capacity
     to perform work tasks, then procedures to improve employability
     only work for some to the extent that others do not successfully
     adopt them.

5    See Taylor-Gooby (1981).

6    As radical social democrats have sometimes demonstrated (Townsend
     and Davison (1982)), empiricist investigation does not
     necessarily rule out structural interpretation of data, but
     neither does it demand, nor in most cases receive it. From within
     this framework, concentration on wider issues is likely to be
     seen as both naive and dogmatic. 'Relatively frequent contact
     with the realities and complexity of human need quickly sobers
     the enthusiasm of ideologists and utopians' (Pinker (1971:108).

7    See especially Simon (1977), Fleming and Lavercombe (1980), but
     also Carter (1962), West and Newton (1983)).

8    Moor (1976:167), while making no attempt to explain the
     'instrumentality' of young workers, uses it to clinch the case
     for vocational education and against the 'progressives'. At
     times, Carter appears to wage a crusade against the majority of
     working class parents for being ill-equipped to advise on
     occupational choice because of their dogmatism and illogic
     (1962:88, 90, 97), and harangues 'rough' working class parents

for spending too much time in pubs (fathers) and gossiping (mothers) and thereby neglecting their children (:57).

9    See, for example, Fleming and Lavercombe for whom typical results might be that 'among boys unemployed less than three months, those who saw themselves as being relatively scruffy, impolite, disrespectful at school, tended to report lower levels of job satisfaction...' (1980:47), or 'pupils rated by teachers as less co-operative towards the staff at school tended to have changed jobs more frequently ...' (:49). Such bald statements of significant relationships are frequently left to stand, ie without consideration of the link between scruffiness and job satisfaction, co-operativeness and job-changing.

10   See Sharpe (1976) and Griffin (1985) on 'nice jobs for girls'.

11   Only one stage removed are such insights as that unfavourable comment on school came more frequently from 'those who had been eager to leave' (:56), or that 'regret or uncertainty more frequently occurred among the less satisfied workers' (:265).

12   For example, Maizels uses an eleven point scale for assessment of job satisfaction (1970:253), while Moor (1976:82) offers ten values for 'looking forward to work'.

13   See Moor (1976:70)

14   How meaningful is separation of factors up to numbers as high as twelve (1976:70).

15   Maizels (1970:253) attempts to overcome the difficulties of quantification (whether to award 6 or 7) by expressing a scale verbally. The resulting format, however, only serves to highlight the awkwardness of 'quantifying' experience. Would, for instance, the differences between 'I am enthusiastic about (the job)', 'I like it very much' or 'I like it a good deal' be easily recognisable.

16   There is a tendency within such investigation to take responses at 'face value', as clear indications of that which they purport to describe. Maizels confidently talks of young workers having, rather than expressing, few regrets (1970:265), and uses checklist responses to conclude that work was characterised 'more by the absence of negative than the prevalence of positive conditions' (:251).

17   This is nowhere more apparent than in the treatment of 'contradictions', which are simply stated without further explanation. Carter writes that the deficiencies of the Youth Employment Service 'arise from the failure of society to take seriously its own stated aims' (1962:169), while Bazalgette (1978:8) notes that employers' pleas for initiative on the part

of young workers are rarely matched by opportunities for its use, but offers no further comment on the nature of 'initiative' or matters of ideology.

18    Ignorance of the effects of competition is particularly unfortunate as many checklist items are only meaningful in a relative or comparative sense. It might also be argued that competitive situations clearly exert pressures which might help to explain the behaviour attributed to those (teachers, supervisors etc) being assessed.

19    Even in supposedly matched samples there is a tendency for male majority - 58.4% in the case of Fleming and Lavercombe (1980), 55.5% for Maizels (1970).

20    Carter provides a typical example when he writes, without any specification of gender, that for Sheffield youngsters 'book-learning was on the whole belittled ... it is practical ability and know-how, and physical strength that counts, in steel' (1962:50).

21    Carter 'explains' the parental view of boys' greater entitlement to pocket money by saying that 'this is linked with the attitude that husbands are entitled to more money than their wives' (1962:283). Even West and Newton, who explicitly state their intention to examine sex differences, offer no further comment on, or explanation of, their conclusion that 'for males, adulthood appears to be marked by the entry to work, whereas for females, marriage and motherhood appear to represent adult status' (1983:180).

22    See Ashton (1973).

23    There are other criticisms which could be made of the study, particularly on the relationship between ethnography and analysis at certain points but these would serve little purpose in such a general review.

24    In eschewing 'empiricist' concerns with quantification, Griffin does leave herself open to charges of selective use of data, as, for instance, in the concluding quotation calling for a women's revolution which implicitly represents the growing politicisation of young working class women without any indication of how widespread such views are.

25    It is important to remember that issues of reproduction and transformation are as much conceptual and definitional as empirical, with no necessary agreement on the essential nature of any particular structures, and hence on their continuity or dissolution.

26    This inevitably raises the question of the relationship between

these 'alternative' versions, the latter's claim to superiority and whether this superiority entails positing dual models of human behaviour for researcher and researched, in which the former implicitly accord themselves freedom from those influences claimed to determine the behaviour of others. In the explanation of social behaviour, 'lay' and 'expert' accounts do often compete, and differences between them must rest fundamentally on their different concerns, which Wallis and Bruce (1983:104) summarise as follows; first, (lay) actors are usually concerned with living rather than explaining; second, their explanations typically arrive at point of satisfaction earlier; third, they are more pre-occupied with the personal than the general. The authors contend that much human action is unreflective so long as it is workable, suggesting that 'the new and problematic is likely to be thought about and pondered in the particulars: the routine and habitual is relegated to the background of consciousness only to be dredged forth and reflected upon when things go wrong' (:105).

In other words, 'superior' explanation of social behaviour reflects a situation where such explanation is a primary concern for the researcher, while for lay actors it is usually a subordinate one, with consequent differences in resources, analytical tools and so on. The knowledge so generated should provide better explanation of social behaviour and dynamics, though not necessarily more effective 'living' or better understanding of 'particular' situations.

27   In his review of the relationship between words and actions in social research, Deutscher finds considerable evidence of discrepancy, maintaining 'not only that there may be no relationship between what people say and what they do, but that under some conditions, there may be a high inverse relationship between the two' (1966:237). See also Phillips (1971). Certain aspects of this relationship and implications for empirical study are considered further in the following chapter.

28   See also Mann (1970:429), Lefebvre (1976:12).

29   See also Holloway and Picciotto (1978:24) on dull compulsion through 'uncomprehended laws of reproduction.'

30   Larrain suggests that in the Marxist tradition four such candidates have been nominated; 1) between the forces and relations of production; 2) between use-value and exchange-value of commodities; 3) between socialised production and private appropriation; 4) between capital and labour. For Larrain primacy rests with the contradiction between capital and labour 'because it is constitutive of the very essence of the capitalist mode of production' (1983:153). By way of further justification, he argues that the contradictory nature of the commodity is only a potential prior to capital-labour relations and that the other

two are dependent on the contradiction between capital and labour. Giddens, it should be noted, argues that 3) is the principal contradiction (1979:135).

31    It is, of course, debatable as to how far all social relations are 'determined' by the major relations of production and thus the 'holistic' component must be questioned, but there can be little doubt as to the enormity of the influence.

32    Poulantzas has argued that 'class contradictions are the very stuff of the state; they are present in its material framework and pattern its organisation' (1980:132).

33    Ideology must emphasise interdependence and mutual interest rather than antagonism, represent particular class interests as universal, portray social relations as just, and the existing order as the most desirable of feasible alternatives. As the critics of a 'dominant ideology' thesis have argued, the results are somewhat mixed, although they have also stressed that this 'failure' does not necessarily present a serious threat to social order.

34    Rejecting the Marxist emphasis on essential contradiction, Giddens (1976:125) has argued that contradiction and conflict can both exist without the other.

35    What are the day-to-day patterns and experiences of 'dull compulsion', 'pragmatic acceptance', relationship between contradiction and conflict and so on?

36    Apart from the question of orientations to work (see main text), there were differences in patterns of interaction with friends, neighbours and kin (:ch.4), aspirations for children and involvement in their education (:131,138) and political affiliations (:172).

37    For a review of such 'pluralist' perspectives on liberal democracy and debate between them, liberal anti-pluralism and Marxism see Dunleavy (1981).

# Chapter 1

## Background to the Study

### Historical Context

The data which inform the bulk of this study were collected in the early 1980s via questionnaires, individual and group interviews. The purpose of this section is to provide some background history to the period, though its brevity and generality render a contextual ambit more appropriate than any firm 'explanatory' role. In turn, while concentrating on the particular development of the Durham Coalfield, the account must also draw up its own (national) context.

The inter-war years provide a useful historical starting point, for although certain of the distinctive features of modern Coalfield history developed in the last century (Austrin and Beynon (1981a:5)), it was between the wars that the particular and apparently enduring character of Durham as a 'depressed' area emerged. Similarly, with its massive and protracted unemployment, this era offers an interesting point of comparison with modern times.

Before embarking on any historical review, however, it is useful to offer a brief outline of the social geography of the Coalfield. As used here, the term refers to that area where coal has been mined for much of the past century or so. In the pre-1974 County Durham,(1) the Coalfield accounted for a majority of the surface area and an even greater majority (c. 80%) of the population.(2) It is customary to

divide the Coalfield according to the depth of workings, increasing from the 'exposed' western to the 'concealed' eastern Coalfield. From the nineteenth century at least, the working (and exhaustion) of coal has followed the west-east route, so that overall decline has been accompanied by increasingly residual concentration of pits in the eastern and ultimately coastal sector. If some justification is required for a study of Western Coalfield areas whose present connection with mining is limited to a few open cast sites, then it must be sought in the mining legacy, the nature and significance of which will hopefully emerge in the following history.

The extent to which Durham's history revolves around the rise and fall of mining is difficult to over-estimate. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth there was a massive rise in population, with that of West Durham growing from c. 86,000 (1851) to c. 341,000 (1921) (Daysh and Symonds (1953:37)). Reliance on mining was also enormous. Bulmer (1978a:22) writes that

> in the typical mining settlement more than two thirds of
> the male population were miners. (3)

In 1923, at over 170,000, the number of miners in Durham was virtually double that of the current national workforce of Bitish Coal.

By 1933, as the result of extensive pit closures, this figure had dwindled to around 101,000.(4) In July 1932, male unemployment was running at 40.5% in Durham, against an average for Great Britain of 22.7% (Garside (1971:268)), while the impact in West Durham was even more severe.(5) As we shall see, although unemployment was to abate considerably after the 1939-45 war, the trend of job losses in mining continued, (albeit unevenly) and the area retained its characteristic

higher than average unemployment.

Perhaps the most spectacular consequence of inter-war unemployment was the exodus of population from the Coalfield. According to Daysh and Symonds, there was a net outwards migration from West Durham of c. 89,000 between 1921 and 1939,

> a result in almost every case, of the lack of jobs.
> (1953:47)

Although most migration occurred without recourse to state sponsorship, the latter's availability, following the establishment of the Industrial Transference Board in 1928, signalled the initial policy response to the problem of unemployment in the 'depressed' or 'distressed' areas.

The first tentative move towards a 'work to the workers' regional policy came with the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act 1934, which focussed primarily on aiding land settlement through smallholdings, allotments and the like. This was soon followed by the introduction of Industrial Estates and powers for Special Area Commissioners to offer financial concessions to capital investing within the designated areas. More will be said of the impact of regional policy later but for the moment it is intended to describe certain other features of the inter-war Coalfield.

Mining areas are often difficult to classify as urban or rural, sharing characteristics of both (Bulmer (1978a:21)).(6) The traditional image of the mining settlement is of an archetypal 'occupational community' (Ennis (1986:198), Salaman (1974)), with the industry exerting hegemonic influence over all aspects of social life. While it is not always possible to separate fact from fantasy on such

matters, the image of 'insularity' in the pit villages is powerful and enduring (Chaplin (1978), Williamson (1982:68)). Clearly, this insularity rested on the 'symbiotic' relationship between pit and settlement, and the former's provision of employment for the latter's male inhabitants. The 'symbiosis' was manifest in various ways.

Reliance on mining meant that living standards were almost entirely dependent upon wage and employment levels in the industry. Housing was predominantly provided by the coal owners, with numerous investigators testifying to widespread slum housing, chronic overcrowding and general dilapidation (Garside (1971:228-90), Pilgrim Trust (1938:74), Jephcott (1948:28), (Middleton (1985:26)). With extensive poverty and an historically poor, deteriorating infrastructure, health standards were predictably poor (Goodfellow (1941), Wilkinson (1939:238) (Middleton (1985:27)). Another area of interconnection was the influence of the miners' lodges, which extended well beyond the pits and even local politics, and which Benney likens to that of a 'local medieval church' (1946:172). It is beyond our scope to discuss the basis and development of 'labourism' in the Coalfield (Austrin and Beynon (1988)), but one of its facets was the maintenance of a strong 'self help' tradition built around working class institutions such as trade unions and the Co-operative Society (Pilgrim Trust (1938:270) (Williamson (1982:69)).

Finally, mention must be made of the distinctive pattern of sexual division within Durham mining communities. Numerous writers depict an almost complete segregation between the sexes (Benney (1946:24), Bulmer (1978a:32) Ennis (1986:254). Levels of paid work for

women were very low. In the 1921 Census, against a national figure of 32.3% for female employment, the corresponding figure for Durham was 19.3%, while the numbers became lower still where reliance on mining was greater (Thorpe (1970:49)).

Daysh and Symonds (1953:98) explain this pattern in terms of the needs of miners for meals, baths, washing etc and the variable times at which such demands arose.(7) There is little doubt that the burden of domestic labour was extremely heavy (Chaplin (1978:70) Williamson (1982:119) Austrin and Beynon (1988: ch.4)).(8) Patriarchal power was also evident within the home in terms of powers and prerogatives. Being 'boss' in the house was widely considered synonomous with being a man, a prescription which could even semi-legitimise domestic violence (Strong Words (1979:71) Ennis (1986:257) (Austrin and Beynon (1988:ch.5)).(9) Not only was paid work outside the home largely a male preserve, so too was leisure. 'Masculinity' revolved around strength and skill in pit work and leisure activities (such as football, pigeon racing, leek growing), which were invariably all-male affairs (Zweig (1948:104)).(10) Perhaps the supreme symbol of this territorial division was the Workmen's Club, from which women were formally excluded (Strong Words (1979:62)).

Sadly, space does not permit a fuller consideration of Coalfield social history, nor of the literature devoted to it (Thorpe (1970), Moore (1974), Strong Words (1979), Austrin and Beynon (1988), Bulmer (ed) (1978) Williamson (1982)). Instead, attention is turned towards the transition from school to work in the inter-war period.

The most obvious labour market feature facing school leavers of

the day was extreme limitation of choice. According to Gollan
(1937:52), young men in mining areas faced three alternatives, the
pit, unemployment or transference. Hostility to working in the pits,
with their danger, exploitation and hardship was so widespread that as
Zweig (1948:28) notes,

> if other jobs are available, practically no-one takes up
> mining. (11)

Lack of alternatives for young men may help to explain why the
proportions of the 14-19 age group employed in mining were
consistently higher than for men as a whole.(12) As in many other
industries of the day (Gollan (1937), Jewkes and Jewkes (1938), there
were particular jobs set aside for school-leavers, invariably
characterised by low wages and frequently by dismissal as adult wages
loomed (Pilgrim Trust (1938:78)).(13) The lack of alternatives to
mining can also be gauged from the fact that, in the 1931 Census,
County Durham recorded the lowest figure for agricultural workers,
equal lowest for professional workers and second lowest for clerical
posts.(14)

Young women shared an equally narrow if totally different range
of employment avenues. There is a wealth of evidence impressionistic,
and statistical, to support the idea that domestic service was a
female 'equivalent' to mining.

> When I was a girl the only work for women was domestic
> employment. (Strong Words (1979:74)).

In 1921, 38.3% of all women (and a similar proportion of young women)
employed in Durham were in domestic service. As for mining, these
figures rose away from the urban areas which might offer alternatives

in clerical or manufacturing work. The other main source of employment for (young) women was in distribution which in most districts accounted for 25-30% of jobs.

Apart from restricted choice, perhaps the most noteworthy feature in the employment of young women was that the low 'activity' rates applied equally to them as to older, married women.(15) This is only explicable in terms of the widespread practice of young women acting as (unpaid) domestic labourers either in their own or neighbours' homes (Strong Words (1979:57)). Domestic service almost invariably entailed travelling, ranging from a few miles to migration from the area. Daysh and Symonds note how the north-east

> was looked upon as a reservoir of domestic help for the
> Midlands and London. (1953:47) (16)

Despite their small scale, the first fruits of 'work to the workers' regional policy gave a foretaste of changes in the form of sexual division of labour. There is no doubt that the problem of the 'depressed' areas was construed in terms of their male population, hardly surprising in view of the material relations of dependence (and concomitant subsumption of interests), ideological presuppositions regarding sex roles and so on. This was buttressed by the issue of perceived threat to social order (Hannington (1937:79)). However, the investment and location decisions of individual capitals are not generally responsive to such 'abstract' political considerations and around half of the pre-war trading estate jobs were taken up by women (many of them young women) (Bulmer (1978b:170)). This 'mismatch' was frequently noted (Wilkinson (1939:262)).

'Work to the workers' did not mean the abandonment of

transference as a solution to the depressed areas problem. The reliance of young men upon mining employment and their greater vulnerability to unemployment led to a geographical concentration of male school-leaver unemployment in mining areas. In less concentrated labour markets, the problem was much less acute (Gollan (1937:50,227)). Suitable young men were transferred to more prosperous areas to look for work or persuaded to attend training schemes situated nearer to possible employment (Pilgrim Trust (1938:76)). Transference was used even more widely for young women (Daysh and Symonds (1953:47)), overwhelmingly for domestic service in the Midlands and South.(17)

Among other state measures to cope with youth unemployment, it is also worth mentioning the growth in Juvenile Unemployment Centres (renamed Juvenile Instruction Centres in 1930), attendance at which was made compulsory in 1934 for receipt of benefit. By 1937, there were 228 centres with 27,000 trainees nationally. Their curriculum was strongly practical but not vocational, with activities divided on the basis of sex (Rees and Rees (1982:19), the aim being to inculcate work discipline and prevent demoralisation through 'loafing'.(18) Jephcott notes how they were frequently regarded with contempt and hostility by young workers (1947:146).(19)

Daysh and Symonds' (1953) study of West Durham provides useful information about the early post-war years. Their comparative figures for the years 1938 and 1947 show that although there had been some movement towards a more 'typical' labour market in terms of ocupational distribution, the local economy remained highly atypicial. Thus, while there had been increases in both manufacturing and service

sector employment, their local levels remained well below national averages. Clothing manufacture, almost negligible in 1938 at 0.2%, occupied 2.2% of the workforce in 1947, against a UK figure of 3.5% (:30). Similarly, despite increases, only 19% (35% in the UK) of workers were employed in the service sector, with shortfall in every listed category within it (:23). Even though 6,000 mining jobs had been lost, 44.6% of insured workers in West Durham were employed in mining in 1947 ( :30)

Thus, mining and the related production of iron and steel were to dominate the postwar (male) Durham labour market, largely defining its character and ensuring its continuing vulnerability to decline in their fortunes (Chapman (1985:2)).

Daysh and Symonds' data allow calculation of the number of 14-15 year olds employed within each industrial classification, although these figures are not broken down by sex. Together, mining, clothing manufacture and distribution accounted for 57.3% of all employment for this age group. The 'advent' of clothing manufacture was particularly significant for school leavers, for whereas only 2.2% of all insured workers were so employed, the equivalent figure for school leavers was 14.2%. If, allowing for a small overestimate, clothing workers were assumed to be female, then this figure would rise to 31.5% of insured female school leavers.

If the pre-war problem of over-dependence on a declining industry remained in the post-war era, there were still important differences. In particular, unemployment was markedly lower and a planning framework, concerned among other things with location of industry and

the 'regional problem' had been established.(20) Within the county, planning concerns revolved around a fundamental restructuring which could both help to repair the damaging consequences of earlier decline, and provide a basis upon which future (compensatory) development might occur.

Spatially, such changes were to entail the development of industrial estates near the major centres of population. The corresponding residential adjustments were to be achieved by four-fold (A-D) classification of settlements and a steep sliding scale of investment appropriate to projected populations. Thus, category 'A' towns were to grow, while category 'D' villages were to be 'killed off' by complete withdrawal of investment. The 1951 County Structure Plan also laid considerable emphasis on the need for environmental improvement. Having noted the prevalent dreariness and lack of basic facilities, the Plan's written analysis concludes that

> the village, like the mine, was 'an instrument of profit'. (1951:101)

In conjunction with lack of employment opportunities, environmental inadequacy was blamed for the high rate of movement away from the area (:117).

In the early post-war era, the quest to attract new employment was not without its ambivalent aspects. It should be remembered that employment in mining was still massive and decline was slow until the late 1950s. As Robinson (1978:196) argues, the NCB, despite its plan to reduce employment from 108,000 to 80,000 by the early 1960s was opposed to the development of any alternative 'male' industry which might compete for available labour in the meantime. This contradiction

between long and short term requirements was hardly conducive to a smooth transition to the 'new' economy.

'Female' employment received a more straightforward welcome, being regarded both as nationally beneficial and as helping to alleviate family poverty (Robinson (1978:204)).

Despite numerous legislative changes in regional policy (MacCallum (1979)) and frequent redrawing of boundaries for assisted areas, there are certain themes which have remained fairly constant for most if not all the post-war period. This continuity derives in part from enduring 'background' features such as colliery closures, net out-migration and unemployment levels consistently above the national average. Within the planning literature, there have been recurrent calls for diversification towards a more 'balanced' and consequently less vulnerable economy, with broader-based manufacturing and developed service sectors (NEPC (1966:2), (1969:11)). The latter has been assumed to rest on expansion and/or decentralisation of state services and the attraction of private administrative and development operations (NRST (1975:17)).

The post-war principles for spatial reorganisation have remained largely intact. In particular, notwithstanding changes in terminology (growth 'points', 'zones', 'corridors'), the tenet of concentrated industrial and residential development has been maintained, with economic 'viability' (based on size and communications) crucial (NEPC (1969:5).(21) Net out-migration has generally been viewed negatively, as indicative of deficiencies and weaknesses in comparison with other areas (NEPC (1966:63)). Thus, increased employment has been seen as

necessary to reverse the trend of migration as well as to relieve
unemployment among those who remain (NRST (1977:107), DCC (1978:217)).

'Modernisation' serves as a useful umbrella term to cover a
number of strands within regional policy and county planning. While
some of the strands predate the 1960s, it was then that they
increasingly came to be woven into the notion of regional
'backwardness'. This thesis is discernible in the Hailsham Report
(Board of Trade (1963)), but is most strongly associated with the
regional planning of the Wilson government(s) (NEPC (1966), (1969)).
In keeping with the 'white heat' ethos of the day, technological
innovation was seen as necessary for a 'more vigorous and resilient
regional economy' (NEPC (1966:52)) and in particular to create a base
for future growth less reliant on state aid (Senior (n.d.:15)). To
facilitate this, various infrastructural improvements were called for.
Some of these related to communications (road and air travel) but most
were concerned with making the area more attractive to business
executives, scientists and other professionals whose migration to the
area was regarded as requisite for growth.(22)

Albeit with the privilege of hindsight, a further recurrent
feature of planning documents had been a propensity for over-optimism
about future prospects. Daysh and Symonds grossly underestimated the
speed of pit closures in North-west Durham, while the NEPC's (1969)
'Outline Strategy for the North' assumes that by the late 1970s the
worst regional problems will have been overcome and the 'new
industrial structure' will serve 'as a springboard for future
expansion' ( :15). Similarly, the Report of Survey for the 1976 Durham

County Structure Plan assumes both that 'Consett steel works will not be closed' ( :22) and that after 1981

> the service sector would begin to grow again at the rate experienced in the 1960's ( :23).

Without disregarding the difficulties in making such predictions, the consistent bias of the errors is suggestive of a certain propagandist function.

If that had been the 'vision', what then of the reality?

The employment fortunes of workers in the Durham Coalfield have been dominated by the massive and precipitous decline of the area's pits and by the outcomes of the quest to 'replace' them. Since 1945, the number of Durham pits has fallen from one hundred and sixty four to its present total of six, employment in them from 109,000 to 16,000. Even these figures underestimate the pace of decline in that there were relatively few closures before the late 1950s.(23)

It should be noted that this trend was far from uniform within the Coalfield, and in view of the three locations for this study, situated in south-west, north west and east Durham, it is useful to refer briefly to variation in the degree of decline or disintegration. Closures came first to south-west Durham, where connection with mining was almost entirely severed. The final pit, Whitworth Park, was shut in 1972, but there was relatively little redeployment in other Durham mines, although many thousands of miners left for other coalfields (Mellor 1974:26)). In north-west Durham, however, where the last pit, Sacriston, closed in 1985, there was and remains considerable 'travel to work' from north-west to coastal pits ensuring that there has been negligible recruitment of young miners. The pace and spatial phasing

of closures can be seen from the maps (pp.64-67).

Map 1, with its bewildering series of dots, graphically illustrates the historical scale of mining in Durham. Also shown are the sites of the 36 pits still working in 1971 and it is the balance between working pits and closures which clearly demonstrates the different situations within the three locations.

To the south and west of Durham, the concentration of closures is greater than elsewhere, while in 1971 just one (soon to close) colliery remained open. In the north-west, while there had been many closures, ten pits remained at that time, although almost all were to close in the following decade. The position in east Durham stands apart, with a clear majority of working pits situated there and markedly less closures, indeed with closures in the coastal strip negligible.

Maps 2 and 3 offer clearer picture of information contained in Map 1. Map 2 shows especially the scale of pit closures in west Durham between 1950 and 1970. What is noteworthy here is the way in which the north-west 'followed' the south-west, which had previously borne the brunt of pit losses.

Map 3 displays the distribution of working collieries in 1971, with production virtually ceased in south-west Durham, and increasingly concentrated on the 'long life' coastal pits. In Map 4, which shows the current position, this concentration has become something of a 'last stand' clustered around Seaham and Peterlee. It is perhaps in the contrast between Map 4 and Map 1 that the starting point for comprehending modern Coalfield history must lie.

# CONTRACTING COALFIELD

CLOSURE OF DRIFT & COLLIERY
WORKINGS IN CO. DURHAM

SOUTH SHIELDS ①

② 

GATESHEAD

⑨  ⑤  ④  ③

⑦  SUNDERLAND

⑧  ⑥

⑭

⑩  ⑮

⑪  ⑯

CONSETT  CHESTER LE STREET  ㉓

⑫  ⑬  ㉔

⑰  ㉑  SEAHAM ㉕

⑱  ⑳  ㉖

㉒  ㉗

㉘  ㉙

⑲  DURHAM  ㉚

㉜ PETERLEE ㉛

㉝

CROOK  ㊱  ㉟

㉞

BISHOP
AUCKLAND

NEWTON AYCLIFFE

BARNARD CASTLE

## WORKING COLLIERIES 1971

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Westoe | 19 | Bearpark |
| 2 | Boldon | 20 | Adventure |
| 3 | Wearmouth | 21 | Eppleton |
| 4 | Hylton | 22 | Elemore |
| 5 | Usworth | 23 | Vane Tempest |
| 6 | Washington Glebe | 24 | Seaham |
| 7 | Ravensworth | 25 | Dawdon |
| 8 | Kibblesworth | 26 | Murton |
| 9 | Marley Hill | 27 | Hawthorn |
| 10 | Medomsley | 28 | South Hetton |
| 11 | Eden | 29 | Easington |
| 12 | Morrison Busty | 30 | Horden |
| 13 | Waldridge Fell Drift | 31 | Blackhall |
| 14 | Silksworth | 32 | Shotton |
| 15 | New Herrington | 33 | East Hetton |
| 16 | Houghton | 34 | Fishburn |
| 17 | Sacriston | 35 | Metal Bridge |
| 18 | Langley Park | 36 | Whitworth Park |

- • Working closed before 1920
- • Working closed between 1920 & 1950
- ● Working closed since 1950
- ◯ Existing collieries
- △ Large settlements

Miles

0   2   4

# LOSURE OF DRIFT AND COLLIERY WORKINGS
# CO. DURHAM 1950 - 1970

SOUTH SHIELDS

GATESHEAD

SUNDERLAND

CONSETT

CHESTER LE
STREET

SEAHAM

DURHAM

PETERLEE

CROOK

BISHOP
AUCKLAND

NEWTON AYCLIFFE

| | |
|---|---|
| ● | Mine or Drift |
| ○ | Licensed Mine |
| △ | Large Settlement |

Miles

0    2    4

# COLLIERY WORKINGS IN CO. DURHAM 1971

SOUTH SHIELDS

Westoe

GATESHEAD

Boldon

Hylton

Marley Hill

Ravensworth Ann

Usworth

Wearmouth

SUNDERLAND

Kibblesworth

Washington Glebe

Medomsley

Silksworth

Eden

New Herrington

CONSETT

Morrison Busty

CHESTER LE STREET

Vane Tempest

Crookhall

Waldridge Fell Drift

Houghton

Seaham

SEAHAM

Eppleton

Murton

Dawdon

Sacriston

Adventure

Hawthorn

Langley Park

Elemore

South Hetton

Easington

Bearpark

DURHAM

Shotton

Horden

PETERLEE

Blackhall

East Hetton

CROOK

Whitworth Park

Metal Bridge

Fishburn

BISHOP AUCKLAND

NEWTON AYCLIFFE

● Mine

○ Licensed Mine

△ Large Settlement

0    2    4

Miles

# COLLIERY WORKINGS IN CO. DURHAM 1987

SOUTH SHIELDS △

Westoe ●

GATESHEAD △

Wearmouth ●

SUNDERLAND △

CHESTER LE STREET △

CONSETT △

Vane Tempest ●

SEAHAM △

Dawdon ●

Murton ●

DURHAM △

Easington ●

PETERLEE △

CROOK △

BISHOP AUCKLAND △

NEWTON AYCLIFFE △

● Mine

△ Large Settlement

0    2    4

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Events during the 1950s and 1960s were of particular importance. Whether due to NCB pressure over male alternatives or not (see above), contemporary job strategies tended to place special emphasis on the expansion in numbers (if not occupational spheres) of female employment. The historically low starting point for the latter allied to the post-war expansion of female employment had created the 'paradox' of rapid growth and continued lagging behind.(24) The differential involvement of men and women in declining and expanding industry was a crucial factor in shaping changes in respective activity rates. For although expanding industries had yielded slightly more new jobs (54% to 46%) for men, over 95% of job losses in the declining industries were borne by men (NEPC (1966:8)). If this shift in labour force composition was generally welcomed in 1960s' reports, the rising unemployment of the 1970s prompted a different response.

> Future trends seem likely to call for a situation in which more males will need to adapt to jobs previously taken up by women. (NRST (1977:46n)).

Assessment of the 'success' of regional policy is beyond our scope, but certain characteristics of the 'new economy' are worthy of mention. The aim of diversification has been met to some extent. The 1981 Census shows that, with notable exceptions, such as concentration on energy (mining) and low service sector employment for men, the county's industrial structure is not particularly deviant in national terms.(25) Yet, despite its greater diversity, there is evidence to suggest that the 'new economy' in the Coalfield is more unstable in employment terms and exploitative of workers than in other areas. Townsend (1985:103) notes the preponderance of semi-skilled workers in

the 'new' (factory) jobs. Thus, the aim of a 'self-sustaining' regional economy appears both unlikely and dependent for its limited success on a quiescent workforce as well as state subsidies.

Austrin and Beynon (1981b:5) argue that one of the most significant aspects of regional planning has been the operation of an 'open house' policy aimed at large (multi)national corporations.(26) Control of enterprises has increasingly passed outside the region and while the consequences of external control cannot simply be read off, instability appears to figure prominently among them ( :11) (Massey (1984:102).(27)

Pimlott (1981:53) notes that two thirds of all redundancies over thirty in 1979 occurred where factories had been acquired by larger concerns. It must also be said, however, that smaller forms offer little by way of employment stability, although the reasons for closures may be different and the consequences less drastic.(28) Whether vulnerability stems from the likelihood (heightened during recession) of large scale 'rationalisations' or small scale bankruptcies, it clearly has deep roots within the structure of the local economy.

It is also important to remember the distinctly double-edged role of the state in relation to unemployment within the Coalfield. (Hudson (1985)) For, alongside the regional policy subsidies and decentralisation of services,(29) must be set the performance of nationalised industries whose rationalisations have far outstripped their private sector counterparts.(30) Regional policy itself, both in theory and practice, has enshrined an ambivalence on employment aims,

with subsidies often awarded to highly capital-intensive projects.(31)

Vulnerability is not confined to the risk of unemployment, but also extends to conditions of employment. Austrin and Beynon comment upon the weakness of a region

> whose future is staked totally on selling its labour force
> to ... (large) ... corporations (1981b:18).

In addition to regional policy incentives, it can be argued that the availability of large labour reserves paves the way for profitability built on low wages and a pliable, frightened workforce (Carney et al (1976:21).

There is a considerable body of evidence to support both propositions, although there are dangers in over-generalisation. Writing in the early post-war era, Daysh and Symonds observe how, among local female textile workers, any deficiencies of skill (vis-a-vis the traditional centres of the industry) could be compensated by their being easily 'moulded', thereby allowing firms greater flexibility in working practices and hence lower production costs (1953:147-8) (see also Whickham (1986:39). Hunt's (1968) survey of women's employment provides an interesting profile of their work in the Northern region. She demonstrates that while activity rates remained low in national terms, women in the North were more likely to work full-time, long hours (including more than five days) and shift work (1968:10-11, 37, 39).

In 'Challenge of the Changing North' (NEPC (1966:12), it is noted that the number of working days lost per thousand was only 73 against a national average of 97. This figure is certainly not explained by the health of the region's workers and seems to fit well with the

hypothesis of a 'frightened' workforce, although for those marketing the region it is taken to indicate propensity and enthusiasm for hard work. Yet, closely accompanying such proclamations are calls for still more 'flexibility', reduced manning, (sic) extension of shiftwork and removal of all 'restrictive practices' (Carney and Hudson (1974:31)).

Aggregated income figures, while rather a blunt analytic instrument for demonstrating a 'low wages' economy, nonetheless reveal income levels in the region and County Durham itself well below national averages. Regional Trends (1983) reveals that average personal and household incomes in the North were both below 90% of national figures,(32) and predictably perhaps, the North held the lowest regional figure for investment income. For those in full time work the regional defecit was smaller, but earnings in Durham were a little below the regional average, with men earning 94.2% and women 90.7% of their respective national averages. Yet the same document shows that manufacturing wages, for example, approximated to national averages, suggesting that the low level of earnings may depend as much upon class structure as on lower wages for similar work. The 1981 Census states that while the ratio of manual to non-manual work for Great Britain was 1.51:1 for men and 0.60:1 for women, the corresponding ratios in County Durham were 2.31:1 and 0.75:1. (33) It should, however, be remembered that the figures for earnings were not based on hourly rates and may have reflected longer hours, incidence of shift work and the like. Similarly, there have been well-known instances of manipulative attempts to lower local wages (Massey (1984:89)).(34)

Recent 'State of the Region' (NECCA) Reports indicate that this income gap is growing, with the 1986 Report showing average household incomes an alarming 17% below the national average. (See also Regional Trends (1986) for evidence of the widening gap. By 1984, gross earnings for male workers were lower in only 6 counties than in Durham.) Moreover, their analysis of the regional economy offers a ready explanation of such statistics and argues that only radical reversal of current state policies can arrest this trend.

The 1985 NECCA Report, reviewing the period 1977-85 reported that between those years 230,000 or 18.1% of jobs in the region had been lost, and that the rate of redundancies was running at over twice the national average. As if to underline the North's downward spiral and divergence from national trends, it was the only region in which service sector employment and expenditure on research and development had actually fallen during the period (1985:3-7). In terms of state support, it was noted that during the 1980s there had been a steady fall, both absolutely and relatively in the receipt of regional aid (:10), while the 1986 Report indicated a fall in the broader measure of 'regionally relevant public expenditure (1986:39).

In the Durham Coalfield, the closure of BSC's Consett works (1980) and the closure of east Durham pits in the wake of huge increases in imported coal for BSC's Teesside plant(s) signalled the final rundown of the coal-steel economy (WERU (1985:40)). By 1985, 20% of coal production in the north-east came from opencast mines, which were being expanded rapidly despite general 'over-production' of coal ( :61, 68). This expansion, along with that of the 'super-pits' of

south Yorkshire, clearly herald the demise of the remaining Durham pits on the grounds of 'economics' rather than exhaustion.

Before looking at the place of young workers within the 'new economy', it is useful to consider some of the latter's accompanying social changes and continuities. Durham has remained a strongly 'working class' county (see note 30) and has largely retained its 'deprived area' status. In housing, according to Regional Trends (1986) only three counties in England and Wales had lower percentages of owner occupation than Durham. Similarly, rateable values of houses in Durham were the fourth lowest of any English county. In terms of factors such as overcrowding and provision of basic amenities, however, the area is not particularly deprived in national terms.

Health indicators paint a gloomy picture. Durham appeared (the only non-metropolitan county to do so) among the ten authorities listed in the Black Report (Townsend and Davison (1982)) as having the highest standardised death rates, while only seven counties had higher perinatal mortality rates. In the mid 1970s, as if to confirm Tudor Hart's 'inverse care law', the number of patients per doctor was 15.8% above the average for England and Wales, while the corresponding figure for dentists was a staggering 59.4% (DCC (1976:131)). The 1985 NECCA Report showed the North as having the highest regional sickness and death rates ( :24), with male workers' sickness rates twice the national average and the standardised mortality ratio being 10% above the national figure ( :28)

The Northern Region also had the highest figure for unemployment ( :24), both in gross terms and in long-term unemployment with 50% of

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male and 33% of female unemploymed having been so for over a year. Some 29% of the long-term unemployed were under 25 years of age ( :16).

In education, Durham had the third lowest percentage of pupils moving into further education for any county (Regional Trends (1986)). Similarly, in terms of qualifications gained, Durham generally figured among the lowest five counties. At the regional level, while there have been some recent improvements in O and A level examination passes, the 'staying on' rate remains 27% below the national average (NECCA (1986:31).

Regional Trends (1986) also reports that there were fewer telephones and cars per household in Durham than in almost any other county. If the 'new economy' has done relatively little to ease deprivation within the Coalfield, it has nevertheless brought some significant changes in its wake. In particular, the pattern of isolated, self-contained communities has been broken. Post-war industrial development has meant that those outside designated growth areas must either resettle or travel to work. Both have occurred. Between 1951 and 1981, population in the west of the county has declined markedly, a trend more recently followed in the east, while the central districts have gained substantially in population.(35)

For the county as a whole, 'travel to work' figures were, in 1981, slightly above the national average for both sexes, and in western districts such as Derwentside, the numbers were much greater.(36) It seems that in most former mining settlements the employment vacuum left by pit closures has been 'filled' by diverse

industries in diverse and more distant locations. The impact of these changes on community life remains debatable, but there can be no doubting the decline of mining hegemony characteristic of earlier times.

Writers such as Townsend and Taylor (1974:35) have written of the distinctive way of life associated with mining as 'outliving the pit itself', finding the Coalfield town of Spennymoor to be close knit, with a strong 'folk culture' and appearing

> more remote from the diffusion of national culture in general. ( :42) (37)

Others tell of the decline in community spirit which had flourished in the pit villages (Robinson (1978:290)). Sadly, most treatments of this question are both limited in scope and rather fragmented, failing to get to grips with conceptual issues.

Notwithstanding the conceptual difficulties of notions such as 'community' and 'culture', there is considerable evidence of the decline of a distinctive, traditional Coalfield culture(38) the near-collapse of the Durham Miners' Gala, the diminishing minority participation in previously major leisure pursuits (DCC (1976:151)) and the increasingly nostalgic stereotyped packaging of north-eastern life (Ennis (1986:44) are all suggestive of profound change. Change is also readily apparent environmentally with reclamation of 'pit heaps' and the increasing rural nature of the western part of the county (DCC (1978:183)).

None of this, however, is to deny the existence of a distinctive areal or regional sense of identity within the Coalfield and the broader 'north-east'.

> There can be little doubt that the north-east is a
> distinctive region; there is a sense of historical and
> cultural identity, and the region has characteristics,
> largely associated with its economy, which reinforced its
> sense of identity. (Chapman 1985:9))

In a recent analysis, Ennis argues that this 'regionalism' is best understood in terms of the region's historical shift from being part of the industrial 'core' - with nationally central industries such as coal, iron and steel, shipbuilding and heavy engineering strongly represented locally - towards a peripheral status, with those same, but now declining industries over-represented and a paucity of 'new' industries to replace them (1986:14).

In terms of ideological legacy, Ennis contends that the combination of relatively recent 'centrality' and precipitous economic decline has produced a paradoxical mix of regional 'separateness' within a strong nationalism ( :13). (39) Historical evidence of earlier economic success is used to locate the north-east in the van of imperial greatness - the main 'workshop' within the 'workshop of the world' ( :104) - with north-easterners epitomising desirable national characteristics such as inventiveness, hard work and integrity ( :127). (40) In more recent times, with the north-east exploited and/or neglected by the metropolitan South, these qualities have increasingly been manifest in a stoic capacity to bear 'hard times' with dignified fortitude and a sense of comradeship ( :130, 235)

Ennis writes that in the region's 'official ideology' 'the implication is that past deprivation and heavy unemployment in the region have generated a specific social and cultural form which marks

the region as distinct. That culture is to be measured by its
stability, calmness and endurance when faced with this deprivation
rather than any hint of riotous outrage (:5). For Ennis, the
particular place of the north-east within the history of British
capitalism is also evident in the way regional imagery appear as a
'throwback' to earlier days - with 'Geordie' culture as an archetype
of traditional, white, working class 'Englishness' ( :110, 239)

Finally in this section, reference must be made to the impact of
the 'new economy', especially via changes in the employment pattern of
women, upon family life. Throughout the post-war era, there has been a
steady narrowing of the gap between local and national 'activity'
rates, which had all but disappeared by 1981. Even discounting
Chaplin's eulogistic notion of the factory bringing 'final liberation'
for women (1978:77-8), the importance of the two-income family is
readily acknowledged (Austrin and Beynon (1981b:17). Whatever private
changes have been wrought through shifts in control of the purse
strings, the dominant cultural imagery of the Coalfield remains
strongly masculine. (41)

Before looking at the place of young workers within the 'new
economy', it is necessary to set this in broader context, particularly
that of the mass youth unemployment of the last decade. During the
long post-war 'boom', apart from isolated years such as 1962-3 amd
1971-2 (youth) unemployment levels remained low. However from the
mid-1970s, in the wake of international recession and state deflation
(Mandel (1978), Gamble (1981)), unemployment levels rose rapidly with
young workers especially hard hit. Thus, in January 1974, only 8,600

school leavers were still unemployed, but this figure had risen to 83,800 in January 1978 and to 123,500 by 1982, the latter figure heavily 'disguised' by the mushrooming growth of state-sponsored schemes. (In 1978-9, 162,000 young workers participated in the Youth Opportunities Programme, while 553,000 did so during 1981-2). (42)

The policy response to rising youth unemployment was swift if somewhat limited in scope. (43) The Job Creation Programme (JCP) began in October 1975, seeking to provide temporary jobs of 'social value'. At the same time a Recruitment Subsidy for School Leavers (RSSL) was introduced, offering £5 per week for up to six months for anyone employing an out-of-work school leaver. (44) A Job Release Scheme (JRS) began in September 1976, offering a guaranteed minimum income to anyone taking early retirement in order to create a vacancy for an unemployed young person. More important in terms of policy direction was the simultaneous introduction of the Work Experience Programme (WEP).

Whereas JCP had no formal age limits, WEP catered specifically for the 16-18 age group. It also heralded a shift from jobs ('created' or subsidised) to 'experience' for which a flat rate allowance, rather than a 'rate for the job' wage, was payable. In the light of subsequent developments, it is worth remembering the relatively small scale of these schemes. The Holland Report (MSC (1977:26)) estimated 15,000 young people on WEP, with a combined total for JCP and Community Industry (45) of 28,500. A further 52,400 jobs were reckoned to be subsidised under RSSL (YES) or JRS ( :11). (46)

April 1978 saw the launch of the Youth Opportunities (YOP), which

can be seen as a decisive move towards a national programme for school leavers. In particular, greater prominence was given to training aims.

> The programme gives the country a chance to build a workforce better adapted to the needs of the 1980s. (MSC (1977:7))

The main elements in YOP were the provision of Work Experience on Employers' Premises (WEEP), the use of Training Workshops (TW) and Community Service (CS) schemes, Short Industrial Training Courses (STC) for specific skills, and assessment or induction courses for those with 'settling in' difficulties. Once again, a flat rate allowance was to be offered to 'trainees'. Placements were generally of six months duration, although those in TW and CS schemes often lasted for a year.

In the wake of topsy-like growth in YOP 'A New Training Initiative' (Dept of Employment (1981)) was published in December 1981, setting out the format for YOP's successor, the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), which was to commence in September 1983. YTS was divided into Mode A and B schemes, the former based on employers' premises, the latter subdivided into B1, with schemes operated by community or voluntary organisations and B2 based at FE colleges. Placements were to last for one year, (extended to two years in 1986) with three months 'off the job' training as part of a concern to remedy the often poor quality of training under YOP.(47)

Job subsidies were also reintroduced in February 1982 via the Young Workers Scheme (YWS). This could only be seen as a transparent attempt to depress the level of wages for young workers, in that it

offered a £15 subsidy to any employer 'creating' a job with a wage below £40 per week and a £7.50 subsidy if the wage was below £45. Despite minimal success in job creation (Jackson (1985:144)), this scheme has been maintained, being renamed the New Workers Scheme in 1986.

Annual reports from the Durham County Careers (formerly Youth Employment) Service provide a good picture of the youth labour market in the Coalfield. For most of the 1950s and 1960s, unemployment levels were low and spells of unemployment usually of short duration, although the area remained particularly vulnerable to any national swings.(48) Reports chart the decline in mining employment for young men, and domestic service jobs for women, with the latter's replacment by work in clothing factories.(49) Whatever the number of employment opportunities, their range tended to remain narrow, with a dearth of clerical openings and

few alternatives apart from mining and clothing factories' (YES Report 1963). (50)

In the last decade, reports offer increasingly grim statistical evidence of the collapse in the local labour market for young workers. Whereas in 1975-6 (in spite of a marked rise in unemployment) 59.3% of male and 47% of female school leavers had found employment by autumn of their leaving year, the corresponding figures for 1981-2 were 14.6% and 10.3%. 'Current' vacancies had fallen during the same period from 126 to a mere 27, while the January unemployment total had jumped from 591 to 3039.(51)

Comparison between the years 1974-5 and 1981-2 in the following tables provides a graphic illustration of the collapse in the labour market.

Table 1.4(a)

Employment of male school leavers by selected occupations

|  | 1974-5 | 1981-2 | % decline |
|---|---|---|---|
| construction | 368 | 120 | 67.4 |
| distribution | 335 | 54 | 83.9 |
| national government | 253 | 86 | 66.0 |
| mining | 215 | 40 | 81.4 |
| iron and steel | 208 | 21 | 89.9 |
| engineering | 192 | 97 | 49.5 |
| motor vehicle maintenance | 158 | 16 | 89.9 |
| local government | 156 | 28 | 82.1 |
| agriculture | 140 | 33 | 76.4 |
| electrical goods | 119 | 23 | 80.7 |
| metal (misc) | 112 | 11 | 90.2 |

Table 1.4(b)

Employment of female school leavers by selected occupations

|  | 1974-5 | 1981-2 | %decline |
|---|---|---|---|
| distribution | 615 | 90 | 85.4 |
| clothing and footwear | 535 | 135 | 74.8 |
| (clerical)* | 341 | 44 | 87.1 |
| nursing, medical and dental | 192 | 5 | 97.4 |
| electrical goods | 133 | 39 | 70.7 |
| hairdressing | 106 | 35 | 67.0 |
| national government | 80 | 0 | 100.0 |
| local government | 72 | 3 | 95.8 |

* (clerical work is included here as a separate item but also listed under other categories)

Source: Durham County Council Careers Service Annual Reports

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, apprenticeship fell slightly more than proportionately in relation to all jobs, while openings leading to professional qualifications plummeted.(52) Hand-in-hand with falling numbers within each occupation came growing concentration of employment within few occupations. Even in the short period 1978-9 to 1980-1, the number of occupational entries fell from 47 to 41 for males, 44 to 38 for females. Whereas for young men in the former year, the leading three occupations accounted for 28.3% of jobs and the leading five for 42.6%, the corresponding figures for the latter year were 39.8% and 50.6%. For young women the change was less marked, but it should be remembered that concentration was, initially, and remained, much higher than for young men. By 1980-1, the leading three occupations provided 62.8%, the leading five 75.9% of jobs for young women.(53)

The vacuum left by disappearing jobs was increasingly 'filled' by expansion of YOP, which by 1981-2 occupied 41.6% of male and 30.1% of female school leavers, some three times the number of those in employment. The high ratio of unemployed young people to vacancies had led to Durham receiving immediate exemption from the six week qualifiying period for YOP eligibility, one of only three authorities to be so exempted. By 1979-80, it could be written in the Annual Report that

> there is no doubt that for a majority of school leavers,
> YOP is becoming the first and in many cases only means of
> obtaining a toe hold in the world of work.

From its initial peak of 45% (lower than in most areas) the 'keep on' rate from YOP fell to 25% by 1980-1 and to 15% the following year. The

'substitution' effect had become sufficiently blatant for the 1980-1 Report to carry comment about employers increasingly using the scheme

> to replace permanent recruitment. This becomes clearly apparent when a substantial minority of employers complain to Careers Offices that their Work Experience youngster has not been immediately replaced as if their business depended on the labour provided.

Since the time of the study, this situation has further deteriorated. In 1986, marginally less than 10% of school-leavers had found work by the autumn, with the figures for young women falling to only 7%. In 1984, the first full year of YTS, 40% of 'graduates' found employment, a higher figure than the 26% for the final year (1982-3) of YOP, but substantially below the national figure of 56%. The change to two year YTS makes direct comparison difficult but the 1986 Careers Service Report notes that only 31% of those completing first year YTS during the year moved on to permanent employment. Once again 'substitution' effects had served to sabotage the official aims of the extension. As the report comments,

> the creation of continuation places was intended to cater for those leavers who were unable to find work. What in fact appears to have happened is that may young people stayed on in these continuation places who might actually have been expected to find work.

Whether due to this effect or not, there was a dramatic fall (28%) in the number of YTS leavers finding work. Notified vacancies also fell 29% during the year, reinforcing the picture of progressive collapse of the youth labour market and its replacement by state-sponsored schemes.

To cope with the problem of employment post YOP/YTS, Durham County Council introduced the Youth Employment Premium in December

1983, offering a subsidy to employers taking on any worker aged 17-22 who had been unemployed for over 6 months. Around 300 premia were awarded in both 1984 and 1985, the average at any one time being approximately 100. The percentage of school-leavers entering further education had risen from 28% in 1983 to 32% in 1986, but the route from YTS to FE was rarely trodden. Only 1.6% of Durham YTS leavers made the passage to 1984, a figure attributed in considerable measure to 'financial pressures within the family'.

This situation can be related to a broader historical tradition wherein families have exerted major regulatory influence on young workers.

Within the pit villages, families acted as the crucial 'source of supply' for pit employment and often in the domestic service employment of young women (Austrin and Beynon (forthcoming:ch.4). Similarly, McKie (1984:8) describes the Coalfield area as one

> where local labour markets have been inextricably bound up
> with securing employment via family connections and word
> of mouth

and where transition

> centred upon leaving school at the first available
> opportunity. (:11)

Townsend argues that this pattern has changed little in response to the 'new economy' (1985:104,109).

In setting an historical context for the study, it is important to locate this tradition of strong family influence and relatively low prioritisation of formal education alongside the 'new' local youth labour market mediated by state bureaucracies such as the Careers Service and the Manpower Services Commission. From this juxtaposition,

questions can be raised about the particular forms of continuity and change in and between these structures, and these are addressed in the ensuing chapters.

## The Study

As was noted in the introduction, the transition from school to work has been examined from a variety of perspectives, a critique of which was then offered, followed by a brief abstract outline of the requisites for a more adequate treatment.

The present study shares certain features with a number of transition studies, notably a broad view of the process, encompassing events both within and outside school/work, and a strong empirical base deriving from questionnaire and interview data. However, being informed by rather different theoretical concerns, it is also unlike other transition studies in crucial ways. One is that there is a greater concern to locate the subjectivity of responses within a more 'objective' context, both in an immediate interactive, and broader structural sense. This means that subjectivity should be considered in terms of 'situational logic' and the (re)production of ideology. A further interest lies with the dialectical relationship of thought and action, so that where possible the origins and/or consequences of subjectivity might be traced.

The particular aspects of transition examined (and readily discernible from chapter headings), are those of education and careers guidance, unemployment, occupational choice, experience of work, payments and 'instrumentality', trade unionism, family life, leisure,

migration and certain political issues relating to the transition. The study is set in three localities - Bishop Auckland, Consett and Peterlee - chosen as the major centres of south-west, north-west and east Durham respectively.

The rationale for the choice of locations rests on the differing timetables of pit closure (see above) allowing the possibility for the latter to become a 'variable'.

Brief historical 'pen-pictures' of the three towns will be offered before Census data and information from local careers offices are used to compare the three in terms of their populations and (youth) labour markets.

## Bishop Auckland

Bishop Auckland has a long history, providing the site for the residence of the prince-bishop of Durham since the Middle Ages. Mining has been carried out in the vicinity for several centuries, although initially on a fairly small scale (Hebden (1974:11)). In the nineteenth century, particularly its second half, there was a dramatic expansion of mining and accompanying growth in population. Within what is now the Wear Valley district, centred on Bishop Auckland, population grew from 16,000 in 1801 to 96,000 in 1911 (Wear Valley DC (1980:7)). As Hebden (1978:5) writes,

> it was between 1856 and 1911 that the village of Bishop Auckland vanished in an urban explosion.

Just as expansion in the Coalfield came first to south-west Durham so too did contraction and closures. Such was the pace of this contraction during the interwar years that there was massive

depopulation, with nearly 20% loss of popluation between 1921 and 1931 (Daysh and Symonds (1953:46) (Middleton (1985:25)). Despite this level of migration, male unemployment in Bishop Auckland reached a staggering 60% in July 1932 (Daysh and Symonds) (1953:37)) and still stood at 40% in 1937 (Garside (1971:286)). While the Coalfield area as a whole deemed 'depressed' during this period, much of the area around Bishop Auckland was declared 'derelict' (Middleton (1985:25), meaning that salvation was regarded as uneconomic (Bulmer (1978b:177) (Carney and Hudson (1974:7)). However, nearby St Helen Auckland was to be the site for one of the first industrial estates which were intended to provide 'replacement' employment. As Daysh and Symonds (1953:121) note, the introduction of industrial estates before and immediately after the 1939-45 war produced a dramatic rise in the number of women taking paid employment outside the home, the figure for south-west Durham rising from 7.2% in 1938 to 21% in 1947, Daysh and Symonds data also show clearly the importance of Bishop Auckland as a 'market town' and its difference from neighbouring towns and villages. In 1947, while in the exchange areas of nearby Spennymoor and Crook, miners accounted for 56% and 57% of insured workers respectively, the corresponding figure for Bishop Auckland was only 13%. Conversely, 15% were employed in distribution, compared with figures of 4-7% in neighbouring areas. Similarly, while in west Durham generally only 17% of insured workers were women, the figure for Bishop Auckland was 37% (1953:26).

As the Wear Valley District Plan notes, Bishop Auckland remains a service centre, with a pattern of women commuting in to work and men

commuting out to work elsewhere (1980:36). Further development of this service centre role formed a key flank in the Plan (:96), along with some expansion of opencast mining in the area (:79).

In terms of mining employment, the area received a 'stay of execution' under the post-war planning framework and imperatives of national coal production. During the 1950s and 60s, however, closure accelerated dramatically (House (1969:104)) so that by 1972 with the closure of Whitworth park, all deep mining in south-west Durham had ceased. Within the Wear Valley District, the percentage of workers employed in mining fell from 30% in 1951 to 3% in 1971 (Hubbard (1982:26). As Mellor (1974) reports, closures were accompanied by extensive transfer to other coalfields.

More generally, there was massive out-migration, which peaked in the 1960s and which was concentrated on the 15-34 age group (WVDC (1980:10)). As elsewhere in the Coalfield, the semi-skilled factory production which 'replaced' job losses in mining has proved highly unstable, with widespread closures (:33).

Hubbard (1982:31) notes how the south-west Durham area has become over-represented with 'low growth' industries, and it is this weak economic base which has contributed to what the District Council refer to as the 'chronic problem of gradual population loss (1980:17).

Between 1921 and 1971, the District suffered a 32.5% fall in population, while in the same period that in Bishop Auckland declined by almost a quarter, from 44,500 in 1921 to 33,700 in 1971 (Hubbard (1982:117). By the time of the 1981 Census, this had fallen further to 32,500. The level of out-migration and the relative youth of migrants has led to an ageing population (WVDC (1980:10).

## Consett

The history of Consett has been dominated by its status as a 'company town'. Prior to the formation of the Derwent Iron Co. (later Consett Iron Co.) in 1840, it was a small village but from that date onwards there was steady growth in population as production expanded. This expansion was particularly rapid towards the end of the nineteenth century and by the late 1880s 'the works' accounted for 10% of national steel output (Robinson and Sadler (1984:1)). At its peak, the Company owned ten collieries but its influence extended well beyond industrial ownership. As Robinson and Sadler ( :2) observe,

> the Company owned 2,700 houses, employed 6,000 people and had founded schools, recreational and reading rooms and even an infirmary. In short, the Company controlled and dominated Consett.

During the interwar years the relative buoyancy of steel relative to coal production meant that workers in Consett were largely spared the mass unemployment suffered by those in other parts of the Coalfield. Indeed during the Depression, unemployment in Consett itself was generally below the national average (Middleton (1985:24).

In the early postwar years, the introduction and consolidation of clothing factories provided the major change on the industrial scene. As Daysh and Symonds' study indicates, there was clear recognition that many of the pits in north-west Durham would eventually be closed although the extent and speed of closure were greatly underestimated (1953:76).

As Garside (1971:16) notes, Consett was the pivotal point of the coal-steel complex so crucial to the Durham economy. In the

Derwentside District, the number of pits fell from 29 in 1950 to 3 by 1976. The last pit in the area, Marley Hill, closed in 1981. Throughout this period, there was substantial out-migration (Harrop and Cockburn (1977:15) and the population in the District fell from 102,000 in 1951 to 89,000 in 1981. In Consett itself, population fell by 5,500 to 33,900 between 1961 and 1981. Job losses within the area were proportionately much greater, with a fall of over 25% between 1951 and 1975. Commuting (primarily to Tyneside) became a major phenomenon with the District Council noting that it had

> offset to a large extent the additional loss which would otherwise have occurred in the younger age section of the community. (Derwentside DC (1980:23))

Despite a fairly substantial proportion of local workers employed in the service sector (see below) local jobs remained relatively concentrated in manufacturing (:78).

According to Robinson and Sadler, nationalisation of the steel industry in 1967 was the 'beginning of the end' for production in Consett, bringing with it emphasis on capacity reductions and concentration on the development of integrated coastal plants (1984:3). Writing in 1969, House referred to the likely closure of the plant (1969:131)). After a series of 'rundown' measures during the 1970s, the plant was finally closed in September 1980. Both the closure decision and struggles against it were the sources of great bitterness and controversy, scarcely surprising in view of the devastating impact of closure on the local economy and community.

> There remains a sense of something akin to bereavement: almost everyone in Consett still marks time in relation to The Closure. (Robinson and Sadler (1984:4)

Even if closure can be seen as an 'inevitable' aspect of longer term decline, it is worth noting that in the period 1971-8, employment in the Derwentside area rose by 6% ( :9), a rise primarily attributed to increased factory employment for women. Between 1978 and 1981, however, there was a catastrophic decline which went far beyond the BSC closure or any related 'multiplier' effect. Within the three year period, one third (9,500) of all jobs disappeared, while manufacturing employment fell by a staggering 63% (:11). Such has been the (relative) decline in male employment in the area that the percentage of jobs held by women has risen from 33% in 1971 to 48% in 1984 (:12). In 1981, Consett's male unemployment figure of 32% was exceeded only by the similarly stricken steel town of Corby. By 1984, this had fallen only to 28.4%, with female registered unemployment standing at 16.1% and long-term unemployment having risen from 19.8% in January 1981 to 46.6% three years later. As Robinson and Sadler note, the spread of unemployment within the locality is also very uneven, with certain enumeration districts having male unemployment rates of over 50% and occasionally 60%.

Following the 1980 closure, considerable efforts have been made to implement a 'reindustrialisation' strategy for the Derwentside area.

Since 1982, these activities have been co-ordinated by the Derwentside Industrial Development Agency. The financial package of incentives for would-be employers has been at least as generous as anything available elsewhere in the country (Robinson and Sadler

(1984:42-3). This strategy has certainly had its successes, but this appears to be heavily dependent on the district's designation as a 'disaster area' and consequent influx of 'relief funds'. The obvious danger here is that as time passes 'specialness' will disappear and access to funding will decline. As industrial resurgence seems totally dependent on special funding, the prospects on withdrawal appear gloomy. For Robinson and Sadler, the combination of this dependency and the sheer scale of local unemployment means that despite its successes, the impact of the reindustrialisation strategy

> is, and will remain, very limited. At best, it will be a
> case of running fast to stay in the same place. ( :58)

They claim that one obvious indication of these limits is the way in which the local labour market has become dominated by MSC schemes for both adults and young workers - prompting feelings that the MSC is well on the way to replacing The Company as the dominant influence in the town (:70). In turn this raises important issues for the future, for as the authors contend

> in the case of YTS there is no answer ... to the question
> 'training for what?' and in the case of CP, there must be
> a limit to the number of church halls to be renovated or
> the scope of cheap substitute social services. ( :81)

Despite obvious fears that the collapse of Consett's industrial raison d'etre would lead to large-scale out-migration, this has not yet happened on any significant scale due to factors such as the specificity of steelwork skills, family and community ties and the practical difficulties of selling or exchanging houses.

## Peterlee

The following historical outline of Peterlee New Town is based largely on the detailed research of Robinson (1975a, 1975b, 1978). The origins of the town (named after a locally prominent labour Party politician) lie in the postwar New Towns policy based on the Barlow Report (1940).

However, whereas most of the new Towns were to provide for metropolitan 'overspill', Peterlee ('designated' in 1948) was developed in order to relieve overcrowding 'squalor' in local pit villages and to serve as a centre for population (and to a lesser extent industrial) growth as those villages contracted (see Clarke (1947).

> Peterlee was thus conceived as a means of meeting local
> housing needs an providing an urban focus for the area.
> (Robinson (1978:94).

It was also felt that its development would help to stem the tide of migration from east Durham (House (1969:222). Population growth in the town has been steady if modest and by the time of the 1981 Census had reached 22,756.

In terms of male employment, Peterlee, despite having no pit within the town, was clearly established as a (dormitory) town for miners. In 1954, 51% of male workers in the town were employees of the NCB. During the 1950s, industrial strategy was dominated by the attraction of factories (especially clothing) to provide greater female employment in the area. As in other parts of the Coalfield, the opposition of the NCB to facing competition for male workers meant that little effort was made to develop alternative employment for men

(Austrin and Beynon (1981b:22). As Robinson states, the clear policy was

> to absorb the female labour available in the district and
> any male labour not employed in coalmining. (1978:196)

NCB projections for closure and job losses were consistently large underestimates, so that official recognition of the need for new 'male' employment tended to be both belated and partial ( :208).

At the height of 1960s optimism about regional planning and 'modernisation', it was envisaged that Peterlee should become a centre for technological (and artistic/cultural) development. In the words of Robinson, it was to change 'from a "town for miners" to a "town for boffins" (1975:58). Like many other aspects of the region's 'vision', this shift has failed to materialise, and Peterlee's labour market has continued to be dependent on the (largely semi-skilled) employment provided on the town's industrial estates. In 1976, manufacturing industry accounted for nearly 4,500 jobs in the town of which nearly 58% were held by women. Connection with both mining and the surrounding village communities has continued to decline. Whereas in 1957, one in two incoming male workers worked in mining, by 1974 this had fallen to one in six (1978:139). Similarly, in-migration from the (Easington) district had fallen from 72% in 1959 to 36% by 1969 (1975a:25, 1975b:31). As Robinson argues, the relationship between Peterlee and neighbouring villages has always been a problematic one with the former being seen to gain at the latter's expense in terms of facilities, amenities and employment. Needless to say, this has also created a high degree of dependence within the villages on Peterlee's provisions (WERU (1985:112-3).

Given the aims of the New Towns in building new communities, it is worth offering some comment on the outcome of this quest, even if the evidence is largely subjective and impressionistic. In the words of their 'founder', Lewis Silkin

> the aim must be to combine in the New Town the friendly spirit of the ... slum ..., with the vastly improved health conditions of the new estate but it must be a broadened spirit embracing all classes of society. (cited Robinson (1978:31))

While local ties have remained strong, there seems to have been a weakening of primary social networks and Robinson argues that Peterlee residents have appeared more susceptible to the values of 'mass society' than those in the pit villages ( :295, 283). He also found a subjective lack of 'community spirit' in the town, which suffered from considerable vandalism and crime from the 1960s onwards ( :285) (see also Hudson and Johnson (1975:19,145). High turnover of population may have been a contributory factor to (or reflection of) such problems and this in turn may have derived in part from the high rents and poor quality of housing with Peterlee's flat-roofed houses particularly notorious (1978:129) (1975a:44) (Hudson and Johnson (1975:143)).

One other noteworthy characteristic in the development of Peterlee concerns the age structure of its population. Predictably, for a new Town, it has always had a relatively 'young' population, but this tendency was particularly marked in its early years. In 1961, almost one third of the population were under ten years of age, earning the nickname 'babytown' from the Daily Express (Robinson (1978:277)), while even in 1971, over half the residents were under the age of twenty five ( :188). At the time of the 1981 Census 43.5%

of Peterlee residents were under twenty five, compared with 36.4% of the UK population. Peterlee was also noted for early marriages, with 75% of 20 year old women married in 1966 (1975b: 65).

Data from the 1981 Census allow comparison between the study's three areas, and in turn with the county and national picture. Areal comparison occurs at the level of districts centred on the three locations:- Wear Valley (Bishop Auckland), Derwentside (Consett) and Easington (Peterlee). Table 1.5 offers profiles based on employment by industrial grouping.

## Table 1.5(a)

## % employed by industrial category - men

|  | GB | Durham C | WV | D'side | Eas'n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| agricultural, forestry fisheries | 3.1 | 2.8 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 1.5 |
| energy & water | 4.5 | 13.0 | 3.3 | 10.8 | 42.4 |
| manufacturing | 32.0 | 34.0 | 40.6 | 30.9 | 21.1 |
| construction | 10.7 | 11.3 | 15.9 | 11.1 | 9.7 |
| distribution & catering | 15.4 | 11.1 | 12.0 | 11.3 | 4.8 |
| transport & comm'n | 8.8 | 7.3 | 6.4 | 9.1 | 4.8 |
| other services | 24.8 | 19.8 | 17.2 | 23.4 | 12.3 |

Table 1.5(b)

% employed by industrial category - women

|  | GB | Durham C | WV | D'side | Eas'n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| agric., for'y & fish | 1.0 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| energy & water | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.8 | 1.7 |
| manufacturing | 19.6 | 21.0 | 26.3 | 13.6 | 27.5 |
| construction | 1.4 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| distr'n & catering | 25.0 | 26.4 | 23.6 | 28.0 | 27.5 |
| transport & comm'n | 3.2 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| other services | 47.9 | 46.8 | 44.4 | 52.4 | 40.4 |

Source: 1981 Census

In looking at the figures for male workers, perhaps their most immediate feature is that of the wide variation within a county which is still somewhat atypical in national terms. This atypicality revolves around the county having a much higher proportion of workers employed in 'energy' (predominantly mining) and rather less employed in providing services. Whereas 49.0% of male workers nationally are in the service sector, only 38.2% of those in Durham County are so employed.

In Wear Valley, the disappearance of mining is readily apparent in the lower than national average figure for the energy category. Apart from the higher than average employment in agriculture, the most

noteworthy features of this profile are the very high concentration in manufacturing - at 40.6%, markedly higher than both county (34.0%) and national (32.0%) figures - and, again, the low percentage (35.6%) enagaged in services.

Apart from some over-representation in 'energy' and corresponding under-representation in the area of distribution, Derwentside does not appear to be particularly deviant in national terms. However, it should be noted that this 'normality' relies heavily on travel to work outside the district. Whereas the figure of 38.5% for the county is close to the national one of 37.3%, in Derwentside no less than 46.9% of men worked outside the district.

Easington's male employment profile is dominated by mining, with 42.4% employed in the 'energy' category. This concentration seems to occur more at the expense of service than manufacturing employment, with the former providing only 24.4% of jobs in the district, marginally below half the national figure. Predictably, given the preponderance of mining employment, travel outside the district is less common, affecting only 30.7% of male workers.

For women, breakdown by sectors reveals a high degree of similarity between county and national figures yet once again, this broad fit conceals substantial variation between areas of the Coalfield.

In Wear Valley, like their male counterparts, women are much more likely to be employed in maufacturing, with 26.3% so occupied compared

with 21.0% for the county overall. This surplus is counterbalanced by lower levels of employment in the service sector.

Again as for men in the district, the employment profile for women in Derwentside shows less deviance in national terms than other areas in the Coalfield. Indeed, far from the usual picture of higher manufacturing, lower service employment, the reverse is true in Derwentside with only 13.6% of women employed in manufacturing (19.6% GB) and 83.4% (76.1%) in the service sector. However, this also appears to necessitate a greater willingness to travel beyond the district, with 32.5% of female employees doing so, compared with a national figure of 25.3%.

In Easington, the picture is much closer to that in Wear Valley, although with even higher employment in manufacturing (27.5%) and less in the provision of services (69.3%). In contrast to the lower than average 'travel to work' among men in the district, at 32.4%, the corresponding figure for women is markedly above national or county averages.

Comparison has already been offered (see footnote 30) between the class constitution of County Durham and the corresponding national statistics, which served to demonstrate the relatively 'working class' nature of the former. Similar breakdowns for the study's three areas reveal considerable variation (Table 1.6).

## Table 1.6(a)

### % of workers in each R-G social class - men

|         | DC   | WV   | D'side | Eas'n |
|---------|------|------|--------|-------|
| Class 1 | 3.2  | 3.1  | 3.1    | 1.2   |
| Class 2 | 14.8 | 14.4 | 12.9   | 8.8   |
| Class 3N| 7.9  | 5.7  | 6.7    | 5.4   |
| Class 3M| 36.0 | 36.2 | 37.0   | 41.9  |
| Class 4 | 17.1 | 16.8 | 15.0   | 20.4  |
| Class 5 | 6.8  | 9.4  | 8.1    | 5.5   |
| Forces  | 3.1  | 3.9  | 3.3    | 4.4   |
| Other   | 11.0 | 10.5 | 13.9   | 12.4  |

## Table 1.6(b)

### % of workers in each R-G social class - women

|         | DC   | WV   | D'side | Eas'n |
|---------|------|------|--------|-------|
| Class 1 | 0.3  | 0.4  | 0.2    | 0.2   |
| Class 2 | 8.2  | 8.1  | 9.0    | 6.6   |
| Class 3N| 15.6 | 11.8 | 16.0   | 13.0  |
| Class 3M| 3.5  | 3.3  | 2.5    | 3.6   |
| Class 4 | 11.1 | 11.6 | 9.5    | 13.4  |
| Class 5 | 3.5  | 3.5  | 3.2    | 3.1   |
| Forces  | 1.9  | 1.8  | 1.5    | 2.7   |
| Other   | 55.8 | 59.5 | 58.2   | 57.4  |

Sources 1981 Census

For both sexes, Durham's relatively high ratio of manual to non-manual jobs has been noted above. With one limited exception, this tendency is more pronounced within the traditional Coalfield areas to the west and east of the county (Table 1.7).

## Table 1.7

### Ratio of manual to non-manual jobs

|  | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| County Durham | 2.31:1 | 0.75:1 |
| Wear Valley | 2.69:1 | 0.90:1 |
| Derwentside | 2.64:1 | 0.60:1 |
| Easington | 4.40:1 | 1.02:1 |
| Great Britain | 1.51:1 | 0.60:1 |

Table 1.7 shows clearly the element of historical continuity within the Coalfield, with the effects of reliance on mining and/or manufacturing combined with small service sectors all too visible. In this respect, female employment in Derwentside provides a notable exception, with a ratio identical to the national one and well below that for the county. Perhaps the most prominent feature of Table 1.7 is the way in which Easington stands apart from the other two districts, with its markedly greater level of manual work for both sexes. The relative 'poverty' of Easington district is also apparent in the lower incidence of house and car ownership (Table 1.8).

Table 1.8

% ownership by household

| | house | car |
|---|---|---|
| County Durham | 47.6 | 52.4 |
| Wear Valley | 50.7 | 50.8 |
| Derwentside | 49.3 | 49.3 |
| Easington | 30.4 | 43.3 |

Source: 1981 Census

Having looked at certain features of the industrial and social make-up of the study's three areas, attention is now turned towards their local youth labour markets. The following account is derived from data supplied by local careers offices and covers the period 1978-9 to 1980-1 which immediately preceded fieldwork.

Table 1.9 (a-d) shows in percentage terms, changes in the destinations of school leavers in Bishop Auckland, Consett and Easington (the careers office covering Peterlee). The figures are adjusted to exclude both those whose destinations were unknown and those who had left the area. Numbers in the former category were small and uniform between areas and therefore of little importance for overall analysis. On the issue of 'migration', however, some comment should be offered on its incidence and significance.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature is that of variation between areas, with figures in Bishop Auckland consistently higher than

elsewhere. In 1980-1, 9.2% of school leavers there were classified as having left the district and this, in turn, represented a fall from the previous two years, when the relevant figures were 14% and 20%. By contrast, for two of the three years less than 1% of Consett school leavers left, although in 1979-80, the figure rose to 8.3%. In Easington, the number of migrants remained steady at between 2.5% and 4%. For school leavers, migration would be at least as likely to occur with other members of the family as individually, but unfortunately the data are not broken down in such a way (or indeed at all!) as to allow any further observations on this. What is clear is that, during this period, there was considerably greater migration from Bishop Auckland and this should be borne in mind when considering the 'fates' of those who remained.

The trends shown in Table 1.9 reveal a combination of powerful similarity and important differences between areas. By far the most significant common factor is that of collapse in the youth labour market and progressive replacement of jobs by schemes. As can be seen from Table 1.9(c), schemes already had a considerable presence in all three areas by 1978-9. However, the pace of change thereafter can be gauged by the dramatic turn around in the ratio of jobs to schemes. In 1978-9, the least favourable balance occurred for female school leavers in Easington where jobs outnumbered schemes by 1.6 to 1, while the most favourable was for young women in Bishop Auckland where the corresponding ratio was 4.0 to 1. Two years later, the most favourable ratio occurred in Bishop Auckland, where for male leavers schemes now outnumbered jobs by 1.6:1. At the opposite extreme, young women in Consett now faced a ratio of 5.7 schemes to every job.

Table 1.9

destinations of school leavers (%)

a) employment

|  | Bish Auck | | Consett | | Eas'n | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 1978-79 | 57.5 | 47.8 | 41.8 | 25.7 | 45.4 | 35.4 |
| 1979-80 | 37.3 | 27.4 | 20.4 | 14.8 | 38.0 | 17.4 |
| 1980-81 | 24.2 | 13.8 | 12.3 | 6.7 | 15.4 | 9.5 |

b) full-time education

|  | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 13.0 | 31.1 | 34.1 | 46.6 | 15.2 | 31.0 |
| 1979-8- | 13.1 | 32.8 | 25.2 | 40.5 | 13.1 | 27.5 |
| 1980-81 | 24.2 | 42.9 | 31.5 | 53.6 | 17.4 | 29.8 |

c) temporary (schemes)

|  | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 22.3 | 12.0 | 19.0 | 19.2 | 25.4 | 22.0 |
| 1979-80 | 35.3 | 23.7 | 44.2 | 30.7 | 37.1 | 37.3 |
| 1980-81 | 39.8 | 29.8 | 54.1 | 38.2 | 48.6 | 42.1 |

d) unemployed

|  | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 7.2 | 9.0 | 5.0 | 7.8 | 14.0 | 10.7 |
| 1979-80 | 14.1 | 14.2 | 10.2 | 11.7 | 11.7 | 16.8 |
| 1980-81 | 11.9 | 12.4 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 17.8 | 17.3 |

Despite these apparently wide variations, the pace of decline in the three areas was broadly similar, with the level of employment for both sexes remaining highest in Bishop Auckland and lowest in Consett throughout (Table 1.9(a).

One interesting variation that occurred was in the level of continuation in full-time education (Table 1.9(b)). For whereas in Consett and Easington, participation remained fairly constant despite the dramatic labour market changes, in Bishop Auckland those changes were accompanied by a substantial rise in 6th form and FE enrolment for both sexes. (In all three areas there was consistently greater participation from young women than young men.) However, the common 'stability' in Consett and Easington masks a vast difference between them in terms of the level of continuing education, with figures for the former approaching twice those for the latter. It is also the case that continuing education in Consett, having dropped considerably between 1978-9 and 1979-80, rose dramatically in the following year. Perhaps the most likely explanation for this pattern would lie in the areas' respective class structures and job markets with Consett less strongly 'working class' and more oriented towards service sector employment than Easington. The change in Bishop Auckland is more difficult to interpret. The 1978-9 situation, with slightly lower participation than Easington may have been somewhat 'anomalous' in terms of class constitution, but less so in terms of local labour market opportunities for school leavers (with manual work 'over represented'). Thus with the collapse of the latter, it might be expected that more leavers in Bishop Auckland would seek 'the

educational solution' to unemployment than would be the case in Easington.

In an environment increasingly dominated by schemes, analysis of registered unemployment becomes more complex, especially on the key issue of how far it reflects the (non)availability of schemes or chosen avoidance of them. A further relevant variable here might be that of careers office attitudes towards schemes and the pressures they might bring to bear on unemployed school leavers to take them. In the case of the figures presented in Table 1.9(d), further complications arise from their 'snapshot' nature, which may disguise longer term trends. Unfortunately, the more detailed information which may have helped to resolve these issues was not available to the researcher.

Having considered school leaver destinations in broad terms, we now turn to closer consideration of local youth labour markets in the three locations and changes within them over the period 1978-9 to 1980-1. In Bishop Auckland, employment for young men fell from 285 to 183 (35.7%). Employment in agriculture, national government and railways all held up well, (although the British Rail Engineering workshops at Shildon were already under threat of closure, which finally took place in 1984). In other key sectors, however, there were substantial losses with jobs in construction falling from 56 to 24, distribution (24 to 9) and engineering (22 to 5).

For young women, the fall (from 223 to 103 (53.8%)) was sharper, both in relative and absolute terms. Apart from a small rise (6 to 9)

in engineering employment, there were declines in all major categories, such as clothing (92 to 39), distribution (28 to 10), electrical goods (22 to 0) and hairdressing (8 to 2). Clerical employment in all sectors dropped from 27 to 5.

Earlier in the chapter, the question of 'concentration' was considered for the county as a whole. Predictably, in more local labour markets, the degree of concentration was generally higher. In Bishop Auckland, the number of listed categories for male school leavers fell only marginally, from 30 in 1978-9 to 29 in 1980-1, but for young women the corresponding fisures were 23 and 13, underlining the greater loss of opportunities faced by the latter.

In terms of reliance on particular sectors, there was relatively little change during the period. In 1980-1, the leading three categories accounted for 48.1% of male school leaver employment, and the top five for 66.1%. As elswhere, young women faced greater concentration with the leading three areas providing 62.1% of jobs and the top five 74.8%. Young workers in Consett faced bleaker prospects than their Bishop Auckland counterparts. Employment for male leavers fell from 158 to 41 (74%). Losses occurred in every sector but by far the most significant was the disappearance of jobs in iron and steel (48 to 1) in the wake of the BSC closure. Other important losses occurred in construction (14 to 6), distribution (13 to 5) and engineering (8 to 1). As if to highlight the fragility of the 'new economy' recruitment to the textile industry also fell from 12 to 4. Significantly, by 1980-1, there was no male employment in mining.

If young men in Consett experienced precipitous decline in

employment opportunities, the situation faced by young women was one of near extinction of jobs, which fell from 79 to a mere 18 (78.2%).

Distribution, where employment dropped from 16 to 9, was the only sector to avoid almost total devastation. Clothing industry recruitment fell from 33 to 3, while that in timber and furniture manufacture declined from 9 to 1.

The collapse of the local youth labour market was also evident in the sharp fall in job categories listed as employing school leavers. For young men in Consett, the relevant figures fell from 26 in 1978-9 to 15 in 1980-1, while for young women the figures were 17 and 8 respectively. Given the paucity of jobs by 1980-1, concentration figures require cautious interpretation. For male school leavers in Consett, concentration actually fell slightly, due primarily to the degree of earlier dependence on iron and steel. In 1980-1, the leading three sectors provided 43.9% of jobs and the leading five 63.4%. For young women, job losses also brought greater concentration. In 1978-9 62% of employment was in three categories, with 77.2% in five, but by 1980-1 these figures had risen to 72.2% and 83.3% respectively.

In Easington, decline in school leaver employment between 1978-9 and 1980-1 was also more rapid than in Bishop Auckland, but fell short of that experienced in Consett. The number of jobs for male leavers fell from 435 to 149 (65.7%). Again there were losses in virtually every sector with a rise from 2 to 11 employed in iron and steel providing the only exception. The relative 'success stories' came in national government (primarily Peterlee Development Corporation) where jobs fell from 51 to 40, construction (37 to 20), distribution (20 to

14) and chemicals (11 to 8). Elsewhere, losses were much greater, most crucially in mining where employment of male school leavers fell dramatically from 143 to 37. Yet there were also many other sectors where collapse was (almost) total:- engineering (10 to 3), local government (18 to 2), clothing and textiles (16 to 3), vehicle service and repair (11 to 1), metal goods (14 to 1), electical goods (16 to 0), food, drink and tobacco (11 to 0).

In 1980-1, 82 female school leavers in Easington found work, representing a 76.3% drop from 1978-9 total of 346. Employment in all categories fell, and almost without exception, dramatically so. Apart from national and local goverment, where recrutiment declined from 9 to7, all sectors recorded at least 50% of jobs lost. Openings in the key areas of clothing and footwear fell from 115 to 26, with those in distribution halving from 50 to 25. Opportunities in manufacturing work were severely hit with employment in food manufacture falling from 24 to 6, metal goods (13 to 5), electrical goods (16 to 0), textiles (24 to 0) and miscellaneous manufacture (22 to 1). Service work fared little better with nursing and medical jobs falling from 10 to 4, insurance banking and finance (9 to 0) and hairdressing apprenticeships (23 to 3).

Over the period, the number of employment categories listed fell from 32 to 18 for young men and 31 to 19 for young women. The degree of concentration rose considerably for both. Whereas in 1978-9, 53.1% of male school leavers were employed in three sectors and 64.6% in the leading five, by 1980-1, the corresponding figures had risen to 65.1% and 81.8%. For females the comparable rises were from 54.6% and 68.2%

in 1978-9 to 69.5% and 80.5% two years later.

Whatever the differences between the three locations, the similarities were clearly greater. In particular, in the period between 1978-9 and 1980-1 there had been both huge falls in the number of school leavers finding work and with the limited exceptions of young men in Bishop Auckland, situations of substantial reduction in the number of occupations offering any recruitment whatsoever.

Figures for apprenticeships generally fell proportionately with those for employment, except in Easington. For young men there, apprenticeships fell even faster than employment overall, so that while in 1978-9, the 216 apprenticeships represented 49.7% of jobs, in 1980-1 the 43 remaining accounted for only 28.9% of openings. Changes in two key sectors were responsible for the fall. In mining, the number of apprentices recruited moved from 71 in the former year to 0 in the latter, while the number taken on by Peterlee DC declined from 29 to 6. Thus for young men in the Easington area, shrinking employment seemed to be accompanied by a considerable measure of 'deskilling'. For young women, the introduction of apprenticeships in the clothing industry actually raised the percentage of apprenticed jobs but did not compensate for the loss of 20 (from 23) hairdressing apprenticeships.

Taken together, the three areas were consistently under-represented within the county in jobs leading to professional qualifications. Despite containing 42% of the population, they accounted for only 9.5% (16/168) of such jobs in 1978-9 and 15.4%

(2/13) in 1980-1.

As studied here, the transition covers a relatively short period, from the year immediately before and (up to) two years after leaving school. Rather than the oft-used 'follow-up' study, two distinct surveys were carried out, related only by their concern with similar aspects of the transition.

Given that the study adopts something of a 'before and after' approach to the transition, it might be asked why a straightforward 'follow up' methodology was not employed. In part, this is explicable in terms of a concern to complement relatively superficial data from a large number of prospective school leavers with more in-depth material generated by a smaller number of focussed interviews with young workers.

This could, of course, have been achieved by some sub-sampling from within the original sample. The major advantage of this 'longitudinal' form of study is its provision of successive 'snapshots' which cannot later be erased by retrospective 'editing'. West and Newton (1983:11) write of retrospection's notoriety for omission and distortion. According to Sellitz et al,

> people may not remember, their present attitudes may
> distort their recollections etc. (1965:131)

Thus, the 'snapshot' views can be seen as offering a measure of protection against these phenomena.

The principal reasons for dividing the field research of this study into two separate sections were practical, appreciably shortening the time required and lessening the demands for

co-operation on the part of schools, workplaces and those making the transition. The significance of these factors, however, goes beyond mere convenience or manageability for the researcher.

The results of longitudunal studies of the transition constantly bear witness to the difficulties of keeping in touch with respondents, even when teams of researchers are involved. In the two years or so of Sawdon et al's study, the reponse rate fell to below 50% while for West and Newton only 59% of those originally interviewed were available for a second interview. With fall-off on such a scale, doubts must be raised as to the relationship betwen original and final samples and in particular the latter's representativness of the former. This problem is the more serious because it cuts directly at the validity of sequential snapshot comparison. Standardisation also suffers because of the inevitable variety of interview locations (home, work, cafes etc) which arise in longitudinal studies.

Focussing more directly on issues of methodology, there are other points which can be made regarding the degree of assumed superiority of the 'longitudinal' over the 'retrospective' study. Maizels' (1970:16) pilot study showed easy recall of final year school ecperiences, even up to two years or so later, while it is important to remember that retrospection is by no means the only, or even primary source of omission and distortion. Similarly, as the interval between longitudinal interviews is often a year or more, one is still heavily reliant on retrospection in accounting for, as opposed to merely charting by snapshot comparison, the changes which occur. A snapshot approach often tends to fit neatly with the features of

empiricism, encouraging a focus on (successive) product(s) rather than process. Thus, longitudinal studies such as those of Sawdon et al. (1981) and West and Newton (1983) make little use of actor recollective accounts of the whys and wherefores of change, favouring instead the more 'objective' juxtaposition of snapshot views. Once again, however, it is important to point out that this tendency is not inherent in the method and that concern for the process of change and snapshots are not mutually exclusive.

None of these caveats are intended to deny the potential advantages within longitudinal study, but suggest that in the case of this study any disadvantage arising from 'retrospective' methods would, on balance, be very slight (Clarke (1980:2).

The first part of the study took place in six comprehansive schools, two within each of the three towns, the aim being to find a balance between likely unrepresentativesness and blanket coverage. (54) Within each school, there was participation 'across the board' in terms of academic performance but in only one school was it possible to use 'banding' as a variable.(55)

The principal research method used was that of a questionnaire (see Appendix A) which sought certain basic classificatory data, but whose general format was built around fixed choice questions followed by open-ended ones allowing for expansion upon the former. Questionnaires were to be self-completed, and this gave rise to some incidence of partial completion. Against this, advantages may have accrued from respondent freedom based on anonymity, (Moser and Kalton (1971:259)) and certainly in terms of research practicality.(56)

It was hoped that the wording of the questionnaire would be sufficiently straightforward as to make it readily comprehensible however articulate the respondent. As Ackroyd and Hughes argue

> questions should be as short as is feasible, be easily understood and avoid esoteric language. (1981:75)

Classificatory data were kept brief for three main reasons, the first being to aid accurate and 'painless' self-completion. A second was that the number of respondents, 438, while considerable, was insufficient for any complex statistical analysis involving repeated sub-sampling. Related to this was a third factor, namely the open-ended nature of many questions which does not allow direct comparability between responses and thereby also militates against statistical sophistication.

Thus, while there was some interest in structured questions and quantifiable data, there was also an emphasis on seeking more qualitative responses, with negligible prompting.(57)

It is, of course, important not to over-polarise this distinction for as Phillips (1971:137) rightly points out

> all descriptions and analysis of behaviour are inevitably both qualitative and quantitative.

Research within the schools also entailed a number of small group discussions, the primary purpose of which was to deal with those areas felt unsuitable for inclusion in the questionnaire, although there was, additionally, some expansion upon included areas. Groups were drawn on a voluntary basis from those classes which had completed the questionnaire (usually three groups with about four members each)(58) In all, some 120 prospective school leavers took part in the small

groups, although clearly 'quantitative' use of data from them could only be impressionistic.

Post-school research took the form of individual interviews, usually lasting between thirty and forty-five minutes. These interviews were 'focussed' so that the study's particular areas were covered, but further discussion of these areas was generally left fairly open, allowing scope for explanation of events or ideas which arose 'unexpectedly'. As the following two quotes show, the value of the 'focussed' or 'semi-structures' interview can be approached from different starting points.

> The idea is to maintain the flexibility of the informal
> interview but to ensure that all the relevant topics are
> covered. (Kent (n.d.:50))

> It comes to grips with the need for sustaining a degree of
> organisation in the interviewing process, all the while
> permitting the interviewer considerable leeway in ...
> questioning. (Sjoberg and Nett (1968:214))

Given the theoretical concern with the relationship between thought and action, the interviews sought to examine both - events as well as attitudes - and where possible, interviewees' views on the relationship between them ie utilising their own awareness of whether attitudes had translated themselves into, or derived from, particular activities. This concern for 'grounding' is important not simply as an object of study in its own right, but as a means of minimising the problems which arise from a more exclusive focus on 'opinions' or 'attitudes' per se. As Sellitz et al contend,

> especially in the case of questions of opinion or
> attitude, many people can be induced to give answers on
> matters about which they really have no opinion or
> attitude. (1965:149)

In this study, such questions were kept to a minimum and related as closely as possible to areas (eg schemes) where 'having no opinion' was unlikely. Some advantages of the semi-structured interview here are that less pressure may be exerted to obtain answers to specific questions, or that alternative phrasing or lines of enquiry can be explored more easily. An additional reason for avoiding 'opinion' questions is the matter of diminishing the possibility of 'right' answers' being given. In any social encounter, mutual 'image presentation' is important and there are likely to be concerns for social approval (including those on the part of the resarcher) (Phillips (1971:60), Shipman (1981:93).

Kent (n.d.:51) outlines the complexity of interview interaction as follows.

> The interview, as a process of social interaction, is a
> very difficult social encounter which will be effected by
> many variables like the age and sexes of both interviewer
> and respondent, by their social class and personalities,
> by the degree of reluctance or enthusiasm of the
> respondent, and by the general cultural values within
> which both have to operate.

As Phillips (1971:ch 2) persuasively argues 'interview bias' is not something which can be eliminated. However, the type of questions asked would seem to have an obvious bearing on the likelihood of 'accurate' replies. The degree of disclosure sought on 'personal' (eg sexual) issues is clearly important here in two senses. The first is that of likely 'secrecy' for as Goffman suggests,

> there can hardly be a person who has never been concerned
> about giving ... social or personal identities away,
> whether through lack of emotional and intellectual
> self-control, or the failure to inhibit expression, or the
> demonstration of incongrous social practices. (1969:81)

A second factor is that 'interview bias' is likely to be heightened the more 'personal' the discussion, with factors such as age, sex and perceived 'safety' taking on greater significance (Phillips (1971:30). For these reasons, such areas were not included within the research design, although clearly they would be of great importance to respondents themselves.

However constructed, interviewing entails a considerable degree of simplification. In the brief but pointed works of Shipman,

> human actions, attributes and attitudes are subtle. Research methods are crude. (1981:xi)

One major problem here is pinpointed by Ackroyd and Hughes, namely that

> beliefs, attitudes, values and other so-called subjective states cannot be directly inspected, and must therefore be inferred from other less direct sources, such as responses to questions, observed behaviour and so on. (1981:28)

Yet, whatever the limitations of question-based research, it remains a key investigative tool (Sellitz et al (1965:243)). What is vital is both that such limitations are recognised by a research design which seeks to minimise tham and that they are openly acknowledged. Arguably, the central weakness of empiricist research has been its failure to do this. For, as Ackroyd and Hughes suggest,

> the empiricist account of theories has largely been discredited, but not the important stress it lays upon systematic methods of social investigation. (1981:15)

As in the case of the school-based research, it was intended to interview a fairly 'representative' group of recent (up to two years) school leavers, although with the welter of factors upon which representativesness might be based, this process could only be seen in approximate terms. It was decided that thirty young workers should be

interviewed in each of the three locations, with roughly equal division between the sexes.(59) Typicality was also taken to necessitate interviews with young people in employment, on training schemes and unemployed. For various reasons, a precise division between these groups was problematic, although the eventual breakdown (of eighty eight interviewed, fourteen were in full-time employment, fifty six on temporary schemes and eighteen unemployed) was probably quite 'accurate'.(60) (See Appendix C for details)

Unemployed young workers were interviewed at Careers Offices and as such might be taken as atypically enthusiastic job-seekers. It should, however, be pointed out that very few young people stayed away entirely, being 'summoned' if they did so, and ultimately threatened with benefit withdrawal.(61) Thus any bias in the sampling would be certainly have been quite small.

For both those in employment and on schemes, I was provided with extensive lists of relevant 'employers' by local Careers Offices. The main concern in sampling was to guarantee a fairly wide range of working experience and one which would at least loosely reflect the overall distribution of jobs and schemes.(62) Once the co-operation of employers/scheme managers had been gained, the usual practice was for the researcher to approach young workers who might then agree (or not) to be interviewed.(63) In fact, incidence of refusal was negligible.(64)

Interviews were timed (during winter and spring) to ensure that respondents would have left school at least six months previously and only those who had left within the past two years were included.

Though this was not not controlled in any way, the division between those in their first and second post-school years was roughly equal, but this equality did not extend to all three locations.(65)

In closing this chapter, it is useful to offer some brief comment on its content and relevance for the chapters which follow. In its first section, the main purpose was to provide as historical background to the Coalfield, concentrating on developments in its labour market but also dealing more broadly with issues of social and cultural legacy. The place of those making the transition in this setting has been considered and particular attention drawn to the tradition of early school leaving and narrow range of employment opportunities.

In a general sense, the pervasive historical influence of mining has been documented, as has the impact of its collapse. This has included questions of class structure, of the sexual division of labour and of spatial variations in the decline of mining. All these issues will figure in the analysis of the study data.

In the second part of the chapter, the design of the study was outlined, along with profiles of the study's locations and their (youth) labour markets and consideration of various issues relating to research methods. It was there that the study's two distinct sections were introduced and this is reflected in subsequent chapters by the use of separate headings. Material deriving from school questionnaires and small group discussions is headed 'anticipations', while that from interviews with young workers appears under the title 'experiences'.

## Notes

1   This would include both that part of the present Tyne and Wear south of the Tyne and of Cleveland north of the Tees.

2   The only areas not covered lay in the far west and south of the county, the only major centres of population being those of Darlington, Stockton and Hartlepool.

3   He notes that in 1921, within the administrative county (ie excluding certain large towns outside the Coalfield area but including certain non-mining towns and the City of Durham) 49.5% of men were employed in mining.

4   During the period January 1924 to November 1928, no less than 128 pits closed, 71 of which were abandoned (Garside (1971:248)).

5   There, male unemployment stood at 45.8% with four individual exchanges topping 60% (Daysh and Symonds (1953:37-8)).

6   Despite the weight of implicitly urban, proletarian imagery associated with mining communities, numerous writers have pointed to the significance of the rural history and surroundings of such localities. This is particularly so in the sense of 'rural' closeness in communities, paternalistic features such as tied cottages, payment in kind and the like, and a 'sense of place' which gives prominence to images of countryside, even if only as an escape from pit and village (Ennis (1986:245), Williamson (1982:60), Austrin and Beynon (1988:ch.5)).

7   Such demands multiplied when there were unmarried sons working in the pit.

8   One observer recalls,
    my impression of a pit village is of women working morning til night ... they had no social life ... it seemed all work (Strong Words (1979:53)).

9
    There's no doubt about it, men in that generation were the kingpin of the house. Other people cleaned their shoes. They had a special seat. Nobody dared sit in their seat ... they were tyrants really in their own way. (Erdesdun (1977:12))

    See also David Bean on nearby Ashington,
    the only place I have seen a woman give up her seat on a bus to a man as his right (Guardian 29:10:82).

10   This 'masculinity' also formed an important part of local and regional identity, with reputation for toughness being particularly prized (Welbourne (1923:11), Zweig (1948:43-4)).

11   See also Pilgrim Trust (1938:71) and Zweig (:228).

12   In 1921 (Census data) with a countrywide 33.4% of men employed in mining, the corresponding figure for 14-19 year olds was 41.1%.

13   This risk was particularly high in distribution, often the staple employment for school leavers, a risk which helped to make other options relatively more attractive.

14   Although it could be argued that proportionate figures are deceptive in their reflection of vast mining employment, they offer an excellent indication of local openings for those seeking them. It should also be remembered that alternatives varied inversely with the number of mining jobs, non-manual work being overwhelmingly concentrated in urban areas.

15                          Table 1.1

         Female activity rates (%) at selected ages

|                    | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | all ages |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Durham             | 22.5  | 48.4  | 54.2  | 19.3     |
| England and Wales  | 44.8  | 70.9  | 76.3  | 32.3     |

                                        Source: 1921 Census

16   Beyond domestic service, the seemingly inevitable future for a majority of young women lay as miners' wives. As Austrin and Beynon argue,
     just as men, whose horizon of possibilities was dictated
     by the mine, were therefore led to the mine with the idea
     that they could do nothing else, women also structured
     their futures by the thoughts of marriage and family
     within the community. They too could do nothing else. The
     sealed world of the mining communities closed the
     possibilities of life's options for both (1988:ch.4).

17   This created the 'paradoxical' position of young men being more closely tied to their families, only leaving home on marriage, although escape for young women from the family frying pan was often only to the fire of close moral regulation from the families they went to serve (Austrin and Beynon) (1988:ch.4).

18    There were additional concerns to equip young women for
      the responsibilities of motherhood and creating and
      directing a home for husband and children (Pilgrim Trust
      (1938:232)).

19    For an account of state policy on youth unemployment between the
      wars see Rees and Rees (1982).

20    Mechanics for this included the 'carrot' of loans, grants and
      premises for those locating in development areas (under the 1945
      Distribution of Industry Act) and the 'stick' of Industrial
      Development Certificates (1947 Town and Country Planning Act)
      which were to be severely restricted in areas of full employment.
      In this context, mention should also be made of the New Towns,
      primarily concerned with city overspill but occasionally, as in
      the north-east, with population regrouping. During the period
      1945-1950, 37,000 new jobs were created in County Durham, largely
      on new or existing industrial estates (Bulmer (1978b:173)).

21    While the focus on major urban centres has been relatively
      straightforward, the relationship betwen the 'central corridor'
      and both west and east Durham has been more problematic (NRST
      (1977:76-8). While such issues are beyond our scope it is worth
      remembering the institutional complexity of planning in an area
      such as the Durham Coalfield with a variety of county, regional
      and national planning bodies, New Town Corporations, job-finding
      agencies such as BSC (Industries) and the involvement of the EEC.

22    Housing, hotels and cultural facilities were all depicted as
      grossly inadequate and the Hailsham Report warned that for
      businessmen,
          even generous inducements and assurances of an ample
          labour supply may not be enough to offset the effects of
          dismal town centres, decaying villages, bad roads and a
          scarred industrial countryside (Board of Trade (1963:8)).

      See also Carney and Hudson (1974:26) who note that the reports of
      the day are full of derogatory environmental references.

23    Between 1956 and 1974, the consumption of coal in the UK fell by
      47%, with its proportion of all energy consumption falling from
      85% to 35% (Bulmer (1978b:159). In 1957, there were still over
      100,000 miners in Durham.

24    In 'Challenge of the Changing North' (NEPC (1966), it is reported
      that during the period 1960-64, the number of men employed in the
      region had fallen by 2.8%, the number of women rising by 8.1%,
      the national figures being increases of 3% and 6.5% respectively
      (:8). Nonetheless, the female activity rate in the North was only
      33.2% against 39.2% nationally (:20).

123

25                              Table 1.2

Industrial classifications           Male            Female

                                GB    DC    GB    DC
agriculture , forestry &
                 fisheries     3.1   2.8   1.0   0.6
energy and water               4.5  13.0   1.0   0.8
manufacturing                 32.0  34.0  19.6  21.0
construction                  10.7  11.3   1.4   1.1
distribution and catering     15.4  11.1  25.0  26.4
transport and communication    8.8   7.3   3.2   2.5
other services                24.8  19.8  47.9  46.8

                                        Source: 1981 Census

26  Large corporations are, of course, by no means the only
    benificiaries of regional policy but contrary to the fashionable
    rhetoric of salvation through small businesses, it is primarily
    on them that the viability of employment strategy rests.

27  The flexibility of large corporations allows them a highly
    calculative approach to location decisions, into which a
    'cynical' use of state subsidy can easily enter. Peripheral
    branch plants may also be more easily sacrificed, and this
    outcome may even be anticipated in theit establishment.

28  Robinson in his 1970s study of Peterlee notes that most closures
    were among
      small single plant enterprises, possibly artificially
      supported by regional policy incentives (1978:236).

29  Apart from the regional effects of say, the huge DHSS complexes
    in Newcastle (and Washington), on a more local level a large
    National Savings Bank Centre has been established in Durham City.

30  Mining and shipbuilding are the most obvious examples here but
    within the Coalfield the two most devastating closures (leading
    directly to the loss of over 6,000 jobs) have been those of BSC's
    Consett works and BREL workshops at Shildon.

31  See Northcott (1977) for variations in costs per job of regional
    aid. It is also important to remember that section 7 of the 1972
    Industry Act made finance available for 'modernisation or
    rationalisation' which might not create any extra jobs but
    safeguard (some) existing ones.

32  Average personal income was £51-75 (£57-97 UK), household income
    £140-24 (£157-80).

33                                    Table 1.3

| R-G Social Class | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | GB | DC | GB | DC |
| 1 | 4.9 | 3.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| 2 | 19.4 | 14.8 | 9.0 | 8.2 |
| 3(N) | 10.1 | 7.9 | 17.9 | 15.6 |
| 3(M) | 32.0 | 36.0 | 3.7 | 3.5 |
| 4 | 14.6 | 17.1 | 9.7 | 11.1 |
| 5 | 5.4 | 6.8 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| Other | 13.5 | 14.1 | 56.1 | 57.7 |

Source: 1981 Census

34   Consider, for example, the case of Courtaulds' Spennymoor factory
     where a 'wage cut or closure' ultimatum was issued in 1978, and
     the withdrawal of Perkins, the Peterborough diesel manufacturers
     when faced with having to pay 'Peterborough' wage rates in the
     Coalfield.

35   During the period 1951-81, Derwentside's population fell by
     15,000 (14.5%) and Wear Valley's by 12,500 (16.4%). Between 1971
     and 1981, Easington, in the east, lost some 8%, while the three
     central districts (Chester-le-Street, Durham and Sedgefield)
     gained over 17,000 in population.

36   'Travel to work' is defined in terms of movement beyond the
     district of residence. Of men and women in G.B., 37.3% and 25.3%
     respectively travelled to work, while in County Durham the
     corresponding figures were 38.5% and 28.1%. In Derwentside,
     however, they rose to 46.9% amd 32.5%.

37   Having dismissed 'D' villages as 'not villages in any meaningful
     sense of the term' but rather like city slums set down on
     moorland, Senior (n.d.:   ) waxes lyrical about the spirit of
     community
        which will not be lost when that unworthy environment is
        finally obliterated. It is a flame the people will take
        with them wherever they go.

38   It should, of course, be remembered that this may owe a great
     deal to a wider demise of distinctive working class culture
     (Seabrook (1978); Swingewood (1977)).

39   One aspect of this commitment can be seen in the high level of
     recruitment to the armed forces (Townsend (1977:56)), which Ennis
     convincingly argues cannot be explained simply in terms of high
     unemployment and consequent 'lack of alternatives' (1986:
     139-173)).

40   The imputed regional characteristic of capacity for 'hard work'
     is particularly important and transcends time, gender boundaries
     and types of work (1986:131). See also Williamson (1982:132).

41　As in many areas of social imagery, women may be invisible, implicitly subsumed or excluded. Much 'Geordie' imagery is almost exclusively 'male' in orientation - tough, hard drinking, hard (heavy manual) working, sports mad etc. Townsend and Taylor (1974:43) observe that women dissociate themselves from this imagery, including the use of regional dialect and accent, but this appears as withdrawal towards 'national' culture rather than as an alternative regional identity. Household expenditure data show some continuation of the supposedly traditional 'Andy Capp' consumption patterns with proportionately more spent on drink and tobacco, less on housing, clothing and durables (Regional Trends (1983)).

42　Figures from the Department of Employment Gazette (March 1983). Care has to be taken in relating YOP participants to levels of school leaver unemployment for various reasons. First not all trainees were school leavers. Second, most schemes lasted for only six moths so that participants may still have appeared in unemployment statistics during the year. Third, participation in YOP was measured in terms of placements rather than directly by number of trainees, leading to some 'double counting'.

43　For a description of early policy measures, and some consideration of outcomes see Casson (1979:ch.7). For a more recent review see Lonsdale (1985:ch6).

44　In October 1976, the subsidy was raised and renamed Youth Employment Subsidy.

45　Community Industry (CI) was introduced in 1971 to provide 'sheltered' employment for those experiencing special difficulty in making the transition from school to work, perhaps because of emotional or behavourial problems. Interestingly, CI has survived intact, albeit at its original small scale (5-7,000 places) throughout all the various policy changes.

46　Expenditure on all programmes for young workers in 1976-7 was £92.3m (:11)

47　There was also an unsuccessful attempt to impose a swingeing cut in the already low trainees' allowance and to remove Supplementary Benefit entitlement for 16 year olds.

48　In 1963, the July figure for school leaver unemployment rocketed to 1455 as compared with a range of 250-300 in preceeding years. The YES Annual Report of that year described the employment situation as 'serious' and argued that the influx of new industries had to remain first priority.

49　Between 1955 and 1963 jobs in mining fell by 60%, although in the latter year 671 male school leavers found such employment. The 1955 Report notes that for young women only 3% of jobs were in domestic service, with 23% in clothing factories.

50  The 1957 Report tells of increasing difficulty in finding
    suitable employment for school leavers with O levels.

51  Perhaps an even starker comparison is provided by the
    'betterment' register (for those in placement but actively
    seeking a better one) on which the number of young people had
    risen from 287 (1974-5) to 6267 (1981-2), a rise largely
    attributable to the vast increase in temporary placements.

52  In 1978-9, 1290 male and 230 female school leavers entered
    apprenticeships, representing 51% and 12.5% respectively of those
    finding employment. By 1980-1, such entry had fallen to 416
    (49.4%) and 45 (11.1%). In the same period, jobs leading to
    professional qualifications fell from 79 to 10 for young men, 89
    to 3 for young women (DCC Careers Service Annual Reports).

53  This classification includes clerical work as a separate item
    with appropriate deductions from other categories.

54  Bearing in mind Rutter et al's (1979) finding that school may
    significantly influence pupil performance and attitudes, it
    seemed important not to rely on single schools as representative.
    Given also that comprehensive schools often retain some of their
    former (grammar, modern) characteristics, balance was also sought
    in this respect in the two choices.

55  The remaining schools either did not operate an overall banding,
    using 'sets' for particular subjects instead, or ran mixed
    ability classes for those sessions during which participation
    occurred. Although, statistically speaking, school could serve as
    a variable, limited knowledge of the schools would demand
    considerable caution in such an endeavour.

56  Four hundred and thirty eight questionnaires were 'completed' and
    it is difficult to see how this number could otherwise have been
    approached without placing intolerable burdens on researcher time
    and school patience.

57  See Appendix B for further details of the sample.

58  Finding volunteers proved very easy, with most pupils seeming to
    find such discussions preferable to their lessons.

59  The eventual total interviewed in Peterlee was twenty eight owing
    to the sudden closure of a particular WEEP scheme and the
    difficulty of arranging an alternative at short notice. This
    reduced the overall number of interviews to eighty eight, with
    forty three males and forty five females. Given their lesser
    participation in employment and training schemes, this division
    could be taken to be a slight over-representation of young women.
    However, there appeared to be little purpose in moving from
    parity when numbers were fairly small and given that differences
    of sex and gender were central to the study.

60    The only figures available on  school leaver destinies are  those
      compiled by local Careers Offices  in the autumn of each  year.
      Figures from the three relevant  offices suggested that those  on
      schemes outnumbered those in work by a factor of roughly  between
      two  and  five  according  to  location  and  sex but  averaging
      approximately four. With schemes readily available,  unemployment
      figures were  fairly  low,  and  broadly  similar  to those  for
      employment. Given the seasonal variations,  there is ample  scope
      for debate  on  the  meaning  of statistics,  but  there was  no
      doubting the centrality of  schemes in  the destinies  of  young
      workers.  There  are  no  available  figures  for  'second year'
      leavers, although with general availability of schemes until  the
      age of eighteen, and little in  the way of full-time openings,  a
      broadly similar pattern might reasonably be assumed.

61    Indeed,  those  interviewed  included  several  who  were  either
      attending 'by order' or were extremely irregular visitors.

62    One barrier to more precise sampling was the non-availability  of
      MSC or Careers  Office  figures for  schemes broken  down  beyond
      broad  categories  such  as  WEEP,  TW  and  so  on.  A  list  of
      interviewees'  'current'  and  past  placements  is  provided  in
      Appendix C.

63    To try to  offset any  likelihood of being  steered by  employers
      towards young  workers thought  likely  to present  a  favourable
      image of the workplace, it  was emphasised that views on  current
      work situations  were to  constitute  only a  small part  of  the
      interview. While in a minority of workplaces there was scope  for
      such steering, neither the characteristics, qualifications,  work
      careers etc.) nor the expressed views of respondents suggested  a
      significantly atypical sample.

64    Within the literature on reasearch methods, different views  have
      been expressed on the extent to which people are 'willing' to  be
      interviewed by reasearchers. For Shipman (1981:99), the number of
      postal questionnaires put into waste  bins suggests  considerable
      reluctance, while according to Moser and Kalton (1971:274)
       most people are only  too ready to  talk about  themselves
       and to air their views, and common politeness, mixed  with
       curiosity, does the rest.

      The experience within this study closely conformed to the  latter
      view,  and  this may  well  reflect  different  perceptions   of
      interviews conducted personally rather than by post.

65    In this  respect  the  Consett sample  was  rather  'older'  than
      average, that in Bishop Auckland rather 'younger'.

Chapter 2

'Education and Careers Guidance'

Like any institution of a capitalist state, education is committed in a broad sense to the maintenance of capitalist society.(1) As Hall observes,

> so long as the fundamental social and economic relationships of a society remain intact, education will tend to obey the 'logic' of that system. (1981:10)

Numerous authors have offered analyses of how the major divisions of class, gender and race are 'reproduced'.(2) Fuller examination of these matters is beyond our scope here, but it must be pointed out that such 'reproduction' is a complex and often contradictory affair.

Even prior to the 'Great Debate' (see below) pressure to meet the 'needs of industry' had been prominent within educational history (Reeder (1979)). Yet, in a situation with fragmented and competing capitals, such needs may prove extremely difficult to identify beyond certain general minima, without straying into the area of training, and thereby creating a minefield of charges of partiality and the like (Finn (1987:119)). An increasingly specialised and hierarchical division of labour clearly exacerbates these problems.

Further difficulties arise from the 'political' requirements of education. As David points out,

> the education system was not designed merely to fulfil the economy's requirement for labour, but is more generally linked with social and economic needs for particular types of adult. (1980:15)

Thus, although concerns for social order and citizenship are closely bound up with relations of production they are by no means reducible to them. Notions such as citizenship may carry more egalitarian connotations, whether of 'all-round' education or equality of opportunity, which operate against hierarchical division and specialisation. Indeed, from a social democratic stance, education may even by regarded as a

> counterbalance to the inhuman results of the division of labour. (Vaizey (1962:23))

Recognition must also be given to the effects of institutional history, for as Williamson (1979:51) contends, the form in which market-generated inequalities are refracted through the educational system reflects the historical development of both, leading to the latter's possessing a degree of immunity

> from immediate social and economic demands ... (and) ... a great deal of institutional inertia.

The 'space' created by these factors has provided a battleground for those favouring either 'progressive' or 'traditional' education. According to Anthony (1979), progressive education favours activity-based learning with an emphasis on discover and creativity, free from the shackles of subject boundaries. Inherent in such an approach is a rejection of a narrow 'work preparation' role for education, although 'human capital' arguments have often been employed to show that personal development could complement both individual and societal economic performance.(3)

Against this, the 'traditionalists' of the (new) right have alleged that 'progressives', in their encouragement of freedom of

expression, neglect the 'basics' - literacy, numeracy, competition and discipline - and engender unrealistic ambitions, along with disdain for industry.(4)

In the mid-1970s, when economic crises at a time of rising education expenditure appeared to undermine the notion of the latter as 'good investment',(5) Prime Minister Callaghan launched the 'Great Debate' on the purposes of education. The launch marked a victory for the 'traditionalists', whose concerns were adopted even more vigorously by the subsequent Conservative government.

Growing unemployment brought an increasing focus on the saleability of (young) labour-power. To some extent, this is a 'necessary' process, for as Finn writes,

> the origins of youth unemployment may lie in investment
> and labour process policies but the political solution to
> youth unemployment can only lie in changing the young
> themselves. This is why an employment problem is
> transformed into an education crisis. (1982:49) (6)

The main thrust of the 'new right's' approach has been to forge an alliance between the perceived demands of employers and parents and pupils disenchanted with progressive education.(7) In the words of CSE (1979:71),

> the politics of educational restructuring has been the
> politics of reaching a consensual definition of the needs
> of (capitalist) industry as the needs of young people. (8)

In 'Learning to Labour' Willis (1977) describes the teaching paradigm in terms of the exchange of knowledge for control, with teachers offering knowledge in return for co-operative behaviour on the part of pupils. Despite their high degree of introversion, schools have always sought to underpin this exchange with the stronger logic

of the labour market, depicting acceptance or rejection of the paradigm as the key to occupational success or failure. The loose fit between respective reward structures in school and work has always rendered this process problematic,(9) but incidence of mass unemployment offers an obvious threat to the paradigm itself and thereby presents a legitimacy crisis for schools (Finn (1982:52)).

Before examining the experiences of education and guidance related by prospective and recent school leavers, it is necessary to consider briefly certain critical issues surrounding careers guidance work in recent years.(10) In particular, it is important to recognise the impact of mass unemployment upon the work of those seeking to smooth the transition from school to work. (A fuller account of this impact is provided elsewhere (Kirton (1983).)

It might be argued that, as that part of the curriculum closest to the labour market, careers teaching would be particularly vulnerable to the effects of high unemployment. However, this would appear to be more a question of heightening rather than creating problems. The favoured 'client-centred' approach (Hayes and Hopson (1975:56-7)) and emphasis on personal development (Watts (1973:4)) have always been shaky in view of the many jobs which offer little or nothing in the way of satisfaction and the often restricted opportunities facing young workers (Roberts (1974)). West and Newton found that pupils preferred a more directive labour marked orientation to a more developmental, non-directive one, the reason being that the latter, in raising aspirations but leaving outcomes unchanged, merely increased frustration (1983:80).(11)

Among careers teachers in the schools of the present study, there was clear recognition of the problems presented by mass unemployment. As one of them put it, 'there's no carrot to dangle any more.' The 'management of ambition' (Mills (1956:285)) entailed walking the tightrope between raising hopes of employment too high and becoming 'defeatist'. Responses to the crisis varied, but were overwhelmingly 'positive' in orientation.(12) This meant the maintenance or intensifying of the competitive ethos and almost complete neglect of unemployment or even YOP in careers curricula (Hendry (1987:205)).

Large-scale unemployment has created similar problems for the Careers Service, for which professionalisation has rested on a client-centred approach which rejects the role of 'supplier of bodies.(13) As Ashton and Field observe,

> the idea of vocational guidance which informs much of the work of the Careers Service is based on the belief that young people should be able to develop their potential and find self-fulfilment in their work through making a career. (1976:121) (14)

Such a perspective has come under attack from Employment Minister Peter Morrison, insisting that the Service

> must respond positively to the indications employers give about the sort of youngster they want. (cited Scofield et al 1983:23).

Careers officers I spoke to often referred to a clash of priorities between themselves and the MSC which, in its unseemly haste to expand YOP, was seen as playing a 'numbers game' with scant regard to the interests of young workers. However, YOP also provided a 'shadow' labour market, which allowed the Careers Service to retain (and even enhance) many of its traditional concerns and practices. Not only did

the 'equivalence' of schemes to jobs help cushion the blow of having almost no full-time vacancies, but the former's channelling through the Service afforded it greater involvement with young workers and their 'occupational' choices than had occurred previously.(15)

## Anticipations

As no part of the school leavers' questionnaire related directly to the issue of education and careers guidance, the following account is based upon the small goup discussions. While the freedoms and inhibitions of group settings ahould not be denied, the comments made showed striking parallels with those from individual interviews.(16) Before considering more directly views of careers teaching, it is useful to set these within the context of more general perceptions of school and its curriculum.

Feelings expressed about school were far more often critical than complimentary. Broadly speaking, the two main areas of complaint were those of school discipline and the irrelevance of the curriculum. Rules and their enforcement by teachers were often seen as a source of irritation.

> Some of them are all right, but some of them get on your nerves. They're always telling you to do things and that. (Sammy)

The following interchange began with Paul explaining what he hated about school.

> Paul        Everything ... teachers ... they're too strict. You can't walk about ... on the field, anywhere. It's stupid. If you want to smoke you should be able to smoke. I don't smoke myself but ...
> Patricia   No, that's daft, they could set it alight.
> Paul        They should set it alight.

In three different groups, it was alleged that school restrictions were contradictory in their treatment of adulthood and its responsibilities.

> They're always telling you to go out and look for a job,
> but when you ask them they won't let you out. (Helen)

The notion that school treated pupils 'like bairns' arose on a number of occasions (Griffin (1985:17)) and was sometimes linked to the coercion involved in doing disliked subjects. Michela contrasted school with Tech. college where it is possible to take 'the subjects that you want to', concluding that 'I think you'll be treated much older.' Views on curriculum relevance were overwhelmingly 'instrumental', with very little seen as relevant (to work) and the irrelevant majority rarely seen as possessed of saving graces (Finn (1984:28). Few admitted to simply enjoying subjects for their own sake.

For a small minority, dismissal of school was almost total. Lyn, seeking some form of factory work, stated that 'You don't need brains for the job I'm going to do'. The impact of unemployment received little mention although Michelle thought that

> It's all a waste of time, coming, because there's all
> those people on the dole and they've been to school,
> haven't they ... and they couldn't get jobs.

Typical comments about subject relevance were those of John,

> French, like, that's not going to get you a job as a
> welder or a mechanical job.

or Hazel's dismissal of religious education 'I'm not going to be a nun'. Science, for Sammy, was useless,

> unless you want to be a geet professor or something like
> that.

Despite some inevitable variation in preferences, the pattern of opinion on the curriculum showed a remarkable degree of consistency. English and maths were generally accepted as necessary, although some reagrded anything other than basic literacy and numeracy as pointless. The most widely approved subjects were those, such as metalwork, needlework, technical drawing and cookery, with a strong practical emphasis. Beyond this, appreciation and enjoyment of academic subjects tended to be both extremely limited and tightly bound to vocational choice; with RE followed by geography, history and languages, faring particularly badly.

The 'instrumental' view of education, noted earlier, might be expected to be very strong in an area like the Durham Coalfield, with its distinctive class structure and tradition of early leaving, and so it proved. Positive comment about socialising aims within schools occurred only once, in William's remark that 'it learns you to get on with other people'. Otherwise, behavioural issues appeared either as a battleground of imposition and defiance, or as so taken for granted as to be unworthy of comment.

Whatever the validity of the 'correspondence' view of school and work structures, comparison tended to polarise rather than conflate the two. In part this was attributed to being paid for work hassles, but not for those at school (Finn (1987:94)). Moreover, the respective rules, authority relations and compulsion to attend were usually regarded as qualitatively different. Indeed, contemplating their forthcoming release with relish, some found it difficult to see any parallels at all. 'Once I get out of here, nothing'll bother me'

(Peter). Verdicts on careers lessons confirmed the instrumental perspective in the favourable references sprang from their being seen as work-related, while the unfavourable indicated that they shared the general irrelevance of school. Unfavourable references outnumbered their opposite by an approximate ratio of two:one, with mixed verdicts usually closer to the former, often 'damning with faint praise'.

Help with job-finding techniques was the most valued activity, especially where this involved a degree of rehearsal.

> I find it useful when he tells us what things to learn to pass the entrance tests, tells us how to go about the interview, 'get your hair cut and smarten yourself up'. (John)

> It's pretty good. He's taught us how to do application forms and to write away to firms, make sure our writing was in the right place, paragraphs, your age, date of birth, interest in the work, things like that. (Alan)

While most felt this to be useful, it could be laboured unduly.

> It's all right, but once you've got the hang of it, that's it. (Joanne)

> It's all right, but we just seem to write letters, don't talk much at all about careers. (Matthew)

In looking at the volume and often venomous content of unfavourable comment directed towards careers teaching, it is difficult not to be struck by the depth of (often underlying) hostility. The eye for irrelevance was extremely keen and there seemed to be a strong disinclination to be 'reasonable' - to see any utility or purpose whatsoever in the teaching.

> We do a lot ... a lot of nothing. That's basically it. (Paul)

> I don't think anybody gets much out of it. (Fiona)

Relevance was commonly seen in particular and concrete rather than

general and abstract terms. For Geoffrey,

> there's things we do in careers that are completely
> irrelevant, like the employment situation in Consett. We
> wrote about it, but we didn't need to write about, with us
> living here, we know how bad it is. There's other things.
> We wrote about the career of Lester Piggott and that was
> totally irrelevant, unless you want to be a jockey.

Careers teachers' concerns to broaden the focus towards 'preparation for adult life' were occasionally appreciated,

> just gets you ready for life, build your confidence up
> when you leave school. (Anthony)

> They tell you how to run a flat and look after yourself.
> (Michael)

but more frequently taken as evidence of still greater irrelevance.

> It's not really like a lesson, he just talks about
> anything. (Paul)

> We don't even talk about careers, just anything. (Suzanne)

Similarly, while some careers teachers felt their lessons offered scope to engage in discussion of topics of interest free from the trammels of exam preparation, pupils tended to see this in a different light.

> It's a free lesson, that's all. (Tracy)

> Sometimes it's a bit of light relief, because it's the
> last lesson of the week and we do nothing. We used to get
> homework but nobody did it so there isn't any now.
> (Veronica)

As if to confirm the narrowness of legitimate teaching, lack of direct job-search material was often attacked.

> She hasn't told us nowt about trying to get a job. (Les)

In one class, where a stand-in teacher had concentrated, apparently exclusively, on money management, Peter complained that

> she tells you what to do with your pay, but she doesn't

tell you how you're going to get it.

The claim was often made that YOP and unemployment were never mentioned in careers lessons, while many more felt their treatment to be inadequate. Some were also unhappy at the lack of attention given to political issues and trade unionism.

Veronica    I think we should be taught more about politics.

Paul    First time we mentioned trade unions was when your questionnaire came round.

Helen    Never touched that area, I think they like to leave it alone, bit frightened of politics. We've had these book shortages ... and we haven't been told why. Nothing's been explained. Why is it the government says you can't have such and such? Is it lack of money or what?

A further indication of hostility was the very frequent recourse to what might be termed 'reductionist' descriptions of careers teaching, with the word 'just' a recurrent feature. By far the most common couplet was that of 'just talk'.(17)

It's just talk, no use at all, divn't even talk about nowt. (Mark)

Diane    We never do anything. We just talk.

Christine    You mean he just talks - all the time.

Other variants included just - writing letters, doing application forms, going through books and for one class, writing cheques.

The strength of 'practical' consciousness among a large majority of pupils was striking; to a degree which casts doubts on any 'strong' concept of education as a or <u>the</u> crucial 'ideological state apparatus'. Similarly, the place of learning in the school exchange paradigm required cautious treatment. Clearly, what was taught (or

not) in schools may have been important in establishing and maintaining certain ideological parameters, especially those restricting the development of any form of 'alternative' consciousness. Yet, there is little indication of the former's 'message' (whether academic or behavioural) having made much impression on a majority of prospective leavers. Indeed, much of the curriculum was openly dismissed as irrelevant. For them, participation in school seemed to rest heavily on 'dull compulsion', perhaps tempered by valuation of friendships and the like.

In this situation, the threat of 'crisis' arising from mass unemployment appeared relatively small. To the extent that the latter rendered education irrelevant, this was largely a matter of giving a new slant to an already understood irrelevance. There was little hint of any radicalising effects. Rather, the demands of school continued to be largely met with stoicism and resignation, although this did not necessarily preclude criticism and anger.

The small number and narrow range of outside speakers, overwhelmingly from the armed forces, was also a source of disgruntlement.

> We have to go even if it's nothing to do with us ... all they ever get is the army and that, nobody for things like nursing, we've asked for somebody but she says then can't get anybody to come out, or she says she's too busy to write anyway.

For some, the attempt to construct a syllabus of general relevance seemed to founder on the taken for granted strength of sex divisions within the class room and the labour market. As Alex put it,

> if he asks the lasses, the lasses start talking and the lads go to sleep, and then he asks the lads and the lasses go to sleep

adding as an afterthought, 'we'd be much better off going out to look for work'. Suggested improvements (polite ones!) were thin on the ground and invariably practical, focussing on job-search techniques and information.

For prospective school leavers, direct contact with the Careers Service was generally restricted to the 'careers interview' given to each fifth year pupil. The interview is a highly bureaucratised measure which imposes a uniformity (that everyone shall have an interview of the same length) upon wide variation in 'need' for such assistance, whether need is assessed from the standpoint of officers or pupils. Like school, the careers interview appeared to be experienced by the majority as an imposition, though not necessarily an unpleasant or unfruitful one.

Although 'unfavourable' references outweighed the 'favourable', contact with careers officers did seem to be rated more highly than that with careers teachers. Not only was the balance of comment relatively more favourable, but praise for careers officers tended to be more fulsome, denunciation less vitriolic. While comments ranged from 'great' to 'rubbish', the legitimacy of careers office work was not subjected to such fundamental challenge as was careers teaching, perhaps because as a personalised service, verdicts were not so readily generalised, and almost certainly because of the lower level of contact with the former.

Nonetheless, the hostility and disposition towards being critical was also present in assessment of service from the careers office. For most, appreciation appeared to be 'hard won', while seemingly minor

failings aroused strong condemnation. Despite their brevity, careers interviews were described more fully than the content of careers lessons, the tendency to 'reductionism' being markedly less. However, utility was usually assessed from an 'instrumental' perspective similar to that employed for careers teaching.

Client-centred ethos notwithstanding, the careers interview has a strongly bureaucratised flavour. In essence, the aim is to ensure that prospective school leavers have a fairly definite chosen occupation, preferably with a second, fallback choice. A further aim is that choices are 'well- informed' and 'realistic' in relation to personal characteristics and opportunities. Apart from assisting such clarification, the interviewer might also seek to offer guidance on how the choice(s) might be pursued, whether through information leaflets, lists of relevant employers or a commitment to notify in the event of vacancies.

School leaver evaluation of interviews depended on experience of both the overall process and its component elements. Not surprisingly, positive views rested on perception of the help offered as being both legitimate and practically useful. Clarification of occupational choice clearly depended on the young person's starting point. Those with fairly definite ideas might be asked questions such as 'why do you want to be a welder?' From the officer's point of view this can be seen as a checking process to gauge both how definite and how well-informed the choice is. Alan was one who found this helpful.

> She made us know what I wanted to do, to be sure that I
> really wanted to be a fitter or a plumber and not just be
> doing any old job. (18)

Yet, the quest to ensure clear choices was often experienced as a 'test'. As Brian put it, 'She just asked you about the job to see if you knew.'

Two young people mentioned the important discovery of otherwise unknown requirements in their chosen occupations. For the less decided, a more general clarification was usually attempted and this too was appreciated by a few.

> She was asking what jobs I would be suitable at and she was writing them all down. (Glynis)

The demand for 'realism' meant both that the less qualified should not aim too high and that they should be prepared to view the sale of their labour power in more abstract terms.

> I said I would like to work in an office and she says 'have you got any qualification?' and I says 'no', so she goes 'well, you'll not be able to do that, so what else are you going to do?', so I says, 'factory work, all sorts', so she says, 'all right', they'll let us know. (Tracy)

Peter, after a long conversation, was asked,

> 'Would you work in a factory?' and I said, 'Yeh, any work'll do me.

Second choices, in particular were often used to check on willingness to 'do anything'.

Job-search information in the shape of employer lists, training course details and the like were generally seen as valuable even if the returns were poor.

> She was pretty helpful, told us where to go ... gave us lists of firms to write away to. I've written away to nearly all of them and they just aren't taking people on. (John)

Careers officer commitments to 'let us know when there's a job' did

not seem to be viewed as an empty gesture, although few thought it likely to yield firm results.

Mention of YOP schemes was a frequent occurrence, usually taking the form of young people being told

> to go back if you don't get a job so that they can see about getting you on one of the schemes. (Tony)

Descriptions of such instructions revealed a variety in the degree of perceived compulsion. In the words of Ruth,

> She says if you can't get a job, you have to go down to the careers office and they'll get you onto a government scheme.

In broad terms, negative evaluation of careers interviews fell into two camps, one comprising those who regarded the interview as an unnecessary and unwelcome imposition, the other those who saw particular shortcomings in the service they received.

The most obvious candidates for the first group were those whose occupational choice and pursuit was felt to be progressing satisfactorily, or those who were 'happily undecided' and disinclined to face an interview where this would be challenged.

For the former, there were two major irritants, the first of which was that careers officers could offer no new information, or worse still, appear to know less than the interviewee.

> Didn't give you much information, or at least she didn't give me much information about what I wanted to do. (Fiona)

> What she told us I'd already been told off the careers teacher, so it was just a waste of time. (Russell)

> I thought she was rubbish ... I don't think she must have heard of the course I'm actually going on. (Susan)

The second problem area was that of 'dissuasion', or (perceived)

attempts on the part of careers officers to change a firm and appropriate choice. Victoria, intent on chiropody, said that

> She tried to change my ideas. I told her what I wanted to do and she kept telling me I should be doing other things - occupational therapy, speech therapy, I didn't know what she was talking about.

Helen, set on joining the navy, complained that

> She never gives no reason why you shouldn't go in, she was just saying 'you don't want to go in ...'. It's the first time she's seen us and she automatically knows what you're thinking and what you want to do. (19)

One interesting feature of dissuasion in the case of young men was the considerable number of times that the suggested shift was to join the army.

> I told the careers officer what I wanted to (farming DK) but she was useless, didn't seem to know much about it or anything. She just said maybe I should think about going into the army. Useful, isn't it? (Tommy)

> She wouldn't take 'no' for an answer when I said I didn't want to go in the army. She went on and on about it. (Frank)

For the 'happily undecided' there appeared to be two main ways of handling the interview, either by inventing a choice (Carter (1962:125),

> I wasn't taking much notice, she was just waffling on. I told her I wanted to be an engineer. It's a lie ... but she gave us about two dozen addresses to write off to. (Peter)

or by treating the interview as a joke.

> Just a bit chat. Now if there'd been tea and biscuits ... (Malcolm)

One group dissolved into hysterics recounting their string of 'don't know' responses to questions, and ridicule through caricature was fairly common. Another group 're-enacted' an interview in which

the answer to all questions (first, second and ideal choices) was 'Strakers' (a corrupt term for a local monastery running a YOP scheme for about ninety young men). The 'irony' here was that for a clear majority of male lower band pupils, Strakers was indeed to be their destination. Caricature might also involve the notion that careers officers tended to make suggestions from within a narrow range (preferably with intrinsically 'humorous' jobs) and would stop at nothing to fit people into this scheme.

> Anybody who was interested in sport, you had to be a remedial gymnast. (Paul)

Another area for wry humour was the talkativeness of certain careers officers, with phrases such as 'I couldn't get a word in edgeways' occurring on a number of occasions. For some, the 'non-directive' approach did not go down well. Patricia remarked that

> she was just asking us questions ... never told us nothing,

while Sarah was disappointed that

> they don't really argue back at you. They don't tell you their views.

One noteworthy feature in discussions of preparation and guidance was the negligible influence attributed to growing unemployment. It may well be that views indirectly reflected this trend, but it seemed that the 'institutional inertia', which tends to minimise the short term impact of labour market fluctuations, also influences evaluation, so that the latter occurs in terms seemingly 'independent' of such fluctuations.

## Experiences

Retrospective views of school expressed by young workers were, with one partial exception extraordinarily similar to those of prospective leavers.(20) The principal features were those of a majority hostility, strong instrumentalism with dismissal of all other than maths, English and practically oriented subjects, dislike of being bossed and so on. Indeed, the degree of concurrence was such that there would be little purpose in 'repetition'. The partial exception came from the eight interviewees who expressed regrets over their school performance, sometimes including a wish to return.(21) For some, the value of qualifications in widening options had now dawned. Donny S. commented that

> I was stupid, 'cause I thought, why, who needs exams if you want to work in a factory, but if I could turn the clock back I would have taken the exams,

adding as an afterthought,

> You don't realise it then, 'cause you're just a stupid kid.

Qualifications were usually implicit in notions of 'sticking in'.

> I was told to stick in at school, which I didn't, and I regret it now. (Gary F.)

> I could kick myself now for not sticking in at school, but there's not much I can do about that now, is there? (Brian P.)

Scorn could be poured on the alternatives ('acting daft', 'playing the idiot' or truancy) adopted during school.

Regrets over school were sometimes directly attributed to the disillusionment over what had followed, whether the difficulty of finding work, the boredom of unemployment or being no better off

financially than when at school.(22) However, these young workers, who saw cause for regret in their present circumstances and/or past attitudes and behaviour, were in a clear minority. As stated above, most had seen little reason for subsequent experience to change their views on the relevance of school.

Verdicts on careers teaching from the eighty young workers who had received it can be broadly classified as favourable,(16) non-committal(21) and unfavourable (43). In statistical terms, this approximate breakdown was not found to be related to factors such as qualifications, current employment situation, time elapsed since leaving school or sex.(23)

By far the most frequently cited of careers teaching's positive aspects was the utility of help with job-search techniques, the three main components of which were letters to employers, completion of application forms and rehearsed interviews. In all, twenty seven young workers spoke of having found one or more of these elements useful. Details of interview instruction seemed to be very well-recalled, especially by young women. Audrey W. remembered being told not to wear too much make-up or to fidget, while Anne D. was told

> how to talk, how to sit, to ask questions. You had to pay
> a bit of good attention.
>
> You're not supposed to wear high shoes in case you fall
> over walking in. Come in plenty of time ... and try to
> have a shower or something beforehand so you're nice and
> clean. (Sharon W.)

In a more general description, Diane J. felt that the careers teacher had 'just learned us all the tricks of the trade,really.' The idea that job-search technique was the most, and for many the only, useful

contribution of careers teaching was further reinforced by complaints from those who felt such help had been sorely missed in their careers lessons.

> It didn't show you the right way to talk and how to go on about the interview, the questions to ask them. (Peter A.)

> It didn't tell you how to act in an interview. (Denise N.)

Six young workers felt that careers teaching had supplied information which was helpful in terms of occupational choice, although in no case did anyone attribute their own favoured choice to this source.

A further four talked of careers teaching as being 'helpful', without being able to specify what made it so. A variant of this was to say that while it had not been of personal use, others had found it beneficial. On occasion, accuracy or realism was the yardstick for judging utility. Philip G. spoke of how 'you find a lot of what they say is true when you leave.'While Gary F., who had only had one interview said appovingly,

> I would say it was similar to the mock interviews we had at school. They asked you the same sort of questions.

Sylvia R. expressed appreciation of the inculcation of a positive attitude.

> We used to say 'why, there's no jobs, there's no point looking for them' but when he explains the different things and that, we says 'why, there must be jobs, ... if you have got experience or grades. (24)

As mentioned earlier, the balance of comment upon careers teaching was negative and it is to this which we turn. No less than fifteen young workers remembered careers lessons as periods during which very little was done.

> I'd really class that as a free lesson, myself, 'cause we
> never seemed to do anything. (Michael F.)

The two major perceived causes of inactivity were class indiscipline

and teaching priorities (Griffin (1985:18, 34)).

> They never learned us anything. Everyone just seemed to
> fool on ... a lesson where you did no work. (Francesca D.)

> The teachers were too soft and it was all a bit of a
> shambles, especially the lads, you know what lads are
> like. (Donny S.)

> Fifty per cent of the time the teacher was away and there
> was no discipline, just riots and that. (Richard D.)

Apart from Richard D., six other young workers comented on the

extremely low priority given to careers. One problem identified was

teacher attendance.

> The deputy head taught it and he was nearly always doing
> something, so we never used to get them ... just a free
> lesson. (Brian P.)

> Half of the lessons the teacher didn't turn in, so we used
> to play table tennis and that. (Robert P.)

Others thought that even when certain teachers were present, their

commitment was less than total.

> We just used to sit there, 'cause the teacher was always
> busy. (Kathleen H.)

> The impression I got was that he couldn't care less. It
> was just a job that he had. (Lesley C.)

According to Laura H., the teacher would say

> You just sit still and keep quiet until I get on with my
> work. We never done a thing, that's honestly. I tell a
> lie, we once had a film.

Twenty eight interviewees (with very little overlap with the

above-mentioned fifteen) spoke dismissively of lesson content as

something from which little or nothing was learned. Typical comments

were those such as

> Rubbish, we done nowt, didn't learn anything. (Trish C.)
>
> It didn't really tell you anything. (Denise N.)
>
> To be quite honest it was a waste of time. They were pathetic. (Lorraine G.)

The reductionist 'just' was much in evidence, and while this may be partially explicable in terms of reluctance to expand further, it occurred throughout the spectrum of talkativeness. As in the case of prospective leavers, the general hostility towards careers teaching was unmistakable. Once established, the mood of dismissal led to an implicit denial of any purpose (in talk, writing, reading etc), and/or to the omission of (often major) sections of the careers programme.

Seven young people expressed the view that tasks such as letter writing and completion of application forms were unnecessary, 'I could've done it all anyway' (Brian M.) or covered elsewhere in the school curriculum.

> Anyone can write a letter and you learn that in English anyway. (Gary F.)

A further nine criticised the narrow range of careers talks and films and their domination by the military.

> All we got was an army instructor showing you all about the army. (Pamela J.)
>
> We were supposed to get all these people in, but no-one came. We had a list up on the wall. (Stephen J.)

As noted earlier, young women tended to be less favourable than young men in their verdicts on careers teaching. Five made specific reference to 'sex bias' in the programme and particularly in the use of films and outside speakers.

> There was people who came in but I think it was more
> people who came in for the boys. (Julie M.)

> I mean, some jobs you weren't even interested in and most
> of them were just for lads. (Andrea K.)

Forces films and speakers were often seen clearly in male terms. For

Diane J.,

> The only thing I thought was wrong about all that was that
> it was more for the lads than for the lasses.

While the number commenting on this issue was small, it must be

remembered that the comments were in no way solicited but arose from

general discussion of careers teaching. Evidence from this study thus

fits well with West and Newton's (1983:40) finding that greater

attention was paid to boys than girls in careers lessons, although

this phenomenon is, of course, not unique to that subject.(25)

Furthermore, the three interviewees who said that their careers

teachers had tried to talk them out of their chosen careers were all

young women.

While the vast majority of critical comment mentioned so far

could easily have been offered by those still at school, there was a

considerable number of young workers (eighteen in all) who openly used

their post-school experience as the basis for their remarks.

There was, it should be noted, some sympathy for the plight of

careers teachers in the face of high unemployment.

> There's not a great deal they can do really. (Peter R.)

Graham L., having laughingly declared that the teaching was not very

helpful, 'cause I'm still on the dole', continued

> I've done exactly what they told us to do ... but they
> only tell you what they can, can't do any more.

Others, however, were quick to use the realities of unemployment as evidence of the irrelevance of careers teaching. Unlike those who were prepared to value job-search techniques more for their hypothetical than actual utility, six young workers stated that lack of jobs rendered them useless. Trish C. said of letters,

> I've never had to write one. I mean, there's no jobs I can write for.

Letter writing was much more prevalent among young men, primarily due to the issue of 'trade lists', but this could be a disillusioning experience. Robert P. had written about forty to fifty letters for possible openings as an electrician but had received only four (negative) replies. Geoff W. complained that

> they'd tell you what to do when you went for an interview ... but you never even get an interview apart from YOP schemes. I didn't even get an interview for here, they just told us to come up, catch the bus the next morning. (26)

Comments sometimes highlighted the perceived emptiness of bureaucratic responses from institutions which had lost any meaningful link with the labour market, with the former's artificiality set against the practical bite of 'real' knowledge of the latter.

> Speaking of careers teaching generally, Carl R. remarked,

> it would be helpful if there was any jobs, but it's a bit of a waste of time at the moment. They were saying 'you've got to learn how to write all these' but nobody got the job. They're just in a little world of their own, they should tell you what it's like.

> It's crap really, because there is no jobs...they're just telling them (pupils D.K.) a load of rubbish. (Colin Y.)

Job choice aspects of careers work were similarly undermined.

> They...kept asking what you wanted to do. The lads would keep saying 'a sheet metal worker' and 'a welder',

'electrician'. But when you see them in Consett, they're all on the dole, so I don't really think it does anything. (Joan E.).

A few young workers were implicitly critical of the positive approach with sought to raise hopes of employment and avoided the practicalities of unemployment because of its negativity.

They don't emphasise how hard it is to get a job. (Peter R.)

I got a real shock when I left school. I thought it would be easy to find work. (Angela F.)

Stephen J. used the following example to sum up his lack of preparation for leaving school.

I was completely lost. I mean, when I left school I didn't even know how to sign on the dole.

The balance of negative comment on careers teaching might have been even greater without the willingness of a considerable minority to regard aspects of job-search technique favourably. For the young workers interviewed, a reply to a letter was often a bonus, application forms were rarely used and job interviews decidedly thin on the ground.(27) In many ways, of course, careers teaching is strongly educational in its orientation, but as the above comments show, its perceived irrelevance did little to foster appreciation among its consumers.

When considering young workers' views of their contact with careers officers, various contextual factors should be borne in mind. Relative to careers teaching, which is clearly part of, and shaped by school, the Careers Service offers a more discrete, personalised and practically focussed service. The 'job finding' role means that for

many, ideal contact is restricted to quick and appropriate placement. More protracted contact is likely to be accompanied by growing frustration, whether this is directed at the Service or not.

The exchange paradigm for Careers Service operation shows the co-existence of both 'service' and 'disciplinary' aspects. Its twin assumptions are that careers officers will assist young people in making, and acting upon, sensible occupational choices, so long as the latter are committed to 'work in general', and prepared to be directed towards 'suitable' choices. Young workers, are, or course, not exempt from the social security requirement to 'actively seek work'and for them, the Careers Service is the primary adjudicator on its being met. The latter's ethos tends to make it reluctant to use such powers, but as we shall see, many felt the weight of more informal pressure.

The testimony of young workers showed enormous variety in treatment by the Careers Service, which while doubtless attributable in part to differences in interpretation, certainly reflected differences in interaction built upon careers officer approaches and perceptions of young worker 'commitment'.

Mention should also be made of the 'gatekeeping' role of the Service at a time when the majority of provision occurred through YOP. Careers Service control of YOP placements put officers in a more central position than ever before with regard to allocation of 'employment' resources.(28) The qualitative difference between old (jobs) and new (schemes) created a dilemma over the extent to which they could be treated alike. For, despite the numerical pervasion of YOP at the time of the study, it must be remembered that two or three years earlier, YOP had a marginality, both in terms of numbers and applicability, which would have made any 'equivalence' nonsensical.

Prior to subsequent pronouncements that unreasonable refusal of (YTS) schemes constituted failure to seek work, the question of equivalence was a discretionary affair. Custom and practice appeared to be that, informally, young people would be encouraged to treat schemes as job equivalents, both in terms of their being preferable to unemployment and as an avenue of choice. Formally, however, there was minimal likelihood that refusal of schemes would have disciplinary repercussions.

If verdicts on the Careers Service are broadly classified in the same way as those upon careers teaching, of the seventy eight who had had sufficient contact to offer an opinion, thirty two were 'favourable', twenty five 'non-committal' and twenty one 'unfavourable'. Thus, in overall terms, the Careers Service was markedly more 'appreciated' than was careers teaching.

This balance was constant between the sexes(29) and, perhaps surprisingly, showed no relation to the employment situation of young workers. Verdicts on the Careers Service did, however, show a statistically significant relation to two factors. The first was that of time since leaving school. Table 2.1 shows the breakdown of responses according to year groups.

Table 2.1

| View of CS | Time Since Leaving School | |
|---|---|---|
| | -12 months | +12 months |
| favourable | 19 | 13 |
| non-committal | 15 | 10 |
| unfavourable | 4 | 17 |
| | $x^2$ = 10.21 df2 prob. .01 | |

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These figures suggest that while initially, the Careers Service tended to be held in fairly high regard, there was growing disaffection with the passage of time. The other statistically important factor was that of academic qualifications. Thus if Table 2.1 is analysed in terms of qualifications, it can be seen that while for first year leavers there was relationship, for those in their second year disaffection was clearly associated with higher academic qualifications (Table 2.2).(30)

From focussed interviews, it was not possible to offer any clear-cut explanation for this relationship, but it is worth noting that the group of nine second year 'unfavourable' young workers with 0 levels were responsible for almost half of all comment about the

Table 2.2

| View of CS | Time Since Leaving School | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -12 months | | +12 months | |
| | 5CSEs+ | 4CSEs- | 5CSEs+ | 4CSEs- |
| favourable | 9 | 10 | 3 | 10 |
| non-committal | 7 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| unfavourable | 2 | 2 | 12 | 5 |

$x^2$ = 0.01 df2 prob. .99    $x^2$ = 6.64df2 prob. .04

Careers Service having 'only schemes' or pressing people to take places on them. It was also the case that many of those with O levels had foregone the option of staying on at school and were more likely to be disillusioned when this decision had 'worked out badly'.

Almost all those who reported good experiences of the Careers Service were impressed with the latter's prompt help in fixing up interviews for desired placement.

> They used to send us down for different interviews and jobs if I was interested in them. (Patricia P.) (31)

> If it wasn't for the careers ... I wouldn't be here now, because it was them who set us up with the interview. They've been very helpful at the careers. (Geoff R.)

In all, thirty young workers referred to this form of help, while a further eight described fairly similar dealings in more neutral terms ('they've been OK').

Apart from efficient service, personal qualities were also mentioned by six young workers. Heather T. said of one career officer,

> she'd help you, if you ever had a problem it was straight to her. You could trust her. You could talk to her. She wasn't nasty or anything like that.

while Donny S. commented that

> they try hard for you, they do really try their best to get something for you. I think they feel it as well when they see you sitting there like a dead end.

Unlike careers lessons, service from careers officers was sometimes described in glowing terms.

> They've been great. I don't know what anybody else's had but I've had really good attention. (Chris W.)

> Every time I've been down they've helped me out champion. They're great them. (Peter A.)

> Fantastic. They put up with us when I get mad. (Amanda K.)

If the expressed reasons for favourable verdicts were fairly straightforward, those for the unfavourable showed greater variety. The handling of ambitions caused disgruntlement for some. Lorraine G., who had subsequently gained a place on a drama course and performed in local theatrical productions, complained bitterly about the 'battle' she had faced with the Careers Service.

> I mean, they think 'oh yeh, drama, here's another one, wants to be a film star or a pop singer'.

On the comparatively rare occasions when crossing prescribed gender boundaries was on the agenda, the response could be derisory, and serving to reinforce those boundaries.

> They just laughed at us wanting to be a plumber. Just laughed at us and said 'don't be stupid'. They just wanted to talk us out of it. I suppose it was stupid, but it was what I wanted to do. (Carol P.)

Six young workers claimed that careers officers 'offer you things you aren't interested in'. The meaning of this varied according to the perceived powers of officers. For some, it was simply an irritant, its futility a source of frustration. Peter R. maintained that, for those with qualifications who were unsure of what they wished to do, the response was indiscriminate.

> You can guarantee that they'll give you a list to do with the civil service, banking and local government. It's amazing how many people go in and come out with exactly the same thing.

For others, persuasion was rather more threatening.

> She was going to put us in ... (a factory) ... but I said I couldn't go there 'cause I cannot stand the heat and that'. (Angela H.)

> They weren't even bothered. It was all just 'You'll have to take this or take that. (Angela F.)

Bureaucratic demands for clear and consistent choice sometimes caused problems for those who were interested in exploring more than one avenue. Two interviewees spoke of being pressed into a definite and single prioritisation, while another three mentioned difficulties in changing 'what was written on your form', being told in effect that if they opted to be 'indecisive', it would be extremely difficult to help them.

> If you wanted to do anything different that wasn't written on your form, you couldn't. (Trish C.)

The impact of unemployment was most readily obvious in the replacement of jobs by schemes, upon which thirteen young workers commented.

> All they've got is government schemes. (Jacqueline N.)

> They've been all right really, but every single job that they have are government schemes, no jobs. (Brian M.)

One noteworthy feature was the wide variation in perceived Careers Service culpability for this state of affairs.

> They've tried their best, it's just there's nothing they can do. (Peter H.)

> They've tried, but there's not that many jobs going around. (Tricia L.)

Philip G. felt that with so many people to deal with, you can't expect them to spend much time on you', while Colin Y. thought they were 'overstretched'.

If no-one directly blamed the Careers Service for the lack of jobs, their high visibility still made them likely targets for vented frustrations.

> Them up there, they all want sacking, honestly they do.
> They're pathetic. (Lorraine G.)

> We've just got to deal with these idiots in here. They're
> not bothered. They've got jobs. (Carl R.)

> I don't know how they get their jobs in the careers
> office. They do nothing (Patricia N.)

As noted earlier, the degree of 'equivalence' between schemes and jobs was a thorny issue. A number of young workers, though voicing different criticisms, all implied that the Careers Service was ignoring the essential non-equivalence of the two. Seven spoke of the pressure to join schemes.

> They're dead keen to get you on a scheme. (Christine W.)

> I think they're happy to just get somebody bunged onto a
> government scheme myself. (Steven D.)

The experiences of those who resisted the pressure (in one instance for a year) suggested that its form was usually fairly gentle. Indeed, there were two complaints about the difficulties in obtaining places on schemes.

> They seemed reluctant to give you a government scheme and
> I thought that was wrong. (Colin Y.)

Whether coincidental or not, both young men had several O levels. The enthusiasm of careers officers for YOP placements might also mean that they gave insufficient information, especially on the drawbacks of particular schemes. Heather T. argued that information on firms' treatment of trainees, including 'keep on' rates should be automatic, but was often withheld or conveyed partially and grudgingly. Sharon W. resented the careers officer

> telling you to do your best on schemes in the hope of

getting kept on, even when the firm doesn't keep people on.

Karen H. highlighted the point in exempting one careers officer from the more general criticism.

> One of them was great. She'll tell you what she thinks. She'll say 'I wouldn't fancy going there myself.'

According to Leslie H., a scheme placement was a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

> When you're on a government scheme they don't send you full-time jobs. They just more or less leave you until you're coming to the end of your scheme. They just forget you.

An alternative view was offered by Carl R., who appeared to be trying to make sense of the contradiction between 'seeing through' schemes and recognising their value as a possible route to jobs.

> They give the idiots jobs first, all the mugs who go on government schemes. People with the brains, who don't want them and know what it's like, they don't give them jobs.

Carl is clearly aware that in the bureaucratised world of schemes, conditions are such that only 'idiots' participate, while those with 'brains' leave well alone. However, despite (or because of?) their being 'in a world of their own', the bureaucrats do have some powers and use it to reward those who play their particular game. Thus, bizarrely, those with 'brains' are punished for their insights.

'Equivalence' in application of bureaucratic procedures was also subjected to critical comment. Trish C., who had experienced difficulties in changing designated choices observed, 'if it was a proper job, fair enough, but it wasn't.'

The prevalence of schemes and efforts to persuade young workers to join them begins to raise issues of whether careers office

provision is seen in service or disciplinary terms. However, these issues sharpen considerably over the question of attendance at the careers office.

For many, their perception of the office as a 'junior Jobcentre' meant that while unemployed they would drop in regularly in search of work. One young woman spoke of having gone in three times a week for about two months, while others attended weekly or fortnightly. Four young workers reported slackening off when they realised there was 'nothing for us'. Gillian C. said that she became 'so sick' after a couple of months that she stopped going.

For those whose voluntary efforts were deemed insufficient, it was apparently common practice for them to be told to attend at regular intervals, usually of three to four weeks. 'Enforcement' seemed to vary widely. Some were adamant that they <u>had</u> to go and were 'sent for' if they did not, but others reported attending infrequently or irregularly, yet escaping with impunity. Brian P. who was clear that he did not want a scheme, said

> I call in now and then, 'cause you're supposed to, but it's not much use.

Laura H., who had already been on one scheme and preferred to look for a full-time job, was told that she had to go, and having explained her position, was then told 'to report every three weeks anyway'. Being told to go in, especially when nothing was offered, was generally experienced as a process of 'checking up', rather than as a service. Summons to the office, combined with the fact of unemployment, could easily be taken as indicative of job search apathy, and the burden of disproof touched some raw nerves.

Francesca D., who had said she only attended when sent for, alleged that 'she just shouts at us, says I don't bother'.(32)

Patricia N., having spoken of a 'useless' Careers Service which had no jobs to offer, went on,

> and they were dead cheeky about it because they made you feel as though you're not trying hard enough. They were really horrible and bitchy with it.

Heather T., more sympathetically inclined, still felt obliged to say,

> they make you feel very down and out, 'you haven't got a job, you're unemployed, find a job, there's jobs to get ...'. I don't like going. It's very depressing, when you come out you don't feel as if you've talked to people, you've had a lecture on unemployment. I mean, it's not their fault, but you've had a lecture on unemployment no matter how you try to get round it.

In her analysis of 'Regional Underdevelopment and Education', Robinson (1976) notes the ideological link between education and 'modernisation', where negative attitudes towards education (in the north-east) are portrayed as an obstacle to progress, and improving education standards is seen as a key element in stimulating the local economy (:51,56).(33) She also notes County Durham's particularly 'disadvantaged' position within the wider north-east region.

As was observed in the previous chapter the onset of large scale youth unemployment had had mixed effects on the well-established local pattern of early school leaving. However, evidence from this study suggests that neither attempts at 'modernisation' nor even the more immediate threat of unemployment had had any profound effects on the attitudes of most prospective or recent school leavers towards education. Consciousness remained strongly practical in its focus,

indicating continuity with a situation where family and locality rather than education were seen as the primary source of work for the majority.

As mentioned earlier, participation in education seemed to rest heavily on 'dull compulsion', with scant evidence of strong ideological domination. For the most part, consciousness appeared to be firmly located in a set of material practices with their 'practical' discourses, rather than as the product of 'hegemonic' influences. Dealing with the careers service tended to be judged from a similarly practical standpoint, with positive valuation of straightforward help, and considerable resentment at episodes of 'bureaucratic interference and obstruction'. For prospective leavers, contact with careers officers was largely unaffected by the spectre of unemployment, although the possibility of schemes providing a 'fallback' was sometimes mentioned. However, for the majority of their post-school counterparts, the impact of unemployment on contact was clearly enormous, considerably raising its amount and setting the context for negotiation between the Careers Service and its 'clients'.

As noted earlier, the relationship between jobs and schemes, and their '(non)equivalence was the source of some tension. In turn, this can be seen to relate to perceptions of the 'legitimacy' of unemployment on the part of both officers and young workers, and it is to the question of unemployment that we turn in the next chapter.

## Notes

1   Althusser (1971) accorded education pride of place among modern 'ideological state apparatuses'.

2   Gintis and Bowles (1981:46) argue that 'education prepares students to be workers through a correspondence between the social relations of production and the social relations of education.' In support, they cite features such as individualised competition under hierarchical relations, external systems of reward, punctuality and acceptance of extra-familial authority. Beyond acquisition of correct attitudes and basic numeracy and literacy, the curriculum and certification process serves to rank pupils via the attainment of rationed qualifications tied to labour market allocation. In this ranking process, education 'serves less to change the results of primary socialisation in the home than to ratify them and render them in adult form' (Bowles (1977:147)). Various aspects of school culture may act to reinforce the process of hierarchical reproduction. (See for example Bourdieu (1977) on 'cultural capital', Bernstein (1977) on class linguistic codes, Jackson and Marsden (1966) on the difficulties faced by working class grammar school boys and Hargreaves (1967) for a comprehensive account of informal 'hierarchy' in a secondary modern school).
    There is also a sizeable literature devoted to the reproduction of gender and racial divisions. In respect of the former, the main focus of attention has been on the effect of patriarchal assumptions and practices and especially upon preparation for respective sex roles (Sharpe (1976), Deem (1978, 1980), Wolpe (1981)). For the latter, emphasis has been placed on isues of curriculum, teacher attitudes and the wider impact of a racist society (Taylor (1981), Stone (1981) (Sarup (1986).

3   See Karabel and Halsey (eds) (1977) CCCS (1981), Reeder (1979:115).

4   In the early 1970s, the 'Black Papers' were the main organ of the traditionalists (Cox and Dyson (eds) (1969). (See CCCS (1981:ch.9)). The general line of thinking is neatly expounded by the MSC's Training Services Agency (1975:15).
    'In recent years, the social environment in a number of schools, with more emphasis on personal development and less on formal instruction, has been diverging from that still encountered in most work situations, where the need to achieve results in conformity with defined standards and to do so within fixed time-limits call for different patterns of behaviour. The contast is more marked where changes in industrial processes have reduced the scope for individual action and achievement.'

5     As many writers have observed, the 'human capital' argument, as proferred by Schultz (1977) is seriously flawed in its view of the conversion of educational into economic performance. Quite apart from the question of whether education improves the performance of workers (or capitalists), it is fallacious to assume that its effects can somehow bypass the blind workings of the market (Hussein (1981:166)).

6     The nonsense of trying to 'cure' unemployment by improving the quality of labour-power and of job-search techniques, has frequently been noted (Hussein (1981:170), Youthaid (1981:1). As CCCS (1981:161) write sardonically, 'whatever would the educationalists and manpower planners do with a host of ambitious individualised school leavers clutching their educational certificates?'

7     As Corrigan puts it, 'they didn't like it when it was all maths and exams, they now didn't seem to like it when it was all civics and projects.' (1979:21) See also CCCS (1981:35), Sawdon et al (1981:para 6.11).

8     According to Tory Minister David Young, skills and competences 'must relate to what employers are looking for and what young people see as relevant' (Guardian 20.4.83).

9     In one sense, there is a neat dovetailing of the two, with school imposing a hierarchy based on qualifications and work attitudes which is then roughly translated into hierarchy of occupational entry. However, there are numberous areas of divergence, whether due to employer discrimination on the basis of class, sex or race, use of contacts, non-recognition of qualifications and so on (Halsey et al (1980), Karabel and Halsey (eds) (1977), Dale et al (eds) (1976), Cosin et al (eds) (1977), Deem (1980)). In addition conventional notions of hierachy may be subverted, as in Willis's 'lads' rejection of mental labour, although depending on levels of academic attainment, such choices may serve to reinforce the prevailing relationship of harmony between the two sectors.

10    Within this chapter, the primary focus is on careers teaching and the work of the Careers Service, although broader experiences of school are also dealt with.

11    Amid general antipathy towards 'progressive' education, Corrigan found pupils particularly scathing about careers lessons (1979:65).

12    See Kirton (1983) for expansion on the forms and rationales for these positive responses, which seemed to rest heavily on the smooth running of schools and the difficulty of translating reservations into actions.

13   This self-image has not been readily accepted by the Service's clients, who often wish to use it more instrumentally (Bazalgette (1978:100), Roberts (1971:104-5)).

14   Simon (1977:49) has argued that this may tend towards 'elitism', with help concentrated in those areas of work where 'self-fulfilment is more of a possibility'.

15   This increased involvement was most clearly manifest in the MSC's 'guaranteed offer' of a scheme place to all unemployed young workers, which for an overwhelming majority of school leavers in the Durham Coalfield meant contact with the Careers Service.

16   Where possible, the representativeness of observations will be indicated, but this is inevitably a somewhat impressionistic process.

17   Carter (1962:102) suggests that pupils are often very vague about what they have been told regarding jobs, due to a combination of disinterest and poor delivery. While this may be true in the sense of detail, it did not, in this study, inhibit the free flow of invective.

18   The suggestion to have a second choice could also be found useful.
     She got us interested in speech therapy as a fallback, which I'm considering now. (Carol)

19   Predictably, perhaps, there was little speculation as to why dissuasion should occur. One exception was Sarah, who attributed it to the careers officer's fear of being 'redundant'.
     From the way he was talking, he was a bit astonised that I'd already decided what I wanted to do and that he wasn't going to be much help really.

20   The use of focussed interviews meant that careers work would be discussed but what the interviewees chose to say about it left as 'open ended' as possible. The strength of the method is that comments are made 'freely', so that what is deemed significant is dictated more by the respondent than the questioner. Its chief weakness is the lack of comparability on issues raised by some but ignored by others. Thus, the raising of issues (or expression of particular views) is important in that no-one is compelled to do so, but often the only definite knowledge of the remainder is that they chose not to.

21   Of the eight, one was employed full-time, for were on schemes and three unemployed. Four had passed no exams, while a further two had four or less CSEs.

22   One interesting variant was produced by Karen H who said
     you hate it while you're there, but looking back you realise that you had a good laugh.

23  Young women were less impressed with their careers teachers  than were young men,  although the $x^2$ for this  relationship at  2.75 (df2) represented a probability of 0.27, far short of the conventional (.05) measure of 'significance.

24  Sylvia was one of those interviewees in full-time employment.

25  See also Prout (1983) on sexism within the careers curriculum.

26  The assumption of certain  large non-WEEP schemes  was that  they would accept anyone referred, and that there was no real need for interviews.

27  In YOP, letters and forms  would be rarely, if  ever used,  while interviews were neither universal nor always 'serious'.

28  All placements had to  be ratified  by the Service  and the  vast majority were also arranged by careers officers nominating  young workers for interview.

29  This finding is  at odds  with that of  Sawdon et  al  (1981:para 6.20) that young women were generally more favourable than  young men towards the Careers Service.

30  The figures for those with 0 levels show this even more clearly

### Table 2.3

| View of c.s | Time since leaving school | |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | -12 months | + 12 months |
| favourable | 6 | 1 |
| non-committal | 3 | 3 |
| unfavourable | 1 | 9 |

31  Mentions of 'jobs'  were  often  references  to  schemes,  the confusion of which will be discussed further in chapter 5.

32  The 'hurt' came  across as rather  tongue-in-cheek, as  Francesca elsewhere depicted her dealings with the careers office as a  war of attrition for which she gained considerable enjoyment.

33  See also Harrop (1976) on the 'problem' of early school leaving.

Chapter 3

Unemployment

There are few, if any areas of people's lives which are untouched by their being unemployed. Questions of resources, routine and the images held by selves and others guarantee that this is so. Such pervasive influence means that examination of the effects of unemployment will recur in all chapters, and that this chapter is not, therefore, intended as a 'holistic' treatment. The testimony upon which it is based emerged from direct discussions of unemployment, so that where other topics arose, it was because young people chose to raise them in this context. Although this entails a small measure of overlap between chapters, a specific chapter outlining the major impressions of unemployment remains necessary because of the scale of its overall impact and influence.

Stark as they are, the statistics of youth unemployment within the coalfield do not do full justice to the impact of unemployment upon young workers.

In an area of historically high unemployment (in national terms) and little in-migration, young people are likely to have grown up with greater experience of unemployment in family and community than those elsewhere. For many, exposure to the 'tribal memory' would include recollections of the acute hardships of the thirties. Similarly, they have witnessed the closure of large-scale workplaces, and their

erratic and partial replacement. As we shall see in chapter 10, perceptions of the area are closely bound to its employment prospects, and in a broader sense, to its historical 'decline'.

The prevalence of temporary schemes requires that a distinction be drawn between the immediate and background influence of unemployment. Both in their rewards and routine, schemes are clearly different from unemployment, but are in various ways, equally different from unemployment. In particular, the often minimal chance of being kept on after the expiry of the scheme makes unemployment a constant threat for many. Nor is this insecurity confined to those on schemes. Of eight full-time jobs previously held by interviewees, only four had been given up voluntarily, while few jobs 'currently' held were at all secure (see chapter 4).

If the young (especially school leavers) share many facets of unemployment with older workers, theirs is, in other ways, a distinctive position. As would-be job entrants, they clearly suffer from 'natural wastage' and other 'no recruitment' policies. In terms of sympathy, they may benefit from the fact that they can scarcely be held responsible for lacking experience or for many of the industrial ills (low productivity, overmanning, strikes etc) by which workers are often said to bring unemployment upon themselves. 'Unreasonable' wage demands are, of course, an exception here and readily tie in with moral outrage over 'too much, too soon' as the explanation for wayward youth. Inexperience and assumed lack of family responsibilties combine with beliefs that they must be occupied, to make young workers prime targets for exploitative and often regimented measures. As yet, it is

difficult to conceive of Thatcher's 'unemployment will not be an option' being applied to older workers,(1) nor indeed, proposals for outright withdrawal of benefit entitlement.(2)

The treatment of young workers is closely bound to the institution of childhood, a 'paradoxical' amalgam of sentimentality and repressive denial of rights and resources.(3) Within YOP (and later YTS) this mixture has been evident in the rhetoric of 'guarantees' and 'training' alongside total insecurity, falling allowances and growing compulsion to participate.

State measures have cast the young unemployed as a group of special 'vulnerability' for whom positive experience must be found within a labour market which otherwise has no use for them.

> The danger for the state is the threat of disillusionment among ... young people before they can be effectively locked into working life. (Stafford (1981:56))

For the young, more than any other age group, the presumed links between worklessness and (threatened) social disorder are tightly drawn. 'Youth' is seen as a key area of social reproduction. As Davies (1981:14) puts it,

> Youth has always been a serious flaw in the process by which our society reproduces law-abiding citizens, a hard-working labour force and responsible adults.

In describing the genesis of a 'moral panic', Mungham contends that

> the vision of workless youth was never primarily one which saw too many hands which should be put to productive use, but rather than one where youth unemployment was woven together with crime, insubordination and moral degeneration into an imagined dark and threatening alliance. (1982:30)

In one sense, the imagination required must be vivid, for as

Mungham continues,

> there is almost no evidence to sustain the view that youth
> are major carriers of riotous thoughts and actions. (:36)

Yet equally, it is not difficult to find raw material upon which imagination can work; the 'alien' quality of certain youth (sub) cultures; a 'Lorenzian' belief in innate aggression among young men which if not channeled safely into military, paramilitary or sporting avenues will inevitably find outlets in disorder; the disproportionate involvement of young men in crime and hooliganism; 'political violence'; sexual licence, teenage pregnancies and so on.(4). Clearly such imagery has no necessary connection with unemployment (indeed many of the evils of youth have been explained as products of affluence) but the idea that 'the devil finds work for idle hands' remains a powerful one (Clarke and Critcher (1985)).

The contradiction in capitalist society between the socialised nature of production and its private control finds expression in the situation of the unemployed who are obliged to accept that they have no right to work but have a duty to take work when it is available and to remain in active search when it is not.

Essentially, the fears of the respectable are that the unemployed may seek to 'resolve' their situation either by refusing (violently, subversively etc) to accept that they have no right to work, or that they become apathetic in the dispatch of their 'duties'.

If these are the major concerns of their elders and betters, what then of the experiences of the young themselves? Once again, the views of prospective school leavers are the product of small group discussions rather than questionnaire material.(5)

## Anticipations

Those still at school could have no direct experience of unemployment, but for many with family or friends out of work there was considerable knowledge of its effects. Not surprisingly, perhaps, such knowledge tended to have produced images of unemployment as something to be avoided at almost any cost.

> My brother was on the dole for months and he was so bored, he would have done anything to get a job. (Sandra)

> My dad's been on the dole for years and it's terrible. (Marie)

> I think at times it must get to desperation. When ... (my brother) ... sees his friends going out, he knows he can't cause he hasn't got the money. (Geoffrey)

Overall, references to the future possibility of unemployment were predominantly negative. A small minority professed themselves (whether naively or not) reasonably happy with the prospect.

> It wouldn't bother me, I'd walk the dog. (Ian)

> I'd be quite happy on the dole if I couldn't get a job. I'd go round visiting, I'd be out every afternoon and evening. (Stephen)

Similarly, for some who saw themselves engaged in battle with the work ethos and restrictions of school, 'going on the dole' represented a victory of sorts. With obvious pride Peter stated his career intentions. 'I'm going to be a dole-wallah.'

The links with glamorous adult privileges were also evident in the following interchange about the dole.

> Anne            You'd get sick of it, man.

> Malcolm (grinning) I don't think it would be too bad.

> Barry (to M.)    That's just 'cause you'd spend all your time down the pub.

Not only did negative views of unemployment heavily outnumber (by over three to one) the positive, but they were also much more emphatic in their verdicts.

> Worst thing you can do. I'd do anything not to be on the dole. (Russell)

> If I'm on the dole, I think I'd die. (Diane)

> I'd hate it myself. (John)

> I'd go daft. (Paula)

By no means the only problem, boredom was nonetheless seen as the overriding worry.

> I just cannot sit in the house. (Dot)

> I couldn't be on the dole because I'd be bored sick all day. (Marie)

Alan drew on his experience of boredom during school holidays to remark,

> starts depressing you after a bit if you haven't got a job, sitting round doing nothing. It's bad enough in holidays but it would be just like one long holiday if you can't get a job

Particularly for young women, there was the additional consideration that a greater domestic contribution would be demanded, thereby offering a rather dubious 'relief'.

> It's just getting bored... and then you get more to do round the house. (Pat)

> Sitting around doing nowt. Just looking after the bairn. (Tracy)

Expectations that being unemployed would mean boredom depended, at least in part, on implicit recognition that there would be little money available for leisure activities. However, numerous direct

mentions of finance were also made. According to Alex,

> you don't get no money. You get paid fortnightly and your money's going to go in a week, so you'll be skint for a full week

Michael said he was

> disturbed at the thought of not getting work, having no money in my pocket.

Against the 'bigheads' who believed they would have £15 spending money, Sammy commented, 'Our Gary, he pays board, everything. He's left with nowt.' Worries were also expressed that having no money when mates were working would wreck friendships.

Inevitably, dread of the dole generally made other options more attractive in comparison. Very few fifth year pupils directly attributed their decisions, whether to stay on or leave school, to employment conditions. Those opting to stay had usually chosen occupations which demanded further academic qualifications, while intending leavers tended to claim (with varying degrees of outrage at the idea) that nothing would persuade them to return. All six schools, however, reported upward trends in sixth form entry,(6) a trend borne out by figures from the three local careers offices, which show that in 1979-80, 10.4% of male and 13.4% of female 'leavers' entered sixth forms whereas in 1980-81, the corresponding figures were 15.5% and 17.8%.

The rise was far from uniform between the three areas. In Bishop Auckland, the percentage rise (for both sexes combined) was from 10.1% tp 18.8%, in Consett 20.3% to 31.6%,(7) while the Easington figure actually fell slightly, from 10.5% to 10.1%.(8) For the two west Durham towns, the rises do suggest that the collapse of the local

youth labour markets had made continuing education a more desirable option. In the east, however, where it might be expected that traditional Coalfield patterns would be strongest, a similar collapse had had no effect on continuation rates.

If the relative attractions of school were not widely felt (and rarely admitted to), this was not the case for YOP schemes, about which the phrase 'better than the dole' was much in evidence (West and Newton (1983:89)). This preference was undoubtedly seen in terms of a 'lesser of two evils', as very few prospective leavers were at all enamoured with YOP. Yet, although the perceived margin of preference varied considerably, there were only a small minority of dissenters who claimed to prefer unemployment. Those who did so almost invariably explained their choice in terms of the disadvantages of YOP, its minimal financial gains (especially where bus fares were high, or 'board' arrangements varied) or its uselessness as a route to full-time work.

For some, 'better than the dole' was clearly a 'last resort' verdict.

> There's no way I would go on the dole, but I wouldn't like to go on the government schemes. They're just cheap labour, I think, paid £23-50 for doing jobs other people are doing for twice as much. I'd go on if I had to but ... (Michela)

> I don't like them but I suppose I'd go if there was nothing else. It's ridiculous. You could be kept on but they're just avoiding paying money. As soon as they get rid of one, they get another one in and they're not paying a penny. (Joanne)

Discussion of financial matters and 'incentives' was notable for the conflict between those who focussed on the inadequacy of scheme

allowances (either as 'cheap labour' or as too close to dole payments)

and the pragmatists such as Sandra for whom

Any money's better than the dole.

| Paul | You get £23-50 and it's not really worth it. |
| Michelle | Better than nothing. |
| Paul | Same as the dole, near enough. |
| Mark | Why, £23-50's better than £15 odd. |
| Anthony | Should maybe be more like £30. |
| Mark | Still better than the dole £8 better. |

If the financial 'merits' of YOP remained highly contentious, its

offer of relief from boredom (or worse) was more readily appreciated.

Stops you just sitting around. I've got some friends on them and the money doesn't mean much to them. It was just the fact of having a job. (Elizabeth)

I'd rather do that than be on the dole. At least it keeps you busy. Better than doing nothing for six months. (Sharon)

There was also recognition that experience of unemployment could lead

to depression. Stephen said of YOP,

I think it's an ideal way of ... if people are getting depressed it gives them something to do and they're learning a skill at the same time.

The potential for schemes to stave off boredom and its consequences

was often viewed in the same pragmatic light as its small pecuniary

advantages, and thereby used to counter its obvious drawbacks.

| Sarah | My friend was on one and then she was just finished. |
| Ruth | What else would she have been doing, she would have been bored. |
| Peter | Probably committed suicide by now. |

The effect of unemployment 'elevating' what might otherwise be

regarded as poor options has been noted elsewhere (Stafford

(1981:69)). What was most striking about discussion of unemployment

was not so much the weight of 'dull compulsion' towards pragmatic acceptance of the undesirable, but that this should be so evident from the vantage point of school and prior to direct experience of unemployment.

Links between unemployment and crime were referred to on numerous occasions

If you've got no work, you get into trouble (Michael)

John described schemes as

good for keeping people off the streets. At least on a six month government scheme you know where they're at, working and not roaming the streets, smashing up places,

to which Alan added, in a very 'matter of fact' way

it gives them money to save them breaking in places. (9)

Apart from facing boredom and poverty, unemployment also means coping with the stigma of being out of work. The moral imperative to seek work ensures that success and failure in job search are seen in moral terms, particularly by the successful, eager to play down any elements of fortune. Braun (1977:50) notes that

those who have jobs or apprenticeships tend to regard their unemployed peers as lazy, unintelligent, lacking motivation, lacking discipline, lacking responsibility.

Such is the desire to avoid the connotations of unemployment and the 'skiver' stereotype, that many unemployed people indirectly deepen the divisions in attempting their own 'escape' (Hendry (1987:207)). Sinfield observes of older workers that

if one can claim with an injured pride that this is the first experience of unemployment, then one is establishing more deserving status. The implication is that those with repeated experiences of unemployed have a more questionable claim for sympathy and special help. (1981:35)

Of course, such internal division need not be based on anything as solid as incidence or duration of unemployment, but may arise simply because one's own efforts, disappointments and the like are better known than those of others or that signs of flippancy in others are judges more harshly. To be 'bothered' about finding work is an extremely vague notion and the label 'not bothered' relatively easy to fasten on those who are unemployed and whose thoughts and efforts to find work may be unknown.

Deacon (1981:74) points to the popularly-held belief that, regardless of absolute numbers unemployed, there is a certain percentage who are 'workshy', and suggests that at times of high unemployment this is rapidly transformed into a notion of 'unemployability', a concept curiously absent under conditions of full employment. He writes,

> both historical and contemporary evidence demonstrate that 'unemployability' is a function of the tightness of the labour market.

The 'absolute' nature of the duty to seek work facilitates this move in a number of ways.

First, it allows 'empirical' variations in effort to be treated as the product of personal qualities rather than of situations ie there is no 'excuse' for apathy. Second, it can incorporate a duty to equip oneself with the requisites of employment so that changing demand factors (for qualifications, experience, location etc) can more easily be treated as problems of supply. This in turn helps to focus on the 'deficiencies' of the unemployed, which can be used, implicitly, to explain unemployment itself. 'Paradoxically', the

increasing emphasis on supply factors occurs at a time when they could well be less prominent. As Hill asks

> since there is a  scarcity of  jobs to go  round, does  it matter that some people are  not trying very  hard to  get work. (1981:113)

Perceived culpability at times of mass unemployment is subject to contradictory pressures. On  the  one hand,  it clearly  becomes  more difficult to pathologise  ever greater  numbers of people,  not  least when many have very good work records, or in the case of young people, qualifications  which   would   have,   until   recently,   guaranteed employment. Yet, to  the extent  that unemployment is  accepted as  an evil,  its  growth  ideally  requires some  form  of  explanation  with corrective potential. Within ideologies which  hold capitalist  social relations sacrosanct, this  must  almost certainly  take the  form  of attacking workers for  their obstruction of  market workings,  whether through greed, restrictive practices or whatever.(10)

Among those participating in the group discussions, the  abstract notion that unemployment was in any way due to the qualities of  young people themselves was almost  totally rejected. The  fact that  'there just aren't any jobs' seemed so plain as to make questions of 'supply' appear ridiculous.

Yet  ideology remained  powerful,  with  contradictions   often 'solved' by distinguishing the particularities of personal experiences and situations from the generalised ones of 'others'. Thus, while  the vast majority of participants claimed,  and genuinely appeared to  be, deeply concerned about the prospect of unemployment, many professed to know many of their peers who were not.

David        Most of them are lazy in school, like in the lower bands, but most of the middle band want to try hard to get jobs.

Alan         Some of them in the middle band don't - mentioning no names.

For Joanne

you get too much on the dole. Half of them don't want to work and I don't think people should get paid to just laze about. Most of them only go on the dole for the money.

Being on a scheme did not necessarily grant immunity.

I think they should sort out the people who've got places on schemes, see who really wants to work, cause some of them are just not bothered as long as they're not on the dole. (Sally)

The onus of proof about seeking work could be used to legitimise the 'conscription' of the unemployed. Victoria expressed the view that

it's daft having all these people on the dole when there's graveyards going to waste. Maybe they should get them on cleaning them up. They're always saying they'll do anything for a job.

Such views come from those who have not yet entered the labour market. But already they are aware of one of its crucial divisions - namely that between the 'honest worker' and the 'scrounger' - and anxious to place themselves on the side of virtue. It may, at first, seem paradoxical that those who are highly likely to be unemployed themselves should be so punitive towards 'the unemployed' in general. Yet, as Nichols and Beynon argue, this is explicable in terms of the 'ideology of sacrifice' adopted by many members of the working class (1977:194). For them, the dilemma of work v. unemployment is 'close to home' and the idea, that unemployed workers may be faring as well or better than they are, has the potential to make a mockery of their own sacrifices (:196). Fantasies that this is the case simultaneously

serve to underline the extent of those sacrifices and to justify the punitive responses which would, in fact, widen the gap between their respective positions. One worker, at least dimly aware of the hardship of life on the dole, preserved the fantasy notion by arguing that, if unemployed, he would probably be discriminated against and receive none of the lavish benefits enjoyed by other claimants (:198).

It can be seen from the above testimony that prospective school leavers had already formed judgements of various aspects of unemployment - of its boredom and poverty, of demands for domestic labour and of ideological issues of blame attaching to unemployment. We now move to consider the experiences of the study's young workers, in order to assess the parallels with, and differences from these views.

## Experiences

Before looking more closely at young workers' experiences of unemployment, it is useful to consider this experience in durational terms. Sixty eight had at some stage been unemployed for at least a month.(11) Of these, fifty had only had a single spell of unemployment, seventeen, two spells and one, three spells. Table 4.1 offers a breakdown of these figures by duration.

### Table 3.1

### Periods of Unemployment

| One | | Two or More | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 months or less | 30 | 6 months or less | 11 |
| 4 months or more | 20 | 7 months or more | 7 |

The total (inevitably approximate) was 292 months (24 years 4 months) an average duration of 4.3 months for the sixty eight concerned. Not surprisingly, with over three quarters (77%) of the sample experiencing unemployment, there were no sub-groups who escaped lightly. More young women (38 from 45) than young men (30/43) had experienced unemployment, a trend which would have been much more marked, were it not for the dramatic overrepresentation of young men among the longest-term unemployed (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

| Single Period | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| 3 months or less | 12 | 18 |
| 4 months or more | 8 | 12 |

| Double Period* | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 months or less | 4 | 7 |
| 7 months or more | 6 | 1 |

* (includes one treble spell)

Predictably, those in their second year after leaving had experienced greater unemployment than those in their first. Expressed in terms of average duration the figures were 5.3 and 3.2 months respectively,(12) while second years had a much higher incidence of repeated unemployment (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

| | Time since leaving school | |
|---|---|---|
| Periods of Unemployment | 'First Year' | 'Second Year' |
| One | 30 | 20 |
| Two or more | 2 | 16 |

$$X^2 \ 12.81 \ df1 \ prob \ .00$$

Although academic qualifications offered scant protection from unemployment per se, the linkage between them and repeated unemployment was striking (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

| | Qualifications | |
|---|---|---|
| Periods of Unemployment | 5CSEs+ | 4CSEs- |
| One | 26 | 24 |
| Two or more | 4 | 14 |

$$X^2 = 4.76 \ df1 \ prob \ .03$$

Of those in jobs at the time of interview ten from fourteen had been unemployed three months or less in total, as had thirty five (from fifty six) of those on schemes, but only five of the eighteen unemployed.

Quite apart from those unemployed at the time of interview, the scale of these figures shows unemployment as a significant part of the

personal experience of the majority. Their testimony, and the strength of feeling it conveys, also indicate that the experience generally 'left its mark'. It is, of course, interesting to compare how well these accounts accord with the anticipatory views expressed by final year pupils. The most noteworthy feature of such a comparison is the high degree of congruence between the two sets of views.

For the vast majority, unemployment was a strongly and sometimes overpoweringly unpleasant experience.

It's horrible being on the dole. (Paul J.)

Terrible. I was sick. (Trish C.)

It's terrible. I can't stand it. (Carol P.)

I hated every minute of it. (Geoff R.)

Even for the most positive, being unemployed was more a matter of 'survival' than enjoyment. Only Richard D., who occupied his time with a variety of sporting activities and listening to music, went further.

I enjoy it. You can always amuse yourself. The Victorians did, so why can't we.

Donny S., whose parents had both been ill, reported that apart from looking after them she

used to do gardens and things like that. I wasn't bored at all. I found plenty to do and I used to babysit through the day.

Coping with unemployment meant, above all, keeping boredom at bay.

Sometimes it gets you down, but you've just got to keep busy. (Tricia L.)

It doesn't bother us too much. If I'm sitting at home and I've got nothing to do, I sit and think about ... being on

the dole, but if I'm doing something I'm all right. (Olwyn G.)

I don't like it. I'd rather have a job but I can get along. (Brian P.)

Interestingly, all three were unemployed at the time of interview and it seemed generally that those who were unemployed more often regarded being out of work as more 'tolerable' than did others, and were slightly less disenchanted. While finding life on the dole relatively more tolerable may have inclined some to be less desperate to leave it by taking a YOP place, there also appeared to be elements of rationalisation or even self-directed 'pep talk' in comments from unemployed young people. Denise N. remarked,

You've just got to put up with it. You can't get too depressed.

Without doubt, the dominant impression of unemployment was its boredom and the (usually losing) battle against it. Of sixty eight young workers who had experienced unemployment, only three said they were never bored, and a further four that they seldom were. For the remainder, tedium was a regular and sometimes ever-present companion. Its uniformity across divisions of sex and academic attainment was striking. In relation to the former there was nothing to indicate that young women found unemployment any easier to bear because of 'alternative sources of identity' as has been suggested elsewhere (Ashton and Field (1976:104)).

Standing as it does 'outside work', experience of unemployment becomes intertwined with that in other 'non work' structures and activities, such as those of family and leisure. As we shall see, this linkage has significant differentiating effects on the respective

experiences of young women and young men (Roberts (1984:57)).

In many ways, the boredom of unemployment can be seen as deriving from the destruction of work/non-work boundaries with regard to time, place and purpose. The pleasures of 'free time', 'home life' and 'self-direction' are all customarily set against the demands of work, so that in its absence their meaning and probably satisfaction undergo a qualitative shift (Hendry (1987:201)). Interviewees' testimony amply bears this out.

Speaking of filling the gap left by the absence of 'working hours', Peter A. said,

> it was terrible. I had that much time on my hands with nothing to do. I was just bored all the time.

Daytime was a particular problem with friends occupied and activities rarely available.

> It was really boring through the day. (Andrea K.)

> There's nothing to do through the day, nowhere to go. (Denise N.)

Not surprisingly, some chose to alter other aspects of 'social time'. For Colin Y.,

> it was boring all day. I ended up getting up late, going to bed late and I found most of the day was past by the time I got up, got ready and went out.

Paul C. described his morning routine as

> getting up, gannin' back to bed, then getting up at twelve o'clock,

while Geoff R. confessed that he

> didn't have a lot to do really. I used to lie in bed, like most people do on the dole, then just sit round the house and go out on the night.

One of only two interviewees to express a wish to return to

school in response to unemployment, Robert P. maintained that this was ''cause school took the afternoon up.'

The phrase 'just sitting around the house' (or close variants) was offered by thirty five young workers as part of their description of life on the dole. Implicit in many of the comments, which were often combined with statements such as 'I can't stand sitting around the house', was the notion that whatever its uses, home could simply not serve as a day time base for any length of time. Regardless of determination to 'get out' or the availability of alternative venues, all interviewees found themselves spending more time in the house than either they were accustomed to or wanted to. In three extreme cases, being unemployed meant (virtually) never going out, while only a small minority felt that their outside social life had been sustained or enhanced.

The 'meeting place' role of school, and to a lesser extent work, proved hard to replace. Isolation from friends and rapid diminution of peer group contact greatly contributed to the misery of unemployment. The other side of this coin was the changing nature of family relationships and the strains generated by closeness, not least at a time when young people are often very protective of their independence and desirous or more rather than less freedom in this area.

The effect of transition upon domestic labour is considered further in chapter 8, but it is worth noting that eighteen young workers (eight of them unemployed at the time) chose to mention it within accounts of being unemployed. Of these, sixteen were young women, most of whom were commenting on their greater involvement in

domestic labour while unemployed as compared with their time at school and/or work. The origins of, and reactions to such moves varied considerably.

Kathleen H. thought it one of the saving graces of unemployment that 'I had a lot more time to help my mam', while Donny S. took an obvious pride in doing

> loads when I was on the dole. By the time my mam was up, I had everything done.

Two interviewees explained that they had chosen to perform more domestic labour as an antidote to boredom.

> I help my mam, go messages, do the hoovering, tidy up. Just to keep my mind occupied. (Mark B.)

> I do more housework. I never did much when I was at school but now I do the lot during the day. It helps to fill in the time. (Julie M.)

Activity to combat boredom hardly constitutes wild enthusiasm, but for most the greater involvement was described either matter-of-factly, as a duty or as an imposition which had sparked considerable resentment. An example of the former was given by Audrey W. who remarked that

> When I was on the dole I used to do a lot of the housework. There was just nowt to do so I helped her in the house. But when I'm working now I find I can't.

For two young women in particular, recollection of the domestic demands made on them while unemployed aroused strong feelings of grievance. One of them, Laura H., recalled

> I was in the house all day and my mam would come in on a night, 'did you not hoover up ...', 'did you not do this, that and the other'. She was nagging at us all the time and I hate that. I felt like a little old housewife because I was washing up, doing the washing and hanging it out, hoovering up, polishing, tidying, doing the same

> thing every day. I was getting really fed up. I says 'I'm
> old before I'm young'. All day, I never seen a soul. It
> was horrible. Didn't meet anybody. I hated it.

While it is, of course, ultimately impossible to separate subjective
and objective elements in such accounts, there can be no doubting the
fact that unemployment had vastly different domestic implications for
a substantial number of young women than for young men. Of the handful
of the latter who mentioned domesic activities, most referred solely
to 'male' preserves, such as 'odd jobs' or 'fixing things', or the
relatively neutral (in gender terms) areas such as decorating and
gardening, both of which were also mentioned by young women.

Domestic labour as a sex divided and predominantly female
responsibility could, however, operate in very different ways across
generations. For Olwyn G., the problem had been that

> I did start getting under my mam's feet a bit, and then I
> started going out to get out of the way and they've really
> took it better,

while Jean N. confessed to worrying that

> my mam would be getting sick of me being around all the
> time. You feel like that. I don't think she was but ...
> you feel as though you're in the way all the time when
> she's trying to to do things.

The greater confinement of young women to the home due to 'chores' was
compounded by normative proscription of activities such as 'hanging
around' and informal sports, both of which offered young men a degree
of 'escape' and opportunities to meet friends.(13)

> I just walk about a bit. I can't stop in the house. I've
> got to get out, just walk around the towncentre, meet
> mates, have a bit chat. (Carl R.)

> Me and my mates, we just go to the baths, play football,
> pool, hang around, anything really. (Graham L.)

Such testimony highlights the extent to which the common label 'unemployment' may conceal wide differences in the experiences of the sexes. In particular, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which domestic labour and confinement are used to control the activities of young women. This is not to say that the latter do not resist such impositions, but that nonetheless, they do so within the context of certain material and normative options. Resistance may entail 'escape' from the family home (Wallace (1986:109)), but this is quite likely to be to other prescribed feminine roles. As Lees observes (1986:115),

> tensions within the family as a result of unemployment may act as a pressure on girls to leave home and set up on their own. Often this may involve getting pregnant, getting married or both.

Lees goes on to argue that the ideology of marriage as 'free choice' ignores crucial structural constraints on young women, who have 'neither the financial independence nor the cultural support to make other choices' (:95).

Whatever their restrictive impositions, both school and work provided a 'purpose' which was difficult to replace. Particularly for the less instrumentally oriented, having 'nothing to do'(14) was not simply a question of finding it difficult to fill time but also of the perceived futility of the available alternatives, and indirectly of the financial plight of the unemployed.

> You've got no money so you can't go out anywhere. (Gary E.)

If the 'freedom from' aspects of unemployment were sometimes appreciated at first, in the longer term it appeared to offer little by way of 'freedom to'.

> You think it's great when you leave school, say 'oh, great, I'm sick of this place'. A couple of weeks after you've left school you're sick, bored out of your mind. (Gary E.)

The ambivalence in having 'nothing to do' was perfectly, if unwittingly, captured by Patricia N.

> It was great for the first month with nothing to do but then after that, there was nothing to do.

Ten other interviewees spoke about the boredom of unemployment in progressive terms.

> At first, it was all right but then after a while you get bored. (Jean N.)

The onset of boredom was sometimes very rapid.

> I was bored on the first week. I get bored easily. (Graham L.)

> Within two or three weeks it was getting us down. (Sandra J.)

Almost all who spoke of unemployment in 'dynamic' terms portrayed it as becoming worse. Elaine N. remembered that

> the first month was all right, and by the second I was absolutely cheesed off. By the third, I was worried sick.

From those who suffered more than one period of unemployment and felt them to be different, the prevailing view (expressed by seven interviewees) was that second spells were worse.

> With us being at work in the first place, then going onto the dole, it was even worse. (Alan D.)

Paul J. was the lone dissenter, arguing that

> second time round wasn't so bad, 'cause I knew what to expect.

Ten young workers made direct mention of financial worries as part of their description of unemployment. Denunciations ranged from the

relatively mild 'it's not enough, really' (Jacqueline N.) via 'you don't get much money and it goes too easy' (Robert P.) to Susan P's unequivocal verdict, 'the money's rubbish'.

Efforts to find work, particularly those which involved going to the Careers Office or the Job Centre, or 'walking round the factories' could offer at least temporary respite from home and extreme boredom, with the possibility, however remote, of securing a more permanent escape.

Needless to say, the misery of boredom and poverty provided a sizeable 'stick' to press young people towards alternatives, notably YOP schemes, which were often seen as decidedly short on 'carrot'. The 'better than the dole' view of YOP, held by fifth year pupils, had become a real experience for many school leavers. For Jean N., schemes were

> better than lazing on the dole, where you just get bored anyway.

In their recollections of unemployment, six interviewees specifically pointed to the function of their later schemes in dispelling the boredom of the dole. Indeed, for some who had completed one YOP scheme and had not wanted to take another, it was the experience of unemployment which forced them to reconsider.

> I was on the dole 'cause I didn't really want to take another government scheme. And then I was really bored, 'cause I couldn't find a permanent job at all. So in the end I went down the careers for another scheme. (Laura H.)

Even the strongest commitments were liable to be worn down.

> I vowed I would never go on another scheme but it was that boring on the dole that I did. (Jacqueline N.)

The boredom of unemployment also persuaded two young workers to take

up jobs within family businesses when they would have been otherwise disinclined to do so. Disinclined or not, the vast majority had no such option.

Although in many ways, experiences of unemployment were dominated by issues of boredom and shortage of money, they also depended to an extent upon those of stigma and blame (Litter and Salaman (1984:115)). To judge from the testimony of young workers, such was the 'impossibility' of acquiring employment that few 'took it personally' when unable to do so.

> It's all right, really. I don't get offended easy. There's not that many jobs to get. (Tricia K.)

However, many statements to that effect also bore witness to the lurking presence of culpability and the felt need to proclaim innocence. Thus, while ability to work was almost universally taken for granted: 'if you're not brainy, you can always do labouring' (Geoff W.) many, and particularly those unemployed at the time of interview, also felt obliged to stress their job-search efforts.

> I go out looking and that, but I never find anything. I don't see what else I can do, just keep looking. (Christine W.)

> I look for jobs, but there's nothing really that you can do if there's no jobs about. (Peter H.)

Similar purposes could be served by drawing attention to the historical dimensions of the problem, recalling the days when it was 'dead easy' to get jobs.

> I know there's just no jobs to get, not like years ago where you could just walk in and they'd say 'start on Monday'. (Sandra J.)

Sharing the fate of unemployment with many others clearly made it less

likely to be construed as personal failure.

> Look how many's unemployed, not only me is there. (Gillian C)

> I don't think it's me. I think everybody's in the same boat. (Karen H.)

> Why, there's three million can't get jobs. (Michael M.)

The argument was most clearly spelt out by Steven D., who commented,

> if there was less people on the dole I'd think it might be me, but with there being the amount of people on the dole, I think there's just no jobs.

Three interviewees explained how awareness of the scale of unemployment had allayed anxieties over personal inadequacy. In the words of Angela F.,

> you get to the stage of feeling as if there's something wrong with you, and then you hear about all these job losses on the news, and that helps,

while for Sharon W.,

> watching the Jobslot on TV made me realise it's the same for everybody, really.

Competition for jobs, expressed in spectacular application figures could offer some solace by rendering failure to find work 'impersonal' through near-inevitability.

> I mean, there was some lads went for an interview at ... (a local garage) ... and there was only one job going and there was about two hundred people applied for it. So they can pick and choose who they want. It's not just a case of 'oh, why, we want somebody, anybody'll do'. Five or ten years ago it might have been. (Chris W.)

> There's just so many going for jobs, I think it would be different if there was just two of you for one job. (Jean N.)

With stakes so high, 'near misses' were double-edged in their effect, simultaneously encouraging achievements and yet more painful

experiences. Five young workers mentioned that unsuccessful interviews were more distressing than rejection by letter or even failure to reply.

> When they've actually seen you and you don't get it, you feel awful. (Elaine N.)

Peter R. remarked that he hadn't felt too bad about his numerous rejections, but added,

> Mind you, I haven't had any interviews yet. That'd be different.

Given the sheer scale and continuous rise of local youth unemployment, it was not surprising that a number of interviewees should adopt a very 'philosophical' attitude to job search and its apparent futility, although as we shall see, others reacted very differently. Tracey E. commented that

> there's no jobs to get, is there, really. I would take one if I could, but if I can't, well I can't.

Audrey W. stated her attitude as one of

> if somebody else gets the job, good luck to them. I just keep trying and hope for better luck next time.

The need to maintain a positive approach ('you've just got to keep trying' (Richard D.)) was mentioned by five young workers. Such comments may owe something to the interview situation, but those making them all seemed to have made extensive efforts to find employment.

Lesley H. spoke of the problem of tempering the positive with the realistic. After interviews, she said,

> you feel a bit down when you go outside. You build up your hopes. You have to have a little bit of hope, but not a lot.

For Alan B., becoming philosophical had required both adjustment and a long term perspective.

> I never really thought it was as hard as what it is, for all that we heard so much about the situation. It doesn't really bother us now, something's bound to turn up. I won't be on the dole for the rest of my life.

In all, forty six interviewees told of how the near-impossibility of obtaining full-time employment, and sharing this fate with the majority of their peers helped to ease the psychological burden they might otherwise have carried. However, these second order compensations paled alongside the first order problems or boredom, hardship and the like or the partial relief offered by YOP. The isolating effects of unemployment ensured that the 'shared fate' was largely confined to the abstract level.

In addition to their limited scope, it must be noted that the consoling effects of mass unemployment were not felt by all young workers. Thirteen confessed to considerable 'self doubt' and/or depression as a consequence of being unable to find work. Their accounts show the difficulty of avoiding internalisation of the blame attached to failure to find work, no matter how uneven the odds. As Coffield et al (1986:72) argue self-blame can co-exist with awareness of structural factors behind unemployment. In part, this may reflect absorption of widely propagated and stereotypical imagery, but also a situation where the felt pain of a 'private trouble' may outweigh any softening effects of the wider 'public issue'. It was certainly the case that testimony frequently highlighted personal dramas around feelings of self-worth.

For Lesley H., large numbers of fellow job-seekers only

highlighted the enormity of the task, serving as a reminder that 'you're just one of a lot of people'. While the ostensible reasons for adverse reaction varied, the common thread was that they appeared to operate cumulatively. Given that they revolved around feelings of rejection, worthlessness and frustration, it is not surprising that a period of 'build up' was required. Moreover, such expressions were almost entirely absent in the responses of 'first year' leavers, who accounted for only one of the thirteen young workers. It is also the case that, while the odds against successful application for any particular job were massive, they diminished with multiple applications, thereby undermining the consoling effect and creating scope for the development of self-doubt.

There was also a small minority who appeared to take failure very hard. Alan O., who was in his second full-time job and had only a handful of unsuccessful applications behind him, remarked that failure 'makes you think you must be as thick as a wall'. Entrance tests, perhaps because of the likeness to school exams, could also evoke feelings of failure which seemed 'objectively' harsh.

Donny S. described the largely unsuccessful fight against self-castigation.

> I was really sick but I thought 'it's not the end of the world' and I kept thinking 'it's not my fault', but you get really depressed and ... you think 'why can't I get a job? What's the matter with us?'

Alan D. recounted how he thought

> everybody who I wrote to has got summat against us. Why, I didn't mind in the first place, but as it's getting on and I'm writing away for more jobs, I'm starting to feel depressed that nobody wants us.

The word 'depressed' was used by six young workers to describe their state in response to their employment situation, and although it invites loose usage, there is no doubt that the experience could be very distressing indeed. Lorraine G. spoke of how frustration mounted until

> I got four letters on the same day, all saying 'no'. I got them outside and lit them with a match, burned them.

The most serious reaction was that of Amanda K.

> I just couldn't get anything. I couldn't get a scheme and so I says 'oh, that's it, take the easy way out'. So I tried it. I took tablets, I was out for the count and they had to pump us.

The notion that many young people became extremely depressed seemed to be 'common knowledge' (Seabrook (1982b:114) even if generally disapproved.

> Some people get more depressed than others, just go round killing themselves, taking overdoses and that for nothing. Things like that, just 'cause they haven't got a job. It's not worth it 'cause you're bound to get one eventually. (Tricia K.)

Two young workers expressed strong reactions over the stigmatising effects of unemployment.

> People say you should get up and find a job, but where's the jobs to find? You can walk round factories all day long but they just stand there and give you application forms. (Terry T.)

> I don't think I'm a layabout and I don't think that I should be called a layabout. (Stephenie G.)

In this context, it is worth remembering those who felt it necessary to stress that they had made all reasonable efforts (and often far more) to find work. Fear of the 'scrounger' label appeared to be widespread.

Overwhelmingly, both the prospect and reality of unemployment were dreaded, objects of fear and loathing. The experience of its boredom, confinement and hardship weighed very heavily and generally helped to make almost any alternative relatively attractive. Moreover, while mass unemployment helped to alleviate some of the psychological strains of 'culpability', this effect was neither universal nor in many cases, enduring. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the brooding presence or threat of unemployment provided the backdrop against which work was seen and it is to this which we now turn more directly.

Notes


1   This statement was made at the 1982 Conservative Party Conference
    (Guardian 9.10.82).

2   This proposal was introduced as part of the New Training
    Initiative and subsequently dropped because of the opposition of
    the MSC (particularly its trade union representatives). It was
    decisively revived as part of the Tories' 1987 election manifesto
    and now seems very likely to occur.

3   See Gillis (1974) for discussion of the historical development of
    'youth' as an institution.

4   See, for example, Pearson (1983), Brake (1980), (Scarman (1981).

5   See chapter 5 for discussion of questionnaire material of
    relevance to unemployment.

6   According to representatives of the schools in the study, the
    swelling of sixth form ranks was due almost entirely to pupils
    returning to do extra O levels rather than A level courses,
    seemingly often as the product of 'late decisions'.

7   The rise in Consett is probably deceptive in that participation
    in further education in Consett had fallen sharply in the
    previous year.

8   In all locations participation was higher among young women.

9   With a similar air of 'inevitability' (and an interesting
    solution) Paul told of a mate who was

          on the dole and got caught fiddling, working when he
          was supposed to be on the dole, and they take the dole
          off you for 6 weeks. Now, what he does straight away
          is knocks a place off to make some money, 'cause he's
          got none. What they should do is give you your dole
          and send you to work in a church or a graveyard, clean
          it all up for the six weeks. But taking the dole off
          you is asking for trouble.

10  Stigmatisation of the unemployed operates on a hierarchical
    basis. In the social security system, factors such as skill, age
    and marital status can justify more lenient treatment over the
    requirement to 'seek work'. Moreover, in popular terms, as
    Sinfield observes terms such as '"workshy" and "malingerer"
    appear class specific' (1981b:146). Unemployment for those lower
    in the hierarchy is more likely to be seen in terms of supply
    than demand, on the grounds of their failure to make themselves

employable by acquiring marketable skills or experience. Clearly within the school leaver group there is an internal hierarchy based on school record and qualifications, but the group itself, with no work record, occupies a lowly position within the wider hierarchy.

11  These figures are based on accounts offered by interviewees of 'how they had spent their time' since leaving school. Most appeared to find the exercise of recall easy, and most 'tallied' at the first attempt. Inaccuracy was also minimised by the predominance of fixed term (six or twelve months) schemes which both heightened subjective awareness (eg starting dates could easily be worked out from impending leaving dates etc) and facilitated 'objective' checking (two completed schemes would 'account' for a year and so on).

12  Average time since leaving school for 'second years' was 20.5 months and for 'first years' 9.0 months.

13  For a fuller account see chapter 9. See also Lees (1986:60) on the importance of female sexuality in setting the terms of appearance on the street, namely as the disrespectable 'street walker' or the respectable 'girlfriend'.

14  This phrase was used by thirty three interviewees.

Chapter 4

Occupational Choice

Like that upon unemployment, debate on occupational choice is of
profound political and ideological significance, although this is
rarely acknowledged by writers on the subject.(1) The significance
derives from its touching crucial issues regarding the nature of
capitalist society. To what extent are the freedoms of the labour
market more apparent than real? What do jobs, specific or general,
offer by way of rewards?

The question of occupational choice, its formulation and pursuit
lies at the heart of the transition from school to work. It is not
intended here to offer a critique of the relevant literature, but the
reader is referred to the introduction, where consideration of
transition studies dealt with numerous issues pertinent to
occupational choice.(2)

It is argued here that occupational choice is best understood
within the framework of the sale of labour-power. In capitalist
society, workers are in a contradictory position in relation to their
own exploitation, for their material well-being is simultaneously
dependent upon minimising the exploitation they suffer at the hands of
employers and keeping themselves sufficiently exploitable, relative to
other workers, to continue selling their labour-power.

With regard to occupational choice, the contradication expresses

itself in the desire to obtain the 'best' job along with the need to get a job. For the seller of labour-power, felt exploitation is likely to be least where rewards are highest in relation to demands and the balance of pleasant and unpleasant duties most favourable. Thus, seeking a 'good job' is also perceived as a way of minimising exploitation (as, of course, is the struggle to improve existing ones).(3) Yet equally, the necessity to have a job means that exploitation, in the form of usefulness to an employer (skills, commitment, compliance etc) must be maximised.

It is in the nature of capitalist social relations that workers must be pressed to accept work made available by capital, yet their 'freedom' requires that they should be held fully responsible for the positions they occupy. Insofar as certain jobs are recognised as unrewarding, the 'hard' ideological response (epitomised by the 'New Right') is the re-assertion that workers must accept what is on offer to them, and escape only via 'self-improvement'. Individualist theories of occupational choice bear the stamp of a more subtle ideology.

West and Newton (1983:43) identify three groups of theories relating to occupational choice, namely those which emphasise individual differences, development, and opportunity respectively. Their essential features can be briefly summarised as follows. Differentialist or matching theories begin from the premise that the individual characteristics of job applicants equip them for and incline them towards particular occupations whose own characteristics 'match' those of the applicants. As Super explains,

1) people differ in their abilities, interests and personalities,
2) they are qualified by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations. (1981:26). (4)

Such theories have been influential within guidance work, with Rodger's (1962) 'seven point plan' for many years the working manual of the Youth Employment Service. Rodger argued the need to build a profile of the applicant based on physical make-up, attainments, intelligence, special aptitudes, interests, disposition and domestic circumstances, which could then be used to home in on the most appropriate job(s). Developmental theories share with their matching counterparts a starting point with the characteristics of individuals, and an implicit view of the labour market as an arena for realisation of human potential. The main differences stem from the former's links with developmental (chiefly Freudian and, less so, Piagetian) psychology, evident in the centrality of stages, maturation and self-awareness. Vocational development is depicted in terms of progress towards a mature self-concept which can be implemented through appropriate occupational choice (Ginzberg et al (1956)). If differentialist and developmental approaches show a certain degree of overlap and compatibility, those which emphasise opportunity stand in clear opposition to both. Put simply, opportunity structure theories maintain that labour market allocation occurs through availability rather than choice and that ambitions are reflections rather than determinants of career directions (Simon (1977:32) Brannen (1975:116). For Roberts,

careers can be regarded as developing into patterns dictated by the opportunity structures to which individuals are exposed, first in education and

> subsequently in employment, whilst individuals' ambitions, in turn, can be treated as reflecting the influence of the structures through which they pass. (Thus) ... despite the existence of a nominally free labour market, individuals do not choose their jobs in any meaningful sense; they simply take what is available. (1975:138)

Empirical studies of the transition have consistently demonstrated the 'moulding' effects of local labour markets upon occupational 'choice' (Carter (1962), Simon (1977), West and Newton (1983)). Sawdon et al conclude from their study that

> the jobs done by young people are no more and no less than the jobs provided by the local industry in the area in which they live. (1981:para 8.4)

This evidence is used to unmask the pretensions of individualistic theories of occupational choice. It is argued that to talk of 'implementing self-concepts' is largely irrelevant when many young workers are primarily concerned to escape unemployment (West and Newton (1983:91)), or when many jobs offer negligible scope for 'self-actualisation' (Roberts (1975:138)).(5) Similarly, as Super (1981:20) observes, developmental theories have evolved from consideration of routes to professional jobs via higher education, whose atypicality makes generalisation inappropriate. Such inappropriateness is clearly visible when frequent job changing is treated in terms of 'immaturity' or faulty matching (Maizels (1970:157-8), rather than as an understandable response to grossly unsatisfying jobs (Ashton and Field (1976) Roberts 1984:40)).

In essence, both differentialist and developmental theories carry the implication that the capitalist labour market offers jobs to suit the needs of its entrants. They ignore the extent to which the (increasing) specialisation of the division of labour restricts scope

for fulfilment of more than a limited range of needs. In addition, they neglect the effects of hierarchy, generalising from processes applicable to relatively rewarding jobs and thereby grossly overestimating the possibilities for 'matching' throughout the labour market. Because of this neglect, suitability does not appear as a relative, competitive notion but as an absolute one of suitability per se.(6)

This ideological function is readily apparent in the differentialists treatment of terms such as 'interests' and 'abilities'. Hayes and Hopson (1975:28) write of the need to learn that people are

> naturally different and that these differences are to be respected and not condemned.

Yet, Roberts has pointed out the nonsense of allocation according to 'interests' in a situation where

> there are many jobs where extrinsic rewards compound rather than compensate for the intrinsic deprivations. (1981:194). (7)

It could also be argued that the language of 'career', 'vocation', 'aspiration' and 'attainment' is similarly ideological, using their positive connotations to cast a false homogeneity and 'equivalence' across the labour market.

Although, in many ways, young workers share the contradictory labour market position of their elders, there are also distinctive features in their situation. As new entrants, young workers are seen to be 'vulnerable' in two areas. One is that of inexperience which may lead to hasty and inappropriate choices of occupation. Such mistakes affect not only the young workers but might also be regarded as

damaging to 'national economic performance'. The other is that the general 'bottom line' requirement for workers to obtain a job is often regarded as especially applicable to young workers.

> (Young people ought not to be idle. It is very bad for them. It starts them off wrong. (M. Thatcher, cited Guardian 18.12.84)

Apart from meeting this 'disciplinary' need, counter-measures to youth unemployment have also been portrayed as offering opportunities for adjustment and work 'sampling' which might aid occupational choice (OECD (1977:48)).(8)

Before directly considering the relevant study data, it is useful to offer brief comment on the complexities of occupational choice. By the time they approach school-leaving age, young people will have some knowledge of a large number of jobs, gleaned at different times and from various sources, and ranging from a name to quite detailed knowledge of performance. Alongside knowledge grow inclinations, from strong attraction via indifference to revulsion. Notions of (in)appropriateness also develop according factors such as sex and 'abilities' (academic, paractical etc.). Choices may also be influenced by desire to accord with or contradict the views of family or friends. The emergent 'occupatonal choice' may be single and definite, a narrow or broad range of possibilities or almost total 'openness'. Similarly, there will be variation in duration and intensity. Whether admitted to researchers or not, fantasy aspirations may be held alongside realistic expectations and hopes.

In job pursuit as well as occupational choice the permutations are almost endless, from long term, sequential overcoming of 'hurdles'

to an 'out of the blue' offer. Factors such as class, race and sex exert influence at all stages of the process, impinging upon occupational knowledge, attraction and appropriateness, the reactions of others and the likelihood of positive or negative discrimination.

The influence of social structures, even in weighty combinations, is rarely totally determinate. However, while deviations do occur in the 'reproduction process' (not least because of shifts within social relations of production), structuration tends to restrict their scale.

## Anticipations

In the following treatment of occupational choice, the first section is based on two sets of questionnaire material and the small group interviews with prospective school-leavers. The first set of questionnaire data come from responses to the questions 'what job would you like to do when you leave school?' followed by 'if you cannot get that particular job are there any other jobs you would like to do? If so, what are they?'(9) To ask for 'first choices' across the myriad variations and complexities of choice is, of course, to distort the process.(10) That said, the majority of respondents seemed to find the expression of choice(s) fairly straightforward, and their approximate and often specific 'realism' demonstrates that they were far from arbitrary. Cautiously interpreted, the aggregated data can yield numerous insights into the complexion of occupational choice within the Coalfield area. Table 4.1 shows the 'raw' first and second choices, expressed for each sex in terms of class.(11)

Table 4.1*

|  | Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| R-G Class | 1st choice | 2nd choice | 1st choice | 2nd choice |
| 1 | 14 (6.9) | 7 (4.2) | 4 (1.9) | 3 (1.5) |
| 2 | 28 (13.8) | 19 (11.3) | 58 (26.9) | 38 (19.5) |
| 3N | 23 (11.3) | 18 (10.7) | 85 (39.4) | 70 (35.9) |
| 3M | 76 (37.4) | 79 (27.0) | 27 (12.5) | 48 (24.6) |
| 4 | 26 (12.8) | 26 (15.5) | 29 (13.4) | 30 (15.4) |
| 5 | 7 (3.4) | 3 (1.8) | 1 (0.5) | 1 (0.5) |
| Forces | 29 (14.3) | 16 (9.5) | 12 (5.6) | 5 (2.6) |
| Other** | 12 | 47 | 7 | 28 |

\* (% figures in brackets exclusive of 'other' category)

\*\* Mostly 'don't knows' in the case of first choices, omissions in the case of seconds.

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that, in aggregate form at least, there was close correspondence between 'first' and 'second' choices. The product moment correlation figure for males was 0.98, that for females 0.90. Both have probabilities of less than .01.

Direct comparison of choices also reveals close correspondence. of those with definite first choices, 37.4% of males and 28.2% of females had second choices from the identical class, while the respective $X^2$ tests for association yield probabilities of .00 for both sexes.(12) Predictably perhaps, for both sexes, manual jobs were

more prominent among second choices.(13)

Table 4.3 shoes the relationship between fathers' occupational class and the first choices of respondents.

## Table 4.3

a) <u>Male</u>

| | First Choice | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Father's class | Class 1/2 | 3N | 3M | 4/5 | Other | (N) |
| 1/2 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 | (37) |
| 3N | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 4 | (11) |
| 3M | 9 | 10 | 39 | 12 | 12 | (82) |
| 4/5 | 6 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 7 | (31) |
| Other | 12 | 2 | 16 | 12 | 12 | (54) |
| N = | 42 | 23 | 76 | 33 | 41 | (215) |

$x^{2*}$ 19.94    df9 prob. .02

b) <u>Female</u>

| | First Choice | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Father's class | Class 1/2 | 3N | 3M | 4/5 | Other | (N) |
| 1/2 | 21 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 5 | (41) |
| 3N | 6 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | (21) |
| 3M | 20 | 38 | 8 | 7 | 5 | (78) |
| 4/5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 2 | (26) |
| Other | 10 | 22 | 7 | 14 | 4 | (57) |
| N = | 62 | 85 | 27 | 30 | 19 | (223) |

$x^{2*}$ 19.01    df9 prob. .03

* calculation excludes 'other' categories

These figures show a considerable degree of 'family' influence upon occupational choice for both sexes, with substantial (anticipated) 'self-recruitment' of classes. For instance, whereas those with fathers in classes 1 and 2 accounted for only 17.8% of the sample, they supplied 33.7% of those seeking occupations in the same classes. By comparison, only 18.4% of those with fathers in classes 3M,4 and 5 held similar ambitions.

Table 4.4 (a) shows the extent to which the division between non-manual and manual work was 'self-perpetuating' for young men.

## Table 4.4(a)

### Occupational choice (male)

| father's occ. | non-manual | manual |
|---|---|---|
| non-manual | 22 | 16 |
| manual | 29 | 65 |

N=132*

$X^2$  8.31      df1 prob. .00

*  excludes all those cases where either or both occupations cannot be categorised within this schema.

For young women, the comparable figure yields virtually no relationship ($X^2$ 0.55 prob. .47) but if the non-manual for occupational choice is sub-divided than a clear association emerges (Table 4.4(b)).

Table 4.4(b)

Occupational choice (female)

| father's occ. | Class 1/2 | 3N | manual |
|---|---|---|---|
| non-manual | 27 | 16 | 11 |
| manual | 25 | 47 | 25 |

N=154*

$x^2$   9.26    df2 prob. .01

* as per Table 5.4(a)

Maizels (1970:93) has argued that vocational preferences are more sharply related to educational levels than to social class. Using one Consett school as a sub-sample, it is possible to analyse the relationship between father's class and occupational choice within different school 'bands'. Table 4.5 shows the association between these two variables across the sub-sample, while Table 4.6 shows the relationship between father's class and academic banding.

Table 4.5

| father's occ. | Occupational Choice | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Class 1/2 | Class 3 | Class4/5 |
| Non-manual | 10 | 10 | 3 |
| Manual | 4 | 26 | 6 |

$x^2$ 8.21  df2 prob. .02

Table 4.6

| father's occ. | 'Banding' | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Upper | Middle | Lower |
| Non-Manual | 14 | 11 | 1 |
| Manual | 4 | 24 | 10 |

$x^2$ 15.87 dr2 prob. .00

By far the clearest association, however, lays between academic banding and occupational choice (Table 4.7), a relationship which held for all backgrounds.(14)

Table 4.7

| | Occupational choice | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Banding | Class 1/2 | 3 | 4/5 |
| upper | 16 | 4 | 2 |
| middle | 3 | 33 | 4 |
| lower | 1 | 12 | 9 |

$x^2$ 55.54 df4 prob. .00

The picture which emerges from Tables 4.5 to 4.8(14) is one of class linked aspiration refracted through the education system, with the latter acting as the 'final arbiter' of appropriate choice. The relationship between educational performance and occupational choice cannot, of course, be construed as uni-directional but must also

recognise the extent to which choice (even if only in a broad sense) influences performance via (un)willingness to compete academically.

For the purposes of this study, place rests on combined totals from the two schools in each location. However, as each pairing comprised two quite different schools, place as a variable carries carry greater weight than might at first appear.

By far the most pronounced variation in occupational choice between places was the preponderance of 'aspirants' to the forces from Peterlee, with proportionately more from both Peterlee schools than any other. Thus, whereas 24.7% of young men in the sample came from Peterlee, 51.7% of male 'aspirants' to the forces did so. For young women, the figures were 26.9% and 58.3% respectively. Whether because the forces represented an alternative to manual work or not, the percentage of both sexes opting for manual work were lower than elsewhere, while those for non-manual work were broadly similar.(15)

Peterlee's other distinctive feature was the relatively low proportion 'aspiring' to classes 1 and 2, with only 17% of young men (Bishop Auckland 18.8%, Consett 22%) and 12% of young women (Bishop Auckland 27.4%, Consett 34.2%) doing so. This may be partially accounted for by the catchment areas of the schools,(16) but largely reflected Peterlee's position as the study's most 'working class' location.

Given that the labour market in Consett was dominated to a greater extent by unemployment than the other towns it is interesting to note the impact of this upon the 'aspirations' of the young. The principal effect appeared to be that of polarisation, between those

seeking to improve the saleability of their labour-power and aim high, and those who responded by a willingness to 'sell short'. Staying on to further education was more common in Consett than elsewhere (see chapter 1) and this would fit well with the greater number aiming for (semi) professional employment (see above). Conversely, for young men, whereas the ratios of skilled manual (3M) to semi- or unskilled (4,5) jobs chosen in Peterlee and Bishop Auckland were 4:1 and 3.55:1 respectively, the corresponding figure for Consett was 1.20:1.(17)

For young women in Consett, the polarisation effect was less marked, with little evidence of 'selling short' although it could be argued that the female labour market rests on selling short to such an extent that there is little scope for further sacrifice.

So far, the focus has been on broad groupings of occupations and it is now time to switch attention to the chosen occupations themselves. The two major features of specific occupational choice were a fairly narrow range and a near-total division of choice between the sexes. The narrowness is evident by comparison with the number of parents in such employment.

It is interesting to note that while there were sixteen fathers employed in mining,(18) only two young men offered mining as their first choice. However, there seemed to be a high degree of over-subscription' to the major 'trades'.(19) While only one father was in the police force, nine young men and fourteen women listed this as their first choice. With regard to the 'new technology' eight pupils mentioned working with computers as their choice, while eight also nominated careers in entertainments or sports. Table 4.10 lists their leading five choices for both sexes.

Table 4.10

| Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|
| armed forces | 29 | shop | 31 |
| engineering | 18 | secretary/typist | 30 |
| farming/forestry | 16 | nurse | 19 |
| mechanic | 12 | welfare | 15 |
| police | 9 | police | 14 |

These leading five choices account for 41.4% of male and 50.5% of female choices made. For fathers, the leading five occupations covered 20.8% of all those in work, while for mothers the figure was 39.0%.(20,21)

As expressed in questionnaire choices, intent to cross 'gender boundaries' was negligible. One young man wanted to be a nurse and another to work in a home for the elderly, while a further two chose shop and secretarial work. Would-be hairdressers were all female, and the 'trades' were entirely male. Three young women wished to work in farming, and one as a long distance lorry driver.

However individually 'meaningful' the occupational choices, their expression seemed to be both straightforward and 'realistic'. The latter was clearly evident in the 'appropriateness' of choices in terms of sex and education levels. This 'realism' confirms the findings of several earlier transition studies (Carter (1966:110), Maizels (1970:136), Liversedge (1974:65), (Sawdon et al (1981: para.12.48)). The aggregated choices reflected, albeit loosely, the pattern of potential opportunities (at least prior to the collapse of the labour market) (Finn (1984:33). In turn , this is suggestive of a

high degree of 'self-allocation' prior to labour market entry, doubtless the result of both formal and informal processes.

As a one-off exercise, rather than part of a follow-up study, it is not possible to comment upon the extent to which 'aspirations' were subsequently realised, although safe to say that very few would actually find full-time jobs, as opposed to schemes, in their chosen occupations.

Questionnaire respondents were also asked to prioritise in rank order three from a list of six factors influencing occupational choice. This structured exercise was intended as a complement to the open ended question of expected 'likes' and 'dislikes' about work (see Chapter 5). Before examining the results of this exercise, it is useful to offer some comment on its rationale. The requirement achieves a statistically useful standardisation at the expense of imposing uniformity on a process of great complexity, 'assuming' that factors can be both isolated and arranged hierarchically. However, as in the case of first and second choices, a clear pattern of replies emerged which showed links with the choices themselves. The use of three from six factors was intended to minimise the degree of distortion inherent in standardisation.

In interpreting the resultant data, it is important to remember that the listed factors would carry different meanings for different respondents, not least dependent upon their occupational choices. 'Taken for grantedness' is particularly important, either in terms of factors assumed present and hence not requiring mention, or assumed absent so that mention would appear 'ridiculous'. These problems are more acute when the exercise of prioritisation imposes implicit

'equivalence' across a range of occupations, which may have numerous desirable qualities or virtually none at all. Thus, rather than seeing results simply in terms of different 'orientations' towards work, it must be remembered that they probably derived from consideration of particular segments of the labour market and that the latters' perceived qualities exerted a powerful influence over the priorities listed.

Table 4.11 shows the gross response to this exercise.

## Table 4.11

| listed factors | Choices of Priority | | | | |
| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | Total | W.I.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| good working conditions | 67 | 89 | 89 | 245 | 1.07 |
| meeting people | 27 | 62 | 63 | 152 | 0.61 |
| high wages | 78 | 87 | 86 | 251 | 1.13 |
| good prospects | 56 | 85 | 70 | 211 | 0.93 |
| interesting work | 173 | 70 | 70 | 313 | 1.66 |
| travelling distance | 5 | 13 | 33 | 45 | 0.16 |
| other** | 32 | 32 | 33 | | |

* the weighted index (WI) was arrived at by awarding three points for a first choice, two for second, one for third and then dividing by 438.

** this category was made up overwhelmingly of spoiled or incomplete entries, along with a tiny number of alternative factors which respondents were invited to proffer if so inclined.

If these figures are analysed on the basis of sex, it can be seen that 'good working conditions' were chosen more or less equally by either, that young women more often opted for 'meeting people' and 'interesting work', whereas 'high wages' and, to a lesser extent, 'prospects' and 'travelling distance' were favoured by young men. Table 4.12 presents this comparison in terms of the weighted index.

### Table 4.12

|                          | Male | Female |
|--------------------------|------|--------|
| good working conditions  | 1.10 | 1.04   |
| meeting people           | 0.44 | 0.78   |
| high wages               | 1.45 | 0.82   |
| good prospects           | 1.00 | 0.86   |
| interesting work         | 1.50 | 1.83   |
| travelling distance      | 0.20 | 0.12   |

By crosstabulating these figures with occupational choice, it is possible to assess whether the above results applied 'across the board' or varied according to the 'aspirations' of young men and women.

For 'good working conditions', the rough parity between the sexes was, with one major exception, maintained for all categories of occupational choice. In both cases, those opting for manual work accorded it greater priority, possibly because it could be less taken for granted and so was more of a live issue. The exception to parity

related to forces 'aspirants', with a low index for young men of 0.55 (n=29), and a high one for young women of 1.25 (n=12), which among other things, probably reflected the very different working lives of military personnel according to sex.

The greater expressed importance of 'meeting people' for young women applied to all categories of choice, and was perhaps predictable given the strong personal service elements within 'women's work' and lesser emphasis on career advancement.

The male prioritisation of 'good prospects' also applied throughout all categories of choice, while prioritisation was also associated with the choice on non-manual work for both sexes.

Similarly, the overall result, that markedly more young men than women chose to designate 'high wages' a priority, did not vary according to occupational choice. For both sexes prioritisation was positively correlated with choice of manual work. The index for young men seeking manual work was 1.72 as compared with 1.11 for non-manual, while the corresponding figures for female respondents were 1.04 and 0.69. This particular association seemed to be rooted as a form of 'trade off' (albeit an asymmetrical one) between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (more of which below).

Apart from any questions of positive 'orientation', these expressed priorities may well have derived from perceptions that particular options were not available. Thus would-be manual workers appeared to have responded to a relative lack of intrinsic rewards by emphasising the extrinsic. Similarly, the relatively more intrinsic focus of female respondents may partly have reflected the lack of

well-paid work open to them.

'Interesting work' was given greatest priority overall for both sexes, although only marginally for young men. Its greater prioritisation by young women was restricted to non-manual and forces 'aspirants'. Table 4.13 shows the clear association between emphasis on interesting work and choice of non-manual jobs.

Table 4.13

| Occupational choice | Interesting work (WI) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female |
| Class 1/2 | 2.12 | 2.32 |
| 3N | 1.65 | 1.85 |
| 3M | 1.28 | 1.26 |
| 4/5 | 1.18 | 1.10 |
| (forces) | (1.62) | (2.17) |

It is difficult not to see these results as closely tied to the perceived possibility of interesting work being available. The choice between 'high wages' and 'interesting work' is, in many ways, the touchstone for 'instrumentality', and it is instructive to look more closly at their interrelationship, on this occasion using first choices rather then weighted indexes. Table 4.14 sets out the percentages within each category of choice offering either as their top priority.

Table 4.14

First Choices (%)

| occ. choice | Male | | | Female | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | h.w. | i.w. | (N) | h.w. | i.w. | (N) |
| Class 1/2 | 7.1 | 52.4 | 42 | 4.8 | 67.7 | 62 |
| 3N | 30.4 | 30.4 | 23 | 5.9 | 47.1 | 85 |
| 3M | 36.5 | 25.0 | 76 | 22.2 | 25.9 | 27 |
| 4/5 | 30.3 | 18.2 | 33 | 10.0 | 20.0 | 30 |
| forces | 17.2 | 34.5 | 29 | 25.0 | 58.3 | 12 |

Particularly for those 'aspiring' to class 1-3 occupations the relationship between the two sets of figures is one of very high negative correlation. For those groups, the product moment correlation coefficients are 0.99 for young men and 0.90 for young women.

It is noteworthy that those opting for occupations in classes 1 and 2 rarely portrayed their choice in financial terms, despite their often fairly lucrative nature. Where work has several advantages, it appears that its being interesting is likely to be cited first. As 'intrinsic' interest declines, high wages are increasingly prioritised. However, this trade off did not apply to classes 4 and 5, with less importance being given to these two factors combined,(22) indicating that for this group, the low prioritisation of 'interesting work' far from being 'compensated' by increased emphasis on high wages, was accompanied by a fall in the latter.

Occupational choice and pursuit were also discussed within the

small group setting, material from which can be used to embellish and vitalise that from questionnaire responses. While, as noted earlier, the choices indicated in the latter were generally 'realistic', in other senses this quality was less evident. Schemes, the inevitable fate of the majority of leavers, were rarely mentioned, with most clearly hoping to escape their clutches. Large scale youth unemployment can be seen to create contradictory pressures over the question of leaving school, simultaneously placing a premium on the few jobs available, but also on further qualifications as a means of gaining competitive advantage in the labour market. While many at either end of the academic spectrum would have taken their decisions to stay on or leave 'regardless', the issue was much more sensitive for those in the middle range, some of whose decisions were directly attributed to the difficulties of finding work.(23)

> I would have left if I could've got a job. (Geoffrey)

> There's no jobs to get. That's why I'm staying on. (Trevor)

> I don't really know what I want to do. I just think I should get more qualifications. (Tony)

Whereas in the past, or in more 'affluent' areas, many pupils had jobs awaiting them on leaving,(24) only a tiny handful in the early 1980s Durham Coalfield found themselves in this position.(25) Of those in the small groups, only three claimed to have jobs 'lined up', two via family connections.

In the pursuit of real jobs, reliance on family and contacts far outweighed that upon the Careers Service or direct application.(26) The latter, whether by letter, form or visit, appeared to yield

virtually nothing (other than suggestions to call back or being 'put on the list') while the former was, with considerable justification, regarded as 'only having schemes'. As transition studies have shown, familial influence has always been important in job acquisition (Moor (1976), West and Newton (1983:65)), but it seemed as if hopes increasingly came to rest upon it when jobs became scarce. Almost all those who felt they had strong possibilities of securing employment pinned their hopes on this source, and if some were, doubtless, over-optimistic, this avenue nonetheless appeared to be regarded as almost the only promising one.

> There's a woman we know who owns a hotel down Blackpool and she's coming to see us in a couple of weeks and she's always said that there might be a job for us. (Ann)

> I'd like to get a job where my brother works, on the milk but they're not taking anybody on at the moment. If they start, though, I'll probably be getting a job. (Alex)

> There's a woman lives near us who works ... (in a clothing shop) ... she said I should be able to get a job there. (Helen)

The power of family connections could be decidely double-edged, whether because of the desirability of the employment, relationship problems or fear of nepotism.

> I could get a job with my dad, but they're always on short time or laid off. (John)

> It would mean working with ... (my father) ... which I wouldn't like at all. (Billy)

> I'd rather work on my own than with my family, 'cause I would always think I was relying on my dad, because he's the foreman. (William)

Nonetheless, the 'back-up of family employment was often recognised.

> If I can't get a job in a hotel, I'll have to work for my parents in the pub. (Sarah)

Family (usually parental) influence on the formulation and pursuit of choice varied considerably. It was rarely mentioned as an initiating force, other than where particular jobs were being 'offered'. The most usual pattern to be that when discusssions about future jobs took place (itself extremely variable between families), young people would be expected to provide suggestions, with parents either encouraging or discouraging.

> I don't think many parents tell you what job to do. They leave it up to your own choice, but they'll advise you on the job you've chosen. (Geoffrey)

Discouragement seemed to apply particularly to jobs in the forces.

> I wanted to go in the army, but my parents wouldn't let us. (Hazel) (27)

> I was going to go in the Royal Navy, but my dad told me not to. (Andrew)

There were also instances of a sexist brand of discouragement for young women. Victoria, who wanted to be a chiropodist, reported that,

> My dad doesn't want to know. If he says anything, he thinks I should be a secretary or something.

The degree of tension between 'free choice' and the necessity to sell labour power is massively dependent upon labour market conditions, being most acute when employment opportunities are least. Given that different class/educational and sex groupings tend to seek opportunities within fairly discrete segments of the market, it would not be surprising if the effects of unemployment were perceived differently by such groupings. Accounts rendered of parental views on

the children's future work plans showed noticeable variation according to the 'banding' of pupils. A majority of upper (and numerous middle) band pupils painted a picture of amicable relations and 'non-directive support' from parents.

> I don't think they mind as long as I'm happy. We have discussed work, but I decided that I want to go into medicine and they just try and help me any way they can. (Glenys)

> I talk to my mother a lot, but I decided what I want to do and told them. They said it was all right, so long as I wanted to do it. (Michela)

This pattern may owe something to variations in 'family' attitudes but probably owes more to the relatively favourable prospects of such prospective leavers, with threat of unemployment less and choice to be made from more desirable options.(28)

Conversely, among lower band pupils, there appeared to be a greater incidence of conflict and pressure towards work per se rather then occupational choice. This, too, must be understood in the context of a greater threat of unemployment and more limited range of 'meaningful' choice, as well as any 'sub-cultural' factors (themselves highly dependent upon labour market conditions).

> My parents are always getting on at us about getting a job. (Jack)

> Mam's always telling us to get a job. (Marie)

> I don't talk to her, but she tells me what I want to do. (Brian)

Pressure towards a largely 'abstract' view of the sale of labour power could also occur within a sympathetic rather than antagonistic context.

> They don't care what work I do, so long as I get work.

> That's the main thing. Don't tell us what job I have to go
> in for, said just what I like best at school. They say
> just get whatever job you can. (Joe)

It is useful, in the light of the questionnaire's imposed standardisation of 'choice', to explore further the meaning of the latter.

Although few respondents seemed to find it difficult to name an occupational choice, the impression gained from group interviews was that only a fairly small minority viewed their choices as non-negotiable. Not surprisingly, perhaps, this minority was drawn largely from 'aspirants' towards distinctive careers. Elsewhere, flexibility could rise to the 'infinite' - within, of course, appropriate labour market segments.

> Any job would do me, as long as it wasn't cookery or owt
> like that, women's jobs. (Donald)

Abstraction might also be tempered by determination to avoid particular kinds of work. Lesley, having ruled out her main preferences, namely working with children and hairdressing, expressed willingness to do anything else, only to add a sudden postscript. 'I don't want to work in a factory, mind.' (See Wallace (1986:98))

The need to work could also override (at least partially) considerations of content and rewards.

> If a job came up, I would take it just for the sake of
> having a job. Even if I didn't enjoy it, I would still do
> it until I got the chance to get in the police force or
> something more interesting. (Carol)

Perhaps the most revealing comments about perceptions of future working life were made during discussion of the anticipated duration of chosen occupations. Overall, there seemed to be an underestimate of

the likelihood of change. Many of those pursuing definite 'careers' saw themselves as 'set for life'.

I'd like a job that would last until I retire. (Sharon)

I think I'll stick it for the rest of my life. (Simon)

Some choices, especially male ones, clearly owed a great deal to such prospects. Similar sounding statements could be made in relation to a range of jobs; from the state sector, to professions or trades, although clearly the meaning of 'having it made' would differ considerably. (Such language was, however, notably absent from the testimony of young women). Trevor said of the police force,

> it's a permanent job and if you keep your nose clean, you've got it made.

> Once you've got your articles, if you get with a good firm, you're pretty well made. (Peter)

> If I get a plumber's job, I've got it made. Jobs on the side at nights and weekends. You can get a good, decent life out of that. (Alan)

For this group change was sometimes seen as alien and almost imcomprehensible.

> If you thought you were going to get bored with a job, you wouldn't take it. (Neil)

If this was almost self-evident to those whose prospects of avoiding boredom were fairly good, what of the less fortunate?

Among those seemingly 'destined' for semi- or unskilled work, the probability of boredom was far more widely, if not fully, recognised. There was also considerable 'realism' about the alternative coping mechanisms, whether to remain or engage in a cycle of job-changing and tedium. Discussion revealed a number of factors influencing the outcome, such as tolerance of boredom, the need for and means of

achieving 'role distance', the underlying necessity to work and so on.

The view of work was strikingly different among the 'careerless'.
Getting 'fed up' was a distinct possibility for some, an inevitability
for others. Half-jokingly, Gary said he expected to hold a job for
'about six weeks', while Louis admitted, 'I'd want a change. I'd get
bored pretty soon.'

Without elaborating on the time-scale, Alex declared, 'I'd stay
until it got to us.'

Determination to change jobs could be taken to indicate
initiative through refusal to allow identification with or assumed
suitability for 'mindless' work. Michelle was ridiculed for suggesting
that she would would remain as a petrol pump attendant, Paul mockingly
saying, 'I can just see it, sixty five year old, serving petrol.'

There were others, however, who (implicitly) emphasised the
necessity to work as an obstacle to frequent job-changing.

> I suppose if you didn't like it and there was another job
> to go to, but you can't be too choosy these days. If I
> really hated the work, I'd leave, but not otherwise.
> (Christine)

> I would never give a job up, 'cause you're not likely to
> get another one. So, unless I had another one to go to
> that I liked better, I would take any job and stick with
> it. (Peter) (29)

Occupations often appealed because of their relative capacity to
keep boredom at bay. Margaret said of nursing,

> I'll do it 'til I get sick. Probably get fed up after a
> few years, but if I was in a factory, I would be fed up in
> a couple of months, just doing the same thing every day.

In an area such as the Durham Coalfield at times of mass youth
unemployment, young workers are under particular pressure to adopt an

'abstract' view of the sale of their labour power. Whereas under conditions of 'full' employment, prospective leavers could be reasonably confident of employment, participants in this study were faced with a situation of great uncertainty, the only exception being the knowledge that jobs would be hard to come by.

## Experiences

Before considering in more detail the labour market behaviour of the eighty eight interviewees, it is helpful, by way of introduction, to make brief mention of certain contextual factors.

Other than for a 'privileged' minority, prospects of finding immediate employment were extremely poor.(30) For the vast majority. the YOP offered the only alternative to unemployment, and hopefully a route to full-time work. The principal means to the latter lay via employment-based (WEEP) schemes, for notwithstanding the rhetoric about 'broader recognition' of YOP experience by employers, the passage almost invariably took the form of retention following a probationary operations of the scheme. Apart from occupying the highest layer of the YOP hierarchy, WEEP had its own internal hierarchy, the complexity of which created acute dilemmas for those required to negotiate it. Questions of ambition and feasibility, of balance between preference and availability have always been key components in occupational choice. They are rendered more problematic by the insertion of an additional layer of availability ie, of schemes, through which the availability of jobs must be viewed. Not only did the number of places vary considerably between different

areas of work, but the prospects of retention ranged from very good to negligible.(31)

Some firms, notably clothing factories, clearly engaged in a form of temporary substitution, ceasing direct recruitment and using the scheme for subsidised training and probationary vetting. For many young (mainly female) workers, this created the dilemma of weighing good prospects of permanent employment against a strong dislike of factory work (more of which below).

In contrast, others indulged in permanent substitution, replacing full-time jobs with WEEP places, a practice for which shops (with odd exceptions) were notorious. Thus, while shop schemes were readily available, the likelihood of retention was minimal.

Additionally, there were those (often state) employers who adhered to the official purpose of WEEP, providing working experience as a largely 'altruistic' gesture, with neither probation nor substitution.(32)

There were, of course, many schemes where prospects of retention were much less certain, and young workers were faced with this uncertainty when making their choices. If movement from non-WEEP elements of the YOP to full-time employment was not impossible, the existence of WEEP made it highly unlikely. The most feasible aim for the majority was transfer from non-WEEP to WEEP placements.

In an area such as the Durham Coalfield, with massive youth unemployment and a weak employment base to provide WEEP places, reliance on non-WEEP elements was considerable. Without denigrating the efforts of those who ran them, or in some cases the quality of

training offered, it is difficult not to view many of the non-WEEP schemes as a form of 'blotting paper', soaking up the surplus unemployed in order that the most basic aims, such as 'useful' occupation of time and inculcation of work disciplines, could be met for those not catered for by WEEP.

Various factors support this view.

Such schemes tended to be (very) large, with minimal entry criteria and often operated on a 'multi-activity' (with or without rotation) basis. As if to confirm their 'holding' role they lasted for twelve as opposed to the six months duration of WEEP. In addition, although the aim was to progress from such 'general' schemes to WEEP placements, there was considerable movement in the opposite direction when follow-up WEEP places were not available.

Perhaps the best training was provided by former apprenticeship facilities. Yet there was a cruel irony in the use by fifty or so trainees of the engineering workshop on the perimeter of the massive empty site of BSC's Consett works, or in the fifty plus YOP trainees working alongside the latest batch of eight NCB apprentices.

In the face of such stark reminders of labour market realities, it is necessary to query the ultimate usefulness of such training to such a large number of young workers. This doubt is even more applicable to those schemes where the multi-activity approach led to a very diluted form of training.(33)

When one considers the difficulties of securing employment from WEEP schemes, the chances of doing so because of, rather than in spite of non-WEEP schemes, seemed very slight.

With full-time employment so scarce, many young workers found themselves on successive schemes, the 'informal' maximum number of schemes being three. One problem arising from this situation was that of how such progression could be handled without contravening the professed aims of the YOP. For WEEP schemes, the assumption was that introductory training would be provided for those previously inexperienced. Strict application of this principle would have had the effect of forcing changes of direction (or not offering further schemes) and could be seen to conflict with the 'real', if not officially acknowledged, aim of obtaining full-time employment for young people (and ensuring 'useful occupation'). However, a 'vocational' approach, allowing further placements in the same area of work, created (as we shall see) a situation where young workers often felt they needed experience as a requisite for entry, rather than as something to be gained from the scheme. This reflects a broader scenario in which, as the majority of the youth labour market came to consist in the YOP, so the latter increasingly came to manifest traditional 'meritocratic' concerns.

For young workers, this created something of a bureaucratic minefield, where access to schemes occurred according to rather mysterious and extremely variable criteria, so that the same level of experience could be deemed too little or too great according to the judgements of careers officers and/or employers. In a situation where successive schemes were the 'order of the day' for many school leavers, this clearly created considerable problems in the pursuit of occupational choice.

Interviewees were asked what job(s) they had wanted to do during their last year as school.(34) Most could recall definite choices, often two and sometimes three, while only seven claimed to have been 'not bothered'. In all, some one hundred and fifty choices were mentioned. If in one sense, these choices were widely spread (over forty occupations were referred to), the popularity of some meant that, in another sense, the range was narrow.

For young men, of seventy nine choices overall, thirty four related to recognise 'trades',(35) with a further thirteen to the forces or police. Only nine of forty three male interviewees did not mention anything from the above groups. For young women, fifty three of seventy one choices came for nursing or care work (22), clerical/secretarial (14), police or forces (8), hairdressing (5) and shopwork (4). In all, thirty four female interviewees made mention of at least one of the above. Interestingly none referred to factory work.

As was the case with questionnaire respondents, the degree of 'realism' in leavers' choices, if judged in terms of qualifications, was very high. Those aspiring to semi-professional occupations had, almost invariably, gained O levels,(36) while the same was true, to a lesser extent of clerical work(37) and certain apprenticeships.(38)

None on those describing themselves as 'not bothered' had more than four CSEs, while only one of six aspiring shop workers did so. Would-be members of the police or forces were fairly 'evenly spread' in terms of this sample, although it should be remembered that all had either changed or failed to realise their ambitions.(39)

However the relationship between ambition and educational performance is construed, it emerged as an extremely close one, with very few 'inappropriate' choices, and most of those recognised as such.

Paul B  would have liked to be a veterinary surgeon,
     but I didn't have the brains for that.

Donny S. had wanted to be a children's nanny, 'but I wasn't gifted with brains to pass the test.' Paul C. commented that despite his ability in woodwork, his lack of qualifications meant he could not apply for any job as a joiner.

Seventy four interviewees had left school immediately after their fifth year (the remainder had all continued in full-time education for varying periods before leaving), of whom sixty nine had since moved into at least one scheme or job. Only six found their first work in full-time employment.

Our analysis of occupational choice begins with these initial moves into the labour market, their degree of correspondence with earlier choices and the reasons for this. In the assessment of correspondence, three broad categories have been utilised, according to whether the first move was at least roughly in line with previously held ambition, secondly, where such ambition was partially but far from fully met, and finally where there was complete difference from earlier choices. Where more than one choice had been mentioned, any could serve for the purpose of correspondence, which can be seen as a 'generous' interpretation of realised aspiration.

With this 'generosity', breakdown between the three categories was approximately equal, the numbers being twenty three, twenty two

and twenty four respectively. 'Success' rates varied very little between place, the sexes or according to qualifications. Thus, with the major proviso of 'appropriate' choice having been made, the prospects of short term realisation did not appear to vary significantly between particular groups of aspirants.

Only two of the twenty three initial 'successes' moved into full-time employment. Joan E., whose mother worked at a local cinema, had been fascinated by the work of the projectionist and had done such work on a part-time basis while at school. On leaving school she was able to move to a full-time post at a cinema in Durham. Philip G., who described himself as 'a car freak since I was seven', was unsuccessful with numerous applications for posts as a mechanic, but accepted an offer to be a panel beater and spray painter at a garage owned by the father of a close friend.

All places on YOP schemes required approval by the Careers Office but this sometimes took the form of their ratifying an arrangement made between employer and 'trainee'. Jacqueline N. began on a clerical scheme working for her uncle, while three other young workers entered schemes where they had previously held Saturday or holiday jobs, two at racing stables, one at a hairdresser's. Seventeen young workers, however, gained access to their chosen line of work more directly through the Careers Office. The usual course of events was that offers of interviews would be made for schemes in line with the stated preferences of young workers. Depending upon supply and demand for places, interviews could range from the notional to the genuinely, if never fiercely, competitive.

Although the relatively small numbers involved demand cautious interpretation, there appeared to exist a wide range of scheme availability between different occupations. For instance, almost all those with ambitions in engineering found appropriate placements, whereas the similar numbers interested in work as mechanics, electricians and joiners were much less successful. It should, however, be pointed out that the high 'success' rate within engineering owed much to the existence of Short Training Courses, in practice pre-WEEP placements and thus far removed from immediate prospects of employment.(40)

In considering these 'success' stories, it is important to remember that progress tended to be both extremely difficult and/or limited. Many of this group of twenty three had applied, often speculatively, for numerous full-time jobs without success and a few had had several YOP interviews before being 'successful'. Similarly, although all had eventually made some progress towards a chosen (or accepted) line of work, for the majority this fell short of any real possibility of obtaining permanent employment. Of those (ten in all) having completed their scheme only one, Sandy B. who was taken on as an apprentice hairdresser at her mother's workplace, was kept on. Of eleven still to complete, only three had any chance of retention, the others either being on schemes which could not offer employment or having already been told that they would not be kept on.

The group designated as partially successful in their initial pursuit of occupational choice comprised two distinct sub-groups. Those who recalled no preferences or a willingness to 'do anything'

were included on the grounds that their first placements could not adequately be described in terms of either continuity or discontinuity from earlier choices.(41) A second and larger sub-group included both those on general schemes which allowed some scope to follow stated ambitions and on WEEP schemes which related only in a loose way to previous choices. All twenty two had obtained their placements directly though the Careers Office.

Those without definite choices tended not to be placed in WEEP schemes, with the exception of shop placements, whose availability appeared to outstrip any clamouring to fill them. Peter A. described his start to working life thus.

> I never had ... a thing that I wanted to do, I was prepared to try anything and that's what I've ended up doing, just trying anything.

A careers officer gave him the names of two shops and told him,

> go to the first one if they don't want you, go to the second one, but the first one says it was O.K.

For most of the 'uncommitted', non-WEEP schemes were the destination, which tends to confirm that latter's function as 'blotting paper' within the management of youth unemployment. Such 'general' schemes were also used for partial realisation of choices, albeit to varying degrees. From the Careers Office stance, such placements offered some scope for 'matching', while for young workers they represented a compromise when direct pursuit was not possible but abondonment unacceptable. Nonetheless, the compromise was often an object of considerable resignation.

> I went there cause there was nowt else gannin. (Robert P.)

Others, such as Jean N. and Norman G., knew that particular

schemes offered at least some form of opening to their chosen occupation and asked specifically for placement.

Compromise was evident too in those WEEP schemes which only conformed loosely to the preferences of young workers. Would-be mechanic Sean D. found himself serving petrol, while Sharon W. with ambitions in catering, was largely restricted to serving behind the counter in a cafe.

As noted above, twenty four young workers entered jobs or schemes which can be clearly classified as different from any of their choices prior to leaving school. If questions of choice and availability are ever present in working life, it is perhaps at times of change that their relationship is most visible. There appeared to be two major factors in these early changes of direction. First, that for some, failure to obtain a desired opening led to a resigned willingness to consider 'almost anything'. Often allied to this shift was a second feature, namely that of 'opportunism', positive response to a previously unknown and unconsidered opening. Rather than demonstrating any personal changes, these moves can be seen as overwhelmingly rooted in the need to find work.

The extent to which preferences were sacrificed for at least proximity to jobs can be gauged from the fact that of the twenty four young workers, four were moving into full-time jobs and sixteen into WEEP schemes.(42) Of the latter, no less than ten were based in either factories or shops, representing two thirds of all those entering such schemes.

The acquisition of full-time jobs showed evidence of both opportunism and family influence. John R. had wanted to join the police, and still did, but his father, who worked for BREL, had persuaded him to 'get a trade' to fall back on if necessary.

> So I'd serve my time and then try to get in the police
> force when I've finished. If I don't make it I've still
> got a trade to come back to.

Karen H. had taken a packing job at the factory where her mother worked, though without any intention of staying. The 'opportunistic' facet of job acquisition was readily apparent in the experiences of Michael F. and Carol P.. Michael got a job as a teaboy on a building site.

> It was my dad's idea. He says 'nip down, they might want
> somebody, you never know.' It wasn't an advertised job.

Carol, after considerable efforts to find work as a plumber, found out that a friend just turned down a hairdressing apprenticeship, 'so I just rang up for it and I got the job'.

Changes usually occurred through a process of negotiation with the Careers Service. At the 'hard end', Angela F. said that she was

> given an ultimatum. I had to work in an office, a shop or
> a factory.

She chose a clothing factory because it was very near to home. Most reported friendlier dealings, either taking up careers officer suggestions or producing their own alternative choices. Two young workers based their choices directly on the prospect of working with friends.

A few found their placements in somewhat unorthodox fashion. Alan O. obtained a scheme fitting fireplaces after his father had called into the shop to buy tiles and enquired about vacancies. While many

young workers tried unsuccessfully to find work by walking around the industrial estates and shopping areas, two found their initial placement by this route.

> When we finished school we went all round Consett, all the shops ... all the factories, 'till eventually I went to McVickers and he says 'oh, why, come upstairs and we'll have a chat' and then he says 'you can start Monday' ... it wasn't anything I wanted to do. It was just that we walked round, instead of just sitting in the house waiting for a job to come from the careers. (Chris W.)

Perhaps the most unusual acquisition of a scheme place was that of Paul J.

> This bloke he was working on the church and I walked past and he asked us if I wanted a job. He says I'll see the careers office about you and I'll get you started on next week.

Given the special efforts made by these early changers to find work, it is important to comment on their 'success' rate. Only John R. of the four job holders remained at the time of interview. Carol D. and Karen H. gave up their jobs while Michael F. lost his when the building site contracted. Of the sixteen entering WEEP schemes, fourteen had since completed them and only one had been kept on. Four of the remaining thirteen had left before expiry, two of them to pursue more promising avenues. The two young workers still to complete schemes both felt they had some prospects of retention.

Of the sixty three schemes first entered by school leavers, no less than forty were accounted for by general or non-WEEP schemes (19), shops (10), clerical (6) or factory (5). Building , engineering, hairdressing and garage schemes accounted for a further twelve. From the sixty nine young workers whose initial moves have been considered, forty two had by the time of interview made at least one further move

in the labour market.(43) In addition, thirteen of those who had initially continued in full-time education had subsequently left and moved to jobs or scheme placements. It is now time to consider what might be termed these 'subsequent moves' of these fifty five young workers. For the purpose of assessing their degree of continuity, it was first moves (or educational courses) which served as the benchmark against which situations at the time of interview could be measured. We will return later to the question of how subsequent moves related to initial destinations.

To ease analysis, those making subsequent moves will generally be treated as a homogeneous category rather than sub-divided according to the number of moves, (a 'distortion' which will be borne in mind and rectified where appropriate). It is, therefore, useful to comment briefly upon the basis of this categorisation. Of the fifty five young workers, twenty three had had one 'subsequent move' (ie a second placement), twenty nine a second, while three had reached a third.

Between first and 'current' placements, fourteen young workers showed a high degree of continuity, a further ten partial continuity, with thirty one clearly different. Predictably, the tendency towards change could be seen to grow with the passage of time since leaving school (or fifth year in the case of those continuing in education) and with the number of placements (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15(a)

Career Direction in 'Subsequent' Moves

|  | Continuity | Partial continuity | Discontinuity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time leaving school |  |  |  |
| first year | 9 | 3 | 10 |
| second year | 5 | 7 | 21 |

$x^2$ 4.63 df2 prob. .10

Table 4.15(b)

|  | Continuity | Partial continuity | Discontinuity |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. of subsequent |  |  |  |
| Moves |  |  |  |
| one | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| two | 6 | 3 | 20 |
| three | 0 | 0 | 3 |

$x^2$ 8.97 df4 prob. .07

Of the fourteen young workers showing 'continuity' since their first moves, five had been obtained full-time employment by the time of interview. Sandy B. had been kept on as a hairdressing apprentice, while Gary E. had moved from a STC in engineering to a WEEP scheme in mining engineering from which he was given an apprenticeship.

Colin Y. moved on successfully from a WEEP scheme as a pump fitter, to a NCB craft apprenticeship as a diesel fitter. Having left school a few months after returning, Douglas W. found a scheme and later a job in an engineering draught office. While this corresponded closely to his intentions when at school, the actual path was not so smooth as he had enthusiastically pursued other options along the way without success. This serves to remind that 'continuity' need not necessarily indicate either a strong 'vocationalism' or even a lasting acceptance of circumstances. Donny S. having initially 'settled' for factory work, moved to a second WEEP scheme in assembly work from which she was offered a full-time job.

For the remaining nine young workers, continuity was confined to scheme placements. Three had moved to further schemes in their chosen line of work, while another two had left college courses to pursue similar ambitions through YOP schemes.

Having initially been restricted to a partial 'realisation' of aspirations, another three had moved closer, albeit still within the realm of schemes. For Sean D., this meant progression from serving petrol via the showroom to his chosen course as a mechanic. Such progress notwithstanding, he claimed to be 'a bit fed up of schemes, just the six month bit'. Alison B., after 'unexpectedly' entering a scheme as a hairdresser, decided to continue by moving on to a second.

Subsequent moves classified in terms of partial continuity varied considerably in the degree to which they could be regarded as

positive. Geoff R., having drifted away from his original goal of clerical work, used a second scheme to return to it. To Patricia N., a general scheme which included hospital voluntary work could serve as useful experience for her chosen career in nursing. After schemes as a clerical worker and a receptionist, Audrey W. found that

> there was nothing going on in the line of office work, so I asked 'would it be all right if I worked with old people'?

this leading to a scheme part clerical, part care work in a local authority home for the elderly. Yet, for the majority of young workers, partial continuity was a markedly less positive experience.

Geoff W. and Tracy E. entered general schemes which catered for their major interests only in a fairly minimal way. Although he took up the Careers Service suggestion of an engineering place at a training workshop, Steven D. said that he could never see this leading anywhere and had taken it only because there was nothing else. Peter R. felt he had been 'tricked' into accepting his clerical scheme.

> This fella at the careers office mentioned all this about computers and it's got absolutely nothing to do with it.

There were also those who drifted (or were 'pushed') into general schemes if they were seen to lack specific ambitions and/or the means to realise them. While Tracy J. and Christine W. had never held any particular preferences, Jacqueline N. arrived at this position after becoming disillusioned with clerical work.

Following two schemes which were 'more about making tea than

office work', she had vowed not to accept any more schemes but had been driven to take a general scheme by the boredom of unemployment.

Thirty one, a clear majority of the fifty five young workers, had incorporated within their subsequent moves at least one clear change of direction. From this group, eight young workers' moves were largely explicable in terms of efforts to return to earlier preferences. They included three whose return moves were to full-time jobs. Both trainee miners interviewed had had earlier expectations of working in the pits. For Paul J., this had been a definite if resigned choice, being

> the only thing I could think of, 'cause I didn't fancy
> going in the forces or anything and round here there's
> nowt much better than the forces or the pit.

He had taken a building scheme simply to fill the time while 'on the waiting list'. Alan O., who had stayed on full-time after a scheme fitting fireplaces, moved to the pit when the chance came. Similarly Andrew H. left his farm scheme when offered the engineering apprenticeship he wanted.

Of those whose return to earlier preferences occurred via schemes, only two were in WEEP placements at the time of interview. Having initially wanted to work as a hotel chambermaid, Sharon W. had to wait until her third scheme for the opportunity to do so. On leaving her first after a row with the manageress, she had been persuaded by a careers officer to try shopwork.

> He says 'I know it's not the sort of work you want to do'
> but he says 'you can at least have a go and see if you
> enjoy it'.

The shop scheme had indeed turned out to be enjoyable, but the original ambition remained. Angela F. and Michael M's 'return' moves

were to general schemes which allowed them some scope to pursue aspirations towards child care and joinery respectively. Angela found her previous factory placement too boring, while Michael had taken a shop placement as it was 'the only thing they had at the careers office.'

Amanda K., after returning to clerical work, had not been offered a full-time job and was unemployed at the time of interview. Apart from those whose subsequent moves could be seen in terms of (partial) return to earlier ambitions, there were ten young workers whose changes had led to the establishment of a 'new continuity', defined here as successive placements in the same line of work, also being 'currently' pursued.

For five young workers, the 'new continuity' meant passage to full-time employment. In the cases of Lorraine G. and Terry T., this outcome had been rather 'fortuitous'.

Lorraine, having left a college drama course and resisted careers office pressure to take a factory scheme, moved around various sections of Peterlee Development Corporations YOP provision before arriving in the clerical sector from which she gained a three year temporary job as a typist. This had produced a considerable change of heart.

> I always said 'I'm not going to get stuck in an office, a boring old office', but I enjoy it now.

Terry stayed on an extra year at school and following a disastrous second scheme in printing (which he left after a week) took up a clothing factory WEEP scheme, and was offered a post as trainee manager three months later.

Pamela J. and Diane J. were more calculative, both swapping shop for factory schemes. Pamela explained her move as follows.

> They said I might get kept on here, get a permanent job and I wouldn't have had a permanent job at Woolworths, so it was worthwhile for me, leaving a government scheme there.

She emphasised that this had nothing to do with preferring factory work. 'It was just because it was a permanent job.'

Diane pointed to the longer holidays, weekends off and higher pay available in factories as well as their better prospects for employment.

Sylvia R. progressed to full-time factory work by a different route. She began with a work placement at a zip factory while on a general scheme, before taking up a WEEP scheme at the same factory during the course of which a full-time vacancy arose. Explaining the moves she commented,

> I didn't want to work in a factory but that's all there was.

While the lure of full-time employment in factory work attracted a number of young workers, Karen H. moved in the opposite direction, giving up the job she had taken immediately upon leaving school and opting instead for a scheme in clerical work.

Two young men moved from shop to building work, though with less ultimate success than those entering factories. Chris W. hated his second shop scheme and although he 'would've stuck it' in the absence of an alternative, jumped at the chance of a WEEP scheme with a builder, suggested by a friend placed with the same firm. On hearing of the 'vacancy', he informed the careers office and asked 'is there

any chance of us going on that?' He was told that he could start as soon as he wanted to. Chris's next move was to a general scheme with a substantial building component.

Graham L. reacted to the completion of a shop scheme by a similar move. He was subsequently given a full-time job with the firm, only to be laid off less than three months later. He was unemployed at the time of interview.

Perhaps the saddest 'new continuity' was Michael F's, based on pre-WEEP courses such as WIC, on which he was undertaking a second spell. Without any apparent sarcasm, he talked of how fortunate he was to be allowed to do this.

There were thirteen young workers whose changes of tack could neither be regarded as returning to earlier choices nor leading to a 'new continuity'. Eight had, in effect, given up their chosen (or acquired) courses, three voluntarily, five because there seemed to be no way of continuing to pursue them.

Two young women Joan E., who had given up her job as a projectionist because of the unsocial hours and Andrea K., who had left an art course for personal reasons) had both taken schemes as clothing machinists in the hope of finding full-time employment. Andrea had never previously considered being a machinist but

> just saw it at the Job Centre, so I put my name down for it.

For Joan, the move represented a considerable shift from earlier views.

> I had all sorts of jobs in my mind but I always vowed I would never work in a factory, but now it's come to the push, I have to. I've got no choice. (44)

The prompt came from friends who told her that machinists 'were wanted badly' and that factory work was good as 'you get a bit of a laugh while you're working.' The extent to which such changes of view were due to correction of previous misconceptions or to rationalisation remains debatable.

Tracy G., who had given up a nursery nursing course because of 'the theory', replied positively to a Careers Service offer of a clothing factory scheme on the grounds that 'it's a job'. The five young workers who had their subsequent moves dictated by closure of chosen avenues,(45) reacted, to greater or lesser extent, with fairly radical changes. Trish C., seeing no way forward in hairdressing, took a shop scheme 'to get off the dole', while similar motives inspired Denise V. to switch from clerical to shop work. With no apparent openings as a mechanic Alan D. told the Careers Office he would 'have anything' and found himself in a hotel scheme as a porter/handyman. In the case of Stephen J., the involvement of the Careers Office was more ironic, for having taken up 'out of the blue', their suggestion of a plumbing scheme, found that he really enjoyed it, but was unable to continue. He had moved to a general scheme because

> my mates worked up here and they was telling us about it,
> that it was canny good, so I applied for it.

A further five respondents whose subsequent moves had entailed a clear change of direction saw themselves as 'easy' about the work they did and willing to try most things. At the time of interview, one was unemployed and four on general schemes, although two of the latter had 'specialised' to a degree and felt they had clearer ideas on future direction. The moves of the five had largely been based on 'taking

what was offered' with all the inevitable twists and turns this produced.

Having looked in some detail, 'biographical' as well as aggregative, at both initial and subsequent moves, it is useful to examine the relationship between the two. For the forty two 'immediate' school leavers who had since had more than one placement, the relationship can be shown in tabular form as follows (Table 4.16)

Table 4.16

|  | Subsequent moves | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| first move | cont'ty | partial | discont'ty |
| cont'ty | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| part. cont'ty | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| discont'ty | 2 | 0 | 14 |

$$X^2 \ 18.41 \ df4 \ prob. \ .00$$

At first glance, these figures indicate that, for this group of young workers, there was considerably more change than continuity in their (actual rather than ideal) occupational choices. Statistically, there is clear association between the (dis)continuity of initial and subsequent moves, which suggests that both constancy and change tend to be 'self-reproducing'. It could be argued that the figures for change are misleading to a degree, in that they do not indicate either those cases where the young worker had 'returned' to earlier choices, or those where some 'new continuity' had been found.

Against this, however, it may well be fallacious to interpret attempts to 'return' in entirely positive terms, as in certain instances, it was clearly the result of unsuccessful exploration of alternatives. Similarly, the 'new continuity' was often based on a quest for work, the attractiveness of which relied heavily on lack of alternatives. Desirability and availability were often inversely related, the most obvious example being that of factory work. Not only did considerably more young workers gravitate towards factory work than had 'wanted to', but the mechanism, namely the lure of full-time employment, was clearly spelt out by most of those who did so.

Given the very modest levels of initial ambition, it is also dubious to see 'realisation' as an unequivocal blessing.

If full-time employment provided a form of 'carrot', the presence of unemployment as 'stick' was also in evidence. The need to 'get off the dole' was sometimes made explicit, but usually implicit where interviewees accepted scheme places because 'there was nothing else'.

The scale and some of the effects of unemployment were chronicled in chapter 3, but it is also important to draw attention to the number of young workers who had experience of redundancy or the YOP equivalent, 'release' at the end of a scheme. Four had lost full-time jobs, three in circumstances closely related to the operation of the YOP. Graham L. and Philip G. found their jobs replaced by WEEP schemes, while Joan E. lost her first job as a projectionist when the cinema management attempted to change its status to that of a scheme, with Joan remaining 'in post'. This was apparently blocked by the Careers Service or the MSC, not because of the blatant substitution

but because as an already experienced worker, she was ineligible for the new WEEP scheme! Twenty eight young workers (seven of them on two occasions) had experienced completing a WEEP scheme and being 'released'. This figure is placed in better perspective by the fact that forty six of the interviewees had either never been on a WEEP scheme or were still in their first one at the time of interview. Of the remaining fourteen, six had left their schemes voluntarily,(46) six had been offered full-time jobs, and two had experienced both leaving one scheme and being retained from the next. Thus of fifty one completed schemes, eight led to full-time jobs - a rate which corresponds almost exactly with the official retention rate of 15%

While probationary use of WEEP placements could not receive official sanction, retention was clearly regarded as an indicator of their 'success', not least by many young workers desperate for jobs. WEEP trainees were faced with an extreme version of the asymmetrical exchange between capital and labour, being required to make greater sacrifices for markedly lower rewards.

Although those looking back on their release following WEEP schemes rarely expressed bitter disappointment, all but a few said they would have accepted an offer of employment. Thus, if release cannot be directly compared to redundancy, neither can it be treated as a routine exercise in placement completion.

We have seen that the pursuit of occupational choice, even through the 'shadow' labour market of the YOP was often a difficult affair, and that emergence from the shadows was infinitely more so. Having considered how the study's eighty eight interviewees had

arrived at their 'current' situation, it is a logical next step to look at 'future' prospects.

This focus is particularly important, not only because of their position at the start of working life, but because youth unemployment policy ultimately stands or falls according to its ability to help young people secure employment in the longer term.(47)

If in one sense, future-gazing is a highly speculative exercise, it must be remembered that it is likely to have exerted some influence upon the 'current' subjectivity and/or actions of young workers (see chapter 5 on the effects of (non)retention). The matter of future prospects begins with some consideration of those in full-time jobs at the time of interview.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature was the sharp division between the respective experiences of the sexes. In part, this was due to sampling, which concentrated upon those who had left school. As we have seen, more young women than men entered further education including those successfully gaining places on popular courses such as those for nursery nursing and clerical work. However, the divergence in experiences owed more to the sexual divisions of the labour market. For young men, those jobs still available were often those (such as engineering apprenticeships) which would have been sought-after regardless of umemployment levels. The reverse applied to female school leavers, for whom opportunities were clustered in areas such as factory work, whose popularity relied almost entirely on their offer of employment. This being so, it was not surprising to find clear 'sex differences' among the employed both in terms of how far aspirations

had been attained and what future changes were planned.

Among the eight male interviewees employed, four were engineering apprentices, three of whom had wanted to be so while at school, the other being persuaded by his father to 'get a trade'.(48) A fifth, Douglas W., was hoping to consolidate his job in an engineering draught office by gaining an apprenticeship as a draughtsperson. The two young men employed as trainee miners had both accepted this as their likely working destination, although Paul J. would have preferred an NCB craft apprenticeship for later 'flexibility'. Only Terry T., recently appointed as a trainee manager in a clothing factory had strayed far from his envisaged course, and he was quite pleased with the outcome.

Of six young women employed, four worked in factories (two in clothing manufacture, two in assembly work). Their original ambitions had been decidedly more 'people-oriented', with one hoping to be a nurse and another two to work with children. As has been noted, the move to factory work was overwhelmingly dictated by its offer of employment prospects, and although 'paying off' for these four young women it was not without price.

Donny S. professed to being quite settled, but mused

> I sometimes think it would have been nice doing something
> interesting with my life.

The juxtaposing of the 'privilege' of employment with subjection to (very) monotonous work sometimes produced a moderate and medium term commitment to the job.

> You get pretty fed up doing the same job all the time ...
> I think about doing something else but not really. I mean,
> I don't think I'll stay indefinitely but probably for a

few year. (Pamela J.)

> I would move if something comes up that's better. It all depends, you don't know until the time comes, do you? (Sylvia R.)

Diane J's plans for change were more definite.

> I think I'd like to move on, 'cause the boss gets on your nerves when he gets on your back a lot. He's been all right with me and that but ... the pay's bad, it definitely is.

Lorraine G. and Sandy B., whose jobs as clerk/typist and hairdressing apprentice respectively were some distance from their original ambitions in drama and nursing, appeared to be much more 'settled' than their factory-based counterparts.

With regard to future prospects, it is important to remember that those interviewees 'currently' employed often faced considerable insecurity of tenure. BREL was under threat of closure at the time and has since been closed, while the planned pit closure programme would not only cost the three NCB employees their jobs but endanger a further two in the ancillary area of mining engineering. The unpredictable nature of factory employment in the Coalfield requires little further comment.

Inevitably, the future plans of those on schemes were clouded by great uncertainty. As in other areas, the degree of realism in assessment of prospects was usually high. This was particularly so in the case of WEEP schemes where retention custom and practice had been closely scrutinised. Those in shop schemes tended to 'know the score'. 'Why, there's been other government schemes before me and they've never been kept on (Trish C). Nicholas N. felt his prospects to be very good as he had directly taken over the tasks of a full-time

worker who had left!(50)

In outlining their intentions for the future, a clear majority of those on schemes expressed a desire to remain in their 'current' line of work. Twenty three of the thirty on WEEP schemes did so (with a further three opting for related areas). Although non-WEEP schemes rarely allowed such a specific occupational focus, seventeen of twenty six interviewees wished to pursue directions related to some aspect of their scheme work. Thus, over three quarters of those interviewes whilst on schemes were intending to continue along, or close to their 'current' occupational path. Developmental or matching theorists might interpret this finding as evidence of a settling process. However, it seemed to owe rather more to young workers' recognition that continuity, through experience and indication of commitment, enhanced prospects of employment, where other factors were constant.(50) There was negligible variation according to time since leaving school, which supports the view that opportunity rather than realisation was central.(51)

Even through the medium of schemes and at such an early stage in working lives, there was often explicit awareness that choices had to be definite and adhered to, once made. Laura H. observed of remaining in clerical work,

> well, I have to ... unless I was to start right from stratch,

while Sandra J. declared

> there's no way I'd start something different all over again.

Steven D., who had toyed with various ideas, was worried about the

constraining effect of his present placment, reasoning that

> if I go for a job as a clerk or something and they say
> what are you doing at the minute?, Oh, I'm doing an
> engineering course. Then what are you doing here if you're
> interested in engineering? That type of thing.

The perceived need for consistency, through successive schemes
could lead to reversal of the official view that schemes were solely
for the inexperienced. As noted earlier with increasing 'meritocracy',
experience could be regarded as advantageous, even a pre-requisite for
places. About to apply for a clerical scheme, Amanda K. commented

> It'll help with us working in offices before, I might
> stand a good chance of that one. (52)

Holding continuity as an ideal is markedly different from sucessfully
pursuing it, and in this context, it is interesting to consider young
workers' self-rating of their future prospects. Only two had definite
prospects of work. Patricia N., having just received a starting date
for nursing training, and Karen H., promised a clerical job in a
building society as replacement for a worker who was soon to leave.
The four in factory placements all believed their chances of retention
to be good, and a further six thought their chances to be reasonable.
The remaining nineteen workers on WEEP schemes foresaw no possibility
of retention. In all these verdicts, employers prevailing practices,
rather than workers' qualities, were taken to be the crucial factor.
Where opportunities were known to exist, young workers were generally
confident of their ability to utilise them, but none seemed to harbour
ideas of being able to 'create' openings by thier own performance.

Even if prospects of retention were generally poor, the labour
market toehold of WEEP schemes tended to confer greater status upon

their participants compared with their non-WEEP counterparts. This 'pecking order' was reflected in the latter's self-rating.

An overwhelmingly majority of those on non-WEEP schemes appeared to regard the gap between their position and full-time employment as virtually unbridgeable. Many were enthusiastic job-seekers, writing letters, answering adverts and sometimes doing the rounds of work premises, but held little faith that any of these routes would be successful. Lacking any chance of retention, a 'good' WEEP scheme or college course were often considered to be the only ways forward.

There also appeared to be a much higher incidence of uncertainty among those non-WEEP schemes, both in terms of holding definite ambitions and belief in the possibility of realisation. Seven of the twenty six young workers declared themselves to have no particular occupational aspirations and/or as prepared to 'do anything'. Such views were not expressed by any of the thirty interviewed on WEEP schemes.

Similarly, even where clearer ambitions were held by workers on non-WEEP schemes, they were often less specific than were those of their WEEP counterparts. While it was certainly the case that previous 'indecision' had sometimes led to non-WEEP placements, this provides only a very limited explanation of later outcomes. The form taken by the relative indecision showed clearly the influence of recent working experience. As noted above, most young workers expressed wished to follow their 'current' occupational direction. Such choices seemed to rest on a combination of attachment to, or emjoyment of the work, recognition of the investment made in it and of the lack of feasible

or desirable alternatives.

In this sense, WEEP schemes provided a much clearer object for attachment and investment, and simultaneously rendered possible departures more radical. By contrast, the broader and more diluted experience provided by non-WEEP schemes offered more avenues (and less investment contraints) even if they were somewhat narrower. Thus, it was not unusual to find those on non-WEEP schemes willing to pursue more than one line from their multi-activity programme. Peter A. said that although, ideally, he would like to be a painter or a joiner, he would also be quite happy as a plumber or bricklayer.(53)

Apart from being less likely to have formulated definite occupational plans, those on non-WEEP schemes also tended to be more pessimistic about their future prospects.(54) Although a majority had managed to preserve or acquire fairly definite choices, pursuit of them was usually seen in extremely vague terms. Three young men interested in any form of construction work all took for granted that 'there's just no jobs to apply for' (Michael M.). Robert P., who had managed to 'specialise' in painting and decorating and was taking the relevant City and Guilds examinations, said he had known of no local openings in the past year. He commented,

> I might try self-employed if I can get somebody to start
> up with, give us a bit of help, 'cause I cannot see us
> getting on anywhere unless I've got experience and things
> to prove that I'm capable.

From their training workshop experience, Gillian C. and Francesca D. had decided they liked 'machining', but saw WEEP schemes as their only possibility, with Francesca noting 'and there's not many of them, neither'. Two young women wished to use their experiences with

children to enrol on a NNEB course and a further three hoped to enter other forms of 'care work'. None of the five felt their prospects were good. To greater or lesser extent ('only as an absolutely last resort' (Angela F.), all were resigned to further schemes. The incidence of pessimism was also demonstrated by the more frequently expressed vision of schemes being followed by unemployment and by the more desperate plight of certain non-WEEP trainees. Jacqueline N. saw her future in stark terms, 'on the dole'.

For Geoff W., the future was to

be on the dole, probably, 'cause when you're eighteen, you can't get any more training schemes and the careers just forget about you. I'll still be seventeen when I finish here, so I might be able to get another training scheme to last us another year or so, but that'll be all. (55)

As Atkinson and Rees argue

increasingly school leavers are 'progressing' from one temporary opportunity to another until they are too old to benefit from YOP. (1982:4)

Outgrowing the YOP did bring adult measures such as the CEP within range, but such provision was extremely scarce.

I was eighteen yesterday and I think I might have a chance of one of those courses, the sixty five pound ones. (Chris W).

Gary F's most pressing concern was whether his spell at an engineering workshop might be extended for a further three months. Like certain others, he was anxious about being squeezed out of schemes altogether by the arrival of perhaps the ultimate 'reserve army', next year's unemployed school leavers.

Predictably, perhaps, future prospects for unemployed interviewees were characterised by haziness, often spiced with a dash

of desperation. Of thirteen who had previously worked in jobs or schemes, only four were firmly set on continuing in the same line, although none thought their prospects to be good. Tricia L. said of working with the elderly,

> that's what I've set my heart on. If it come to the crunch I would do something else.

Graham L., recognising the difficulty of gaining a full-time job in construction, was also giving serious thought to joining the army.

In all, eight of the eighteen unemployed young workers declared themselves willing to 'do anything'.

> I'm not bothered, I'd take anything so long as it's a job. (Carol R.)

In self-castigatory tone, Anthony L. stated his desire for

> anything to get us off my big, fat backside and get us a job, anything. I'm not really bothered what I do, or about the money. All I want to do is work.

The 'jobs' in question usually included schemes, although three young workers excluded this option.

> I've been looking for proper jobs now and I wouldn't have another government scheme. (Brian P.)

In most cases, willingness to 'do anything' was directly attributable to labour market experiences. Six of the eight had held definite ambitions and had, with odd exceptions, found them nigh impossible to pursue. Brian P's experience was fairly typical.

At school, he had wanted to be an electrician and had been on a work experience placement with a local electrician.

> I thought it was great but since I left school I've never heard of one job for electricians. It's terrible.

After a month of unemployment, he accepted a WEEP scheme as a

fork-lift truck driver, of which he said,

> I wouldn't have minded being kept on 'cause I really
> enjoyed it, but they did'nt keep us on.

Four months on, and despite the loss of any 'choosiness' over jobs, he

viewed the future with little optimism.

> I'm still looking for jobs and things but not much hope.
> So I'll just keep looking 'til I get one. That's all you
> can do.

His 'fallback' option was that of further education.

> If I don't get a job by next year I'm going to college. I
> don't know which one but I definitely want to go to
> college if I don't get a job soon. It's better, isn't it?

The rhetorical question did not seem to carry any great

conviction.

In addition to indicating positive occupational ambitions, a

number of those interviewed mentioned jobs which they regarded either

as last resorts or as 'beyond the pale' altogether.

Factory work held strongly negative connotations for at least

five female young workers, despite their recognition of its relative

advantages in terms of pay, holidays and chances of full-time

employment (see Wallace (1986:28)).

Three of the young men 'eligible' (via family connections) for

work in the mines expressed extreme reluctance to exercise any such

right. 'My dad says to leave that as a last resort' (Graham L.). Both

Carl R. and Robert P. had had relatives killed in pit accidents and

were determined to 'steer clear'. The latter was adamant.

> I wouldn't gan down there if it was the last job in the
> world. I still wouldn't gan down.

No treatment of the occupational choices of interviewees would be

complete without reference to the 'military connection'. Obviously, sampling methods excluded those in the forces and it was also the case that none of those interviewed had previously been so.

However, no less than eighteen young workers had taken (or were taking) their interest in enlistment to the point of application.(56) Their accounts clearly demonstrate the relationship between the local labour market and application to the forces. Only a very small minority explained their aspirations in terms of intrinsic (travel, activity, adventure) appeal. Sylvia R., who had gained a permanent job in a zip factory, nonetheless felt that the army was 'my type of life' and was planning to follow a number of her friends by joining. Of her home in Peterlee she said, 'you just get sick, man, the same place and that'. Although happy to accept a full-time job at the end of her scheme in a factory canteen, Stephanie G. was crystal clear about her intention to join the army. 'I've got my mind set on it and that's what I'll do'. For the large majority, aspirations towards the forces appeared to rest on an uneasy amalgam of genuine appeal and last resort. The most common pattern was that of (intended) reapplication if matters did not work out satisfactorily 'at home'. Terry T., with a longstanding interest in the navy, withdrew his application on being offered a job as a trainee factory manager. Similarly Karen H. had shelved plans to join the navy due to what she felt was the near certainty of a building society job. For those less fortunate in the local labour market, the interplay tended to continue. No less than eleven young workers explicitly linked their forces' applications to the difficulties of finding work locally. this sometimes took a

general form, albeit directly related to personal experiences. Lesley H., whose attempt to land a secretarial job had failed was now applying for the army 'cause that's all that's left really, 'cause there's no jobs here'. Five young workers, currently on schemes, said that they would (re)apply to the forces if they were not retained. Kevin S. had intended to join the navy but had 'temporarily' accepted a painting and decorating scheme. He now said he would like to be kept on but if not, then he would apply to the navy. If that proved to be unsuccessful, his chosen course would be that of a further painting and decorating scheme.

'Last resort' elements were also evident in the testimony of two young male workers, unemployed at the time of interview. Paul B. had applied successfully to join the army, only to find the intake cancelled. After three scheme placements he had just reapplied. Of one scheme, in a butcher's shop, he said that, if possible he would have accepted a job there

> and then if I didn't really like it, I would still have
> gone for the army.

Graham L., self-confessed army 'fanatic' while at school and still enthusiastic about the idea, nonetheless reported having thought

> I may as well try round the area first, and then if
> there's nowt else, I'll go in the army.

In terms of the theories of occupational choice outlined earlier, the evidence of this chapter provides overwhelming support for the opportunity theorists such as Roberts. Initial choices were 'realistic' in terms of class/education and sex (and tended to be 'corrected' if not), but also, in many ways, reflective of the traditional patterns of local 'aspiration'. This does not, of course,

mean that all local openings were eagerly sought (eg, mining and factory work). However, as choices came to be actively pursued, the lure of full-time employment opportunities was unmistakable and often outweighed previous qualms. Throughout all the complexities of the pursuit of choices, the impact of opportunity constraints was clearly apparent. This was so even in the 'shadow' labour market of the YOP, itself removed by one or more stages from the 'real' labour market.

The relationship betweeen these two markets was revealed as boh vitally important and highly complex. Despite the homogeneity of 'trainee' status enshrined in the administration of the YOP, the existence of an internal hierarchy was widely understood.

The most obvious aspect of this was variation in proxity to the labour market, with WEEP clearly standing above non-WEEP schemes. However, proximity was also variable within WEEP for two related reasons. First, patterns of recruitment from WEEP ranged from its use as probation to outright substitution for other workers. Second, where probationary practices prevailed, the ratio of scheme places to possible job vacancies was likely to be much more favourable than in situations of high substitution.

For young workers, this insertion of a new layer of 'employment' made customary choices - such as weighing 'ideal' choices against the need to find work - markedly more difficult. The usual dilemmas of feasibility and time-scale were rendered yet more problematic by the bureaucratised nature of YOP, which necessitated pursuit of choice via unknown and often contradictory rules.

Beyond the YOP, reliance on family had, if anything, hardened, often being seen as the only hope of finding work other than retention

from a WEEP scheme. However, in view of the scale of unemployment, such reliance was unlikely to be fruitful for more than a handful of young workers.

Although there were instances of family connections operating within the YOP, this was rare and mediation of the latter was placed firmly with the Careers Service.

There were also certain important spatial variations, especially in the two historically key areas of mining and military service. Aspiration to the former had all but disappeared, particularly in the west of the Coalfield. It was interesting to note, that, even where (predominantly in the east) family connections kept this possible 'lifeline' to employment open, considerable reluctance was expressed about exercising this option, which tended to be viewed as a 'last resort'.

Albeit to varying degrees, elements of 'last resort' were also present in intent to join the armed forces. In particular, there was strong biographical evidence of the links between unemployment and enlistment. Spatial variation took the form of higher interest in Peterlee compared with Bishop Auckland or Consett. This is certainly not explicable simply in terms of unemployment. More likely explanation would lie with the area's class structure and family traditons, with the 1981 Census showing a greater number of forces' personnel resident in Peterlee than in other two locations. It might also be argued that, to the extent that enlistment is part of Coalfield culture and tradition, it could be expected to be strongest where links with mining were strongest.

## Notes

1   While 'opportunity' theorists have sucessfully debunked some of
    the pretensions of differentialists and developmentalists, they
    have, in the main, settled for empirical refutation and ignored
    matters of ideology implicit in the opposing views.

2   In particular, attention should be drawn to the pervasion of
    empiricism and overriding concern with matters of 'adjustment'. In
    relation to the latter, the primary interest has been in 'job
    satisfaction' gauged by 'likes and dislikes' (Maizels (1970)) and
    on sources of influence in job choice. With varying degress of
    approval, studies have consistently demonstrated the continuing
    role of family and friends in job acquisition and the relatively
    weak position of state guidance services (Moor (1976:93), Sinfield
    (1981:45), West and Newton (1983:65).

    Empiricism ensures that sources of influence are suitably
    de-contextualised and accredited, by default, greater powers than
    they actually possess. As Roberts warns in respect of the Careers
    Service 'guidance must be recognised as essentially lubricating
    more basic process of occupational selection' (1975:143) a
    position which also applies to the role of family. Clearly, the
    power of the latter to obtain jobs often exceeds that of the
    Careers Service (not least because of differences in permitted
    partiality), but its operation is heavily dependent on the
    reproduction of class and gender relations ie, influence is likely
    to be exerted within the same or similar occupations and often the
    same workplace. Even when this is not the case, influence is still
    dependent upon informal networks of social relations, and in turn
    upon class and gender relations. 'Following in father's footsteps'
    may impose a false homogeneity when those footsteps lead to the
    boardroom or the pit face. The use of sources of influence as
    'independent variables' also tends to imply categorical
    discreteness, which does violence to the complexities of the
    process.

    Treatment of 'sex differences' is also weak, with generalisation
    from essentially 'male' models (Roberts (1974), Ashton and Field
    (1976), Simon (1977) and an over-emphasis on marriage as a
    'dampener' on female ambition at the expense of broader
    consideration of gender socialisation and the sexual division of
    labour (Veness (1962:130), Carter (1975:101)

3   There is an objective basis for this in that, with progress in the
    hierarchy, labour power increasingly undertakes the 'functions of
    capital' and rewards increasingly reflect proximity to the
    exploiters rather than the exploited.

4    'Hard' versions of the theory might trace ancestry to Frederick 'Speedy' Taylor's belief in a 'right man for every job and a right job for every man'. Hayes and Hopson (1975:34) argue that so long as jobs are chose in full knowledge of oneself and the job, there is no such thing as a 'dead end' job. 'Softer' versions may recognise that the lack of intrinsic rewards offered by certain jobs renders matching much less exact.

5    Most job changes do not represent 'a personal struggle' to find an occupation in which needs for expression, for security and for recognition will be met, they are to be understood, merely, as a coming to terms with the world of work which is largely bereft of such positive satisfactions' (Carter 1975:104)

6    Daws (cited Hayes and Hopson (1975:41) provides an interesting variant by arguing that job-seekers may choose to define themselves in occupational terms to varying degrees. A valid proposition in the abstract, this also offers a convenient way of sustaining the fiction that all jobs, even 'unrewarding' ones, can meet the needs and desires of their occupants.

7    It is the nature of capital-labour relations that, as a rule, both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards accrue to those executing the functions of capital. Thus any trade-off between the two is likely to operate only within a fairly narrow range.

8    The payment of fixed allowances has been held to aid choice by removing the deceptive lure of instant rewards (see ch.6).

9    Attempts to use such questions to probe further, or distinguish between 'likes', 'hopes', 'expectations', or 'ideals' etc, have rarely been successful, almost invariably evoking similar responses, in part because respondents are rarely so concerned with the precise wording of questions as are researchers.

10   Carter (1966:139) contends, with some justification, that
          first choices ... are little more than notional choices
          which serve as an answer to enquiries about intentions,
          whether they emanate from parents, teachers of Youth
          Employment Officers (or for that matter research workers).

11   Occupations have been categorised acording to the Registrar General (RG) mo del of social class. As Nichols (1979) has pointed out, the conceptual framework upon which this and other 'ladder' models of class rest, presents class in terms of gradation rather than interrelationship with the latter's complexities and antagonisms. Similarly, Willis (1977:1) has argued against reliance on the notion of a 'shallowing line of shrinking capacity' in the reproduction of the occupational/class structure, and for the need to recognise the 'radical breaks' arising from the interface of cultural forms.

For statistical purposes, however, the RG model has certain advantages, not least its detailed and 'easy to use' classification. Formulation of alternative Marxist models has proved extremely difficult and contentious (Poulantzas (1975), Wright (1979)). Distinctions of (un)productive labour, immediate and fundamental class interests and the like do not readily translate into occupational classification, nor into subjective perceptions of it. Thus, despite its conceptual weaknesses, it was the RG model which was used here, although hopefully the interpretation of results tempers rather than accentuates the deficiencies. Social class was used in preference to socio-economic group because given the relatively small sample size, the latter, with its seventeen categories would have promised a degree of sophistication which could not have been fulfilled. This does, however, mean that the broad categories contain some unlikely bedfellows. (Class 3N includes jobs ranging from cartographers to police officers, entertainers to shop workers.

12   If choices are compared in terms of the division between non-manual and manual work, a split emerges between male and female choices (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

| a) Male | | | b) Female | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2nd choice | | | 2nd choice | |
| 1st choice | non-man | man | 1st choice | non-man | man |
| non-man | 27 | 18 | non-man | 78 | 53 |
| man | 12 | 74 | man | 30 | 19 |
| | n=131* | | | n=180* | |

$\chi^2$ 29.93 df1 prob. .00        $\chi^2$ 0.02 df1 prob. .90

* excluding respondents choosing the forces and/or not making two choices

Thus, whereas the distinction appeared to be very clear for young men, the line was much more blurred for young women, a variation largely explicable in the greater interchangeability for the latter between class 3N and manual occupations. Of eighty five young women whose first choices fell within class 3N, thirty six had second choices from classes 3M and 4.

13   Of first choices 53.6% of male respondents and 26.4% of females opted for manual occupations, while the respective figures for second choices were 64.3% and 40.5%.

14

<u>Table 4.8</u>

a) <u>Fathers' class non-manual</u>            b) <u>Fathers' class manual</u>
             <u>occ'l choice</u>                           <u>occ l choice</u>

|           |     | occ. choice | |
|-----------|-----|-------------|------|
| banding   | 1/2 | 3           | 4/5  |
| upper     | 9   | 2           | 1    |
| middle    | 1   | 8           | 1    |
| lower     | 0   | 0           | 1    |

|           |     | occ. choice | |
|-----------|-----|-------------|------|
| banding   | 1/2 | 3           | 4/5  |
| upper     | 3   | 1           | 0    |
| middle    | 0   | 20          | 3    |
| lower     | 1   | 5           | 3    |

$x^2$ 17.31 df4 prob. .00*            $x^2$ 22.16 df4 prob. .00

* the numbers in this table are smaller than ideal, but the association is a clear one

15

<u>Table 4.9</u>
% choosing manual occupation

|                 | male | female |
|-----------------|------|--------|
| Peterlee        | 37.7 | 21.7   |
| Bishop Auckland | 61.2 | 27.7   |
| Consett         | 48.8 | 26.6   |

16  Peterlee's third comprehensive school would probably have brought about a slight redress.

17  The link of such polarisation to unemployment is supported by the fact that whereas in Consett, 26.8% of young men 'aspired' to class 3M occupations, this figure fell to 17.6% for the school where unemployment among parents was markedly higher. In contrast, this once 'staple diet' in the male labour market attracted 47.5% of young men in Bishop Auckland

18  This includes those whose daughters as well as sons completed the questionnaire

19  From the sample there were fifty five fathers employed as engineers, mechanics, electricians, joiner, fitters or painters. Against an 'expected' total of around half this figure, fifty one young men aspired to such occupations.

20  The narrow range of choices (as compared with parental occupations) almost certainly resulted from a situation where detailed knowledge of the labour market was limited and choices remained fairly general. Given the 'muchness' of many jobs within particular lines of work, it might also be considered strange to opt for a highly specific task even if known about.

21  With certain exceptions, aggregated second choices were usually close to first choice totals. Exceptions occurred especially when

first choices might be perceived as difficult to attain and close substitutes were offered as second choices. Thus, while nursing was a first choice for twenty and second for only seven, work with children or the elderly rose from fifteen to twenty six. Similarly, while engineering was the first choice of eighteen and mechanic of twelve, the corresponding figures for second choices were nine and seventeen. Entry to the police was much less in evidence as a second choice, with ten references as opposed to twenty three first choices.

22  For young men, the combined totals fell from 60-61% for classes 1-3, to 48.5% for 4-5, while for women the fall in combined total is even more dramatic, from 72.5% for classes 1-2, to 30% for classes 4-5. Male aspirants to the forces produced a combined total of 51.7% but their female counterparts produced the highest figure of all, 83.3%, although as their number (n=12) was small, this must be treated with caution.

23  Impressionistically, at least, such decision seemed to be taken more frequently be young men than women.

24  In West and Newton's study, a third of pupils were so placed six months before leaving (1983:61).

25  Only one respondent indicated on the questionnaire that she had a definite job, while a further five expressed strong hopes about finding employment at particular workplaces, invariably where relatives were employed. Although others may simply have chosen not to indicate their secured employment on the form, it seems unlikely that a large number would have done so.

26  Use of the word 'reliance' should perhaps be qualified here. Favoured methods of job pursuit (particularly for those not anticipating clearly defined 'careers'), tended to be highly eclectic, using a number of channels in a fairly opportunistic way.

27  Against this, Sammy had been told 'you might as well go away and join the forces, 'cause there's nowt round here'. For most of the century, the north-east has consistently been one of the major recruiting grounds for the armed forces. In the mid 1970s regional male recruitment was higher than in any other region, standing at 37% above the national average, and almost twice the level in the south-east (Townsend (1977:56)). Ennis has provided a useful account of the militaristic aspects of north-eastern 'regionalism' (1986:163). However, the strength of this connection does not mean either a total lack of opposition to militarism or subscription to the latter. As Ennis makes clear, unemployment and consequent lack of alternative opportunities have been crucial in making the armed forces a more attractive proposition (:148). In common with pit employment, enlistment has frequently been viewed with great reluctance by parents.

28   For those intending to continue in education, issues of (un)employment were also of less immediate concern.

29   For Patrick, sacking was the only sensible way of leaving a job 'cause if you pack a job in you get no dole for six weeks, but if you get sacked you get it straight away'.

30   'Privilege' here refers to family connections. With such dire unemployment, the desire of parents to 'pull strings' for their children is understandable, but its effect was to leave the 'open' job market almost non-existent. Such arrangements were institutionalised by employers such as the NCB and BREL, where having a close relative, usually father, employed was a pre-requisite for entry. Justifiably or not, the 'entry test' tended to be almost universally regarded as farcical. Neeedless to say, individual parental efforts to secure work were very widespread, although given the scarcity of full-time jobs, it seems safe to assume that most were unsuccessful. Similarly, while such priviledge gave rise to considerable bitterness among the excluded, its 'relativity' should not be forgotten. BREL, Shildeon, has since closed, while the ever-hazardous employment in the pits also seems likely to be fairly short term. Indeed, perhaps the fact that entry into work often regarded as undesirable comes to signify unjustifiable privilege offers the most apt commentary upon the local youth labour market.

31   In obscuring this variation, average figures can be very misleading.

32   From an employer's point of view, the work done might serve to ease burdens on full-time workers, or to perform tasks for which the latter could not find time. One unfortunate side effect of such 'altruism' eas that entry criteria were often more relaxed than if probation or substitution were intended, and young workers were sometimes lulled into over-estimating their employment prospects in that line of work.

33   Should full-time jobs have been available in any of these areas of work, it is not only questionable whether such 'training' would receive any recognition, but important to note that any applicant could be in direct competition with all those similarly 'trained'. In extreme cases, some 'general' schemes appeared as direct descendants of the 1930s JTCs. One training workshop for young women offered only sewing and cooking, while the major activities in one outdoors scheme for over seventy young men consisted of felling trees, digging ditches, laying pipes and so on.

34   In the following treatment of the 'careers' of the eighty eight interviewees, certain points arising from the sampling methods should be borne in mind.

There is no reason to believe that those interviewes were, in any meaningful sense, 'unrepresentative' of young workers in the Coalfield or that their 'careers' to the time of interview were highly atypical. Such bias as may have occurred, (either from careers office steering towards better schemes, or employers towards their 'better' young workers) would tend, if anything, to present an unduly favourable image of experiences and prospects, although the nature of the sampling would place limits on the extent of such bias.

While in aggregate form, the sample may be taken as fairly representative, the same cannot necessarily be said for each 'cell' ie, say the two young workers interviewees at a particular factory. Treatment of data thus concentrates on the aggregative.

35  The most popular of these were: mechanic (8), engineer (6), electrician (6), joiner (4).

36  Of seven mentions of teaching, banking, draught work and journalism, all had O levels. For nursing three from seven had O levels, while the others generally recognised their ambitions as rather forlorn.

37  Of eleven young workers reporting such ambitions, seven had O levels and three 5 CSE's or more.

38  Aspiring engineers and electricians tended to be relatively well-qualified, both in comparison with the overall sample and in comparison with those expressing desire to be mechanics or joiners.

39  Educational levels were positively correlated with the class background (father's occupations) of respondents, the relevant $X^2$ test yielding a value of 17.36df6 prob. .01.

40  The recovery prospects of all those who had missed (albeit often non-existent) apprenticeships were extremely slim.

41  While united by their lack of a definite occupational choice, this group appeared to vary widely in terms of enthusiasm for 'work in general'.

42  The corresponding figures for the other two categories were two jobs and eleven WEEP schemes for the 'successful', no jobs and nine WEEP schemes for the 'partially successful'. ($X^2$ 10.68 df4 prob. .03).

43  Nineteen of the remaining twenty seven were still in their first placement and eight were unemployed following it.

44  The vow had been made because she
    thought 'if you're a factory worker, nobody wants to know you' and all this, so I thought I'd better have a different job. (See Massey (1984:158)).

45  The total number who suffered this fate was, of course, much greater.

46  Of those who left voluntarily, five did so specifically because they felt that there were much better prospects of employment elsewhere, while of the others only one could be said to have had 'genuine prospects', which were not sufficient to overcome her extreme dislike of the work.

47  While never promising employment, the imagery of schemes such as YOP or YTS revolves around notions such as breaking the vicious circle of inexperience and lack of opportunity, acquiring marketable skills and so on. Such concepts clearly become somewhat meaningless, when few trainees graduate to full-time employment.

48  See Ryrie and Weir (1978:17)) for an account of family pressures on young men to acquire a trade.

49  Nicholas's position could have been 'probationary' or as the first in a line of substitute workers. While both were abuses of the YOP, the former was much less objectionable to young workers.

50  Inevitably, other factors were rarely constant, but most changes of direction occurred where prospects appeared poor in the forsaken area.

51  Minimisation of 'cognitive dissonance' may have contributed to expressed hopes for continuity, it being more difficult to perform (or survive) in an obviously 'fruitless' predicament.

52  Although such explicit reasoning was offered by only two other young workers, there were several who hoped to make such a clear 'vocational' use the YOP.

53  These choices arose directly from the four activities of his scheme. Geoff W. laid out a similar set of choices, saying 'that's all I've done really'.

54  It should be remembered that many non-WEEP schemes lasted for twelve months, during which time two WEEP schemes (and chances of retention) would have been possible.

55  He summed up his desperation by saying that
if I could get fiddle work, I'd do that, you know, sly jobs, I'd do that if I had the chance. I wouldn't be bothered about getting caught as long as I could get some money.

56  Eight applications (three male, five female) were for the army, six (five, one) for the navy, and four (two, two) for the air force. Three applicants hailed from Consett, eight and seven from Peterlee and Bishop Auckland respectively.

Chapter 5

The Experience of Work

Having considered issues relating to the pursuit of occupational choice and access to work, we now turn to examine more directly the experience of work itself.

In chapter 1, the strongly 'working class' nature of the Coalfield was noted, as was the central place occupied by 'capacity for hard work' in the region's self-imagery. One aim of this chapter is to consider the anticipations and experiences of prospective and recent school leavers in the light of this tradition. However, it is also hoped to address certain issues arising from debate on the advent of 'post-industrial' society.

Drawing on the two major strands (or phases) of the debate, it is useful to consider two factors, the first being the extent to which there have been moves towards developing consciousness in line with the demands of a service-dominated society, where knowledge and communication skills are said to be crucial. The second calls for examination of the degree to which prospects of a 'collapse of work' have induced growth of an 'anti-work' consciousness. In relation to these factors, it is worth noting the evidence of the previous chapter, which indicated a firm clinging to 'tradition' patterns of aspiration. Similarly, testimony recounted in chapter 3 demonstrated little sign of any emergent 'anti-work' consciousness in response to unemployment.

The first section of this chapter, which deals with the (anticipated) experiences of prospective school leavers, is based on data from the questionnaire, supplemented by brief extracts from small group discussions. In the former, respondents were asked to answer the questions 'what things do you think you will like about work?' and similarly for 'dislike'. They were also asked to indicate whether they had ever held either a Saturday or holiday job or undertaken a work experience placement. In relation to these working experiences, comments were invited on 'likes and dislikes' and on what had been learned from them. Before examining the data more directly, it is useful to consider briefly the format of the questions and their implications.

Perhaps their most obvious feature is a certain 'schoolishness' seeking a degree of balance between perceived positive and negative qualities and some evidence of 'learning'. Predictably, while some chose to follow these contours, there were also those who rejected or ignored them (more of which below). Possibly influenced by the matter of 'balance' there were those who appeared to make the anticipatory questions still more hypothetical, effectively changing 'will' to 'would' by highlighting features with little connection to their chosen line of work. Such reinterpretation occurred primarily in relation to 'dislikes'.

The open-endedness of the questions made for replies which are high on spontaneity but low on comparability.(1). Needless to say, there was sizeable variation in the expansiveness of replies, ranging from (series of) single words to strings of sentences. By way of context for anticipations of post-school work, it is useful to

consider the practical working experiences already gained by prospective leavers. Of the four hundred and thirty eight respondents, a hundred and one (23.1%) indicated that they had held a Saturday job, sixty eight (15.5%) a holiday job, with eighty four (19.2%) reporting work experience placements organised from school. This is, of course, to underestimate involvement in paid work as it would not include such staples as paper rounds and babysitting. Were these included, the extensive involvement of school pupils in (paid) work would be still clearer (Finn (1987:82)).

Among the favourable comments passed about these working experiences, by far the most frequent (accounting for over a third) were directed towards sociability, whether with bosses, workmates or customers. Apart from approval of 'friendly people' and 'having fun or laughs', there was implicit in most of the remarks a view of school and peer group culture as restricted, with a consequent desire to meet 'new' or 'different' people. A few referred specifically to the pleasures of mixing across age gaps.

References to money, responsibility, experience and interest each accounted for between 8-12% of the 'likes' listed. In some cases, it was simply the receipt of money which was remarked upon, but in others more positive evaluation was offered. Being trusted with responsibility was a positive factor for some. One Saturday job with a newsagent was described as being

> with a good boss who trust me and gives me much
> responsibility.

Allusions to experience were often couched in terms of 'giving me an idea of what work will be like'. In the case of Saturday or holiday jobs, this was almost invariably expressed in an abstract way, relating to 'work in general', whereas the utility of work experience

placements was usually counched in more concrete, job-specific terms.

There was a similar split between work experience placements and out-of-school jobs in terms of their interest. All but one of the respondents who described work as interesting were referring to placements. Assessment of 'interest' appeared to be largely 'objective' with only white collar, welfare or skilled manual work drawing forth such appraisal, while its near-total absence from evaluation of jobs was probably a fairly accurate reflection of their content. It was predictable, therefore, that all of those who wrote of their working experience in 'glowing' terms ('loved it', 'liked everything', 'only sorry to leave' etc) were also referring to work experience placements.

Unfavourable comments, over a fifth were complaints about long unsociable hours, early starts, short breaks and the like.(2) The next most commonly cited problems, each accounting for approximately 15% of 'dislikes', related to bad weather conditions for outdoor work, and to boredom. Around 12% of remarks referred to work (primarily serving or labouring) being 'too hard' or 'too heavy' leading to tiredness, with a similar percentage expressing dislike for dirty, smelly work.

I always stunk of fish and chips.

I used to have to scrub the floors and they were filthy.

It is interesting to note that, while positive reports on relations at work were overwhelmingly connected with 'colleagues' and customers, the negative were to a similar extent directed towards bosses and owners. There were numerous references to being 'bossed around' and to 'rude', 'cheeky', 'bad tempered' and 'greedy' bosses. One young man wrote that his market stall boss hit him if he made mistakes.

Disparaging comments about money - underpayment, low wages and the like - accounted for roughly 8% of expressed 'dislikes'. The reported 'learning' from working experience included both learning about work and what it entailed and learning how to cope with its demands. Reports varied considerably in their degree of generality. many offered 'job descriptions', while others also wrote of the qualities required for performance. For some, the acquisition of 'tricks of the trade' was clearly a source of satisfaction, as for the waiter who 'learned how to hold six plates in two hands'. Many of those in care work or customer service spoke of the need for patience and politeness.

> I have learned how to deal with 'nasty' people. You have to be polite and helpful at all times - which is a good thing. Serve customers with a pleasant smile and always be kind to them.

Roughly a quarter of all factors mentioned within the 'learning' context related to coping with unpleasant aspects of work, such as handling difficult people, long hours, hard work and so on. A handful also mentioned disciplinary 'learning', such as 'to obey orders' or 'be prepared to do anything you are told! The juxtaposition of dislike and learning was clearest in the case of a male respondent who wrote

> I disliked being bossed around by the owner and getting up too early and never having a day off,

and then continued,

> I learnt to take being bossed about and just to get on with the job and I learnt to get up early.

One suspects that the 'learning' phraseology may have encouraged replies which give a misleading conformist picture of working experiences. It is certainly true that the framework did not readily lend itself to deviant comment. Nonetheless, several respondents

reported that they had 'learned nothing' or, more pointedly, that 'there was nothing to learn', while one young man restored faith in industrial deviance by stating that he had

> learnt how to go haywire with a floor cleaning machine and run people over.

One message which came across powerfully from reported activities and views was the strong air of practicality , of a situation where work and education were sharply contrasted, and 'learning' largely confined to the former. Such 'learning' included both positive aspects such as skill acquisition etc., and the 'negative' ones of coping with unpleasant demands.

While extremely useful because of its practical base, the above derives from the experiences of those who reported themselves as having worked and were prepared to comment upon that work. It is also the case that the distinctiveness of the 'child labour market', (not least its close connections with family and neighbourhood networks) may minimise the transfer of expectations and attitudes towards the adult world of work. However, as Finn (1987:86) argues,

> even though most of the youngsters rejected the option of doing their part-time job full-time - either because they disliked the work, felt it was boring, or too hard, or paid too little - their involvement in paid employment represented a powerful learning experience. (See also Griffin (1985:84))

Thus, as we turn to consider the anticipated likes and dislikes of work as expressed in the questionnaire, it is important that these issues of contextual relevance are remembered.

## Anticipations

The listed 'likes' and 'dislikes' of respondents were post-coded, creating approximately twenty categories for each set. The categorisation process attempted to avoid an indiscriminate bringing together of clearly different factors and yet establish sufficient commonality to make some form of analysis possible. Inevitably, categories varied in terms of 'tightness' and where appropriate, the degree will be indicated. As noted earlier, responses also varied in articulation, from single words to sentences. In the case of the latter, coding involved reduction to the 'essential ideas' expressed.(3)

In all 1084 'likes' and 696 'dislikes' were identified, and these figures can be broken down in terms of frequencies as follows (Table 5.1).

### Table 5.1

| No. of 'likes/ (dislikes) | respondents (likes) (L) | respondents (dislikes) (D) |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 15 | 67 |
| 1 | 88 | 174 |
| 2 | 129 | 106 |
| 3 | 121 | 62 |
| 4 | 50 | 21 |
| 5 | 35 | 8 |

av. 'likes' 2.47          av. 'dislikes' 1.59

The immediate impression given by 'likes' outnumbering 'dislikes' is further confirmed both by the 'hypothetical' nature of some of the latter,(4) and by the fact that the margin grows as more factors are listed.(5)

Table 5.3 offers breakdown of frequencies in terms of the occupational choices of respondents.

<u>Table 5.3</u>

| Occ. choice | av (L) | av (D) | (N) | L/D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| class 1/2 | 2.96 | 1.80 | 104 | 1.65 |
| 3N | 2.45 | 1.50 | 108 | 1.64 |
| 3M | 2.22 | 1.50 | 103 | 1.49 |
| 4/5 | 1.60 | 1.37 | 63 | 1.17 |
| forces | 2.73 | 2.05 | 41 | 1.33 |

It can be seen from Table 5.3 that the number of both 'likes' and 'dislikes' mentioned was positively correlated with the 'hierarchy' of occupational choice. This was also true of the ratio of 'likes' to 'dislikes'.(6)

Interpretation of these data is very difficult. Perhaps the only clear factor present was that those aspiring to 'higher' occupations were more likely to be 'co-operative' and/or articulate in completion of the exercise. The changing ratio might be taken to reflect the

perceived merits of particular jobs, but may also derive from the largely positive views held of work (at least in comparison with school) with anticipated negatives being relatively limited.(7)

Analysis of the data yielded by this question again confirms the central importance of sociability at work. Two hundred and fifty seven (58.7%) respondents chose to mention 'meeting new people' or 'making new friends'. This total accounted for 23.7% of all 'likes' listed.(8) Mention was widespread among all 'groups' or respondents, the only statistically significant variation being between the sexes, with 43.3% of young men and 73.5% of women making such references ($X^2$ 41.51 df1 prob. .00).

Money was listed as a factor by two hundred and forty (54.8%) of those completing the questionnaire.(9)While some referred specifically to 'good money', the majority were usually pointing to the receipt of money itself, with notions of earnings and personal disposal often emphasised. Financial references were more common from young men (60.9%) than young women (48.9%), producing a $X^2$ value of 6.43 df1 prob. .01). They also accounted for a higher percentage of factors listed by those aspiring to manual occupations than their non-manual counterparts, the respective figures being 28.6% and 19.7% (10). The significance of orientations towards money will be discussed more fully in the following chapter, and will not be dealt with further at this point.

It is, however, worth commenting briefly in the extent to which references to money were couched in the language of 'fair exchange', with terms such as 'fair', 'decent', 'reasonable', 'proper' and the like frequently linked to 'wages' and 'pay' (see Pond and Winyard (1983:14).

No other factors approached 'meeting people' and 'money' in terms of frequency. The third and fourth most popular both related to more 'intrinsic' qualities. Seventy two made specific mention of liking the type of work entailed in their chosen occupations. A considerable proportion of such references pertained to work 'with children' or 'with animals', but there were also numerous mentions of skills such as typing and engineering. Expressions indicated that work was enjoyable because of the interest or satisfaction offered were treated as a discrete category whose frequency was seventy. In 'absolute' terms, this factor was strongly related to choice of non-manual work, being mentioned by 20.8% of such respondents as opposed to 9.0% of aspirants to manual jobs. ($X^2$ 9.69 dfl prob. .00).(11) Other 'intrinsic' concepts included those such as 'creativity', mentioned generally by those aiming towards occupational areas such as architecture, acting or design. Adventure, excitement and the like were strongly associated with military, and to a lesser extent, police work. Thirty six respondents (twenty seven of them female) indicated that they saw their work as being 'worthwhile', a notion closely linked to medical or welfare work.

If the various 'intrinsic' categories (excluding sociability) are combined, it is found that one hundred and ninety six (44.7%)

respondents noted at least one such factor. Predictably, there was positive correlation between mention of intrinsic factors and aspiration towards non-manual work, particularly in the (semi) professional occupations of classes one and two.(12)

References to 'independence' numbered sixty four (14.6%) in all, making it the fifth most frequently-cited variable. On examination, perhaps its most striking feature is the majority of female (19.3%) over male (9.8%) respondents. ($X^2$ 7.92 dfl prob. .00) It is possible that this majority reflects a situation where constraints were more keenly felt by young women making independence more of a 'live' issue. References to 'independence' and 'responsibility' were both strongly associated with aspiration towards non-manual occupations. The respective percentages for non-manual aspirants were 19.8% and 11.3%, those for manual aspirants 7.2% and 3.6%. These associations probably derive from a combination of factors. On balance, non-manual occupations tend to have more to offer by way of 'responsibility' and often the financial means to greater 'independence'. Thus, the association may arise either because these features provide a major source of attraction or that they are understood as 'by products' of jobs chosen for other reasons. In addition, emphasis on the latter may well be linked to broader class experience, and in particular that relating to geographical mobility. It is, of course, important to remember that similar words or phrases may represent different thoughts in the minds of respondents. Responsibility, for example, may refer to the minimal responsibility entailed in any job, or to expectation of wielding a degree of organisational power.

'Independence' incorporates various interwoven strands. The underpinning idea is that becoming a wage-earner marks a decisive shift, from reliance on others (usually parents) to greater self-reliance. Clearly, many would find the reality of the shift (in strict terms of disposable income) limited, but the principle and symbolic aspects should not be underestimated. Thus, even where a high proportion of income goes on household contribution, the all-round significance of the contribution must be recognised (see ch 8). Rights of possession and disposal of resources without external approval also bring in their wake powers of decision-making and privacy.

Stated 'dislikes' were dominated by references to working hours. In all, 'early starts', 'long hours' and 'unsociable hours' accounted for 36.6% of all factors mentioned. If references to 'less holidays' are added this figure raised 42.0%. Given that working time is invariably greater than school time, it is perhaps not surprising that its mention was fairly uniform across all 'groups' of respondents.

Boredom or monotony was listed by fifty three (12.1%) respondents. Their statistical association with aspiration to non-manual work,(13) is difficult to explain in terms of expectations, other than that such aspirants were perhaps less resigned to boredom, and were making (negative) hypothetical reference to it. Of sixty three aspirants to class 4 and 5 occupations, non mentioned boredom among their 'dislikes'.

Issues related to the subordination of starting on junior positions and to 'being bossed' together totalled fifty five (12.5%) responses. Such concerns were expressed in various ways.

Being the youngest and having to do everyone's dirty work.

Being asked to make the tea.

If they wanted too much and used me as a skivvy.

The expression 'being bossed about' occurred frequently, sometimes conveying a straightforward antipathy towards 'having to take orders all the time' or being 'told what to do', or of being disciplined ('told off'). Some expressed this as a matter of degree and acceptability, with dislike reserved for being 'bossed about too much', or 'taken for granted'. It is not clear how far unfavourable references to 'the manager' or 'authoritarian and egotistical bosses' were based on firm expectation.

Other workers could also be seen as sources of 'bossing'. 'Other workers tell you what's wrong and bossing me about'. Statistically, the broad category of 'subordination' showed no significant associations.

'Dislikes' were often simply the obverse of 'likes' and sometimes both were offered by the same respondents, suggesting a 'hypothetical' approach. the most oft-cited 'likes', relating to friendly colleagues and money, found counter 'dislikes' in notions of unfriendly ('snobs', 'cheeky', etc) people and negative references towards money ('low pay', 'deductions' or 'exploitation').

Apprentice pay.

Earning money and the tax man taking money from me.

You're expected to do so much for so little.

Not enough money for the work you do.

In addition, however, there were some factors such as 'travel'

and 'responsibility' which were presented as objects of both 'liking' and 'disliking', though doubtless with rather different thoughts in the minds of respondents.

'Dislike' was also expressed for particular ('dangerous', 'dirty', etc) aspects of chosen jobs or likely contingencies such as performing work under adverse conditions. A few also took the opportunity to state their desire to avoid certain types of work, with factory work the clear leader in this respect. 'Working in a factory would drive me mad!!!'

The focus on 'manual and non-manual' has tended to ignore the sizeable minority who fall into neither category in terms of background and/or occupational aspiration. Most notable among the absentees have been aspirants to the forces and those whose fathers were unemployed.

The pattern of responses among the former generally conformed more closely to those of non-manual rather than manual aspirants. Scores were particularly high on factors such as adventure, challenge, excitement and the like. 9.8% of those intent on the forces made such references as opposed to 5.0% of all respondents, while the corresponding figures for expressions of interest and enjoyment were 24.4% and 16.0%. Allusion to money was lower both 'absolutely' and 'relatively' than for any other group.

When considering respondents whose fathers were unemployed, the heterogeneity, in terms of previous experience, of the group should be remembered. The effect of this should be to soften rather than accentuate any distinctive features which might emerge. Yet, in

certain ways, the pattern is, indeed, distinctive. Briefly, this could be summarised as a relatively 'benign' view of work. Those from 'unemployed' backgrounds has the highest ratio of 'likes' to 'dislikes' and were apparently less demanding with respect to work's positives, more tolerant of its negatives. For instance, this group expressed markedly less concern over features such as 'subordination' or 'boredom'.(14)

In this open-ended exercise, they also indicated a low degree of 'instrumentality', making less mention of money and more of 'intrinsic' factors, than any other group. The particular intrinsics most emphasised were those such as 'work itself' or 'everything', all of which surely owes much to proximity to unemployment, prompting accent on work per se rather than showing greater selectivity.

What is readily apparent here is that far from such experience of unemployment encouraging an 'anti-work' consciousness, the reverse seemed to be the case, with work itself, even on relatively unfavourable terms, being highly prized.

Despite being the likely 'fate' of the majority, placements on YOP schemes received little attention from respondents. One young women listed as a 'dislike'

> people coming to your work from the government scheme and
> making you lose hours.

Schemes, were, however, objects of debate within the small group discussions. The most striking impression given was that, although most prospective leavers had heard of schemes, knowledge of them was generally limited and often derived from one or two specific schemes.(15) Many appeared to see a scheme placement as a fairly

remote possibility. Given the neglect in schools (see ch.2) this is perhaps not surprising.

Opinion on the merit and desirability of schemes was sharply divided. The most overtly important issues seemed to be those of the quality of training or experience, but above all the prospects of finding full-time work.

> They're not much good 'cause there's no job at the end of it. (John)

> I've heard a lot about them. The people who've been on them for six months, they have their six months and then they don't get a job. They don't take them on. Lots of people say it's a dead end job. (Alan)

> Sometimes they take you on full-time, but some of them just use you ... cheap labour. (Peter)

Few disagreed with the idea that retention was uncommon, but some preferred to see this as a reflection on the young workers concerned.(16)

> It just depends if you're good, a good worker, then they'll keep you on. (Joan)

> I think it just depends on what you want to do and your attitude to it. (Tracy)

Overall, positive views of schemes tended to outweigh the negative, but this, in turn, appeared to rely heavily on the futility and misery of unemployment as a point of reference. The following interchanges were typical:

> Peter     They're a good thing.

> Sarah    I don't think they're very good, because after you've finished you're not likely to get another job.

> Peter    But you're getting trained.

> Sarah    I know, but my friend was on one and then she was just finished.

Ruth        What else would she have been doing, she would
            have been bored.

Peter       Probably committed suicide by now.


Stephen     They're not much good because when you've
            finished they don't keep you on.

Janet       Aye, but they learn you.

Stephen     Not much, not at Straker's they don't.

Janet       Eh, but if it's going to keep you in work,
            it's good.

Broadly, the picture which emerges in relation to 'anticipations' is one where work was evaluated positively. Widespread awareness of likely or potential problems amply demonstrates that for the most part, such evaluation was not based on any romanticised views of work. Indeed, as in the area of occupational choice, there was a pervasive sense of 'realism' in anticipations of working life. Rather, the strength of such views should be taken to reflect the central place of work in the lives and indentities of working class school leavers, particularly in areas such as the Durham Coalfield.

Before making comparison wihth the reported experiences of young workers, it is worth remembering that the 'work' referred (and replied) to in the questionnaire was implicitly that offered by full-time employment. In addition, it has been noted that prospective school leavers often appeared to under-estimate the permeation of schemes into the local youth labour market. It is important to bear these factors in mind when considering 'subsequent' experiences within a labour market dominated by YOP schemes, and it is to this which we now turn.

Experiences

Before examining the working experiences of the study's eighty eight young workers more directly, it is useful to set this examination in context, and in particular, to offer some explicit comment upon the 'framework' within which it occurs.

As in other areas of the study, it is argued that the starting point for any analysis of working experience must lie with the exchange involved in the sale of labour-power. Because access to resources is dependent upon entry into exchange relationships with capital (or the capitalist state), which are, in turn, governed by the dictates of capital's profitability, the sellers of labour-power enter into a relationship of exploited dependence. 'Rational' workers find themselves in a contradictory position, seeking to minimise exploitation yet obliged to remain sufficiently exploitable for exchange to continue. Interests are thus simultaneously tied to, and in conflict with those of their exploiters (Littler and Salaman (1984:65)).(17) As Thompson (1983:32) contends,

> co-operation and antagonism between capital and labour
> necessarily exist side by side in work.

A further contradictory element within the sale of labour-power lies in the relationship between the worker as person and as seller of labour power. Unlike the situation of capital, which allows a separation between person and saleable commodity, the sale of labour power is a supremely personal affair, its exertions, joys and frustrations directly experienced.

While few workers would construe their experiences in terms of

contradictions in the sale of their labour power, most are clearly aware of issues relating to a firm's perceived competitive position and ability to pay, the requirements for advancement, 'fairness' in dealings with employers, the effects of working life upon personal life and so on. It will be argued, below, that many of the experiences and views related by young workers can best be understood in terms of attempts to 'make sense' of the contradictions.

To put more flesh on theoretical bones, it is necessary to consider the particular position of young workers, including those on state-sponsored training schemes.

Young workers have always been underpaid in relation to adult workers to an extent which cannot be explained in terms of the shortcomings of their labour power (lack of skill, inexperience etc).(18) 'Pre-adult' wages are paid regardless of skill content,(19) while the 'deferred gratification' customarily associated with apprenticeships owes more to the minority position of young workers than the bilateral 'investment' presumed by apprenticeship. Beliefs that young workers do not and should not have 'responsibilities' and that conspicuous consumption is individually and socially damaging have been very powerful in shaping their wage structures.(20) More than any group of workers, the young tend to be treated with 'stick' rather than 'carrot' incentives. For them , work is more likely to be seen as good per se, unemployment less acceptable and affluence 'demoralising'.

Apprentices have long felt they were used as 'cheap labour' (Venables (1968:34)). Not only have apprenticeships often contained

sizeable menial components for which a low wage might be regarded as adding insult to injury, but the label itself has often been used in a phoney way to attract young workers and/or justify further exploitation. Sawdon et al (1981:109) found that

> many opportunities described as - and thought by young people to be - apprenticeships, in fact offered little or no security or vocational training

Whatever its 'hidden agenda',(21) the ostensible rationale for state training schemes rests on the notion that (unemployed) young workers are deficient, either absolutely or relatively, in terms of employability. According to the Aspen Institute (1980:29)

> they have failed to acquire basic skill during compulsory schooling and ... have had no previous experience with which to impress employers.

The deficiency model seeks to justify the necessity for training schemes and, indirectly, the latter's features of low pay ('allowances') and insecurity. In doing so, it clearly draws on the 'deferred gratification' ethos mentioned above. Young workers are exhorted to accept low pay and insecurity in return for training which will improve their employability. The latter term is rendered problematic by its uneasy relationship with the fact of employment (or lack of it). Having attempted to explain unemployment in terms of deficiency in employability, and instituted training courses to correct this, the perceived success of the latter must depend, in part, upon the employment destinations of their graduates. As the Youthaid report 'Quality or collapse' puts it,

> a programme designed to help people into jobs which sends most of its 'graduates' into unemployment, would have little coherence or credibility. (1981:14)

In the early days at least, this was openly acknowledged by the MSC

> The connection between YOP and future employment is very
> important to young people's recognition of the programme
> as relevant to them. (1979:40)

Sir Richard O'Brien talked of the programme's 'success rate' as 'keeping faith' by sticking closely to the labour market (1981:11). Provision of skills and training is also an important legitimating factor in the training scheme exchange. The priority of WEEP within YOP (and Mode A within YTS) reflects the coincidence of young workers hopes for employment and the 'official' view that experience should be as 'realistic' as possible - with 'realism' best provided by close proximity to the labour market.(22) Quite apart from its encouragement of subsitution (the ultimate in 'realism'!), there is an uneasy fit with the promises surrounding training. If the term 'training' is not to be nonsensical, it must refer to something more than simply learning to cope with unskilled work. In theory, training schemes are geared to meeting the needs of young workers rather than employers, so that approval should rest on the latter having 'something to offer' the former. Guidelines for both YOP and YTS have laid considerable emphasis on notions of 'transferable skills' and the need for 'off the job' training,(23) whether in areas such as social and life skills or in pursuit of career qualifications. The reality of 'off the job' elements is further considered below, but it should be noted that one reason for their comparative rarity is that of hostility from employers who regard it as a wasteful diversion from realistic (and productive) working experience.

Attempts to portray schemes as 'training the workforce of tomorrow', while performing a useful, even 'necessary' legitimating function, are beset with major problems. As unemployment and the corresponding need for counter measures have grown, the contradiction inherent in training young workers for a labour market which has no place for them has sharpened.

In the case of WEEP schemes, a press report highlighted the problem as follows

> Both the government and the MSC talk almost casually in figures that would embarrass an electronic calculator, but down on the factory floor the task of finding youngsters something worthwhile to do is proving extremely difficult. (Sunday Times 2.8.81)

Non-WEEP schemes were not without their own difficulties.

> Already in some areas the unemployed are running out of old people's gardens to weed and this will be made worse by an expansion of programmes. (Guardian 7.10.82)

The dilemmas surrounding the organisation of a mass programme founded on the 'voluntary' efforts of employers are all too obvious. At a time when skill gluts massively outweigh shortages, it would be absurd, even if possible, to provide quality training which would largely serve to worsen the gluts. Morgan has pointed to the irony

> than an unemployed craftsperson might get a job (at a lot less pay!) supervising a team of YOP trainees doing the same work that he or she once might have been paid to do. (1981:108)

Raffe contends that YOP

> has not attempted to increase young people's job-specific skills for few such skills are currently scarce and in demand in the labour market. (1983:16)

Instead it

has performed a screening rather than a training function by providing employers with a more convenient and reliable source of recruitment. (:17)

In non-WEEP schemes (where training was often taken more seriously than in WEEP) it was not surprising to find considerable elements of 'make work', especially in the areas of community service and petty commodity production.

Provision of WEEP schemes occurred via the response of employers to the 'bribe' of free labour power, spiced with exhortations to help the young unemployed.(24) Yet this pattern does not augur well for training concerns.

> Employers who volunteer most quickly to receive subsidies have often proved to be the least satisfactory with respect to the quality and type of training and the employment they provide. (OECD)(1977:83)

Youthaid found the majority of WEEP placements

> concentrated in small, low-paying, non-unionised work-places, where the young people concerned receive very little training. (1981:4)

Similarly, another study by Intowork concluded that

> the work undertaken by WEEP trainees is generally the same as that which is available in the employment market for young people with few or no qualifications. (1980:8)

It is difficult to avoid the impression that the 'training' emphasis within YOP owed much to ideological considerations, serving to explain unemployment via the deficiencies of the young unemployed, and to justify their miserly rewards. The continuity of WEEP from the traditional early school leaver labour market and the lip service often paid to 'off the job' elements, suggest that the emphasis on training was somewhat cynical, in its conception and/or its implementation.

The selectivity and deception involved in painting the positive progressive picture shows parallels with portrayals of labour process changes, where as Thompson observes

> behind the glossy advertisements showing futuristic electronic equipment lies the reality of more routine tasks and less skilled jobs. (1983:3)

In the previous chapter, on occupational choice, certain issues of relevance to this chapter were touched upon. These included enumeration of work placements, routes between them and some of the reasons for the moves. They will not be repeated here. Charting an areas so vast and complex as 'experience of work' is necessarily a selective affair. The focussed questioning from which the following data emerged was, hopefully, sufficiently open to let young workers state what had been important to them. At its most basic, it concentrated upon (views of) work content - tasks performed, degree of interest, difficulty etc - and upon numerous issues relating to social relations, such as those with 'authority', or colleagues, or those which provide the context for exchange. Presentation of material occurs within the framework outlined earlier and highlights certain 'key areas' within working experience. While a thorough attempt to link the 'subjective' and 'objective' is beyond our scope here, there will, with this concern in mind, be some examination of particular types of work.

In considering the reported working experiences of young workers it is important to remember the influence of both school and the spectre of unemployment. Both have, of course, been dealt with in previous chapters, but it should be noted that many young workers, speaking 'freely' about their work, chose to do so by comparison

with them.

In relation to school, given the balance of negative feeling described in chapter 2, it was not surprising that favourable comparison predominated. In some instances, this reflected fairly positive views of work and its greater scope for 'learning'. Gary F., on an engineering workshop scheme, commented,

> I mean, at school I took metalwork and ... you were just playing around. They never showed you nothing compared to what they're showing you here.

Audrey W., speaking of experience gained in three schemes, said that

> I've gained more confidence in my own work. Rather than still being at school, I've seen how it's done in an adult world.

For a few, however, the expected contrast was missing. For Michael M., his training scheme was

> just somewhere to go. It's just like being at school, really.

Carter (1966:115) has argued that the transition from school to work has been eased considerably by the lack of intrinsic satisfaction in either sphere. While the implied 'equation' may be over-simplistic, there is little doubt that the perceived negative features of school (including its association with childhood restrictions) serve to cast early experiences of work in a more favourable light. However, it also seems to be the case that once the unwelcome demands of school are no longer present, the imagery they evoke fades steadily (Simon (1977:46)).

For the young workers of this study, unemployment provided a more powerful backdrop to their experiences of work. Apart from the experiences recounted in chapter 3, the 'bottom line' effect of

unemployment arose repeatedly in discussions of the merits of schemes. Indeed, for many, deliverance from unemployment was the primary or even sole virtue of the YOP. Having described his hatred of the dole Paul J. continued,

> the youth opportunities programme, I don't like that neither, but I'd rather be working than hanging about the streets and that

> I don't like the government schemes but it's better than being at home. (Lesley H.)

The misery of unemployment which led to such verdicts needs no further comment. Some twenty five young workers referred to the value of being occupied and receiving more money. It is, however, interesting to note that many young workers spoke in terms reminiscent of the working class 'code of respectability' decribed by Hall et al (1978:ch.6). Being unemployed was depicted as 'lazing about' on six occasions, while a further eight young workers opted for phrases such as 'being kept out of mischief', 'out of trouble' or 'off the streets.'

Because labour-power is inseparable from the person as seller, job content is a central element in the experience of work, its physiological and psychological effects inescapable. Without suggesting that matters of content are empirically separable from those of social relations, we begin the analysis in this section with a focus on the former.

For young workers, whether classified as trainees, apprentices or simply 'pre-adult', the exchange paradigm is one of lower rewards for lower performance. This is 'justified' both in terms of the quality of labour power and the need for 'protection'. Other than in specific 'pre-adult' positions, there is also an assumption that via training

and experience there will be progress towards the full adult exchange relationship.

As has been mentioned above, the legitimation of the YOP's extremely low rewards relied heavily upon the receipt of training.(25) In terms of immediate enjoyment and satisfaction, and in future prospects, young workers have an obvious interest in this aspect of the paradigm. The importance of 'progress' was often made explicit. Pamela J's view of schemes was that

> they aren't worthwhile ... if they don't learn you nowt at the end of it; but some of them are, like this course here, that was worthwhile, 'cause I got a proper job and it learn't us to machine and that.

According to Colin Y., schemes were

> good if they give you training and experience, but if it's just labouring then they get a canny bit of work for just a small amount.

Noting that

> all the factory owners have got people on sweeping the floors or whatever

Peter H. commented 'it's not really giving them experience of work'.

Whatever reservations young workers may have in relation to their situation, the latter's immediacy created, at the very least, a need to 'make sense of' and depending on the availability and desirability of alternatives, a need to 'make the best' of those situations. Transition studies have consistently found that, after an initial 'honeymoon' period, there is a steady loss of interest in work on the part of young workers (Ryrie and Weir (1978:67), Simon (1977:5), West and Newton (1983:139).

> Young workers soon realised that work was not a matter of pride. Interest in work was soon crushed. (Carter (1962:214))

In the present study, while such a tendency was clearly discernible, it was less pronounced, with various likely explanations. One was that relatively few interviewees had been in particular situations (jobs or schemes) long enough for disinterest to bite hard.

Secondly, in the insecurity which pervades the labour market under mass unemployment, questions of job content, quality of training and the like tend to be relegated below those of employment prospects. Enforced rather than voluntary change, by setting clear time limits, may also alter the perception of work. As we shall see, this did not mean that boredom or disinterest were kept at bay, but that the features of this particular, fragmented labour market appeared to soften the trend noted in earlier studies. Although statistically, the differences did not approach 'significance', it was still the case that second year leavers made less positive and more negative comments about their working experiences than did first years.

Comparing remarks made about jobs with those referring to schemes, it was noticeable that the former were on balance markedly more favourable. Not only was the ratio of positive to negative comment higher but the 'boosting' effect of employment seemed to operate at all levels, mitigating the worst and reinforcing the best features of work.

For those in employment, subjective views on interest and the like were closely linked to more 'objective' factors of variety, challenge, and continued learning. Those in apprenticeships, virtually without exception, expressed considerable satisfaction with their work, often describing it in glowing terms.

It's great. I've got no complaints at all. (Gary E.)

It's really interesting. You're always learning something new. (Andrew H.)

I enjoy it all, really, the college, the practice, everything. (Sandy B.)

Alternatively, those engaged in 'routine' factory work were well aware of its limitations and gained their enjoyment from sources other than the labour process. Coil-winder Diane J. claimed that

where I'm working at, they could take anybody and learn them in no time. Honest, it's simple, the work I'm doing. Even a five year old could sit and laugh and do it.

Both trainee miners interviewed thought boredom a likely part of their 'apprenticeship'.

It's pretty boring until you get to the stage where you work on the face. (Alan O.)

I think I'll enjoy it underground if I get put on a proper job, like supplies or something, 'cause the people who don't work hard enough, they stick them on the transfer point. (Paul J.)

In relation to the job content of schemes past and present, comment was fairly evenly divided between the favourable and unfavourable. Of the former, the overwhelming majority were fairly 'sober' references to acquisition of experience, training and specific knowledge or skills.

Schemes could be seen as providing experience in a chosen line of work. While with Age Concern, would-be nurse Patricia P. had spent a great deal of time at a local hospital and declared that

it gives you the experience, gives you the chance to look in and see what you're going to be doing.

Similarly, Denise N. saw the primary value of schemes as follows.

If you're doing something that you want to do, it can give you experience for you to get a full-time job.

The link between experience and job-finding was the object of differing views. In a way reminiscent of the MSC portrayal of the YOP as a means of breaking the vicious circle of inexperience and unemployment, nine young workers pointed to the necessity of experience.

> You get training in the job so you've got a bit of experience of what to do. So now, if I get finished here and I still wanted to continue painting, I could go to another firm and say I've had experience in painting. They might take a different attitude to taking us on.

However, there were eight young workers who made specific comment on the limited utility of experience.

> They give you experience but you've got to use that experience to get a job and there's not many about.

Lesley C's verdict on schemes was that

> they could be helpful if you went to an employer and he said 'have you got any experience?' but actually going on a scheme and ... following on to a job, there's not much chance.

Acquisition of knowlege and skills was regarded in like fashion, as a positive but limited factor. A majority of young workers felt they had 'learned things' from placements, although the scope of such learning varied greatly. In most instances description of this aspect of work was couched in a fairly 'restrained' form - a matter of pointing out what they had learned about mechanics, building, machining, working with children and so on.(26)

Despite this general 'restraint', the importance of interest in work was present in all but a few evaluations of working experiences. It was most apparent in individuals' comparisons between placements. Geoff R., contrasting his present clerical scheme in a large garage

with a previous storekeeping placement said,

> the work down there, anybody can do it, you don't need a
> lot of ... brains to do it, but I think with this I'm
> learning a lot about the job. I learn something new every
> day.

Self-confessed 'car freak' Philip G. offered the view that work
(as a mechanic) was

> a kind of school ... when you're going, you're just
> learning all the time.

Not all interviewees were so engrossed in or enthusiastic about
their work, but there was no doubting the positive evaluation of
'learning', even when accompanied by uncertainty over its labour
market utility. Of his engineering workshop placement, Steven D.,
remarked,

> I don't think it'll come to much in the end ... I mean, we
> get certificates ... in experience, but how I look at it
> is that I'm learning and I'm filling my time as well

Richard D., unemployed since completing a short training course
in engineering, said of the latter

> it hasn't helped us get a job but it's given us some
> knowledge about welding and stuff like that. There's no
> way I could have learned that any other way.

As in the case of those in jobs, the pattern of subjective
assessment of content in schemes conformed, albeit far from perfectly
to more 'objective' aspects such as variety and challenge(27) (Carter
1966:168). In reference to their YOP placements, more than twice as
many male interviewees thought they had acquired useful skills and
knowledge than did their female counterparts (see Littler and Salamon
(1984:22)). Thus, while sexual divisions in occupational choice may
often be experienced as 'voluntary', satisfaction with the outcomes

was far from symmetrical between the sexes.

Complaints over lack of training and/or monotonous work totalled around half of the references to learning, training or useful experience.

> It was mainly just digging ditches and that. It wasn't learning us anything. (Geoff W.)

> All you done there is ... you get this metal and you just had to file it. It was boring ... just done the same things over again. (Graham A.)

Boredom could stem from various factors. Under-occupation was mentioned by four young workers. Amanda K. said of a garage clerical scheme,

> I was just getting paid to just sit there and do nothing. They used to send us home early, give us half days off, a fortnight at Christmas.

Another problem area was that of 'exclusion'. Describing his WEEP scheme as a garage machanic, Robert P., observed,

> I was just standing watching really. Then I'd have to go and serve petrol and by the time I'd done that, the job was done.

Brian P., talking of a factory placement said,

> it was all right until I finished and then I said it was a waste of time because you didn't learn anything ... it's just 'go and fetch things', 'go to the stores', they didn't really train you.
> Alternatively, the work available to young workers might simply

have little to offer in the way of interest.

> It was just stacking shelves all the time, same thing every day. (Olwyn G., placement in shop)

> It was interesting for a couple of days then all you're doing is sticking a screw on a hydraulic drill, screwing the hinges on and things like that. (Paul C Cabinet factory)

Whatever the disappointment and anger associated with boring work

the fiercest reactions were reserved for the performance of menial and/or dirty work

> I was upstairs in the warehouse and I was just ... in a little compartment putting rubbish in a machine every day. I was only supposed to do that for six weeks and ... (the manager/supervisor) ... kept us on it for two months. (Chris W.)

In all, twenty two young workers chose to recount unpleasant experiences of this ilk. The dominant theme was that of being 'put upon' - pressured into performing the most undesirable tasks in the workplace. 'I was just the 'muggins''. 'I'm a bit of a dogsbody, really'.

Kathleen H. said of her placement in a local authority home for the elderly,

> they think I'm just a kid and they just treat us like a kid. And some of them think I'm just there to do their work.

Two young women based at a training workshop spoke of their 'work experience' placements at a local clothing factory as follows:

> We just get run about, doing odd jobs. They say 'Oh, they're from the workshop, they can do that'. I don't like it up there. (Gillian C)

> We just used to do jobs that they wouldn't do, like cut lace out, stupid things that they did'nt have time for. (Francesca D)

Some young workers found the 'domestic service' demands especially galling. On her scheme in 'insurance' Lesley H. found that

> all I was doing was making cups of tea, bits of typing and running messages.

> A lot of it was just going to get the tabs and making the tea. (Paul B.) (28)

Three young workers complained of having to clean areas (sometimes toilets) of their workplaces which had been grossly neglected. All felt that they were assigned these tasks purely because of their lowly status.

The 'stigmatised' position of YOP trainees 'in general' was evident in the testimony of several young workers. Elaine N. said of her current clerical placement organisers,

> they treat you well ... they don't treat you like an MSC
> ... most MSC's just make the tea.

Later she outlined her perspective on the placement.

> You think 'it's not a job, its training', yet some places
> don't class MSC's as training. I've been told when I've
> written applications not to write you're an MSC, because a
> lot of people do think oh, she's been making tea. So you
> try and avoid that until you get an interview and then
> it's not so bad.

> Here they treat you fairly. They treat you as if you're
> not on a government scheme. You're just treated as one of
> them, like full-time worker ... some places, they give you
> all the jobs they don't want to do. (Sandra S)

> As soon as you say I'm on a youth opportunities scheme
> they think you're a fool, they do. They think you're going
> to be a sixteen year old girl with white socks and tied
> back hair and stand there like a dummy. (Lorraine G.)

Of the twenty two young workers referring to matters of menial work, fourteen were women, which among other factors almost certainly reflects that they were more likely to be pressed into 'domestic service' than were their male peers.

'Subordination' was associated overwhelmingly with WEEP schemes where young workers were often isolated and clearly in junior positions. In non-WEEP schemes, with more trainees and little hierarchy, scope for these forms of subordination was much less.

Comparison with others in the same workplace seemed very important to many, with problems easier to cope with when not experienced alone. Gary F. remarked of his non-WEEP scheme,

> it's good here because everybody is on the same scheme doing the same sort of things for the same wage,

going on to describe how his friends on WEEP schemes spent most of their time 'making tea and going messages'.

Reported hazards were few.(29) Those given particularly dirty jobs were often unhappy about the health implications of such work. Diane J., describes how, after having to clean the floors in the shop,

> they had me and my friend Kay on cleaning the big fridge out, why, we weren't supposed to do that. I mean, we weren't full-time. It's their job to do it. It's filthy and all. You go in the fridge and there's grease everywhere ... like off the bacon that's hanging up. There's slime and all sorts, you have to wash your hair every day. My friend Kay, she came out in a terrible rash after we did the fridge and it used to make me feel sick.

In her scheme in a coil factory, Donny S. complained that,

> you had to get these great big, massive coils and you had to put them in the hot oven. Your hands were red hot and they only give you these thin gloves. So it burnt your hands all the time. It was terrible.

The longer hours of work, much-dreaded by prospective school leavers, seemed to cause few problems, with 'adjustment' usually taking place fairly quickly. Where experienced, problems generally arose from long hours per se rather than from comparison of 'normal' working hours with those of school.

Joan E., employed as a cinema projectionist had worked forty five hours per week plus overtime. At weekends, her work finished around or beyond midnight and involved considerable 'splits'.

> I couldn't get out. I was only off two nights a week and
> when I was off I was just that tired I wanted to sleep. I
> wanted to stay in, just couldn't be bothered. So I thought
> I might as well pack it in.

While 'against the rules', long hours were also worked on certain

WEEP schemes. Heather T. had become extremely 'run down' by working

split shifts in hotel catering.

> I worked a lot more hours than you're allowed to, but I
> didn't realise at the time. I used to be in in the morning
> and I was regularly there after midnight if there was a
> 'do' on.

Heather stayed at this placement for the allotted six months as

did Stephen J. and Paul B. who also spoke of being 'taken advantage

of' on the question of hours.

Others, however, chose to leave schemes when such demands were

made. In the cases of Peter H. and Paul C., it was interesting to note

that both drew on the importance of the YOP exchange paradigm. The

former, asked to work longer hours on a farm said 'it was just extra

work for nothing'.

While the latter, who sometimes worked until 10pm on a building

site, described how he had been promised extra money for his

'overtime' but had not received any.

Rotation of tasks, which occurred in most large non-WEEP schemes,

in many WEEP schemes and some jobs, received a mixed verdict. Those in

jobs were usually appreciative because rotation was used primarily a

counter to boredom in factory work. 'Sampling' on schemes was

generally approved, especially if this was done with a high degree of

flexibility, as in the cases of a small number of non-WEEP schemes.

> It's a good scheme to come on, this one. If you don't like anything, you just go to Malcolm, that's the manager and see him about it, just change it and get you a new placement. (Jacqueline N.)

Enforced rotation was markedly less welcome, particularly when it involved movement from the 'liked' to the 'disliked'. For Elaine N., rotation was 'stupid'

> cause you just get settled into one place and you're moved to another.

Reckoning she had long since exhausted useful possibilities, she continued with wry humour,

> if we have to move round again, I don't know ... I'll be going into the engineers to draw maps,

the prospect of which she clearly found very amusing in its irrelevance.

Four young men who had experienced rotation between 'trades' were unhappy about the limitation on training. Wanting to concentrate on bricklaying, Chris W. commented,

> I'd like to stop on that really but you have to change round. A lot of the lads would like to stay on the one thing, to learn more about it.

Similarly, Stephen J. complained,

> why, I like doing what I'm doing now. They change you over every eight weeks, why, you don't have a chance to learn things.

Studies of, and debate about, the transition have invariably given attention to the question of continuing education for young workers. Equally invariable has been the verdict that it has been inadequate in quality and quantity (Finn (1987:123)). Debate has generally operated within the framework of 'human capital' - both

national and individual. Employers have frequently been accused of 'short sighted' attitudes to further education. Carter (1962:255) notes how many regarded day release as

> yet another example of the molly coddling which is at the root of so many troubles

while Ryrie and Weir report a widespread belief among employers that off the job training encouraged 'unrealistic' expectations of work and an unwelcome emphasis on correctness over speed (1978:24). Until recent years, further education for young workers was associated overwhelmingly with those in apprenticeships. However, with the onset of higher youth unemployment and the introduction of state-sponsored training schemes, the debate over continuing education has widened in its scope. In the official (MSC) rhetoric, while some educational input is to be directed towards traditional vocational areas, there has also been a new emphasis placed on 'social and life skills'.(30)

Critics have attacked this approach for its attempt to pathologise the young unemployed. Of the latter, Davies offers a reminder that

> the main reason they fail to get work is not that they do not interview well or dress properly. It is quite simply that there are just not enough jobs to go around. (1979:5)

Davies rues the decline of social democratic youth work's concern with personal development and its replacement by an MSC - inspired emphasis on simply surviving or 'getting by' (:6).

Morgan contends that

> life and social skills are not about mastering techniques for the manipulation of knowledge, understanding relationships or making sense of one's own experience. Thry are about the need 'to adjust trainees to normal working conditions'. (MSC) (1981:105)

From this perspective, these 'skills' are best regarded as manipulative and ideological in nature, attempting to combat the alienating effects of unemployment and uninteresting work. Stafford (1981) argues that social and life skills are intended as a counter to the cynicism evoked by the cash-nexus, aiming to encourage greater 'commitment' from young workers.(31)

It is, of course, important to move beyond questions of official rhetoric and the 'hidden agenda' of the state to consider how such 'education' operated in practice and how it is perceived bu young workers.

In this study, all apprentices were on 'day release' course directly related to their work. None could be said to find their college work 'rivetting' but to greater or lesser extent it was felt to be valuable and generally interesting. Philip G. still attended a day release course in car mechanics some six months after losing his garage job.

From the one hundred and thirty six scheme placements only six had apparently involved day release with a further four encouraging attendance at evening classes.(32) Only one of the ten came from a private sector WEEP placement, the remainder being based either with state or voluntary bodies. These courses were directly vocational, though some included a small liberal/general studies component.

In scheme placements 'social and life skills' training was largely conspicuous by its absence. Only a handful of young workers had heard the term and even after prompting only a small minority (perhaps 10%) of placements appeared to have included anything which

might merit the term.(33) This picture was confirmed by those responsible for the schemes. Only large schemes seemed to even contemplate such provision, but none reported having any sort of organised programme. Almost invariably, scheme managers said that there was no-one available qualified to teach and, with tight budgets, professed themselves disinclined to transfer resources from the 'craft instructor' side. There were occasional attempts to teach letter writing or interview skills, while one scheme settled for knitting and keep fit as its contribution (See also Coffield et al (1986:98)).

In discussing this topic, there was a strong impression that social and life skills were 'trendy' nonsense, which had no part to play either in the provision of work experience or in the lives or 'ordinary working class people'. One scheme manager, having said that he had no intention of lowering the instructor:trainee ratio, told me 'half jokingly',

> anyway, this lot'll learn all the life and social skills
> they need in the club and the bookie's'.

With jobs nigh-impossible to obtain, the irrelevance of this form of 'skills' training was further highlighted.

Needless to say, with so small a presence, such social and life skills training as there were aroused few strong feelings among young workers.

Thus far, our treatment of the experience of work has concentrated upon the 'content' of work. It is now time to turn attention to the social relations within which work is performed. The inseparability of labour power from the person, mentioned in the context of work content, applies equally, perhaps more so to social

relations at work. To enter into the sale of labour power is to enter a network of relations governed in part by formal structural divisions and constraints, but also possessed of varying degres of 'negotiability' with respect to structure. In addition, as Hyman has observed (1975:14) 'in a crucial sense <u>all</u> relations in industry are personal'. The conduct of personal relations can affect both structural 'negotiation' and exert a great influence on the atmosphere within which work is performed. The following section of this chapter seeks to examine the reported experiences of young workers with respect to the relational aspects of their work.

The position of young workers has traditionally been characterised by a measure of 'marginality' when compared with that of older workers. As noted earlier, the low pay, 'service' duties, insecurity and restrictions have always reflected age itself in addition to perceived lack of experience and skill. Whether formally construed as such or not, young workers have always served a form of 'apprenticeship', even if in its most basic form this may simply entail growing older. In a labour market dominated by the YOP, marginality was massively increased. Young workers in WEEP schemes were required to enter an exchange where the balance of demands and rewards was markedly less favourable than in almost any full-time employment, while the vast majority of other YOP participants fared even worse; their most likely prize being a WEEP scheme place. Needless to say, with marginality so pervasive, many young workers were sensitive to experiences which highlighted or accentuated it and receptive towards those which appeared to diminish it.

Levels of payment are dealt with much more fully in the next

chapter, but it is useful to pass some brief comment upon perceptions of them. For those in full-time work, awareness of their relative privilege tended to dampen concerns they might have over exploitation. It was interesting that only one used the language of 'cheap' or 'slave' labour commonly offered in reference to schemes.(34) Without having been asked about scheme payments, fifteen young workers on schemes volunteered comments about the poor financial rewards as a major drawback. For some, this alone spoilt an otherwise satisfactory arrangement.

> They're a good idea but the money's not right. (Chris W.)

> They are a good idea but the money ... I don't think it's very good. (Patricia P.)

A further sixteen scheme-based workers described the demands made upon them in terms of 'cheap' or 'slave' labour. Although, as we shall see, the precise meaning of the terms varied, all conveyed the clear messsage that the exchange involved in training schemes was qualitively inferior to that customarily entailed in the sale of labour power.

In this sense, it is not surprising that in seeking adequate expression, young workers should turn to the notion of 'slavery'. In some cases the injustice was couched in terms of grossly inadequate reward for the effort expended

> slave labour ... when you think about it, twenty five pound. If they made it up to a decent wage it would be all right. (Jacqueling N.)

> Cheap labour, all that work they expect you to do for that sort of money. (John R.)

Comparison with full-time workers further emphasised the injustice.

> I just think they're another form of cheap labour now,
> 'cause of the way they treat you. You work just as hard
> and get next to nothing. (Brian P.)

We will return to the question of retention from schemes, but it

should be noted here the lack of retention prospects figured

prominently in the allegations of 'cheap' or 'slave' labour. Christine

W. commented that

> in a shop or a factory you get five or six months and then
> you get finished. It's just cheap labour.

In similar vein, Donny S. observed,

> why, if the firm just wants to use you, why it's no good.
> You're just slaving on for nothing. There's nothing at the
> end of it.

For Susan P., the problem lay in the ease with which employers

could exploit the availability of young workers on schemes.

> Since the scheme's come out, the employers do need people
> but they're just taking schemes on as cheap labour.

While the comparison with unemployment cast schemes in a more

favourable light, the alternative reference point of full-time work

remained influential. Robert P. said of schemes,

> they are a good idea to get people off the dole, but I
> think that since they came in people have just been
> getting them for schemes, just for cheap labour, really.

> It's extra money from the dole ... and that comes in handy
> ... but to me they are slave labour. (Philip G.)

Enjoying work or appreciating training could act as offsetting

factors in relation to the exploitation perceived in schemes. Of the

latter, Andrea K. said

> I don't like them very much, really some people say
> they're slave labour ... and I think that's quite true ...
> mind you, I'm getting trained here, so it's not so bad.

The following interchange between Brian M and the author further

demonstrated this form of ambivalence.

> B.M.      I don't think they're very good really. it's
>           just cheap labour
> D.K.      Are you cheap labour?
> B.M.      Well, I enjoy what I do so ... I do quite a
>           bit of work but I enjoy it, so you don't
>           really mind.

Complaints over 'cheap' or 'slave' labour were more frequently voiced by young women than young men, although the difference did not reach statistical significance. This association may well have reflected the greater likelihood of the former being 'put upon' and the relative lack of positive offsetting factors such as training and/or interesting work.(35)

In the context of exchange and justice, the question of 'realism' in work experience was of considerable importance. A number of scheme supervisors to whom I spoke, confessed to finding it difficult to know how 'realistic' (ie hard) work could be made in view of the low rewards offered. The dilemma produced a mixed response, some feeling that 'realism' was simply unjustifiable, others that it had to be enforced regardless.

Most young workers on schemes welcomed 'realism' because it reduced the marginality of their position. Responsibility and 'adult' treatment were particularly well-received.

> After I'd been there a few weeks, they were giving us
> important things to do, like drawing plans. They weren't
> really important, but it was really interesting. (Terry
> T.)

> They didn't treat you like you were a kid. If you were
> mature with them, they were mature with you (Amanda K.)

Heather T declared adult treatment to be the opposite of

'slavery'. Similarly, absence of these features was often a source of disappointment. Chris V. told of his experience.

> You can't do a lot on the schemes, the responsibility,
> they can't give you much to do

Although welcomed in one sense, the demands of 'realism' also provoked resentment when set against the injustices of exchange relations. Comparison with full-time workers provided a few such instances.(36)

> It's awful when they take you on as a full-time worker,
> but they don't treat you like one. They'll expect you to
> do the work the same as a full-timer, but they'll not
> treat you like one. (Sharon W.)

> You work just as hard as anybody else and you're just
> getting less money. (Sylvia R.)

Chris W's account of conflict over behaviour and discipline in a non-WEEP, workshop-based building scheme highlights some of the contradictions in the 'realism' approach. He was unhappy at the financial deductions made for lateness and other breaches.

> All right, it's not dead strict here, but it is fairly,
> and other places where I've been they expect you to work
> from when you check in to when you clock out for twenty
> five pound. But yet they say ... sometimes we have a daft
> carry on and one of them'll say, 'why you're not supposed
> to carry on, you wouldn't be doing that if you were in a
> proper job'. But you're not in a proper job, you're not
> picking up a proper day's wages.

Perhaps the 'general' schemes, with nothing to offer by way of direct employment prospects and catering for large numbers of young workers, had a particular problem in this area, obliged to inculcate 'realism' in an arena considerably removed from the labour market. Logan has written of the training workshop that it

> exists to produce in young people a realistic approach to
> future work; a denial of self characterised by passivity,
> punctality and depersonalised job mobility. (1983:41) (37)

The contradictory nature of 'realism' is also evident in the terminology used to describe the work performed within schemes. As Stafford (1981:64) puts it, while the MSC scrupulously avoid terms such as 'work', 'job' or 'wages', lest they provide critics with ammunition, these terms are almost mandatory 'on the ground' to emphasise realism.

Young workers were obliged to cope with this contradiction, with 'realism' simultaneously indicating their integration into the ranks of workers and the gulf which separated then from such status. The importance of integration can hardly be over-estimated

> Trainees decidedly wanted both social and work-based integration with the regular workforce, probably to 'apparently' escape from the limbo and ill-defined status of YOP trainee. (Williamson (1983:91))

From the present study, it was clear that the language of work was not the sole preserve of supervisors. At different points, eleven interviewees on schemes described schemes as jobs.

> I think that the money is too low for the amount of hours you work, but I think really you should be grateful that you've got a job. I mean there's no need for John and them to employ me. But at least they have and they're giving us a chance. (Geoff R.)

> They said we've got a clerk/typist position going which fits you better than the care aid post. So I applied for the clerk/typist and I got that job rather than the care aid. (Audrey W.)

Patricia P., who had given up a market stall to go on a 'Welfare' scheme, said that her father had been 'glad I was starting a proper job'. Almost invariably it was WEEP schemes which were described as jobs, with movement from non-WEEP to WEEP placements 'getting a job'. Stephen J., on a general scheme at the time of interview said that he

had 'asked for an interview up here before  I got the proper job'  the
latter being a WEEP scheme in plumbing.

For those on WEEP schemes, genuine integration, as opposed to the
mere appearance of it, meant retention at the end of the placement. It
is worth remembering here that 65% of schemes were completed by  young
workers in this study, almost certainly a higher figure than in  areas
with  greater  opportunity  to  move  to  full-time  employment  or
education.(38)

Although the 'probationary'  use of  schemes was  technically  an
'abuse', its offer of eventual employment made it attractive to  young
people desperate for work. The oft-expressed view was that a chance of
retention was crucial.

> It's great here ... 'cause they give you a chance to  work
> hard and if you prove  yourself, they keep you on.  (Donny
> S.)

> It's like he said. As  long as I stick in  and do my  job,
> he'd think about keeping us on. (Kevin S.)

On the other hand, for the majority of those interviewed,  taking
on successive trainees was an  unequivocal abuse, denying workers  any
chance, and allowing employers to  'exploit' the system. As Sharon  W.
put it,

> I don't think it's good when they're just taking them over
> and over again so that they don't have to pay the wages.

There was also recognition of the state role in facilitating  the
exploitation. Tricia K. thought schemes a  good idea when there was  a
chance of being kept on

> but to them really, they can just get more in and not keep
> you on at all, 'cause they're getting the work out of  you
> for nothing really  and the government's  paying them  for
> keeping us here.

Gary E. argued that

> a lot of people exploit you ... they take somebody on,
> work them hard for the six months, then they don't keep
> them on and they get somebody else on another scheme and
> they do the same with those. So they're getting it done
> for free, aren't they, 'cause the government pays them.

Young workers who had been or were 'currently' on WEEP schemes were also asked about the effect which retention prospects had on their performance of work tasks. Of thirty nine who felt they could answer this question, twenty six said that it did affect their performance, thirteen that it did not. Young male workers more frequently indicated altered performance than did young women.

The respective ratios of yes:no answers were 15:3 and 11:10, the difference yielding a $X^2$ value of 4.18 df1 prob. .04. This may have reflected the greater expressed concern of young men with 'prospects', and feelings of 'masculine pride'. There were also positive, though not 'significant' associations between yes responses and second year as opposed to first year leavers. It seemed that the link with time elapsed since leaving school was explicable in terms of increasing disillusionment over time. Many young workers spoke of a steady loss of enthusiasm once prospects of retention dimmed.

> It all depends if there's a job at the end of it, 'cause
> it gets disheartening being on one and then finished.
> (Olwyn G.)

> It's OK for a few months and then near the end you find
> out that they're not keeping you on, you aren't so fussed
> then. (Geoff B.)

For some, the incentive effect of retention prospects was almost self-evident.

> I mean, if they said to you 'if you work well in the

> things you do, you'll get a permanent job' you'd work,
> wouldn't you. (Peter R.)

> If you think you've got a chance of a permanent job, you
> definitely try harder. (Lesley H.)

Douglas W. described how

> there were times I was saying about my pay I don't think
> much of this and I don't really want to work, but because
> I knew that I would probably get a job at the end, that
> was an aim, something to reach, sort of strive for and
> work hard for.

On the other hand, investment without return could have a lasting
effect, as for Amanda K., who was told of a probable retention, worked
extremely hard but was not kept on. In future, she said,

> when I take a scheme I'll work at it, but not as hard as
> what I did there, no way.

The exercise of labour-power is always a negotiable affair and
within the framework of WEEP schemes it was the prospect of retention
which provided the major currency. Knowing the latter's incentive
effect for the majority of young workers, there was an obvious
temptation for employers to emphasise such prospects and often to
overstate them. Thirteen young workers spoke of being misled this way,
although it must be remembered that passage from opportunity to
acquistion is a rocky one.(39) Such 'let downs' had evoked
considerable cynicism.

> He said at the interview that there might be a chance of
> you getting kept on but I'm not promising you anything!
> But I don't think they will. I think they say that to them
> all, actually. (Denise V.)

> The bloke at the garage says to us if you're good enough
> you'll get kept on but he says that to everybody, he's had
> five or six now and as soon as their time's up, they just
> go and he gets another one. (Robert P.)

Others referred more explicitly to the use of possible retention

as an immediate incentive

> what they say and what they do's a different thing 'cause
> sometimes they just lead you on, say we're going to keep
> you on so you do work after normal hours for them. (Paul
> B.)

In this respect, the experience of Paul B. is instructive.

> When I first went to Liptons, I got on with the boss, and
> one of the cleaners was off and he says would you come in
> early so I says 'aye' and I went home that night going
> 'oh, I might get a full-time job if I go in early'. So I
> went in early and he never gave us anything extra ... or
> said thanks or owt.

Whatever the naivety here, it is nonetheless true that young
workers on schemes, because of their desperation for work, were
extremely vulnerable to exploitation over and above that inherent
within their basic exchange relations.

Seven young workers mentioned being told that they would have
been kept on but that their employers could not afford to do so.
Generally, this seemed to be a source of pride, indicating that, but
for circumstances beyond (anybody's) control, they would be in
full-time work.

> They said I was the best they'd had sent. He said he
> would've kept us on but he was in a bit of trouble, so he
> couldn't (Stephen J.)

> If they'd had the money to keep somebody on, they would've
> 'cause they were very pleased. (Tricia L.)

There is no way of gauging how frequently this message was
genuine and how often used as a way of 'softening the blow' of
non-retention.

To the minority who felt that retention did not affect their
performance, the two principal factors were those of a deferred pay
off and the strength of a 'work ethic'. For the former, this usually

took the form of working for references and experience which would ultimately help in the quest for employment. The following responses were typical.

> I just look on it as if it's experience. I just like to do the work that I do well, so that I get a good refernce for a permanent job, whatever happens to come up. (Laura H.)

> I think that you get better references, not just that, but you get more experience for when you get a proper job, if you get a proper job. (Karen H.)

Steven D. said of his non-WEEP scheme,

> you always know you're going to be finished after a year, because it's not a permanent thing. Still, you've got somthing to work for, references and that, timekeeping's got to be good for your references, 'cause if you work hard enough here, or if you show interest, they send you down for interviews if they get any jobs in.

The competitive 'flexibility' of the labour market was in evidence in these remarks, there almost always being, for young workers at least, something to hang onto, however slight. the 'objective' nature of employment prospects could not easily be ignored, however, which could make such rationalisation difficult as Elaine N. explained.

> You try to think 'it's not a job, it's training' but then if there's no jobs what are you being trained for?

Of those who emphasised the 'work ethic', Heather T's perspective was fairly typical. Arguing that one could make a scheme good or bad according to self-motivation she continued,

> I mean, if you try and show interest in the job then I think it helps a bit, but if you start throwing things about, 'can't be bothered', show that attitude I think it's wrong because it's a job and you're there to learn.

Alan D. said that while schemes were good for

people who want to work, you get some people who can't be bothered and just go for the money and sit about all day doing nothing. Otherwise it's good.

Apart from issues of retention from schemes, there were also a number of young workers with direct and indirect experience of the substitution of schemes for jobs. Some involved in community based work spoke of how they were doing the work of full-time staff who had not been replaced. In addition, six interviewees reported having restrictions on their holidays or time off because of their 'indispensability'. Laura H., having asked for a day off was told

'don't take Friday, 'cause you know it's our busiest day and we can't cope without you.

As was noted earlier in connection with 'cheap' labour, instances of substitution were 'common knowledge'. However, there were also four young workers who had much more direct experience of it.

Graham L. had been kept on after a scheme with a small firm making fencing panels. Soon afterwards, orders declined,

so I got laid off. But after that he got another government scheme lad doing my job so I was thinking ...

Philip G., who had held a job as a panel beater for over a year after leaving school explained how

then they got ... work experience lads, is it they call them and there wasn't enough work for all of us so I went and he kept them on. I felt it was my fault, to tell the truth until I started to think about it. I thought I wasn't doing good enough work and then I thought about the work experience lad. I thought he (employer D.K.)'s getting paid for keeping him there and the lad didn't know as much as I did about cars, but it doesn't matter. Then the other full-time lad got sacked.

To justify her statement that employees took advantage of the schemes, Angela F. recounted that during a scheme placement in a

clothing factory, permanent employees were put on short time, while those on schemes carried on doing full production work.

> They should have left the schemes and given somebody else the extra work.

Relationships with fellow workers were clearly extremely important in their own right as elements in the experience of work. However, given the 'marginal' situation facing many young workers, they took on an added significance. Overall, very few problems were reported, and a great many young workers told of very good relationships with colleagues.(40) This generally smooth 'settling in' confirms the predominance of what West and Newton describe as 'the easygoing atmosphere of working life (1983:107). Of one hundred and eight placements described, in forty two of them such relationships were reported

> It's great here, they're all so friendly (Tracy G.)

> You can't be new for long, 'cause everybody mixes in with you (Donny S.)

> They're dead friendly here. I've met lots of friends, we have a good laugh and we all go out together on a night now. They're a great bunch of lasses to work with (Diane J.)

Twenty six of these forty two verdicts came from young women which among other things may have reflected workplace age structures, with greater concentrations of young workers in predominantly female workplaces.

Favourable references to colleagues were particularly common for those in jobs and more frequent in relation to WEEP than non-WEEP schemes. This association may derive from both greater subjective feelings of 'belonging' and different treatment by full-time staff. 'Good laughs' were probably the most prized feature of working

atmosphere, often bringing fond recollections even as they were spoken about.

The structually more sensitive relationships with supervisors or managers did not run so smoothly. Sixteen young workers told of conflicts and/or bad relations. Twelve of those mentioning such problems were young women, which probably reflects their different treatment relative to young men. The greater 'subordination' has been referred to above but it also seemed that young women were more frequently subjected to 'authoritarian' treatment.

> They were snapping at you all the time. it was awful, you hated going in to work (Donny S.)

> The manageress didn't like having work experiences at the shop and she just used to pick fault with everything you did. She used to make fun of you in front of the others and then if you made a mistake she never let you forget it. (Anne D.)

> I was poorly one day and she wouldn't take no for an answer. She made us come in and I was bad. And after that she took everything out on us and blamed us for everything that went wrong. (Sharon W.)

> The boss was really big-headed. He used to order the lasses about something rotten. (Lesley H.)

Carter writes that most young workers

> were indifferent to the higher level bosses and many were oblivious of their existence. (1962:223)

This was generally true within this study, although issues of retention tended to create greater interest in hierarchial workings. A few interviewees offered descriptions of the powers held by different managers. It was also the case that, despite the above-mentioned 'hassles', supervisors were usually regarded more favouably than teachers (West and Newton (1983:137). This offers further confirmation of the effect of negative school experiences helping to cast those at work in a more favourable light.

It was noted earlier that a detailed analysis of the relationship between 'subjective' and 'objective' in the experiences related was not feasible but that as a partial corrective there would be some atempt to ground accounts in a more objective context. The way chosen to do this here is that of examination of the major types of work to assess how far they were experienced in common ways.

While there were many who actively sought it, shop work was also an area in which many 'found themselves'. Impressions of the 'atmosphere' were generally good, but the near complete absence of retention prospects, the prevalence of menial work and limited training(41) took their toll. This is hardly surprising given the historical operation of distributive work within the youth labour market. In a certain sense, assembly work within factories benefitted from its widespread poor image, in that set against such expectations the reality appeared less forbidding. The friendliness of fellow workers was often noted (Parker (1977:161)) as were the 'surprisingly' pleasant working conditions. However, the work tended to be found physically demanding and frequently boring. Prospects of retention varied by factory but were sometimes very good whether because of staff turnover or the desire of employers to utilise the training given to those on schemes.

Clerical work was usually well-liked, although here too, there was some incidence of boredom, either because of the restricted scope of working routine or because trainees were given 'one off' tasks whose laborious nature accounted for their being shunned by full-time employees. Underwork was not uncommon and the gap was often filled by service demands (fetching, tea-making, and the like). Working

relations did not appear to generate the closeness often found in factories, and retention prospects were generally poor.

'Trade' work, as might be expected was almost invariably looked upon with favour because of its greater interest, prospects and so on.

As has been noted, the variety of work available in non-WEEP schemes was a positive factor for many due to its capacity to offset boredom, but enforced rotation was less welcome when it prevented young workers from developing specialisms which they found interesting and regarded as enhancing long term prospects. While the atmosphere and cameraderie on non-WEEP schemes were well received, the latter's distance from the labour market made closure of the gap a major preoccupation. Contacts with outside agencies were thus highly valued. The quality of training was often good, even if the organisational needs of large-scale schemes restricted its quantity. At such a distance from the labour market, there were inevitable worries over recognition of training and how it might be translated into improved prospects. Short training courses with their sharper focus were well thought of, but again, their distance from the labour market made 'conversion' very problematic.

To a limited extent, the 'privilege' of full-time work cut across concerns over work content but was far from sufficient to override the importance of intrinsic factors. This was particularly noticeable in the differences expressed by those in 'trade' work and those in, say factory-based assembly work.

Looking at the operation of a youth labour market dominated by schemes, it is easy to view the state's youth employment policy as a

'cutting edge for Thatcherite reconstruction', seeking to restore future profitability to capital by creating a workforce docile through insecurity and atomisation, and prepared to accept low pay and temporary or casual labour. There is little doubt that young, predominantly working class people, whether as wage earners, state sponsored trainees or benefit claimants have been targetted as the group which will suffer the greatest assult on its living standards. The intended effect of measures to withdraw benefits, remove wage council protection and so on, has been to ensure that young workers will be pressurised into accepting low paid work.

Ideologically, young workers have been invited to practive deferred gratification, to accept that unemployment has been the product of past over-privilege, and be persuaded that the way forward lies in disciplined application within the new 'realistic' order. Crucially, provision such as the YOP and YTS were and are to be viewed as positive steps, taken by the state and employers, an offer which should be met with enthusiastic participation from young workers. The latter, apart from deliverance from unemployment, are afforded the opportunity to improve the saleability of their labour power. This process incorporated elements of what Willis terms the shift from real to ideal exchange, where

> the objective nature of 'equivalents' are transmuted into
> the fog of moral commitment. (1977:69)

There are a number of factors which work towards 'acceptance' of this scenario on the part of young workers. Apart from the backdrop of unemployment, there was, for most, an overriding concern to gain full-time employment, with retention or refernces from schemes often

the only feasible route to it. Once in schemes, although we have seen
that the absence of retention prospects affected motivation, there
were obvious limits to how far disenchantment could be acted out
without jeopardising the placement. Most responded to 'dull
compulsion' by settling for 'not putting themselves out'. Similarly,
for those not possessed of a strong 'work ethic' there could be a
place for being occupied simply to stave off boredom.

Against this, a majority of young workers also demonstrated, to
varying degrees, penetration of the asymmetry of their exchange
relations. Many were quick to point out the absence of the training
which they were supposed to receive in lieu of wages. In addition,
while realism and proximity to the labour market were appreciated
because of the improved prospect of full-time employment, they also
served to heighten awareness of WEEP's special brand of exploitation -
the slave labour of a full workload for paltry rewards. Many were
critical of employers (and the state) for allowing a never-ending
supply of free labour and denying the young workers involved any
chance to prove themselves.(42) In this sense, the state's policy of
privatising where possible the management of the youth section of the
reserve army of labour might be seen as one example of the creation of
internal labour markets, embodying

> the idea that by internalising the features of the
> external market, they foster competitive individualism at
> the point of production, which results in greater
> commitment to the enterprise. (Thompson (1983:164)

For those on schemes, this would take the form of a channelling
of effort towards the service of the employer concerned.

In concluding the chapter, it is useful to return to the

questions raised in its introduction, relating to changes in the labour market and in the consciousness and actions of young workers.

In terms of 'post-industrial' society, it must be said that there was little sign of any shift towards more 'knowledged-based' industry. Thus, insofar as there was occurring a technologically-induced collapse of work, the driving force of such change appeared distant, with the said technology noticeable by its absence from the local scene. In the Gorzian schema, young workers in the Coalfield seemed much more likely to join the 'non-class of non-workers' than the labour aristocracy.

Far from the MSC rhetoric about 'training for the future', the local operation of the YOP appeared at best to be 'tacked on' to labour markets themselves in decline and disarray, and at worst to involve 'make work' elements more closely resembling pre- than post-industrial society. Patterns of sexual division remained as entrenched as ever, with no attempts (eg via positive action) to break down gender barriers. Despite the fears of writers such as Davies (1979) about the ideological impact of emphasis on 'life and social skills', the latter was largely absent from the YOP in the Coalfield.

As to the response of young workers to this situation, several issues have been touched upon in this chapter. Similarities and differences between jobs and schemes have been explored with respect to experience of job content, sociability, exchange relationships and the question of young workers' 'marginality'. In the case of work within the YOP, this included consideration of the contradictions of 'realism' in placements, and the effects of 'substitution'.

What was perhaps most striking throughout was the relatively high degree of 'fit' between the consciousness and actions of young workers and the youth labour market which confronted them. For while there was abundant criticism of exploitative exchange and lack of training, the underlying 'alternative' appeared to be restoration of the local 'status quo'. This 'backward-looking' focus was evident in ambitions held, in the continuing strength of 'work consciousness', and of the valuation of 'practical' over 'theoretical' knowledge. In stating this, however, it is vital to remember the local labour market situation facing young workers, and the ways in which such 'backwardness' was enshrined in it.

## Notes

1 'Silences' may indicate anything from the absence of hostility towards a particular idea, via indifference and memory slips to an unwillingness to co-operate with the questionnaire exercise.

2 For delivery work, starts of 5.30am or 6 were not uncommon (including school holidays) and there were instances of even earlier starting times.

3 This 'distillation' could, of course, classify relatively long passages as containing only one (or two) factors, while much shorter ones might be deemed to hold several.

4 As noted earlier, certain problems arise from variable interpretation of the question, creating an amalgam of 'will' and 'would' in relation primarily to 'dislikes'. Thy hypothetical was sometimes explicit in the use of conditional language ('ifs' etc), but also implicit when factors clearly did not relate to chosen occupations. The difficulty arises in gauging how far the respondents regarded their answer as hypothetical. Thus, if a factor such as 'boredom' is mentioned, does this indicate some expectation of it, or merely state an aversion to it. The fact that comments could be made about work generally or specifically should also be borne in mind.

5 Table 5.2 shows evidence of both an 'academic exercise', in that higher frequencies in both categories were closely correlated (r=0.97), but also a steady rise in the ratio of 'likes' to 'dislikes'.

### Table 5.2

| Likes (L) | Av Dislikes (D) | L/D |
|-----------|-----------------|------|
| 1 | 1.02 | 0.98 |
| 2 | 1.44 | 1.38 |
| 3 | 1.92 | 1.56 |
| 4 | 1.94 | 2.06 |
| 5 | 2.45 | 2.04 |

6 These figures showed no correlation with class background and there was negligible difference in response between the sexes.

7 The responses to open-ended questions of this nature allow two forms of measurement.
  a) an 'absolute' measure, based on aggregation of references to any variable.
  b) a 'relative' measure, based on the proportion of all references which any variable represents.

8    A further twenty three wrote of 'fitting in', 'teamwork' and the like.

9    For one of them, it's obvious nature demanded exclamation marks ('money'!!)

10   This yielded a $X^2$ value of 8.76 df1 prob. .00. This divergence was due in part to the greater number of young women aspiring to non-manual work and young men to manual work.

11   Using the 'relative' measure the relationship was still present but less statistically significant $X^2$ 3.40 df1 prob. .07).

12   63.5% of classs 1 and 2 aspirants listed at least one factor, while 40.5% of all others did so ($X^2$ 15.94 df1 prob. .00). 'Intrinsics' accounted for 27.6% of all factors listed by the former as against 21.1% by the latter.

13   The respective $X^2$ measures for the number mentioning this factor, and the percentage of all factors listed were 7.20 and 4.83, with probabilities of .01 and .03.

14   Mention was made of the former by 12.5% of all respondents but only 7.7% of those fathers were unemployed, while the comparable figures for the latter were 13.1% and 7.7%.

15   The proliferation of painting and decorating schemes was commented upon by a few pupils.
     'They're mostly painters and decorators on the government scheme jobs.' (Ruth)

16   It is important to remember the 'elasticity' of a competitive ideology in relation to a wide range of competitiveness.

17   One individual solution to this problem, available to a small minority, exists via hierarchial advancement, where increasing uptake of the 'functions of capital' is accompanied by increasing rewards.

18   See Lonsdale (1988:203).

19   Pond and Winyard (1983:15).

20   See Fisher and Holder (1981).

21   Relevant factors here might include concerns with social order, wage levels and anti-trade unionism.

22   The first stated aim of WEEP in the MSC's 'Guide to Employers' was provision of a
     realistic introduction to the requirements, disciplines, and satisfactions of working life.

23   The MSC's 'Guide to Employers' stated that
     young people on schemes should be given the opportunity of
     off-the-job training in order to learn and develop  skills
     that  are  transferable  across  a  number  of  employment
     situations

24   Williamson (1983:85) cites an advert for the YOP...
     the great thing about the youth opportunities programme is
     that for six months employers will have a willing pair  of
     extra hands about the place absolutely free.

25   Few would claim that trainees receive better training than  their
     highly paid apprentice counterparts, but without the assurance of
     training, the work  performed by  trainees is easily  branded  as
     'cheap labour', make work' or whatever.

26   Willis (1979:191) has argued that
     we should not underestimate the surviving degree to  which
     mechanical, sensuous  and concrete  familiarity  with  the
     tools of production (despite the dispossession of  labour)
     mediates the demands of the labour process, allowing,  for
     instance,  the  possibility  of  an  easy  and  confident
     mobility which at least brings alleviating changes in  the
     form of particular  work  experience if  not in  its  deep
     structures.

27   In part, this was  a matter  of the scope  offered by  particular
     kinds of work, but in part down to individual placements.

28   Michael F. described his job  as 'teaboy' on a  building site  as
     comprising
     cleaning out the cabins and running up to Consett twice  a
     week for messages, making tea  and coffee, just  basically
     like a housewife's job if that's not putting it too daft.

29   It should be noted that injury rates  at work were higher in  the
     Northern Region by  76.6% over the  national average,  reflecting
     association with areas of manual work. (Guardian 1.3.85)

30   The  term  covers  a  loose  constellation,  almost  invariably
     including 'basics'  such as  literacy  and numeracy  and  perhaps
     questions  of  'attitude',  and  sometimes  specific  job-search
     skills.

31   Cohen (1982:46) highlights the ideological nature of life skills,
     suggesting that they seek to
     revamp the  domestic  apprenticeships  served  by  working
     class girls in  the home (and  the traditional  'domestic'
     features of boy labour) by taking them in under the middle
     class codes of vocation and career.

32    A further ten were actually college-based WICs or STCs.

33    According to MSC figures (1979:26) 25% of YOP trainees were
      receiving off-the-job training (40% CP, 13% WEEP). In this study,
      the figures were certainly lower. See also Sawdon and Taylor
      (1980:2.14) for low WEEP release figs.

34    Diane J. described her boss as
      a slave driver ... he wants more work for no money ...
      like charity, but nobody works for nothing nowadays.

35    One interesting feature in the debate over slave labour was that
      five young workers drew distinctions between 'schemes in general'
      and their own experience of them. In each case this took the form
      of setting a personally more benign view alongside acknowledge-
      ment of being 'in the minority'
      I think they're good but there's not many people I've
      talked to who think so. A lot say it's slave labour.
      (Julie M.).

      Audrey W. dismissed questions of exchange and attributed
      the charges to 'workshyness' saying
      I'll be one of the odd ones because there's a lot of
      people that don't like the schemes. They think it's slave
      labour. I suppose if you're lazy that sort of normal work
      would sound like slave labour to you.

36    A fuller account of these issues will be given in the following
      chapter.

37    It has been argued that such inculcation is central to the MSC's
      endeavours. Intowork (1980:23) writes that in the MSC 'Guide to
      Employers'
      a good deal of emphasis is placed on helping young people
      to acquire the attitudes which are necessary to obtain and
      hold down a job. Basically deference, obedience and good
      motivation.

38    In Williamson's study, the completion rate was only 40%
      (1983:91).

39    Feelings of being misled cannot, of course, be taken as
      irrefutable evidence.

40    One exception was Alan O., who suffered some victimisation on his
      WEEP scheme, finding his sandwich box filled with cement and
      being the object of other such 'practical jokes'.

41    In only one instance was there any training beyond that related
      directly to serving.

42   The weight of negative comment was such that the results from this study are rather different from that of Williamson (1983:90) who found that the majority of young workers held generally positive views of WEEP.

Chapter 6

## Money and Instrumentalism

In introducing this chapter, which looks at prospective school leavers' and young workers' views on the financial rewards of work, it is useful to recall two debates which figured in the introduction to this study. The first is that surrounding the notion of 'instrumentalism' and more broadly, 'orientations of work'. Blackburn and Mann suggest that the key features of 'instrumentalism' are those of

> low moral investment in work, a calculative attitude to work, and social privatisation. (1979:17)

Implicit in the Goldthorpe et al thesis is the notion that increasing instrumentalism represents a response to growing affluence and, to a lesser extent, changes in the labour process which have served to decrease intrinsic satisfaction. As such, this model might be taken as 'paradigmatic' or 'prefigurative' in terms of current and future developments in the working class, signifying a decline in its 'solidaristic' aspects (Goldthorpe et al (1968)).

By contrast, Hall et al (1978:ch.6) offer a different view of the (white) working class, focussing on the pervasion of 'traditionalism'. The key elements of the latter consist in emphasis on respectability (hard working, law abiding etc), (self) discipline and 'legitimate' rewards, respect for authority and postponement of gratification. Sense of order is locally-based and parochial and incorporates a view

of national character which is essentially imperialist and racist.

Both historical evidence and testimony from the present study would suggest that the working class in the Durham Coalfield might be more 'traditionalist' than 'privatised'.

In chapter 1, those features of north-eastern 'regionalism' were drawn out which would give the area its own distinctive brand of 'traditionalism'. These included the particular forms of hard work (ie, 'heavy industry'), of betrayal, mono-racial 'imperialism', stoicism and the like. Belief in distinctive patterns of sociability, camaraderie and solidarity would all militate against the development of a highly privatised class. Special areal factors notwithstanding, in a general sense the culture of the Coalfield accords well with Hall et al's historical schema. (It should also be remembered that Goldthorpe et al's study was undertaken in the south-east with many workers having migrated from more 'peripheral' regions).

In a youth labour market dominated by state-proposed schemes (one of whose bureaucratic features was that of paying common 'allowances' to all trainees), the crucial question becomes that of how historically developed traditions operate within this new setting.

Material relevant to this topic has appeared in previous chapters - notably in the 'prioritisation exercise relating to occupational choice (ch.4), but also in dealing with unemployment (ch.3) and experience of work (ch.5) - and will not be repeated here.


Anticipation

In a brief first section of this chapter, this material is

supplemented by that drawn from the 'likes' and 'dislikes' portion of the questionnaire and from small group discussions.

Within the questionnaire, money was, understandably, often treated as a self-evident 'like' about work, with innumerable references to 'good/high' or 'bad/low' wages in the 'likes' and 'dislikes' columns, many were couched in the language of just exchange - of 'fair', 'decent', 'reasonable', 'satisfactory' or 'appropriate' rewards.

Conversely, there were concerns over (the possibility of) exploitation.

not enough money for the work you do.

you're expected to do so much for so little.

Low wages and deductions were an anticipated 'dislike' for 34 respondents, with the following comments typical.

the tax man taking money off you.

reading your pay packet and reading how much tax you have lost.

Similarly, there were other negative references to any factors - 'redundancy', 'being laid off', 'strikes', 'bankruptcy' or 'no overtime' - which might threaten the flow of income, while 'steady' or 'regular' income figured prominently among 'likes'.

Although a few aspiring (semi) professionals wrote of receipt of salaries, it was 'wages' which predominated, with a few respondents listing 'working a week in hand without any pay' among their 'dislikes'. Where references to money were more expansive, it was also possible to detect signs of different 'orientations' which were noted in chapter 4.

For those with intrinsically more satisfying work in prospect, payment might appear as an afterthought.

getting paid for doing something I would like.

the money would simply be a bonus.

The opposite end of this spectrum doubtless included many of those who offered 'money' as their only expressed 'like'. Occasionally, this 'instrumental' focus was made explicit.

I do not want to work but I have to for money.

Attention was also drawn by many respondents to the significance of 'earning' and its implications for independence.

earning a living.

knowing what I have for I have earned.

feeling that I had earned something after I had worked hard.

Contrast was made between this anticipated state of affairs and current dependence.

paying my own way.

working for money instead of pocket money.

being independent due to my own income.

Within small group discussions there was wide variation in terms of the attention devoted to, and knowledge of wage levels. A sizeable minority said that they 'never thought about' or 'had no idea' of likely rewards.

I haven't got a clue. (Michelle)

I'm not bothered about money. (Louis)

Profession of disinterest should, of course, be seen in the

context of a starting point which makes almost any payment seem a
substantial gain. There were few group members who were able to offer
accurate estimates of wages in their chosen jobs, although many more
gave notional views on which provided 'good money'. On the question of
age-related wages, there was widespread acceptance of the justice of
lower pay for young workers.

> Quite fair really, you're just learning. (Brian)

> You're bound to get lower money when you first start.
> That's fair enough. When you get more experience you get
> more. (Susan)

Against this there were those who argued that young workers were
often doing the same work as older colleagues for less money. Some
would-be 'professionals' were also critical of the extremely low
starting pay and resentful of the (mythical) high wages paid to
unskilled young workers.

> I think something could be done about people going
> straight into jobs and getting a load of money from the
> start whereas other people have to struggle for years
> before they get even decent money. (Stephen)

In relation to reasons for occupational choice, 'instrumental'
positions were in a minority.

> I'd go where I get more money. That's the only point of
> working. (Joan)

> Any job would do me so I'd go for the money. (Alex)

For the majority enjoyment was the primary consideration.

> I'm not bothered about the money so long as I'm doing what
> I like. (John)

> It's no good getting a job that's highly paid if you don't
> like it. (Sandra)

> I'd rather go into a job that I knew I would enjoy, rather
> than say a factory where you'd be sitting there bored even

though you're getting good pay. (Ruth)

Those aspiring to (semi) professional posts were generally aware that intrinsic and extrinsic factors were not necessarily inversely correlated. However, this was usually viewed in terms of 'happy coincidence' or the money being a 'bonus', rather than a vital element in choice.

> I'd always wanted to do the job. The money's just a bonus. If it was a pitiful amount of wages, I wouldn't mind so long as I was happy. (Sarah)

Although most of this group stated that money considerations had not influenced them the 'taken for granted' minima for such occupations should not be forgotten. Nonetheless, the group discussions revealed a strong emphasis among many prospective school leavers on factors other than money.

There were also a number of 'realists' who pointed out that at a time of such high unemployment, such issues were something of a luxury.

> You can't be too choosy, you've got to take what you can get. (Geoff)

> You've got to get a job first. (Alan)

Experiences

One of the main arguments of the political right in relation to youth unemployment has been that the labour power of young workers is overpriced as well as 'defective' in various other aspects, a view captured in the phrase 'pricing themselves out of jobs'. Thus, the argument runs that youth unemployment could be considerablly reduced

if the young held more 'realistic' ie lower expectations with respect to wage levels. In fact, as Lonsdale observes (1985:89)

> the average earnings of young people relative to those of adults are low and have been so for many years.

In 1984, for males under the age of 18, this rate was 39%, while females earned 53% of adult rates, these figures having changed little in the postwar era (:203). Indeed in recent years, there has been a fall, yet youth unemployment has continued to rise (Lewis and Lunn (1987:4)). The attractiveness of the myth owes much to the political vulnerability of (non-voting) 'irresponsible' youth, adolescents lacking dependants and regarded as prone to hedonistic consumption (Keene (1969:78), OECD (1977:36). Lonsdale (1985:89)).

Academic studies which have found no link between wage levels and unemployment for young workers have done little to dampen the ardour of the right (Byrne (1987:17), Jackson (1985:61). The Young Workers Scheme sought to reduce wage levels by inversely relating subsidy to wage levels, while the actual and threatened cuts of already low training scheme allowances have carried an equally clear message.

In this study young workers were asked to outline and comment upon the 'wages' they had received since leaving achool and to consider the effects of finances upon job choice and performance.

For the fourteen workers in full-time employment when interviewed, net weekly wage levels ranged from £38 to £72 for young men (with an average of £52), and from £31 to £58 (average £42) for young women.(1) Wages of those in their second year since leaving school were, on average £13-14 higher than for first year leavers, although there was a degree of overlap. In terms of occupational

choice, wage levels were often 'taken into account' but rarely occupied a prominent place (see ch.4). As noted earlier, this was in in part, a reflection of 'good' or 'decent' money being taken for granted (particularly by young men seeking 'trade' apprenticeships).

However, intrinsic factors such as interest or enjoyment were generally held to be more important, as was the attraction of full-time work per se in an area of such high unemployment. Only rarely was money openly acknowledged as a major factor in any particular choice or move, as in the case of Alan O., who had given up a job making fireplaces to become a trainee miner.

> I definitely thought about the money when I came to the pit and that was one of the reasons I came. I'm getting nearly twice as much there.

It should be remembered that opportunities for such 'instrumental' choice were rare and heavily reliant on strong trade union organisation to resist cuts in the wages of apprentices or young workers.

The relatively low prioritisation of financial rewards was also apparent in views expressed about wage levels. In particular, the latter did not usually arouse any strong feelings. Most employed young workers seemed to take wage levels largely as given, seeing them neither as a cause for complaint nor celebration, although four young workers described themselves in a fairly matter-of-fact way, as receiving 'good money'.

Albeit from a very small sample, there appeared to be only a loose correlation between objective payment and its subjective evaluation. Sandy B. could describe her £31pw as 'pretty good', while

Lorraine G. regarded it as necessary to have a part-time job to supplement her £44 weekly wage. 'I'd find it really steep otherwise.'

In sharp contrast to the myth of young workers 'pricing themselves out of jobs', there was an overwhelming impression of modest aspirations – of acceptance of low wages and a degree of gratefulness for those which were a little higher. Such attitudes were almost certainly influenced by one or more of various less favourable reference points such as school, unemployment or schemes. Only one of the fourteen had never worked on a scheme, while nine had actually been retained from schemes within their 'current' workplaces. Similarly, at a time when jobs were 'like gold dust', the opportunities to display an 'instrumental' orientation in terms of job choice were simply not available, so that such inclinations would be, at the very least, lying dormant.(2) Interestingly, the 'privilege' of employment also appeared to have muted any concerns about age-related wages, and 'same work' comparisons with older workers.

Having moved from YOP allowances to full-time wages, interviewees were invited to comment upon the effect of this change on the performance of their work. The majority view, offered by ten young workers, was that the effect was minimal. Runciman (1972:108) has argued that the gap between financial incentives and mental structures makes the former's effects very complex and varied. One aspect of this gap is that performance is clearly dependent upon the demands of the labour process and work disciplines.

Despite receiving more than twice the 'wage', Paul J. felt he had 'had to' work harder when on an earlier scheme than in his subsequent

job. Adaption to demands was evident in a number of statements to the effect that 'I just work'. Five young workers said that they 'never thought about money', while for those who did, such thoughts were often related to its consumption rather than productive effort.

If for some, this focus owed a deal to 'dull compulsion', there were also those for whom enjoyment banished concerns with incentives.

> It's just a bonus, really, at the end of the week (Andrew H.)

> I don't think it makes much difference, not if you like the job. (Gary E.)

> I would still work the same if I was getting twenty three pound fifty again ... I enjoy the hard work (Paul J.)

Another reason for the minimal effect was that desire for retention from schemes could outweigh disgruntlement over allowances. Lorraine G., having said that she worked harder now that she was in a full-time job, qualified this by saying that she had also worked harder 'when there was a chance of a job'.

> I was always hammering away. I thought I may as well prove myself and show them what I can do instead of being lazy just because I'm getting this (low DK) money.

Similarly, while for Donny S., the YOP allowance 'wasn't much to look forward to', she said that

> I knew if I worked hard I'd be on the same money as them ... (full-timers DK) ... in no time. It's just something you've got to go through.

Quite apart from the effect of less favourable points of reference, it should also be remembered that none of these young workers felt themselves to be heavily dependent upon 'payment by results' schemes.

In contrast to the majority view of 'minimal effect', four young

workers reported that the greater rewards they were now receiving had led to them putting more effort into their work. Colin Y. explained this in terms of work 'owed' in response to different conditions of exchange.

> You feel if you're getting more money you've got to work ... because I don't really like doing nothing for my money. I like to work for it. I was working fairly hard at it ... and for the money I was getting it was enough. But now I'm getting this amount of money, I would respect that and work even more.

For Douglas W., 'working solid' for £23-50 led him to become 'half hearted at times'. However

> now that I'm on a fair wage ... it's eased the situation a bit. I'm working a lot harder than I was.

Like Douglas, Diane J. had resented the 'unequal exchange' of difficult demands for very low rewards.

> Where I'm working there's these coils and they're red hot and they wanted them straight away. 'Come on, do this, do that.' One day, I turned round and I goes 'look here, you're getting forty odd pound, I'm only getting twenty three fifty.' It's not worth it ... I would flog myself for nobody for twenty three pounds. I did the work, mind you, but I wouldn't rush to do it.

Having been kept on, she regarded this problem as largely solved, although her net pay was only £38.

For many young workers on schemes at the time of interview, questions of financial considerations in occupational choice seemed irrelevant in view of the difficulty of finding any job. In the majority of cases, money had carried relatively little weight in original choices and had often become even less important with the passage through schemes.

In a labour market dominated by schemes, state regulation of

rewards took on crucial significance. The chosen bureaucratic form was of identical payment which temporarily suspended all questions of 'differentials', thereby creating a situation where, in the short term, other forms of hierarchy (eg, proximity to (segments of) the labour market) operated independently of financial considerations.

One of the stated aims of a common allowance for YOP placements was

> so that young people should not be influenced by monetary factors in their choice of opportunities (MSC, 1979:10)). (See Lonsdale (1985:96)

As was seen in chapter 4, the quest for employment was the most powerful determinant in choice of schemes, while the fact of a common allowance was probably less important than its low level, which had the effect of rendering almost all wage levels attractive by comparison.(3) Those on WEEP schemes had often gained highly accurate knowledge of the wage levels available within such workplaces, but the extreme scarcity of job opportunities left these young workers negligible scope for 'instrumental' choice. Even the attraction of factory-based schemes owed far more to the chance of retention than to wage levels, real or imaginary.

In all, sixty six interviewees offered opinions on the level of YOP allowances.(4) Broadly categorised, forty five expressed negative views, while of the remaining twenty one almost all responded in what might be termed 'neutral' fashion. Negative views varied in strength from the fairly muted ('not right', 'not enough') to dismissals such as 'coppers', 'nothing really', 'serious', 'terrible', 'rubbish', 'pitiful', and 'pathetic'. The two main factors advanced related to

both production and consumption - of pay as reward for effort and as something to live on. The official insistence on calling the weekly payment an allowance, and thereby deflecting debate about levels of pay, was frequently ignored by both young workers and their supervisors who preferred to talk of a wage. As Stafford (1981:64) has argued, this flows directly from a situation where efforts are made to stimulate work in all aspects except its privileges.

Fifteen young workers complained that their efforts were not fairly or adequately recognised.

> I just don't think it's enough for the work we do. (Laura H.)

> Working full hours for twenty three quid a week. It's a bit rough. (Geoff R.)

> I was doing a hell of a lot more than what I got paid for. (Amanda K.)

> I was working so hard for four pound odd a day ... I was doing a man's job for a child's wage. (Peter H.)

Thirty four interviewees told of problems in managing on the money they received.

> It's very tight. (Nocholas N.)

> It's not enough to live on. I've got nothing left to buy things with. (Susan P.)

> It doesn't stretch very far. I'm broke after two days. (Alan D.)

> It's not much ... by the time you pay your mam board. (Stephanie B.)

> It goes nowhere. I'm always borrowing. (Angela F.)

> It's just every Monday I wish it would fly over to Friday. (Graham A.)

It should be noted here that evaluation in terms of production

and consumption, while usually similar, were sometimes at odds. Thus, a few young workers stated either that their payment was 'OK' for the work done, but not enough to live on, or that they could cope but felt inadequately rewarded for their efforts.

Of those who were 'neutral' about the allowance level, regarding it as 'OK', or 'not too bad', nine offered reasons linked to production. Three mentioned training or experience as justification for low reward.

> It's all right, if you think that we're getting trained for the job. (Andrea K.)

> It's enough when you're only starting. (Kevin S.)

For the remaining six young workers, almost all on non-WEEP schemes justification depended on feeling that their work was not very demanding.

> In here, you can take your time, you're not pushed, it's not like a proper job. (Steven D.)

> Twenty five pound for what I'm doing, I think it's worth it 'cause really I don't do that much. It's mainly just talking to the patients and keeping them happy.

Even with such low sums, a strong sense of the need to <u>earn</u> rewards could lead to the belief that the allowance was too high.

> I think the money's all right for a proper job but I think really you're getting paid a bit much say just for a six month scheme. (Lesley C.)

Robert P. commented, of a previous WEEP scheme,

> the amount of money I was getting down there I shouldn't even have been getting that really, 'cause there was that little to do.

Alison B. drew attention to the 'trade off' between enjoyment and financial rewards by saying that the same allowance seemed better when

in a scheme she liked as compared with one she had not.

Among those stating that they could 'cope' or 'manage' on the allowance there was general recognition that this was, at best, achieved with little to spare, and that it often required a degree of family subsidy or self-imposed deprivation.

> I just about break even, but I could never save anything. (Brian P.)

> I get enough really because I pay my mam board but she still buys us things. (Jean N.)

> You're living with your mam and dad. It's not as if you've got to pay for everything yourself. (Geoff R.)

> It's all right for me 'cause I don't smoke or drink, and I don't go out much either. (Donny S.)

> It's enough for me ... 'cause I really don't go that many places but if I did it wouldn't be enough. (Tracy G.)

There was often a considerable degree of stoicism present in testimonies, occasionally backed by some 'homespun philosophy'.

> It's pretty bad but you have to make do with it. You have to manage. (Norman G.)

> It's enough really. It's the more you get the more you spend. (Ellen M.)

Attitudes towards allowances differed according to the sex of interviewees, with young men taking a markedly less favourable view than young women. Of the forty five 'negative' views, twenty eight came from males, while of the twenty one 'neutral' verdicts only seven did so. Cross tabulation of responses yields a $X^2$ value of 4.71 dfl prob. .03. In addition, young women more frequently spoke of being 'able to cope', providing thirteen of seventeen such responses.(5) Given that the wages of young male workers have, historically, tended to be higher than those of young women, it might have been expected

that depression to a common level would produce greater disenchantment among the former, although the high level of hostility among the latter should not be forgotten.

During comment upon YOP allowances various points of comparison were introduced. School was referred to in two connections. The first, mentioned by ten interviewees, was that the initial receipt of money after leaving created a considerable impact, but that this rapidly faded.

> You start, you think the money's a lot, but after a while it doesn't seem very much. (Tricia L.)

> At first I felt I was earning a lot. It was the first wage I've earned. (Peter H.)

> First couple of weeks, when you leave school, you're over the moon, money in your pocket and it's your own money. Then you realise what it's like. (Diane J.)

Three young workers commented that allowances were such that they were no better, or even worse off than when at school.

> I was better off at school getting my clothes and that bought for us ... didn't have to pay board. (Geoff W.)

The relationship between schemes and unemployment had been examined elsewhere (chs 3, 5) and will only receive brief treatment here. At the time of this study, weekly supplementary benefit levels were £14.90 for 16-17 year olds, £19.40 for 18 year olds. Given that YOP travel expenses had to be above £4 before any help was received it can be seen that the financial advantage of a scheme relative to unemployment was at best around £8-10 and often much less. An additional factor which could erode this difference was that, for some young workers, board payments were lower when unemployed than while on schemes (see ch.8).

However, the misery of unemployment was generally such that no

substantial differential was necessary to make a scheme placement
'worthwhile'.

> I think I'd rather be doing this than be on the dole, even
> if I was getting twenty five here and twenty five on the
> dole. (Gary F.)

> It's not much difference, but I'd rather do anything than
> be on the dole. (Geoff R.)

> It's not much money really, but it's better than being on
> the dole. (Diane P.)

Despite the predominant effect of unemployment to render schemes
more attractive, the notion that a small differential amounted to
'working for nothing' still arose.

> I'm working a week for about three pounds, so it's not
> worth it really.'

Needless to say, coping on 'dole money' was found to be even more
difficult than on a YOP allowance, a situation which was exacerbated
by the fortnightly payment of benefit.

> It's not a lot to last you. I'm smashed after a week.
> (Carl R.)

Young workers' own previous financial situations could also
provide an important reference point. Audrey W. attributed finding her
scheme allowance manageable to 'not really knowing any different'.
Loss of money was especially difficult.

> Once I got used to the twenty three fifty it was nothing,
> and then gannin' back onto the dole, that nearly killed
> us. (Paul J.)

> It was great when I first got a government scheme because
> it was the first time I was getting that much money. Then
> it went up to forty pound a week and I got used to it and
> now I'm back on the dole with fifteen, it's a bit of a
> blow. (Graham L.)

For a sizeable number of young workers, the most important point

of comparison was or had been with full-time workers whilst on WEEP schemes. Whereas school and unemployment tended to exert a small but positive influence on the image of schemes' finances, the effect of comparison with employees was much greater and overwhelmingly negative.

Twenty four young workers chose to make this comparison and the powerful feelings of injustice were unmistakeable. Seventeen of them were young women, which almost certainly reflected the greater frequency with which they were placed in this situation.

> I think it's terrible. We're doing exactly the same as everyone else, and we only get twenty five pound. (Denise V.)

> Sometimes you think to yourself I'm doing exactly the same job as the person next to me and he's getting twice as much as me. It's not fair. (Nicholas N.)

> It was slave labour because a woman who was doing the same job as me was getting eighty odd pound plus a bonus and I was sitting there getting twenty three pounds fifty. (Angela F.)

For any student of 'relative deprivation', it was interesting to note that this form of comparison far outweighed any considerations of payment for workload per se. In this respect, WEEP schemes were often regarded as more exploitative than non-WEEP (Roberts (1984:86) (although this was clearly 'offset' by the former's greater potential for future employment).

> I used to feel it when I was in the shop and there was lads getting maybe eighty pound a week and I was doing the same work for twenty three but here (non-WEEP scheme) ... we're all doing the same so it makes no odds. (Peter A.)

Francesca D., also on a non-WEEP scheme said that

> I don't think a place like this is too bad, 'cause you're all on government schemes, but when you go to the

factories where you're on a government scheme and everybody else does a job with a full wage, I don't think that's right 'cause you do the same amount of work as them but you're only getting twenty five pound

Alan B, on a scheme based at the NCB apprentices training centre told of the resentment when the apprentices had first started,

'cause we used to work better than what they did and they were getting twice as much money as us. (6)

Comparison with full-time employees also raised the issue of working for private employers while being paid by the state.

They get good value out of us here. I think they should make up the money. (Peter R.)

I think the firm should pay a bit towards your pay. (Brian P.)

Before leaving the question of reference points, mention should be made of the effect of the YOP allowance itself in setting a 'baseline' which strongly conditioned even the aspirations of its severest critics. Thus, of fifteen young workers who actually suggested revised figures for the allowance, the most popular choice was £30, the highest being £40.

I would have thought thirty pounds was better, a fairer wage. (Douglas W.)

An extra ten pound would be great. (Angela F.)

Paul B. provided the most extreme form of these modest ambitions.

It depends. If you had an easy job you should get twenty three fifty but on a different job, you should get more. Specially, like, in the butchers you should get about twenty five pounds ... 'cause it's heavy work.

The partial legitimacy accorded to the prevailing allowance level was still more ironic given that it had been frozen in the two years prior to the study, and serves as a forceful reminder of the

importance of existing material conditions as a constraint upon expectations.

The relationship between thought and action is clearly very complex and it was interesting, in this context, to consider whether what young workers thought about wages/allowances affected their performance of work. Interviewees were, in fact, asked whether this was the case, and while replies need to be treated cautiously, the question was invariably treated as a 'serious' one, to which there was no automatic or 'right' answer. This issue has already been considered in relation to those in full-time employment at the time of interview and the focus here will be on the remaining majority of young workers.

Among those on schemes, an overwhelming majority declared that the allowance level had little or no effect on their working performance. Of fifty two scheme-based interviewees answering this question, fourty four offered this view with eight reporting definite effects. As will become apparent, this result should not be taken to indicate mass conformity or willingness to tolerate low wages, poor conditions and the like, although doubtless these elements were present to a degree. Rather, it should be taken to reflect a number of contingencies and their (combined) effect.

The majority view included those professing 'satisfaction' with the allowance, for whom 'no effect' could be seen in terms of doing 'a fair day's work'. It is important to remember here that such notions of fairness depended upon work not being seen as too demanding.

> It's all right for me 'cause I'm not doing that much here but when you see other people on schemes they really are working hard. (Jacqueline N.)

Apart from tending to be seen, sometimes wrongly, as less demanding, non-WEEP schemes could also be regarded differently because of their non-commercial nature. Angela P., who rebelled against the demands of a factory-based WEEP scheme, found her stance changed when working alongside mainly voluntary workers in a children's playgroup.

> I mean, most of them get paid nothing so you can't complain but when I was in the factory, I used to really resent people getting treble the wage I was getting.

As has been seen WEEP schemes often gave rise to strong feelings of resentment on the part of young workers about the gulf between their own level of payment and that of employees within the workplace. There were, however, certain factors which militated against these feelings being significantly translated into action. In particular, there was recognition that firms might have employment to offer and often belief that employer's connections and references would carry greater weight than those in charge of non-WEEP schemes.

> You think, well, if I work hard, they'll think oh, he's a good worker and you've a better chance of getting kept on. So I try to do that, if I ever have any spare time, try and go to do something else, not let myself wander about. (Nicholas N.)

> I still work. If you want to be kept on that's how. You've got to do good work 'cause they put reports in about you after each department you've been on. It's no good if they say 'oh, she's lazy, won't do nothing'. (Tricia K.)

While such factors were by no means unique to WEEP schemes, the latter would often strengthen them both by their greater potential rewards and usually stricter discipline. Among those factors there was some evidence of 'dull compulsion'.

> It doesn't matter how much I get. I just work. (Tracy G.)

> I just do what they tell us to do. I just work and that's

it. (Lesley H.)

I just do what's expected of us. (Francesca D.)

It's just what you get, you have to deal with. That's all there is to it. (Trish C.)

The delivery of these remarks suggested neither enthusiasm nor a sense of grievance. This 'matter of factness' was well-captured in the repeated use of the work 'just', with its somewhat 'fatalistic' message.

Others were more enthusiastic, this being attributed either to 'self-discipline' or to work content. Notions of self discipline came in two main forms, namely 'doing one's best' and 'not being lazy'.

It doesn't really affect me. I'd always do it to the best of my abilities. (Peter R.)

I do my best. I cannot do any better. I don't think a higher wage would boost me. (Geoff R.)

I just work as hard as I can. I'm not bothered how much I get. I just do what's got to be done. (Robert P.)

I work as hard as I can, so it doesn't make any difference ... I mean, even if you're only on a government scheme, you're there to do a job, so you should do it. (Heather T.)

Resisting the temptation to 'become lazy' in response to injustice was spoken of by seven young workers on WEEP schemes.

You mean. 'I'm not getting paid for it, so I'm not going to do it.' No, I don't think I'm like that. I think that's petty. (Laura H.)

It's only fair that I do the same as the full-timers. I don't think I should go ... lazier 'cause they make more than me. (Stephanie G.)

These observations were noteworthy for demonstration of the co-existance of a strong sense of injustice and a moral code which proscribed retaliatory action. Two young workers mentioned that

had often done extra hours despite feeling that their level of payment was grossly unfair.

Twelve interviewees explained the negligible effect of payment upon performance by way of enjoyment of their work.

> It doesn't bother me, 'cause I love working with the kids. I would go there voluntary, on the dole after I've finished here ... they're lovely. (Patricia P.)

> I never really thought about the money because I enjoyed my work there. (Tricia L.)

> As long as I'm working with horses I'm happy. The money's poor but it's best to have a job what you like. (Ellen M.)

Terry T. made this form of 'trade off' quite clear when he described his experiences in two previous placements.

> They really looked after us there and because they looked after us, you worked exactly the same, but when I went to the printer's it was awful and the money really had an effect there. You were thinking about it all the time.

Exchange of labour power for payment is, of course, 'negotiable' in various ways (albeit to varying degrees), one of which is the intensity of effort. Such expenditure is only loosely captured by phrases such as 'hard' or 'easy' work and so on. Thus, of nine young workers (eight of them male), who said they would respond to financial incentives by working harder, four already considered themselves to be working hard.

> I'd try harder if I was paid more. Mind, I try pretty hard now. (Sean D.)

> I work hard here, but if I was on bonuses I'd work a bit harder. (Robert P.)

> I try as hard as I can but I think I would put more effort in if I was getting paid better.

This could be taken as veiled admission that the level of reward

was having a dampening effect on performance, but may simply reflect the fact that work is almost invariably performed with 'something in reserve', so that harder work can often be envisaged without implying an easy life in the present.

Turning to those eight young workers on schemes who reported definite effects on the performance of their work, it can be seen that three were responding directly to demands made while on WEEP schemes.(7) Along with other trainees in a clothing factory, Angela F. had refused to meet the 'bonus target' set for full-time workers.

> Say they wanted a hundred pockets an hour, well we couldn't get bonus or anything. So I used to think I'm not doing that and in the end the gaffer had to accept it 'cause none of us would do it. I just didn't work hard. I wouldn't. If I'd been on full money then fair enough.

For Elaine N., resistance came at certain specific moments.

> Sometimes you'd feel you were being put on and then you go straight back to the money and you think I'm not doing that or I'll take my time.

Geoff W. needed no direct workplace comparison to feel the need to rebel against unfair exchange.

> You're not so bothered. You say to yourself 'what's the use when you're only getting paid five pounds a day. No need slogging your guts out for that, when there's people making thirty or forty pound.

> Sometimes I just don't bother myself. (Leslie G.)

> It affects us a lot. I could work a lot harder for twice the money. (Geoff K.)

Returning to the question of 'orientations', it is useful to recall Blackburn and Mann's argument for a 'weak' version of the concept (1979:167). To this might be added avoidance of 'freezing' or 'reifying' orientations, which may change both internally and in

response to complex external factors. In the 'shifting sands' of the Coalfield's youth labour market this latter condition was clearly of great importance.

In a broader sense, the picture which emerges of young workers' orientations is one where there was relatively little 'instrumentalism'. In explaining this, the question of opportunity is of obvious importance. As Blackburn and Mann write,

> orientations can only operate within each hierarchical stratum and functional specialism. (1979:18)

For young workers in the present study, scope was further restricted by extreme scarcity of jobs per se and the bureaucratic standardisation of scheme payments. However, the anticipations and experiences of pupils and young workers also demonstrated influences beyond simply 'lack of opportunities'. This was apparent in the relatively low importance attached to financial considerations in occupational choice. More importantly, there was evidence of the existence of a definite 'code' through which experiences of the labour market and its rewards were mediated.

The principal feature of this code was its basis in notions of justice and fairness, which butressed 'self interest' as inducements to 'do one's best' or 'not go lazy', even when faced by grossly asymmetrical exchange. There are several points which should be made regarding this situation. First, the code appeared to operate in a fairly 'matter of fact' way, rooted in notions of the worker's part in fair exchange rather than a very strong 'work ethic' - a question of 'doing what had to be done' or 'just working'. In turn, this related to a second point which can be made concerning the particular form of

state-regulated competition for jobs and schemes in a youth labour market dominated by the latter. It should be pointed out that whatever the levels of dissatisfaction with the YOP, there was little sign in the Coalfield areas of significant 'rejection' of it on the part of young workers. This level of 'acceptance' cannot simply be seen in terms of compliance with state policy objectives, but rather as a question of 'fit' between the latter and the code adhered to by a majority of local young workers. The significance of this was evident in the ways in which competition was seen - not as highly 'individualistic' process, but of solid performance within prescribed structures.

A third factor worthy of comment was the strong 'moral' component within the code, which served to limit the influence of the 'cash nexus'. The notion of workers' self-image or pride was important in restraining or proscribing relatiatory action in response to exploitataion. It is useful to remember here the inseparability of labour power from its seller and the crucial question of internalised norms with respect to work and effort. For some, as we have seen, this might render restriction of effort 'petty' and damaging to the young worker's self-image. Whatever the 'collusive' effects, there is a sense in which such attitudes can be interpreted as retaining a measure of control over the expenditure of effort and thereby, arguably, over the 'rewards' of work (Beynon and Blackburn (1972:161)).

To talk of 'codes' in this way is, of course, to over-homogenise. Inevitably, there were both non-adherents and those who felt that the

breaches in the other side were such as to release them from their obligations. Nonetheless, for the majority, this form of working class code seemed to be of considerable influence. As a final comment on the question of 'instrumentality', it also appeared that its consumerist facet was largely missing, with many stoic attempts to 'manage' on meagre rewards, although again, the lack of alternatives must be borne in mind.

## Notes

1    One young women had a second evening job in a sports centre which added £20-25 per week to her net payment of £44 as a typist.

2    It is interesting here to note the different concerns which tend to predominate at time of full employment, such as Westergard's comments on the brittleness of the cash-nexus, which may snap and leave nothing with which 'to bind the worker to acceptance of his situation' (1970:120).

3    Intorwork (1980:4) report instances of wages actually below the level of the YOP allowance.

4    The remainder comprised those who had never been on schemes or had 'forgotten' what they thought of them, plus a tiny handful whose comments could not adequately classified as an opinion.

5    It should be remembered that these were 'voluntary' comments rather than replies to a direct question and therefore may have partially reflected differences in image presentation as well as actual management of finances.

6    While this had 'settled down', Alan still felt that apprentices wages should be lower so that the NCB 'would be able to take a few more apprentices on'.

7    Two such cases have already been dealt with in the experiences of those in employment at the time of interview.

Chapter 7

Trade Unions

In the previous two chapters, the focus has been on experience of work in a fairly broad sense and more specifically on questions of financial reward.

This chapter looks at (prospective) young workers' experience of and attitudes towards trade unions. Apart from the latter's obvious importance in working life, it is worth remembering that previous chapters have indicated widespread disgruntlement among young workers over insecurity and exploitation, and it is useful to consider views on the role of trade unions in combatting these problems (or for that matter, contributing to them). Such a concern takes on an added importance at a time when the government's strategy for economic salvation includes the twin linked objectives of weakening trade union power and of adjusting the expectations of young workers downwards.(1)

Historically in the Durham Coalfield, as was noted in chapter 1, the influences of the union 'lodge' within pit village life was quite pervasive. For our purposes, two major points arise from this. First, that the power of trade unionism came to take on more of a 'cultural form' than that of a 'strategic weapon', embedded into the fabric of village life, but often inward-looking. A second related factor was that under the hegemony of mining, other trade unions were either non-existent or 'dwarfed'. This 'dwarfing' effect was nowhere more

apparent than in the exclusiveness, massive scale and national status of the Durham Miner's Gala.

The current relevance of these questions lies in the strength and form of trade union consciousness within the 'new economy', following the collapse of the coal-steel labour market and its industrial estate 'replacement'. Once again for young workers, there was the question of how developed traditions and attitudes were to be re-worked through a scheme-dominated labour market.

The relationship between trade unions and the modern youth labour market will be considered later in this chapter. We begin, however, by examining the responses from prospective school leavers to the question 'would you like to join a trade union when you start work? Please give reasons for your answer.'

## Anticipation

The first 'opinion poll' part of this question produced the following results (Table 7.1).

### Table 7.1

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 130 | (29.7%) |
| No | 137 | (31.3%) |
| Don't know | 87 | (19.9%) |
| No answer | 84 | (19.2%) |

Discounting those offering no answer the percentage figures

become; yes (36.7%), no (38.7%), don't know (24.6%). Before any such discounting, some comment should be offered on those who failed to answer. Surprisingly, perhaps, this group was very evenly spread in terms of background, aspiration and sex.(2) Clearly, there is no way of accurately gauging the reasons for non-response, but two relevant factors should be mentioned. The first, which emerged from small group discussions, was that trade unions often received little or no attention within schools. Consequently, many felt that they 'knew nothing about them'. It may well be that some non-answers were unarticulated 'don't knows'. A second, more practical, factor was that this question was the last on the questionnaire and there were a number of cases where responses had tapered off or even stopped before reaching this point.

Table 7.1 shows a very 'mixed' verdict on trade union membership from prospective school leavers, with a small majority against and almost a fifth offering a 'don't know' response.

Examined in terms of class background, the figures reveal a remarkable uniformity (Table 7.2).(3)

Table 7.2

| Father's occupation | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| non-manual | 29.1% | 30.9% |
| manual | 29.0% | 31.3% |
| unemployed | 29.5% | 34.6% |

Table 7.3 offers a breakdown in terms of the occupational choice of respondents.

## Table 7.3

| Class of occ. choice | Yes | No | (N) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 9 | 18 |
| 2 | 35 | 19 | 86 |
| 3N | 25 | 33 | 108 |
| 3M | 41 | 31 | 103 |
| 4 | 11 | 17 | 55 |
| 5 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| Forces | 8 | 19 | 41 |

It is evident from Table 7.3 that, in contrast to the broadly 'neutral' effect of class background, variations in aspiration were linked to attitudes towards union membership.(4) While overall there 29.7% 'yes' responses, the figures for class 2 and 3M were 40.7% and 39.8% respectively, while those for 3N, 4 and 5 were 23.1%, 19.0% and 19.5%. 'No' responses showed less deviation from the average figure of 31.3%, although only 22.1% of aspirants to class 2 replied thus, while 46.3% of those intent on the forces did so.

Table 7.4 offers breakdown in terms of the sex of respondents.

Table 7.4

| Sex | Yes | No | D.K. | (N) |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Male | 67 | 82 | 28 | 215 |
| Female | 63 | 55 | 59 | 223 |

The most obvious features are the greater incidence of 'no' responses from young men, and 'don't know' responses from young women. These variations are sufficient to yield a $X^2$ value of 16.48 (df2) with a probability of .00. The spread of 'don't knows' tends to support the SCIP survey finding,

> that boys have much stronger and more certain views on the unions than girls. (SCIP (1981:28).

The relatively more favourable attitudes among young women held for almost all backgrounds and aspirations.

Views on trade union membership can also be examined in terms of the location of responsdents (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5

| Location | Yes | No | (N) |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| Peterlee | 39 | 28 | 113 |
| Bishop Auckland | 40 | 69 | 164 |
| Consett | 51 | 40 | 161 |

$X^2$ 10.72 df2 prob .01

In Table 7.5, the contrast is clearly between on the one hand,

Peterlee and Consett, where there were comfortable majorities in favour of union membership, and Bishop Auckland on the other, with a much larger majority against.

Explanation of the above associations must rest to a considerable extent on the reasons offered for and against union membership and it is to these which we now turn.

Underlying all 'yes' responses was the notion that there are (potential) conflicts of interest between workers and employers and that the former's vulnerability requires some countervailing form of organised support. Within the framework of 'dependent exploitation', those offering affirmative replies focussed overwhelmingly upon exploitation and the need for defence against it. As for other sections of the questionnaire, answers were post coded. Because of the nature of reasons given for union membership it was decided that coding could usefully be done in two ways, the first highlighting general concepts of union activity, with the second examining the specific objects of that activity (Tables 7.6 and 7.7).

## Table 7.6

| general concepts | N |
|---|---|
| help, support | 54 |
| provide, obtain | 33 |
| defend, protect | 29 |
| represent | 24 |
| fight against | 10 |
| fight for | 8 |
| miscellaneous | 40 |

Table 7.7

| objects of activity | N |
|---|---|
| wages, conditions | 49 |
| unfair dismissal | 24 |
| problems, difficulties | 22 |
| bad, crooked employers | 14 |
| safety, security | 9 |
| rights | 6 |
| strikes | 6 |
| accident, lay off | 4 |
| unspecified | 67 |

Table 7.6 shows that the dominant positive imagery surrounding membership casts trade unions as providers, defenders, representatives and general sources of help and support. The fighting imagery shows that these roles can be taken to entail elements of direct conflict.

Idioms of struggle could be couched in offensive ('fighting for') or defensive ('fighting against') terms.

A union will be able to fight for my rights.

They battle for more pay.

Fight against bad conditions and low pay.

Your union would fight to get you your job back if you were given the sack for no reason.

In terms of the specific objects of union activity, it can be seen from Table 7.7 that improving exchange terms by gaining better pay and conditions was the most frequently-cited reason for union

membership. Once again, images of justice were very prominent, with numerous references to 'fair' or 'decent' wages. The providing role of unions was more often mentioned by young men (offering 20 of 33 such comments) than young women. The former also made greater reference to issues of wages and conditions (28 from 49).(5)

However, both Tables 7.6 and 7.7 show considerable emphasis on the overtly protective, defensive role of trade unions. Indeed, even setting aside the question of how far wage struggles are defensive, it could be seen that the defensive nature of trade union activity was widely recognised. Unfair dismissal was mentioned by twenty four respondents, fifteen of them young men.

> Trade unions can offer the worker protection against unfair, unjust dismissal by a large employer.
>
> They will fight for your job if unfairly sacked.
>
> You can't get sacked straight away by a manager and if you do the rest will come out on strike.
>
> If you don't join and have an unfair dismissal, there's nothing you can do about it.

Without indicating how common such employers were, fourteen pupils referred to the need for protection from 'bad' or 'crooked' employers.

> If the firm you worked for was crooked or you did not trust it then I would definitely join a union.
>
> Protection from harsh management decisions.
>
> In case I get fiddled out of my weekly wage.
>
> So the boss couldn't give me dirty jobs and low pay.

While some distinguished between employers, one respondent regarded the need for such protection as 'universal'.

It is because of trade unions that workers have a decent
pay, fair hours and decent working conditions. Without
them, employers would be bleeding employed people to make
more profit for their own pocket.

Unions were also thought by some to make jobs safer and more
secure, with one supreme optimist commenting that 'your position can
be more or less guaranteed.' Two respondents cited membership as a
prerequisite for promotion.

The limited scope for individual action, implicit in most reasons
for membership, was sometimes made explicit.

A large organisation such as a union can usually negotiate
larger pay rises.

I would like to think I had the backing of a large body
like a union.

The union can fight for my rights, pay, conditions etc.,
whereas I could not do these things alone.

If I was not in a union I would not be on grounds where I
could complain about bad working conditions or low wages.

In many cases, trade unions were seen in external, even reified
form, as something clearly separate from its members. There were,
however, twenty four respondents who chose to emphasise the
representative and/or democratic nature of unions.

They provide someone to speak for the workers and express
their feelings.

I want to be represented and to have a say in any changes
taking place where I work.

As it is a democratic society, then you get the choice to
vote who you want to be your delegate.

If the union decides on something, but I disagree, I am
entitled to say so, and if others are of the same mind,
changes can be made. (6)

References to active participation came overwhemlmingly from

those aspiring to non-manual jobs,(7) which may owe something to differences in articulation as well as sentiment. Sixteen of the twenty four references came from young women, which is perhaps still more noteworthy because young women tended to be much less specific in their reasons for union membership.(8) Six prospective school leavers replied 'yes' on the grounds that there was a 'closed shop' in their chosen occupation and that they accepted this. Another two argued specifically the need for solidarity with other workers, one emphasing that there should be no 'free ride'.

> Most of my other workers would be in the union and I would
> have to 'stand' with them.

> If the union wants a pay rise and the members have to use
> action to get it, then it's wrong if you get the pay rise
> when you have not helped to get it.

Only one response drew any link betwen union membership and youth unemployment, stating that unions could help to elect a Labour government who could

> bring the retirement age down so we get a better standard
> of jobs for young people just leaving school. (9)

Apart from the many specific references cited above, concepts such as help, protection and the like were often couched in abstract terms.

> They are always around to support you.

> Any problems I have I know I will have someone to turn to.

> They will support me in trouble.

> They take care of you.

Specified or not, notions of help and support were the most commonly cited concepts of union activity, covering 27.3% of all reasons given.(10)

It should be pointed out that a few 'yes' verdicts contained negative comments about trade unions. All but one related to the latter 'causing trouble' through strikes, while the remaining respondent wrote of the need for the leadership,

> to reflect the wishes of the workers more accurately. It would be better to join a union that asks, by way of a ballot, the wishes of their members.

For those answering 'no', the reasons against trade union membership were dominated by the related notions that unions were much too 'conflict oriented' and too powerful in their pursuit of conflict. The rationale for 'no' responses seemed to owe much to media presentation of trade union affairs and to the populist conceptions which underpin and thrive on that presentation (Seaton (1982:274)). This was evident particularly in the massive emphais on strikes and related factors, where the narrowness of focus mirrored the restricted concerns of the media, and to some extent in the use of phraseology such as unions being 'all right in principle, but too powerful' (:272) or as 'ruining the country' and the like. 'Populist' influence also, perhaps, accounted for the fact that responses were more often emotive than those in favour of membership.

> Overall I would prefer not to touch a trade union with a 500 metre bargepole.

> They make me sick.

> They should be shot.

Similarly, it is worth noting that 'no' respondents offered less

reason for their replies than did their 'yes' counterparts. Whereas only four (3.1%) of the latter gave no reason for their verdict, the corresponding figure for the former was twenty nine (21.1%). In two cases, 'no' responses were simply suffixed with exclamation marks (no!!).

If those in favour of membership resolved the contradiction of 'dependent exploitation' by focussing on vulnerability and the need for protection, those answering 'no' concentrated, albeit in varied ways, on trade unions' destructive impact upon the exchange relationship itself.

Reasons against membership can be shown in tabular form as follows (Table 7.8).

## Table 7.8

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| strikes | | 80 |
| (being forced to join) | 24 | |
| (general references to) | 23 | |
| (unions always want) | 9 | |
| (are trivial and | | |
| unnecessary) | 9 | |
| (lose pay because of) | 9 | |
| (damaging to economy) | 6 | |
| coercive, undemocratic | | 25 |
| conflict oriented | | 18 |
| useless, waste of time | | 14 |
| costly | | 8 |
| dislike of politics | | 6 |
| miscellaneous | | 30 |

The dominant influence of strikes was apparent, not only in terms of direct references, but as an implicit contribution to many of the remaining unfavourable images. Notwithstanding a tiny handful of favourable references to strikes from 'yes' respondents, it was clear that strikes were viewed, in the abstract at least, as an unequivocal evil. Furthermore, the strength and manner of citations demonstrates the success of media efforts to lay responsibility for strikes at the door of trade unions.(11) As Chappell (1982:58) suggests, for most young people,

> acquantaince with trade unions is likely to be formed through media characterisations, and perhaps parental attitudes.

Jamieson (1981:28) reports that pupils named television and newspapers as their main source of information about unions (Seaton (1982:285)).

With limited exceptions,(12) media interest in trade union affairs is limited to reportage of strikes. Not only does this tend to 'equate' union activity with strikes but also to hugely over-emphasise the latter's occurrence.

> Most pupils flatly refuse to believe that most firms do not experience at least one strike during the year, let alone that the official statistics indicate that 98% do not. (Jamieson (1981:28))

In this study, acceptance of the 'equation' was implicit in the weight of derogatory comment on strikes and the fact the this was deemed sufficient reason against membership. Small group discussions revealed that trade unions were seldom, sometimes never, discussed in schools. External involvement in schools reinforces this process.

> Nobody queries the right of companies to be involved in
> ... (school talks) ... but there is suspicion and distrust
> about using trade unionists. (SCIP Newsletter 1) (See also
> Jamieson and Lightfoot (1984:253))

This is not simply a matter of 'political bias' but reflects the hegemonic influence of capital, in turn rooted in control of material (and ideological) resources.

In all, fifty two (38.0%) of those answering 'no' made at least one reference to (ie point concerning) strikes. (Of those offering reasons for their decision, 48.1% did so). Mention of strikes was widespread 'across the board'. Statistically, it was associated with both manual background and aspiration. However, this was almost certainly due to different modes of expression, with those aspiring to non-manual work being more inclined to write abstractly about unions being coercive, undemocratic or geared towards conflict. The exception to this 'rule' of homogeneity was that mention came more frequently from young men than women, the respective figures being 43.9% and 29.1%.(13)

Considering the rationale against membership, it appeared that for many, there was a complete identification of industrial conflict with trade unions, so that membership meant being involved in strike, non-membership avoiding it.

> I don't want to be involved in industrial disputes of any
> kind.

> I would not like to come out on strike.

One respondent followed the 'no' with the simple statement,

'because I want to work.'

Nine argued that strikes were the 'raison d'etre' of trade unionism.

> All they ever do is go on strike.

> They are the people who always want strikes.

> They are always going on strikes which is just a waste of time.

Another claimed that 'they cause most of the strikes in Britain.' A further nine respondents chose to highlight the trivial nature of strikes.

> I think the way unions tell men to come out on strike for trivial reasons is wrong. (14)

> I don't like having to go on strike for something ridiculous.

> I wouldn't want to go on strike for anyone else's stupid mistakes.

At face value, such sentiments are understandable enough, yet for these pupils the situations described were deemed sufficiently typical of union activity to merit not joining.

Twenty four respondents referred to being forced to strike regardless of personal wishes.

> They go on strike and you would have to strike even if you didn't want to.

> I would not be able to work when the union has given the order to strike.

> If a union says 'strike', then they strike, but I would not want to.

For this group, trade unions carried the threat of illegitimate

encroachment into the individual worker's domain of exchange and decision-making.

> I would like to make my own decision if I wanted to go on strike.

This problem was not necessarily resolved by union democracy.

> if most workers wanted to go on strike but a few did not, it would be unfair to those few.

A further nine prospective school leavers cited the loss of wages resulting from strikes as a key factor against membership.

> If they make you go on strike and you don't want to you lose money of not your own accord.

> Go on strike too often, don't get paid. (15)

The damaging effect of strikes on 'national economic performance' was referred to by six respondents,

> They have got the country in the state is is now because of strikes about silly petty things.

> Trade unions are harmful to everyone's work with their secondary picketting unions are destroying this country.

Using class rather than national terms, one respondent wrote that

> trade unions do nothing for the working class except cause unemployment by striking.

Two replies from Consett pupils blamed the closure of the BSC plant on the steel workers' strike.

> the unions just end up losing people their jobs. Like at British Steel, they came out on strike and now they're all sacked. That's no use at all.

Belief that unions were 'too powerful' could be based either on their capacity for economic disruption, or their perceived coercive power in relation to their own members.

> I feel that the powers of the trade unions should be curbed in some way as they have a strangehold over British industry.

> They should not be able to govern the lives of men as they do ... union leaders declare a strike without enough consideration to their members.

From those not making specific reference to strikes, the most frequent allegation, levelled by twenty five respondents, was that trade unions were undemocratic and/or coercive.

> They do not properly represent you in union meetings.

> They completely anihilate democracy. They decide whether or not a person can lose their job just because of the views they hold.

Whereas those in favour of membership evidently regarded union power as affording the possibility of moving beyond the weakness of isolation, those against saw the organised collective aspects of this power as largely malevolent. One respondent stated that unions 'make your life a misery', while another attributed the 'no' verdict to 'the restrictions of things you can do.'

> Too many rules and regulations, and you mainly have to do what they say.

> I don't like being told what to do.

While coercion could be seen in terms of leaders dictating to members, individualist stances could also utilise the 'Hayekian' notion of 'coercion by the majority.' From this perspective, regardless of how democratic union practices were, they could be seen

as stifling individuality and removing freedoms.

> I would like to make my own own opinion without them
> telling me what to say.

> You should learn to make your own decisions.

> You don't have your own way. You're one of the crowd.

Although this stance might help the reluctant militant, there seemed to be no consideration of what positive action an individual might take in relation to grievances.

The ideological contradictions which flow from the position of trade unionism are nowhere more apparent than in the question of the respective powers of leaders and membership. Depending upon the preceived powers of leaders and militancy, leaders may be exhorted to reflect the wishes of members (if 'moderate'), or to restrain them (if militant). The SCIP survey found a majority of pupils in agreement with both the following 'contradictory' propositions.

> Trade unions are not run by the majority of members but
> are controlled by small groups who do not necessarily
> represent the majority.

> Trade unions should do more to control their members.

In this study, eighteen respondents explained their opposition to trade unions in terms of the latter's overwhelming orietation towards conflict.

> I would rather solve disputes through talking.

> It's all a bit unnecessary when the management and unions
> could sort it out round a table.

> They tend rather to oppose than co-operate with management
> which gets nobody anywhere.

> I don't believe in stopping work for a small group of
> people who may be out to cause trouble.

They seem to me that they just cause trouble for the employer who after all is only trying to do his job too.

A further six respondents attacked what they saw as the political concerns of trade unions.

I am against socialism.

I dislike the communists, too much communism in the unions today.

They are a set back to the country, they are left wing 'commies' who would rather follow Moscow than London.

Within a framework where worker's interests are totally subsumed by those of capital, the 'disruptive' influence of those who regard those interests as different easily comes to be branded as 'subversive'. As Hall et al. (1978:309) argue,

> The 'conspiracy' is the necessary and required form in
> which dissent, opposition or conflict has to be explained
> in a society which is, in fact , mesmerised by consensus.

Three respondents wrote of 'not believing in unions' without further elaboration, while fourteen dismissed them as 'useless', 'pointless' or 'a waste of time'.

Attention was drawn by eight prospective leavers to the costs (subscriptions etc) of union membership, with one arguing in venomous fashion.

> They all want shooting ... the people at the top of the
> union, the bosses etc, just live like parasites off
> working people.

Just as there were certain respondents who were 'resigned' to the closed shop, there were a handful who were resigned to not being allowed to join a union.

> There's lots of firms who won't take people who are in a
> union and they won't let the workers they have join.

Where I want to work they won't accept unions there.

As noted earlier, of eighty seven respondents returning a 'don't know' verdict, fifty nine (67.8%) were young women.(16) There is no obvious reason for this strong association other than that trade unions are perhaps more likely to be seen as part of 'man's world' about which is is more 'legitimate' for young women not to offer opinion. Not surprisingly, a high proportion of 'don't knows' were accompanied by no reason. Fifty four (62.1%) offered nothing beyond their initial answer, while a further twelve attributed their indecision to lack of knowledge.

I know nothing about it.

I don't understand them.

I have no idea what it would entail.

(Four of this group indicated that they would like to know more). Six respondents indicated feelings of apathy or indifference, professing themselves 'not bothered' and so on.

There were also fifteen replies offering what might be termed 'reasoned ambivalence', pointing out pros and cons without deciding between them. The advantages and disadvantages indicated were very similar to those linked with 'yes' and 'no' verdicts, with protection and pay rises set against strikes and coercive power. This often took the form of unions being 'all right in principle' but too powerful.

I think that people should be able to fight for what they want and unions are a good way of doing this, but I think now unions have too much power.

Trade unions can get you a better deal in pay and work conditions but they can also put you out on strike whether you wanted to or not.

There were also two pupils intent in medical careers who pointed out that the benefits of trade unionism had to be weighed against the danger to patients in the event of strikes.

> doctors should be able to fight for their rights but ... I don't think they could risk lives to get a wage rise.

Utilising issues of rationale to reconsider the association between attitudes towards union membership and occupational choice, it was certainly the case that expressed reasons varied considerably between groups. Non-manual aspirants more frequently couched preference for union membership in terms of defence, representation or democracy than did manual aspirants who emphasised more general notions of help and support. There is, however, an interpretive problem here, namely gauging the extent to which the differences were matters of sentiment or articulation. Reasons given against membership showed little variation, other than the association between manual aspiration and more frequent mention of strikes.

The associations of pro- and anti-union attitudes with aspiration to classes 2 and 3M on the one hand, 3N, 4, 5 and the forces on the other, appeared to relate 'directly' to aspiration, in that they did not vary according to the background of aspirants. This suggests that the roots of variation lay in the perceived qualities of occupations. Broadly, it seems that those which offered more by way of 'career', namely the (semi) professions of class 2 and the skilled 'trades' of 3M, evoked relatively more favourable attitudes towards trade union membership.(17)

It was observed earlier that there was a sharp split in attitudes according to the location of respondents, with the comparatively 'pro' Peterlee and Consett and 'anti' Bishop Auckland. Perhaps the most obvious general explanation for this variation is that the areas are at different 'stages' of deindustrialisation, if the latter is construed primarily in terms of pit closures. Historically, the influence of the lodge in community affairs and local politics was an integral part of mining hegemony. Writing in the immediate postwar era, Benney (1946:172) likened the union to 'a local medieval church.(18)

The large scale closure of pits began in southwest Durham, moving on to the north west and in recent years to the eastern areas of the Coalfield. The 'new economy' which has arisen to 'fill' the vacuum has brought many more women into the labour market, but has, because of its fragmentation and instability, done little to provide a strong base for trade unionism. Thus it appears that advancement of the new order coincided with less favourable attitudes towards union membership. This hypothesis gains further support from analysis of the rationale for and against membership, and to some extent from breakdown of responses according to background and aspiration.

While attitudes within Consett and Peterlee were broadly similar in numerical terms, this concealed certain important differences. In particular, within Peterlee, propensity towards union membership was a strongly 'manual' phenomenon, both in terms of background and aspiration. In Peterlee, 38.1% of those who fathers were employed as manual workers said that they would join a union, whereas the

comparable figures for Consett and Bishop Auckland were 27.3% and 23.9% respectively. Similarly, of those aspiring to manual work, 45.5% of Peterlee respondents replied 'yes', compared with 31.1% in Consett and 25.4% in Bishop Auckland.

If in Peterlee, intended trade union membership tended to be a 'manual' affair, the opposite was the case in Consett where higher 'yes' figures were to be found among those of 'non-manual background' (38.1%) and aspiration (46.7%).

With respect to rationale for membership, there were also clear spatial variations, especially between Peterlee and the other two locations. In the former, those in favour of membership placed greater emphasis on potential abuses by employers,(19) whereas the latter tended to demonstrate greater 'instrumentality' by stressing provision of higher wages.

Likewise, prospective school leavers in Peterlee more often stressed the helping, supportive and defensive role of trade unions while those in west Durham highlighted the providing or obtaining role.

In reasons given against membership, although mention of strikes was fairly constant, those in Peterlee gave little weight to the 'coercion' or 'conflict orientation' of trade unions when compared with their Consett and Bishop Auckland counterparts.(20)

It seemed clear that between the three locations there were significant differences in the strength and/or form of trade union consciousness. In Bishop Auckland, consciousness was clearly weaker

'across the board', suggesting that the shift from mining to industrial estates had been accompanied by a decline in trade union activity and its perceived relevance.

For Consett, trade union consciousness was obviously stronger but rooted more in the service sector and especially it (semi) professional segment. In addition, its focus was relatively 'instrumental', with prominence given to the union role in securing higher wages, and protective, defensive aspects less valued. In turn, this must be seen within the context of the high proportion (relative to the rest of the Coalfield) of Consett workers employed in the service sector, albeit based on high rates of 'travel to work'.

In terms of the continuation of mining and its influence, Peterlee remained the most 'traditional' Coalfield location. Here, trade union support was both marginally higher than in Consett (with 34.5% as against 31.7% 'yes' responses) and of a somewhat different kind. It was particularly strong among those from 'manual backgrounds' and with 'manual aspirations'. Similarly, 'instrumental' concerns occupied a much lower place, while the supportive and defensive role of trade unions was highlighted. It can be argued that this emphasis demonstrated the greatest degree of continuity with the 'traditional' place of trade unionism within the Coalfield. This was clearly far removed from the level and kind of influence previously exercised by the lodges, which would almost certainly have been 'currently' stronger in the neighbouring pit villages than in Peterlee itself.

## Experiences

In this section, which examines the experience of and attitudes towards trade union membership of the study's eighty eight young workers, there are two major concerns. The first is to contextualise responses in terms of the manner and extent of contact with union affairs, the second to consider the ways in which trade unions were seen as (ir)relevant to problems encountered in working life. Before examining these issues, however, it is useful to make brief comment upon the relationship between trade unions and young workers, with special reference to the modern situation of massive youth unemployment and state counter-measures.

Writing two decades ago, Carter (1966:157) pointed to the gulf which existed between keen trade union interest in young workers at the level of national policy, and the minimal practical efforts made within the workplace to welcome new entrants.

In recent years, trade union representatives have participated in the 'tripartite' structures of the MSC and its responses to youth unemployment. In national advertising campaigns for the YOP, union leaders were prominent in singing its praises.

> The future of this country will be in the hands of those very teenagers YOP is helping today. The TUC's behind it all the way. (Len Murray, Gen.Sec. TUC)

> It's nothing less than a new deal for the young unemployed. (Joe Gormley, President NUM). (21)

Although trade union representatives have not been uncritical of YOP (and later YTS), such criticism has been muted and fragmentary, with action taken in quest for improvement even more limited.(22)

Whether 'conspiratorial' or not, the effect of state-sponsored schemes has been to accustom a great number of young workers to low paid, temporary and largely unskilled 'employment'. Furthermore, when the majority of WEEP trainees have been concentrated in non-unionised workplaces (Youthaid (1981:4)), there must be a clear threat to trade union interests both in the short and long term. The nature and scope of the threat makes the limited response somewhat puzzling. As Finn (1983:16) asks,

> how is it ... that an organisation like the TUC, which is hostile to almost every other government measure, sees within YTS a welcome incremental advance in the progress of postwar British Society.

It is, of course important to remember that, institutionally, trade unions merely express rather than challenge class divisions (Anderson (1977:334)) (23) and that commitment to major social change is rarely operational and generally

> confined to the rhetoric of rulebook preambles and conference speeches. (Hyman and Fryer (1977:158)).

Similarly despite the potential strength which derives from collective solidarity, trade unions do not escape the contradictions of 'dependent exploitation'. Thus, while they have an obvious role in minimising the exploitation suffered by members, they are constrained both by the sacrifices which militancy demands of the latter and the need to preserve intact the exchange of labour power for wages. In relation to youth unemployment, actions such as 'blacking' schemes carry additional risks. One would be that of being increasingly 'bypassed' by the use of non-unionised workplaces. Another is that, given most young people's preference of schemes over unemployment,

restriction of the former might alienate many young workers and allow trade unions to be branded as a 'spoiling' force (Jackson (1985:157)).(24) However, there is a price to be paid for inaction in so far as young workers are unlikely to be impressed with organisations which do not appear to address their grievances and are seen to support the 'orthodoxy' that they need to be trained for employability (Eversley (1986:223)).(25)

At national level trade union criticisms of YOP/YTS have focussed on two sets of issues. The first relates to unemployment with schemes being seen as massaging unemployment figures, diverting attention from the real causes of unemployment, and costing jobs through substitution. The second focusses on the exchange relationship, with low rewards and lack of training making schemes particularly exploitative.(26)

In the Durham Coalfield area during the early 1980s, trade unions (with the notable exception of NUPE) showed little practical interest in Y.O.P. trainees. NUPE successfully attempted to recruit young workers on non-WEEP schemes, a move which not only served to establish a contact which would not otherwise have occurred but also brought a trade union presence to workplaces with by far the largest concentrations of trainees.

In March 1981, NUPE sponsored a delegation to Parliament seeking a clampdown on 'dirty boring jobs for a pittance' (Newcastle Journal 24.3.81). On the 26th June 1981 NUPE members led a strike at a large community-based scheme in Derwentside. Ostensibly, the issue at stake was the withdrawal of special transport but the action immediately provided a focal point for angry allegations about 'cheap' or 'slave'

labour.(27) It was variously reported that between 250 and 300 young people were involved, although the strike lasted only three days.

There were attempts made to increase NUPE membership among trainees and to extend the campaign against scheme 'abuses'. Well-attended protest rallies were held in Newcastle during August 1981 and February 1982 with 'low pay' and 'poor training' the main targets. This broader focus and indeed the findings of the present study underline the need to see exchange relationships in a broad sense. So that while arguments about cheap labour were undoubtedly important, there were also deep concerns about wider issues of status, treatment and prospects on the part of young workers. Outside the arena of state schemes, miners at Easington took limited industrial action in autumn 1981 in response to swingeing cuts in recruitment which broke the customary arrangement for sons to follow fathers into pit employment.

Young workers were asked to say whether they were union members and if not, whether they intended to join in the future. They were also asked to expand on the reasons for their choices. More generally, they were asked to talk about the contact (or lack of it) with unions in their workplaces and about any impact which working experiences had had on their attitudes towards trade unionism.

Of eighty eight young workers interviewed, twelve were already union members, while of the remainder twenty six (34.2%) said that they intended to become so, fourteen (18.4%) stating that they did not, with thirty six (47.4%) offering a 'don't know' response.(28) Although the relatively small number of respondents must render

interpretation tentative, the most obvious differences between these figures and those from the school questionnaire are the former's higher yes:no ration and greater 'indecision'.

The greater frequency of 'don't know' responses may be partly explained by the different situations faced by interviewees and those completing the questionnaire. For the former, simply not answering was a more difficult option, while a non-committal response (particularly if accompanied by a plea of ignorance and/or disinterest) may also have been seen as a way of obviating the need for further elaboration.

A second factor was that for a number of young workers, experience of working life and the place of trade unionism within it had brought home realisation of their complexity. Although he had joined the NUM, trainee miner Paul J. felt that

> I'm ower young to really understand it for a start, cause
> they reckon it's complicated.

Taken at face value, the higher yes:no ration among young workers might be taken to indicate that the transition from school to work is conducive to more sympathetic views of trade unionism. While it is extremely difficult, given the impossibility of 'ultimately' explaining expressed views, to demonstrate this, there are nonetheless important sources of corroborating evidence.

First, there was a gradation of response from those in full-time jobs, who as a group were most favourable towards union membership to those unemployed at the time of interview, who were least so. (Table 7.9).

Table 7.9

|  | F/t job | Scheme | Unemployed |
|---|---|---|---|
| union members | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| 'yes' | 6 | 16 | 4 |
| 'no' | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| 'don't know' | 0 | 28 | 8 |

Excluding those who were already members the $X^2$ value for the remainder of the table is 13.10 (df=4) with a probability of 0.01. Second, attitudes were more favourable in cases where young workers had had contact with a trade union than when there had been no such contact. An additional factor was that almost all reported changes of attitude since leaving school were in the direction of more positive attitudes towards membership. Finally, there were those who stated that their interest and involvement in trade unions would grow once in permanent employment or when older.

All those areas will be explored further below, but together they seem to indicate that for recent school leavers the degree of involvement in union affairs may be linked to that in work itself, whether such involvement is seen in terms of permanence, integration or length of acquaintance with working life.(29)

Breakdown of responses by the sex of interviewees shows a more favourable attitude towards membership among young men then young women (Table 7.10).

Table 7.10

|  | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| union members | 6 | 6 |
| 'yes' | 17 | 9 |
| 'no' | 3 | 11 |
| 'don't know' | 17 | 19 |

$X^2$ (exc. members) 7.00 df=2 prob .03

The pattern of greater male favour occurred in each 'employment' situation, while the gradation evident in Table 7.9 held good for both sexes.

As to why this difference between the sexes should exist, there was little clue in the testimonies themselves, either in terms of experiences related, levels of contact or of reasons given for verdicts. If the link between involvement in work and trade unionism is correct then the difference may be a reflection of gender roles within a partiarchal society which encourage greater 'commitment' to work from men.

Responses varied little in terms of the background (fathers' occupations) of young workers, but did show some relationship to the latter's educational qualifications.(30) Given that full-time jobs

were linked to both qualifications and union membership, it was not perhaps surprising that of twelve union members, eleven had five CSEs or more. Of those with similar qualifications who were not union members there was a great divergence between the sexes in attitudes towards membership. From fifteen young men in this category, eleven gave 'yes' verdicts, while of seventeen similarly placed women, only two did so. For those with four CSEs or less, there was no such divergence. The explanation for this probably lies with the perceived appropriateness of union membership for different kinds of work. Among young women, membership was often associated with factory work (see below) rather than the clerical or shop work aspired to by those with more qualifications. On the other hand, better qualified young men tended to aspire to skilled manual work which seemed to be associated with trade unionism.

Responses did not show any significant relationship with time since leaving school nor with the location of interviewees.

For young workers who were union members at the time of interview, reasons for joining were fairly evenly divided between the 'voluntary' and 'compulsory'. Six of those in full-time employment had joined 'automatically', either because of closed shop requirements or understandings built on overwhelming membership.

> When I went to sign to say I was going to work for the Board, it had a slip saying ...your signature for you to join the union. (Colin Y.)

> Mary, that's the union woman, she says that it's better if you're in the union. I suppose I joined cause everybody else was in it. (Pamela J.)

None spoke of resenting the pressure or demand to join, and

indeed membership was generally viewed as beneficial, albeit to varying degrees.

> To tell you the truth I wasn't really bothered, but I wouldn't argue, I'm not against them. Why I'd be stupid if I was against them....they can help you a lot. They stop firms just going out and sacking you when they feel like it. I know one firm that does. (Gary E.)

> With us working at the pit, I know you've got to join the union and it's somebody to fight for you if something goes wrong. (Alan O.)

> I was for it. If there's something you don't like you can go straight to the union and complain about and they'll do something about it. They won't just sit there and do nothing. (Sylvia R.)

Lorraine G. was awaiting a transfer to NALGO, having been retained from a WEEP scheme. She had joined NUPE during the scheme 'in case I got a raw deal.' In common with four other scheme-based NUPE members, the influence of supervisors sympathetic to trade unionism had been an important factor.

> He explained what the union was all about, what they were fighting for and how it could help me. And when he explained that they were trying to fight for extra pay and better quality, I felt as if I wanted to join, cause I'd be an extra person that was helping fight with them. (Angela F.)

On a non-WEEP scheme in Bishop Auckland, union representation had been instrumental in creating awareness of entitlements to equipment and clothing allowances, and in saving trainees from having to work in a dark, dirty cellar described by Norman G. as 'a rathole'.

Although she had given up her job as a cinema projectionist Joan E. retained membership of her union (ACTT) as 'insurance'. Apart from closed shop requirements, she felt it had been an important source of protection.

> They had a cafe and they were wanting you to work in the cafe with me being a lass and they were wanting me to tear tickets and I said 'no chance, I'm paid to run the film'. Why, the bloke there he was a tough gaffer and he said he was going to sack us but the union man used to come round every Saturday and I used to tell him what was going on, so the gaffer backed down and left us alone after that.

With few exceptions, knowledge about and participation in trade union affairs was minimal, whether because activities were themselves limited or because of decisions taken against participation. In all, there was little evidence to refute Carter's contention that,

> most young people are ignorant about trade unions and remain thus throughout their first year at work. (1962:267).

> They don't really have meetings or nowt. Just once and I can't remember what that was for. (Pamela J.)

> You can gan to the meetings if you want to but at the moment I'm not really interested in unions. I might later on when I get right into pit work. (Paul J.)

In the ideologically important area of industrial action, two strikes had directly involved young workers interviewed in this study. In addition, the two trainee miners had been involved in a 'strike ballot' over a pay claim, one voting against as 'the offer they gave us was good enough, for me anyway', the other abstaining

> cause I knew nowt about it. I thought if I let this one go by I'll know more about it next time. I was just watching and listening.

Sylvia R. had taken part in a strike at a Peterlee zip factory in support of a pay claim. After a series of meetings,

> it was just building up and building up, everybody was getting sick, so we ended up out.

The contradictory reference points of unemployment and similar but more highly paid work combined to produce an ambivalent attitude towards the claim.

> Why, at the time there's not many jobs, we should ... be
> thankful we've got a job but the pay we get compared with
> all the factories, it's just not worth working when you
> think about it.

As to the outcome, Sylvia said,

> why, we got it, but we didn't get what we wanted. I don't
> understand percentages and all that.

Her description of being on strike as 'boring' echoes the view of

Roberts et al (1977:97) that

> there is little more boring than being on strike, going
> slow or working to rule. Aside from any financial damage
> involved, for others, apart from the few activists who can
> be at the centre of affairs, waging the class struggle can
> be intensely depressing.

Tracy G., who was on a WEEP scheme at the same factory stayed at

home other than going to work to collect her 'wages', which were not

affected by the strike. To do this she had to go past picket lines,

which she did without any confrontation.

Geoff W., though not a union member, had participated in the YOP

strike on Derwentside which he looked back on as 'a waste of time',

despite gaining some publicity for the cause.

> It was on the news, that was about it, lost two or three
> days pay for it, wasn't worth it.

Also worth noting were the comments of three young workers who

had eschewed involvement in that same strike.

> The work experience course went on strike and I could've
> went with them but it wasn't really worth it cause there
> was only one of me on the scheme that I was on. If there'd
> been a group it could have been different. (Paul B.)

Laura H. and Peter A. had both come under pressure to strike as

efforts were made to widen the dispute. Friends of Laura's had arrived

at her workplace and although she agreed to sign a petition supporting

the action she refused to strike or to join NUPE as 'the union would have made us come out.' Something of a rift had developed between her and her friends, but she defended her 'lack of solidarity', saying she was not prepared to lose money in the short term.

The role of internal divisions in hampering common struggles against employers is well-known (Roberts et al (1977:97)).

In Peter A's celebratory account of the rebuff delivered to YOP 'militants' it is difficult to imagine that the latter's efforts could have helped him in any way.

> They came to the depot and said 'come out on strike with us and we're bound to get more money'; and we says, 'why, we're only getting twenty three pound a week. If we go out with you, we'll get nothing'. Why they went away and they were back at work the next week and they never got no more money. (laughs) (emphasis added)

Yet with 'pay' levels determined nationally, there were also clear problems in organising around essentially local issues, while the problems of wider organisation (across workplaces, industries and regions) were truly daunting or 'Herculean' (Eversley (1986:203)).

The reasons given by the twenty six young workers stating their intention to join a trade union were broadly similar to those offered by prospective school leavers and outlined earlier in the chapter. Perhaps the main difference was that young workers appeared to give less weight to the 'instrumental' side of union activity. Rather, the emphasis was more strongly on the overtly defensive, protective aspects and the necessity for organisational support.

> I'd join a trade union just to make sure I don't get dismissed unfairly or something like that. It's just precautions, really. If I get my finger chopped off they can back us up. (Graham L.)

> If anything goes wrong or if you don't agree with
> something you can go and see the union, where if you're
> not in the union you can't do much about it really.
> (Lesley H.)

> I think they're a good thing cause they look after you.
> There's no way the firm can sort of trample on you. (Alan
> E.)

Three young workers explained their intentions in terms of unions

providing a forum within which one could 'have a say', and thereby

attempt to influence workplace practices.

> I think you should be part of the union. I mean, you can
> speak up and have your say ... and they'll listen. You've
> got to fight for what you get. If you say nothing, you
> don't get nothing. You have to speak up for what's right
> and pay rises, things like that. (Donny S.)

> I can't wait until I get into that union at the hospital.
> I would really speak my opinion. They do nothing and they
> want telling. (Patricia N.)

Pressure to join from other workers was mentioned by nine

interviewees. Such pressure varied both in its degree of formality and

'acceptance' on the part of its recipients. Apart from 'closed shop'

situations, Peter R. argued that people were often 'blackmailed' by

ostracisation into joining when the majority were members. For others,

majority membership was a much less sinister but still effective

pressure.

> Everybody would be saying come on and join and in the end
> they talk you into it. (Sandra J.)

> It's just because everybody else joins. (Chris V.)

Geoff W. raised the issue of non-members benefitting from the

sacrifices of others when he commented,

> if them in the union are losing money every week to get a
> pay rise and you haven't been out on strike that means
> you're getting it and you haven't fought for it.

While recognising the similarities of rationale between the two groups in the study, it is clearly important to consider the extent to which the attitudes of recent school leavers had been shaped by their working experiences. In all, eight of the twenty six young workers reported having become more favourable towards trade unions since leaving school.(31)

> When I was at school I didn't think I'd need one, whereas now I know there's times when I might need one. (Alan D.)

Douglas W. was an office worker in a factory in which only manual workers were unionised. He reflected that,

> when I was at school I used to think god, unions, they seem to cause more bloody trouble than enough. Then when I got to work, I realised unions do a lot of good for the workers, keep people happy. I think a union might be good amongst the office workers.

In similar vein, Diane J. said,

> They don't have a union here but I think there should be one. They cut out our afternoon tea break for an earlier finish on the Friday. They didn't ask us, just did it. It's the principle. I think we should have a vote on it to see of we agree with it. If there's no union, they could just finish you for nothing ... why, who can you turn to, no-one really.

Having been ordered to clean out a drain, Chris W. felt that the presence of a union within the scheme would have made it easier to resist such demands.

Among the eleven young workers against union membership, reasons given for verdicts correspond even more closely to those offered by prospective leavers. The dominant imagery revolved around strikes (referred to by eight of the eleven) as the raison d'etre of trade unions, imposed on unwilling members and often called over trivia, thereby highlighting the 'conspiratorial' nature of unions.

> Why they always seem to be going out on strike. (Denise V.)

> If you're content with your work, it's a job, that's all you need. You don't need to keep going on strike all the time. (Heather T.)

> The trouble with a union is that if they go on strike you've got to go on strike. You've got no option. That's the thing I don't agrees with. (Patricia P.)

> Bad news aren't they. Why, look at British Leyland. I want another five minutes tea break, can't have it, out we go. It's stupid. They're a waste of time. If you're getting put down at work why, you tell them, and if they don't smarten it up, you leave, as simple as that ... needn't bother getting unions in. (Philip G.)

The importance of the media as information sources was often

explicitly recognised.

> you often hear things on the news....about how they're always going on strike. (Geoff R.)

> They're just troublemakers, always getting people to go for more money and then they get sacked. I don't like the unions. I just don't from the years I've known what they do. It's always on the telly. (Carol P.)

> Listening to the news it seems like they're always in trouble, so I don't think I'd fancy going into the union. (Stephanie G.)

While some had acknowledged fear of victimisation as a reason for

union membership, there were also two young workers who mentioned the

possibility of victimisation by employers as a factor against joining.

Mark B recounted how his sister had been among a small group from a

clothing factory who joined the union against the employer's wishes,

and that the subsequent conflict had led her to have a nervous

breakdown. In contrast to the number who had (or were intending to)

become union members as a result of their working experiences, only

Amanda K. attributed her 'no' verdict to such experience. During her

time at a medical centre she had become very disenchanted at the incessant arguing between union members, commenting that 'it's just a waste of time.'

Of the thirty six workers replying 'don't know' to the question of whether or not they would wish to join a trade union, twenty seven explained their position as the product of insufficient knowledge and/or interest.

I don't really know much about them. (Tricia K.)

I've got no idea what they do. (Denise N.)

Never think about it. (Gary F.)

I don't understand it. I don't understand politics or anything. If there's anything political on the telly I turn it over. (Francesca D.)

I'd like to find out more about them before I joined. (Julie M.)

For six young workers, 'indecision' rested explicitly upon recognition of positive and negative features. The former varied but the latter invariably related to strikes.

I think they're a good thing in a way but once one's out, they're all out, as they say. (Laura H.)

Michael F. felt that being a union member might have helped him retain his employment as a teaboy but was very concerned about being forced to come out on strike. For Graham A., the positive was improved prospects of promotion.

They know the bosses and if they go up and say oh he's a good worker ... you get better chances on jobs. Trouble is, they just go straight on the strike.

In a somewhat muddled way, Robert P. drew attention to the double-edged 'morality' of wage militancy, especially in its relation

to the internal divisions amongst working people. Having noted that 'they're always gannin out on strike', he continued,

> they're all fighting for more money and you get people on government schemes, getting this amount of money and they're saying nowt, they're just working. It's just being greedy really...but they're a good thing really, cause they do get more money, that's what they fight for. I'd join one if I had to.

A few young workers explained their verdicts in terms of family (usually parental) pressure for or against membership when they themselves held different views.

One interesting feature was that seven young workers chose to argue that trade union membership was more appropriate or necessary in factories than in other workplaces.

> If I had a full-time job in a factory, I think I'd join. (Graham L.)

> In some cases they are necessary but I think in clerical work they're not. I might join in a factory. (Olwyn G.)

> I think unions are a good idea in factories. (Donny S.)

It seemed that factories were regarded as more dangerous, but also that their generally unfavourable image included the notion that their regimes were more likely to be harsh and exploitative.

Thus far, attitudes towards union membership have been considered largely without reference to young workers' contact (or lack of it) with trade union affairs. It is useful, therefore to offer some corrective treatment at this point.

In a scheme-dominated labour market, forty one young workers reported that they had had no contact in any of their placements. 'Contact', as used here, did not have to signify any direct involvement, merely awareness that some form of union activity or

membership existed within the workplace.

A further fifteen young workers had been aware of, but were excluded from, union activity within at least one of their placements. Exclusion does not simply refer to non-attendance at meetings and the like, but to a more comprehensive notion of 'having nothing to do with it'. Exclusion appeared to be due to both lack of encouragement from member colleagues and/or officials, and desire on the part of young workers to avoid involvement.

> Why, they have meetings, but I never hear about them. (Brian M.)

> There's been unions where I've worked, but that didn't concern me. I just kept out of it. (Audrey W.)

> They were all in the union but they never spoke to me about it. I was left out of all the meetings and things. I didn't mind ... I don't see the point in joining a union if you haven't got a proper job. (Brian P.)

Two first year apprentices were deemed too young to join their respective unions.

A few young workers reported having and taking the opportunity to talk to full-time workers about trade union issues, although apart from Alan D who was 'always asking them questions', the extent and scope of such discussions was limited. Terry T's abiding memory was of being prevented from attending a works' social because he was not a union member.

In all these experiences, the temporary nature of YOP placements and consequently peripheral position of those on them, was a crucial factor, particularly in promoting self-exclusion but also in affecting the attitudes and practices of full-time workers. With regard to self-exclusion, six interviewees argued that membership was

inappropriate on a scheme. (This included three who had been asked to join but refused).

> I would want to wait until I get a job before I think
> about unions. (Sharon W.)

> I don't think it's worth joining anything when you're in a
> place like this (non-WEEP scheme)....you're not really
> going to be here forever. (Gary F.)

Elaine N. said that she was 'keeping away from unions until I get a job' and maintained that protection for trainees was best sought from the MSC.

> I think if you're mistreated, you don't need to go to a
> union, you just need to go to the MSC.

To support this view, she recounted how a MSC representative had sorted out some problems early in her placement. Elaine was also rather scornful of any bargaining role. 'You can't fight for more money, cause it'll never happen.'

Terry T. cited employer paternalism as a reason against union membership.

> Perhaps in some places the trade unions are good but I
> would say in this factory there's really no need for a
> trade union because the workers are fairly well looked
> after. I don't know whether the pay's very good but they
> seem to me to be well looked after. At Christmas they give
> everyone a present, a bottle of sherry or something. At
> Easter they give everyone an egg and then in the summer
> they all get a free bus trip.

Predictably, the marginalised position of those on schemes or unemployed led to some complaints that full-time workers should be grateful for their lot rather than being militant.

> All the train workers, the miners, the way the job
> situation is they should be grateful they've got a job,
> not going on strike to get more money. (Geoff R.)

> When I'm listening to the arguments I'm thinking that they

should all think themselves lucky to be in jobs. (Sharon W.)

There was also recognition of possible generational clashes of interest, especially where commitments differed, although the latter could be perceived as having contrasting effects upon militancy.(32)

As to the effects of (no) contact, it is clearly difficult to discern influence directly other than in the few cases where interviewees testified to having changed attitudes in the light of experience. However, it was interesting to note that attitudes of those who had had some contact with unions were more often favourable (and decisive) than of those who had not.(33)

Although many young workers regarded trade union membership as relevant for their future working lives, it is fair to say that few did so in relation to their 'current' situations. The primary reason for this was the marginal position of those not in full-time work and therefore separated from the labour market 'proper'. Marginality could come in various forms; as separation from full-time workers when on WEEP schemes; separation from genuine 'workplaces' when on non-WEEP schemes; or from work itself when unemployed. Crucially, with the partial exception of the non-WEEP schemes, (whose memberships were subject to steady 'turnover') young workers were usually separated from others in similar positions.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, individual escape to (or progress towards) the sanctuary of full-time employment was the most favoured solution to marginality. Whatever the difficulties of such moves, the route could still be seen as 'line of least resistence', while the obstacles to effective organisation were many and complex.(34)

It has been suggested that greater contact with trade unions tended to promote more favourable views of them among young workers, but the overall level of contact was very low, other than for those in jobs or on a handful of schemes. The 'corporatist' structure of the M.S.C. often meant that some form of contact with trade unions appeared as part of the approved programme for YOP trainees. However, in a number of cases where such agreed arrangements were known to the researcher, interviewees claimed to have had no such input.

Comparison of the views of young workers with those of prospective school leavers suggested that post school experiences in a YOP-dominated labour market seemed to promote less 'instrumental' images of the benefits of trade unionism. Given the widespread dissatisfaction with levels of payment, this shift towards more defensive aspects probably reflected a sense of fatalism with regard to short term financial rewards.

Individual 'one off' interviews clearly do not provide the best vantage point for assessing actual or potential militancy.(35) However, as Chappell contends, it remains to be explained why

> trainees haven't taken the offensive against YOP, or at least why the fabled disruptiveness of working class youth hasn't been very evident. (1982:56)

Such 'fabled disruptiveness' has, of course mostly occurred outside of work, but perhaps it is necessary to consider issues of consciousness and action to find explanation. Roberts et al (1977:89) have pointed to the considerable gap betwen 'us and them' consciousness and genuine class consciousness. Similarly, writers such as Parkin (1971) and Mann (1973) have argued that lack of an

alternative vision of society ultimately acts as a brake upon militancy. These matters will be examined more fully in chapter 11 but it is worth noting that while anger and even suggestions of violent action were not uncommon, radical politicisation was negligible. Seabrook has written of

> the sense of discontinuity in the labour tradition for young people; the feeling that so many of the assumptions, the whole language that gave meaning to the work of many older trade unionists and socialists seem barely intelligible to a new generation. (Guardian 22.11.83)

He goes on to suggest that while many young people feel they have been 'duped', there is a minimal awareness of the forces which shape their lives.

In this study, it was certainly the case that trade unions were seen by their supporters in largely conservative terms, while references to militancy tended to be antagonistic. There were also a number of instances of stoic pride in enduring difficulties.

> I can't be bothered complaining. Me I'd rather just get on with the work and get it done. (Peter A.)

Such comments were often accompanied by assertions that struggling was pointless in 'present' circumstances. It is also important to remember the force of 'dull compulsion' and the perceived alternative of unemployment.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to examine the strength and basis of (anti) trade union consciousness among those making the transition in the Coalfield. While a wide range of union 'functions' were noted, the overall image of concern for fairness and justice figured prominently. Between those 'for' and 'against' membership, there was a sharp split in terms of sources with the latter relying

heavily on media presentations. In the second part of the chapter, the course of attitudes was charted through the scheme-dominated youth labour market.

On balance, working experiences gave rise to more favourable view of trade unionism, perhaps allowing direct experience to counter media stereotypes. However, the link between support for trade unionism and employment status provided graphic evidence of the ways in which the collapse of the labour market and its replacement by state regulation had served to undermine participation in, and backing for, trade unionism.

## Notes

1    The aims have been explicitly linked in that organised labour is held responsible for inflating the wages of the young. It might also be argued that the operation of schemes and unemployment serves to weaken the (future) participation of young workers in trade unions. (See Moos (1983:256), Finn (1987:4))

2    The most likely association would have been with occupational choice, given that fuller responses generally came from non-manual aspirants. However, the link was extremely weak with 17.5% of non manual and 19.8% of manual aspirants offering no response.

3    Within this overall uniformity, there were some variations according to the sex of respondents. Young women with fathers in classes 2 and 3M were markedly more 'pro union' than their male counterparts.

4    The $X^2$ values for the latter in relation to class background and aspiration were 12.96 and 38.85, with probabilities of .97 and .03 respectively.

5    There were also a few references to benefits such as sick pay, pensions and help in cases of accident.

6    Meanwhile, another respondent argued that
     if the members think that their union is doing nothing
     then they can change to another union.

7    Such references accounted for 16.7% of all reasons offered by non-manual aspirants, the corresponding figure for manual aspirants being 4.3%.

8    Of 114 specific references in Table 7.6 the male:female breakdown was 67:47.

9    Another talked of unions helping to stop imports and so to secure jobs.

10    For those intent on manual occupations this figure rose to 38.6%.

11    Factors such as the 'visibility' of strikes (particularly if the perceived fairness of capital-labour exchange makes them appear aggressive) and consumer experience of disruption provide obvious pegs on which to hang discontent. However, there is little doubt that the style of reporting industrial relations serves, and is to some extent intended, to cast trade unions as the source of disruption (Glasgow Media Group (1976), (1980) Seaton (1982:274))

12  Exceptions would include Channel 4's 'Union World' and some articles in the 'quality press'.

13  Young men who were against membership were generally more expansive in their reasoning then were their female counterparts. This was in contrast to those in favour of membership, among whom no such 'sex difference' existed.

14  The term 'men' to signify workers was used by a number of respondents.

15  Two respondents noted that such sacrifices were not necessarily recouped in the form of higher wages.

16  If 'yes' and 'no' figures are combined and then set against 'don't knows' as a measure of 'decisiveness', breakdown in terms of sex yields a $X^2$ value of 14.64 df1 prob .00

17  In this context, it is useful to remember the warning of Roberts et al (1977:134) against too sharp a distinction between white and blue collar unionism.

18  He writes that the lodge
    penetrated and dominated the social life of the village so
    completely that it was scarcely conceivable for a miner to
    have a birthday party for his son without having a Lodge
    official there to make a speech. (:98)

19  This was expressed in terms of concern over unfair dismissal, bad or crooked employers, rights and the like. Such groupings accounted for 37.7% of all reasons given by Peterlee pupils compared with only 16.1% elsewhere.

20  This emphasis accounted for 13.5% of reasons from the former, 30.6% from the latter.

21  These examples come from an advertising campaign during June and July 1981.

22  There have been instances of 'blacking' of schemes, usually by public sector unions such as NALGO, CPSA, or NUPE, and very rare cases of negotiated 'topping up' of allowances (Eversley (1986:205).

23  In an area as the Durham Coalfield, this takes on an added significance in that such 'expression' could entail a considerable degree of cultural hegemony.

24  Union inactivity should also be seen in the context of the 'apprenticeship ethos' which has, historically, legitimised inferior exchange conditions for young workers.

25  There has, in addition, been a fairly tame acceptance of the MSC ban on matters 'controversial' or 'political', the definition of the latter being anything which 'advances a new strategy' (Guardian 3.11.83).

26  See Gregory and Noble in Rees and Atkinson (eds) (1982).

27  Newcastle Journal, Guardian 30.6.81.

28  Those giving definite answers did so with varying strength of feeling, although as Carter (1962:269) points out, many actual decisions are taken without strong commitment.

29  Expressing the other side of this particular coin, Carter (1962:275) argues that
    lack of knowledge about unions and lack of interest was in many cases just another facet of lack of interest in work itself.

30  For this purpose, qualifications were used in preference to aspirations because the latter tended to be so concentrated on similar areas of work as to provide little basis for differentiation. In addition, qualification levels seemed to provide an indication of the prospects of such aspirations being realised.

31  Failure to report changes does not, of course, mean that none had occurred.

32  'I'd be quite happy taking home forty pounds but a married man wouldn't so if they were wanting a pay rise I would have to go on strike even though I wouldn't want to.' (Peter R.)

    'Sometimes they want to go on strike and some don't. There's some people with families who can't afford to miss a couple of weeks' pay.' (Diane J.)

33  This can be presented in tabular for as follows (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11
attitude towards membership

|              | contact | no contact |
|--------------|---------|------------|
| 'yes'        | 16      | 10         |
| 'no'         | 6       | 8          |
| 'don't know' | 13      | 23         |

The $X^2$ value of 4.00 (df=2) prob .15 is well short of statistical significance.

34  The marginality of most young workers within the Coalfield area presented numerous difficulties, quite apart from the obvious problems of co-ordinating action across so many venues. First, there was little unity of purpose among area trade unions.

Second, the terms under which YOP trainees worked were very different from those of employees. A third related factor is the relative lack of leverage held by those not directly employed by, nor in many cases even attached to, bona fide employers.

35 In the context, it is useful to recall the weight given to pressure from other workers and its effects.

Chapter 8

Family

Having looked at various aspects of transition relating to entry into and experience of work, attention is turned to areas outside of work, though by no means immune from its influences.

Our focus in this chapter is concentrated upon the changes in family life, anticipated and experienced by those making the transition from school to work. There is no attempt to provide a detailed or wide-ranging view of these changes, but rather, a concern to examine two particular areas, namely the treatment and status of young people and the demands (eg domestic labour) made upon them.(1) As throughout this study, the context of unemployment and schemes for the majority provides the backcloth against which analysis occurs.

To greater or lesser extent, approaches to the transition recognise that this shift is linked to a transition from childhood to adulthood (see introduction). Thus, although in the short term, leaving school is rarely accompanied by leaving home, (Leonard (1980:61) there is a 'common sense' notion that starting work may well lead to changes in the family position of young workers. West and Newton (1983:61) suggest that this process affects the sexes quite differently.

> Going out to work appears to make a major change in the parent-child relationship for boys, but much less so for girls.

They argue that while boys tend to be treated in more adult
fashion, girls experience little change, explaining this in terms of
different 'markers' of adulthood.

> For males, adulthood appears to be marked by the entry to
> work, whereas for females marriage and motherhood appear
> to represent adult status. ( :180)

## Anticipations

The prospective school leavers' questionnaire did not ask any
direct questions about respondents' families, other than details of
their 'economic activity'. However, two lines of enquiry produced
response of relevance to the topic.

Prominent among expected 'likes' were notions of greater
'independence' and 'responsibility', mentioned by 64 and 31
prospective leavers respectively. In respect of the former, the
importance of 'earning one's own money' was frequently highlighted.
'Getting your own money, not of(f) your mother or father'. In a more
general sense, the transition was associated with freedom, the
financial basis of which was sometimes made explicit (Finn (1987:19).

> Being able to do what you like.

> More money will give a greater freedom.

There were also reference to creating 'distance' between respondents
and their parents.

> I will not have to rely on my parents.

> Breaking away from my parents.

The possibility of moving away from home clearly appeared to some.

> Money to start off my own home.

Get away from home.

Rent my own flat from cash.

But as the 'dislikes' column showed, the same prospect was occasionally daunting.

If you had to leave home ...

Leaving a sense of security behind and having to fend for yourself.

There were also several allusions to making financial contribution to the family.

Bring money into the home.

Bringing money home to help my family.

Replies to questions on migration revelealed both that attachment to family was often an influential factor against moving away, and that even in the absense of desire to remain at home, financial considerations tended to rule out any alternative (see ch.10 for fuller account). For prospective leavers, the main arena for discussions of changes in family life lay in the small group interviews where participants were asked to comment on any anticipated changes in their status and responsiblities within the family.

In relation to the former, views outlining anticipated changes were expressed by around a third of those involved in the discussions.

You get a better deal once you're earning. (Angela)

I think you get different treatment when you're bringing in a wage. (Alan)

The different treatment referred to by many prospective leavers revolved around the notion of being more 'grown up', of having a greater say in decisions within the family and greater personal

freedom in matters such as going out, staying up and the like.

> I think when you're working, you're much more free to come and go as you please. (Alison)

> You can go out when you want. (Geoff)

> They can't tell you to go to bed early. (Simon)

Having disposable income was frequently held to be an important source of independence.

> When it's your own money, you can spend it on what you like. (Janet)

> If you want to smoke and drink, it's up to you. (Kenneth)

Underpinning these changes was the contribution made towards household costs by payment for 'board', which was, albeit in a loose way, exchanged for greater influence and autonomy.

> I think they take more notice of you when you pay board. (Neal)

> Once you've paid board, the rest's yours. (Sandra)

Levels of board seemed to have been widely discussed and had often been settled in advance, sometimes with variations according to employment situation. For those stating amount, the figures mentioned ranged from £7 to £13.50 per week. Interestingly, although the gap between scheme allowances and benefit levels was fairly small, a sizeable minority of pupils told of different board arrangements, with payments £3-5 lower if unemployed.

Making a contribution could also be seen, primarily by young women as a form of repayment for parental support and help.

> My mam's kept me all this time, it's my turn to keep her. (Tracy)

> I'd like to but my mam some new kitchen units, that's what I'd do with my first pay packet. (Helen)

> I'd like to take her to Hawaii, 'cause that's where she
> wanted to go on her honeymoon. I'm not bothered about
> myself. (Veronica)

Despite widespread anticipation of status changes accompanying

the transition, there remained a small majority who expected little or

no such change. In turn, this group was fairly evenly divided. On the

one hand were those who felt they were already treated in a fairly

adult way and therefore saw little scope for change in this direction.

> They're pretty good with us now, I do more or less what I
> want. (Joan)

> I get good pocket money and I go to bed when I like,
> really. (John)

On the other, there were those who thought that current

constraints would remain regardless of any changes.

> My dad's dead strict. I'll still have to be in early and
> that. (Fiona)

> It won't make any difference to them. Me, I have to toe
> the line. (David)

Discussion of possible changes in position within the family

often drifted towards what was clearly a pressing concern for many,

namely the reaction of parents to their children being unemployed.

While some felt this predicament would evoke sympathy or at least a

measure of acceptance, the issue was usually spoken of in terms of

expected 'hassle'.

> I have to have a job, or I'll be in trouble, or a scheme
> if I can't get a job. (Peter)

> They'd get after us all the time. (Jim)

> They're always on at us as it is, never mind if I was on
> the dole. (Matthew)

The issue of anticipated changes in domestic demands proved somewhat elusive within group interviews. Uncertainty seemed to be the most general response, although there were a few supporters for each possible outcome. Greater domestic contribution could be seen as part of a wider adult involvement within the family, but there were also those who envisaged less demands being made upon them, either because working harder for longer hours would be recognised as requiring a more relaxing time at home or that payment of board could be seen as an alternative form of contribution.

The fate of older brothers and sisters was often used as a yardstick for assessing prospective leavers' own likely changes. Needless to say, such discussion frequently turned to issues of (in)justice in a fairly specific way. A partial exception to this was the widespread awareness of the greater demands made upon young women. Within the small group setting, opinion on the justice of this tended to divide along 'self-interested' lines, with female pupils seeking redress and their male peers advocating maintenance of the status quo.

It is useful here to add a rider regarding the generational effects of the sexual division of domestic labour. For, whereas many young women were encouraged to participate in their mothers' activities, there were a sizeable minority of instances where the pervasion of the latter was such as to exclude daughters.

> My mam won't let us do anything. She says I'm just a nuisance. (Christine)

> Mam has to do everything in out house. Nobody can go in the kitchen. (Mary)

> She just sends us out. She says 'I don't want you under my feet'. (Ruth)

Domestic labour demands upon young men were predictably lower and had a distinctive pattern of prescription (gardening, cleaning the car, painting, DIY) and proscription (washing, ironing and with occasional exceptions, general household cleaning). The perceived likelihood of unemployment meant that discussion often moved to its impact upon domestic labour. This issue has been raised in chapter 3 and will not be repeated here.

## Experiences

The study's eighty eight young workers were asked about three main 'family' issues, namely domestic financial contributions, changes in treatment and changes in expectations with respect to domestic labour.

Seventy eight interviewees outlined their arrangements for contributing towards 'board', the remainder stating that they had no definite arrangement.(2) Payments ranged from £5 to £20 per week, with a mean value of £10.90. Table 8.1 shows the frequencies of different levels of contribution.

Table 8.1

| weekly 'board' | No |
| --- | --- |
| less than £9 | 12 |
| £9-£11.99 | 42 |
| £12 or more | 24 |

In fact, the forty two respondents in the middle category were almost invariably paying £10, in frequency terms the nearest to a standard payment. Within the study group, young men tended to make slightly higher payments than did young women, the respective averages being £11.60 and £10.25. Although this may have been partially explicable in terms of the former's higher wages, the difference held also for those on schemes or unemployed. With such relatively small numbers, interpretation must be cautious, but previous findings that young men tend to be allowed greater spending money (Carter (1962:283)) were not borne out here.

Considering board payments in relation to the employment situation of young workers, it can be seen that while payments were positively correlated with income, the asssociation is very slight (Coffield et al (1986:145) (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2

| Employment situation | Average board |
| --- | --- |
| Full-time work | £11.50 |
| Schemes | £11.05 |
| Unemployed | £10.10 |

Even allowing for differential 'subsidising' (see below), it was

clear that with fairly constant levels of board payment, most of any extra income became available as 'spending money'. In this context, it is useful to consider briefly how contributions varied according to changes in individuals' employment situations.

Moves from unemployment to scheme (or vice versa) were very rarely acompanied by altered payments, which is hardly surprising given the fairly small gap between them. In the event of transfers between schemes and jobs, changed contributions were more common with around half the young workers involved paying amounts between £3 and £5 more when in full-time work. Joan E., who had lowered her payments since leaving a full-time job and joining a scheme, commented

> if I get a full-time working, which I hope to be here, I'll give her fifteen again. But she understands ... I can't afford to give her fifteen all the time.

For the remainder payments were constant.

Details of family finances were beyond the scope of this study, thereby ruling out any accurate setting of young workers' contributions within that context. Levels of payment were not statistically associated with either fathers' class or with two income families. These broad categories could, however, conceal internal variations and on an admittedly impressionistic basis, there appeared to be a tendency for contributions to be inversely related to overall family income. For interviewees whose fathers were unemployed, the average board payment was £12.10, whereas the lowest eight

contributions occurred in households where fathers' occupations included a sales director, college lecturer, two overmen and a deputy with the NCB and two self-employed 'tradesmen'.(3)

Board contributions were almost invariably given to mothers, as part of 'housekeeping' reflecting the prevailing sexual division of labour within the home. For the majority of young workers, the transaction consisted of a single payment of the prescribed amount, but a small minority handed over wage packets to their mothers and received 'spending money', either in the form of a weekly sum or as a series of payments to meet particular expenditures.

> I hand it over and my mam gives us ten pound back and sometimes I get odd bits on top of that. (Christine W.)

> I give it all to my mam and she puts half of it in a savings account for us, and then if I want anything I just ask and she gives us it. (Peter H.)

Methods of payment could be a source of conflict at times.

> It's mainly money that we argue about. I used to give my mam the dole but then near Christmas, I decided to go on board, so I could save up for some presents. But I think my mam thought I was doing it 'cause I was paying too much. (Jean N.)

One important division for young workers was between those who bought clothes from their 'spending money' and those for whom clothes were paid for as part of their board. While it might be expected that the latter group's board payments would be higher than the former's, there was in fact no such relationship. Thus, although some of the highest board payments were inclusive of clothes, so too were some of the lowest, for which the degree of subsidy was clearly very high. Amanda K. paid £7.50 per week from which the costs of bus fares, hairdressing and clothing catalogue were met.

Alongside relatively formalised board arrangments there were often a variety of more impromptu transactions, overwhelmingly in the direction of parents subsidising their children. An exception was Tracy G., who despite a board payment of fifteen pounds, said that she usually gave her mother any money left over at the end of the week.

> The money I give her usually goes straight on shopping so she's thankful of a bit extra.

The more usual pattern was for parents (or elder brothers and sisters) to give or lend young workers small sums of money, either as 'treats' or to 'tide them over'.

> I always get a pound or two from my dad. (Chris W.)

> If I'm going out mam'll give us a bit pocket money. (Diane P.)

> They lend us money sometimes, or give us it. I don't know the word lend, if they lend us some money they never see it again. (Graham L.)

Such 'subs' were by no means universal and within many families basic arrangments were strictly adhered to.

> They never help us out with money. they say 'you've got to look after yourself now. (Brian P.)

> As soon as I started getting my own money that was it, my mam stopped buying us things. (Elaine N.)

Apart from the more overt subsidising, there is little doubt that the majority of contributions fell considerably short of meeting the full cost of board and thereby entailed further, often substantial subsidy (Leonard 1980:54)).(4) The low level of payment within YOP (and later YTS) and the targetting of young people for cuts in benefit entitlement can be seen as attempting to extent the period of dependence upon parents, and to utilise familial relations to underpin

the strategy of lowering wage levels (Nava (1984:37)). In this study, as noted elsewhere (Berthoud and Brown (1981:101), this form of subsidy was widespread. A majority of arrangements reflected attempts to compromise between board and other forms of consumption, although this could be achieved only by leaving both parents and those young workers not in full-time work short of money.

The following section is based on replies to the question, 'since you left school have you found that you get treated differently at home in any way?' Where necessary there was a prompt relating to 'things you are now allowed (or expected) to do'. While this focus generated a great deal of comment on the 'before' and 'after', it should be remembered that the primary concern lay with change (or lack of it) rather than details of either period.

In all, forty eight young workers responded affirmatively to the question, speaking either of specific changes or in more general terms of different treatment. The majority of the latter referred to being dealt with in a more adult way, as older, or usually as more 'grown up', such comments being made by thirty interviewees.

> They treat us as though I'm older now. (Susan P.)
>
> They treat us a lot more grown up than when I was at school. (Anne D.)
>
> When you start working ... my parents are accepting us as an adult. When I was still at school I was more like a little child than anything else. (Angela F.)
>
> They treat you a bit more grown up when you're working. (Brian M.)

Wider changes in the subjective experience of transition were probably of importance for many and were sometimes explicitly

recognised.

> I feel more grown up myself, anyway. (Donny S.)

> There's been no obvious changes, but I think you feel a bit more grown up when you've left school and you're working. (Geoff R.)

By far the most frequently cited area of change related to going and/or staying out, with thirty four young workers reporting greater freedom of movement.

> I can stay out much later now, that's the main thing. (Angela F.)

> They let us stay out later ... when I was at school they wouldn't. (Leslie G.)

Usually, this change took the form of removal of a set time for return and its replacement by a later negotiated time.

> Before, my mam would say 'you've got to be in at such and such a time' now it's just 'don't be too late'. (Stephanie G.)

> At school I had to be in at ten to half past, but they don't mind what time I come in now, not extremes, like. (John R.)

Most young workers made the point that they would (be expected to) tell parents where they were going and the expected time of return.

> I can go anywhere as long as I tell them where I'm going. (Steven D.)

> I always tell them where I am and what time I'll be back. (Audrey W.)

> So long as they know where I am and who I'm with they're happy enough. (Douglas W.)

Interviewees outlined shifts from needing to seek permission to greater freedom of choice and a requirement to inform rather than justify.

> If I wanted to go out I had to ask them, but now I can
> just tell them that I'm going. (Susan P.)

> You can choose where to go and you don't have to answer to
> anyone about what time you come up. (Donny S.)

> I can come and go as I like without being quizzed. Before
> it was 'where are you gannin? what are you doing? where've
> you been?, who've you been with' ... now it's just in and
> out without any hassle. (Paul J.)

There are a number of relevant factors which help to locate these changes within the context of the transition. Six young workers related their new-found freedom to release from the demands of parents regarding homework.

> It always used to be 'you're not going out tonight, you've
> got exams to revise for'. All that's gone now. (Patricia
> N.)

> I don't get told to stay in and do homework like I used
> to. (Alan B.)

The move form compulsory school attendance to the 'free' sale of labour power is an important stepping stone towards 'full citizenship', often bringing new assumptions about responsibilities and rights. This can help explain the increased freedom of movement in three main ways. First, the replacement of statutory compulsion by the (quasi) contractual might be assumed to introduce a new basis for attendance.

> They were always on about being in early for school the
> next day, but now they say it's up to me. (Sharon W.) (5)

The second and third factors relate to the literal and symbolic significance of earning money, which can be seen both as conferring certain rights of disposal and via the work required, as justifying leisure time.(6)

> They say it's your money, so you can go where you like.
> (Diane J.)

> You're exactly the same age when you start work, but to my
> mam, it was completely different. Instead of saying 'you
> can't go there, you're just a kid' it all stopped. I think
> she thought 'cause I was working it was up to me. (Carol
> P.)

> It's a case of you've worked hard, so you're entitled to
> do what you want in your own time, within reason. (Geoff
> B.)

Geoff's cautionary final remark serves to remind that this new

freedom did not invariably herald the end of potential or actual

disputes over young workers' use of their leisure time (see ch.9).

'They wish I would stay in a bit, but I won't' (Trish C.)

Andrea K., who now lived with a friend's parents, remarked that

> I got chucked out for staying out too late ... I liked
> staying out.

There were also various reported 'differences of opinion' over

attendance at late night discos and moreso going to pubs.

> It's only recently they've let us go to the discos.
> (Patricia P.)

> My mam hates us going into pubs. I know I'm only sixteen
> but I say there's nothing else for us to do. (Karen H.)

Reported easing of restrictions in relations to going/staying out

were not associated with either the sex or employment situation of

young workers (with the exception of the unemployed - see below), or

the length of time since their leaving school. It should, of course,

be remembered that testimony referred to changes rather than starting

or 'current' positions. Thus, while superficially, there seemed little

difference between the treatment of the sexes, it was interesting that

three young women mentioned the greater privileges enjoyed by their brothers (Leonard (1980:76).

> I can go out now with my boyfriend, but my brother, he's only fourteen and he's treated as more grown up, he can stay out later than me. (Alison B.)

Changed 'status' could manifest itself in ways other than greater freedom of movement. For some, the transition had been marked by generally increased decision-making power and influence within the family.

> They let me choose a lot more for myself now. (Geoff B.)

> They let me make up my own mind on everything. They never used to before. I used to have to have their permission for everything. (Susan P.)

> You don't get told what to do as much. They let you find your own way, make your own decisions instead of making them for you. At school, you feel as if no-one takes any notice of you. (Donny S.)

> Now I can have my own opinions without everybody crossing us. (Stephanie G.)

Similar sentiments were sometimes expressed in terms of respect or responsibility. In this context, the latter was largely a matter of responsibility for self rather than others, although some young workers (mainly female) had become more involved in 'looking after' younger brothers and sisters, on occasion financially.

Changed 'status' could be marked in the most basic material ways, as in the case of three young men reporting that they had received bigger meals since leaving school or Nicholas N's finding that

> My tea's ready when I walk in the door. I used to have to wait about an hour. (7)

Ten interviewees reported a more relaxed atmosphere at home since starting work, and consequently improved relationships within the family.

> They've slackened up a lot. (Jacqueline N.)

> They seem a lot easier on us in the house, more relaxed, so we all get on better. (Peter A.)

While some such comments related to changing demands for domestic labour (see below), there were wider concerns over declines in 'nagging' or changes in the use of particular rooms.

At this point, it is useful to return to the question of board payments and the ways in which they might underpin changes in the familiar position of young workers. Board can be viewed as allowing both the making of a contribution to family finances and, via the remaining personal spending money, as further easing the strain on those finances. The implications of the new arrangments were often openly acknowledged. Payment of board could be regarded as the basis for more adult treatment.

> They treat me as an adult 'cause I'm working and bringing in money. (Tracy G.)

> You're treated as more grown up when you pay board. (Sharon W.)

For some, contributing was clearly more than simply a duty.

> I feel better than when I was at school 'cause than I was ... getting money off my mam to gan places, where now I'm paying my own way and giving her board to help keep us gannin. So I feel better about that. (Robert P.)

> I fell my mam's more close 'cause I'm able to help her. Giving board helps out and I just buy my little sister something, say she's going to a disco and mam can't afford it. (Diane J.)

> At school ... you don't bring money into the house and you

feel as if you don't pull your weight. I used to feel
awful when my brother and sister were helping out and I
couldn't. Now I can and I feel more grown up, one of them.
(Donny S.)

Increased 'say' in domestic affairs was also directly attributed

to payment of board.

I get more of my own way now than I did 'cause I'm
bringing money in now. (Denise V.)

I think the money the money makes a difference ... get
treated with a bit more respect and I get a bit more say
in what goes on. (Stephen J.)

Board was especially useful for countering allegations of over-

using family resources. Sharon W. described how complaints over

nightly baths ceased abruptly once board commenced.

When my mam's arguing about ... say, you're going to get a
snack, you just say, oh, well I'm putting money into the
house now. (Nicholas N.)

That's the main thing about getting a wage. You can always
turn round and say well, I pay my board now, so ...
(Audrey W.)

Laura H. found that she had become rather 'carried away' with her

new found power.

Mam says she's seen a big change in me since I've left
school and started work. Says I've got more mouthy, 'cause
I felt as though I could say more, why I'm paying for this
so ..., but when she said that, I thought I'd best buck my
ideas up and start speaking to her respectfully again.

For the purpose of changes in 'status', it seemed as if little

distinction was made between work on schemes to in employment. The

same was not true, however, for young workers who were (or had been)

unemployed. As Stokes (1983:28) argues, 'adult' status depends heavily

on being employed. Apart from differing domestic labour demands, which

will be considered below, it was sometimes the case that the

privileges outlined above were denied to the unemployed. Eight young workers described particular instances of such denial, while a further six talked in more general terms of a poorer atmosphere, with more 'hassle'.

Of central importance here is the question of 'legitimate' or 'useful' occupation. For all workers (self) esteem rests to a considerable degree upon being 'usefully occupied'. This condition is most clearly met by paid employment outside the home, but may also be satisfied by contribution to the family, voluntary work or to a lesser extent, 'constructive' leisure. For the young, such pressures are likely to be greater, whether because of the taint of ' adolescent frivolity', lack of 'responsibilities' or track record as worker and citizen. Crucially, if living with parents, they face the latter's arbitration as to the 'usefulness' or otherwise of their occupation, and possible sanctions if the judgement is adverse.

Being unemployed opened the way for negative labelling and criticism.

> Now I'm on the dole, they look on you as being lazy, so they're always having a go. (Brian P.)

Alternatively, it might bring restrictions on leisure or movement outside the home.

> When I was on the dole, there was far more arguments about us going out. (Brian M.)

Particularly for the young worker, lack of 'useful occupation' could easily lead to a more general erosion of independence.

> They interfere with what you're doing a lot more when you're on the dole. (Christone W.)

If, for the majority of interviewees there had been at least some

definite changes in treatment since leaving school, it is important to remember the sizeable minority who reported no such changes. Thirty five young workers said that they were treated either exactly or roughly the same way at school.(8) Fourteen of this group offered no elaboration, in effect simply stating that they were not aware of any changes.(9) Fifteen interviewees qualified their 'no change' verdict by emphasising that they had been treated in a fairly adult way while still at school, thereby obviating the need for change.

> They've always just let us get on with it as if I've been grown up. (Colin Y.)

> They've always tret us as if I was grown up, I could always stay out if I let them know where I was. (Joan E.)

> I've always stayed out 'til what time I liked. (Angela H.)

> My dad used to take us out drinking and that when I was at school. (Stephen J.)

The remaining six young workers reporting continuity did so in terms of continuing strictness.

> They don't treat us a working class, just treat you as if you were still at school. (Paul C.)

> No chance of stating out late unless it's a really special occasion. (Lesley H.)

> My dad's dead strict. I still get a clip round the ear. (Anthony L.)

On the question of domestic labour, young workers were asked whether they did more or less than or about the same work as they had while at school. Especially where changes had occurred, they were invited to offer some explanation and in all cases to give a rough outline of the tasks they undertook and the latter's frequency. On the basis of these outlines, an admittedly impressionistic division was

made between those who did minimal domestic labour and those who engaged in it fairly regularly. Unless any particular task(10) was performed very frequently (3-4 times per week), qualification for the 'higher' group depended upon performance of at least two types of activity which would both occur at least weekly. Using this rough yardstick twenty eight young workers were placed in the higher category, fifty three in the lower category.(11) Breakdown of these figures on the basis of sex confirmed the 'expected' association between young women and greater domestic labour, although the fact that almost half of young women fell within the lower category should warn against over-bland stereotyping (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3

| amount of domestic labour | sex | |
|---|---|---|
| | male | female |
| higher | 5 | 23 |
| lower | 33 | 20 |

$$x^2 \; 14.37 \; df1 \; prob. \; .00$$

The figures in Table 8.3 suggested that while young women may or may not engage in significant domestic labour with roughly equal likelihood, young men overwhelmingly do not.(12) Apart from differences in the amount of labour undertaken, there was also

evidence of a clear sexual division in terms of tasks engaged in.

For while there were 'unisex' tasks such as washing dishes and general cleaning and tidying, there were also those which were empirically linked (almost) totally with one sex. Washing and ironing, and cooking were almost entirely 'female', while decorating, small household repairs and to a lesser extent gardening were overwhelmingly 'male'.

The pervasion of a 'traditional' sexual division of domestic labour was also evident in other ways. Mothers' central role was reflected in language which spoke of (not) helping 'mam' and the notable exceptions which occurred when gardening, cleaning the car and the like were done for 'dad'. Perhaps the supreme example of maternal centrality came form Peter A. who described his decorating activities as having 'done my mother's house out'.

Despite the different situations they described, the weight of prevailing expectations was equally well-captured in the following comments from young women.

> My mam was out at work and I was the one who kept the house going. I've got an older brother but I don't think that's any good. So I sort of looked after him and my younger sister. (Elaine N.)

> My brother helps a bit ... even though he's my brother. Why, I do more than him, but he still helps us. (Jean N.)

In light of the widespread divergence of expectations relating to the sexes, it is useful to comment briefly upon its possible effects on subjective experience and testimony. In this area, gauging effects is particularly problematic because, for both sexes, plausible cases could be argued for either amplification or diminution. Concern to conform to their allotted images might lead young men to underplay and

women to overplay their participation in domestic labour, but, conversely, baseline expectations might lead young men to overestimate and young women to underestimate their involvement. In practice, more of the latter phenomeon seemed to occur, especially in the case of some young women who would begin by saying that they 'didn't do very much' only to describe fairly extensive activity.

Overall, however, any such effect would have been fairly slight, primarily because of the descriptions given of actual labour performed, but also due to the 'straightforward' way in which questions were answered.

As to the matter of changes in domestic labour during the transition, eighteen young workers stated that they now did more than while at school, twenty two that they did less, with forty one indicating little or no change. Taken at face value, these figures reveal a broadly 'neutral' effect of transition upon domestic labour with half of interviewees reporting negligible change and the remaining half fairly evenly split between increased and decreased participation. Table 8.4 offers breakdown of these figures by sex.

Table 8.4

|                      | sex  |        |     |
| -------------------- | ---- | ------ | --- |
| Change in dom. lab.  | male | female | (N) |
| more than at school  | 5    | 13     | 18  |
| less than at school  | 9    | 13     | 22  |
| same as at school    | 24   | 17     | 41  |

The most striking feature of Table 8.4 lies with the more 'volatile' situation of young women. If its top two lines were combined, allowing comparison of change with continuity, the $X^2$ value of the revised table would be 4.58 dfl prob. .01. To some extent this volatility reflects the generally higher level (and expectation) of involvement in domestic labour among young women, for at certain points, expectations may have served to raise a low involvement or constraints acted to curtail a previously high one. The relative absence of such pressures upon young men tends to make change in either direction less likely.

Looking first at the eighteen young workers who considered themselves to be more involved in domestic labour than while at school, it is worth pointing out that six of the group were still placed in the lower category of participation, reflecting situations of having done 'even less' or 'nothing at all' when at school.

> I don't do that much now, but I did nothing then. (Gillian C.)

> When I was at school I hardly did anything. (Lesley C.)

Other than for the unemployed, the most common factor advanced to explain increased involvement in domestic labour was the desire ot make a practical contribution to household affairs. In turn, this appeared to rest on a growing sense of duty or obligation, largely conveyed in the positive light of welcomed 'adult' responsibilty rather than as an onerous burden.

> I just do more to help out now. (Sylvia R.)

> I've always done housework, but I definitely do more now. I just feel like I have to do more. I've got to help out more. (Diane J.)

For Jean N., the change in her mother's employment situation had sparked the 'sense of duty'.

> Now my mam's working ... I do a lot of the housework now. Why, it doesn't really bother us, 'cause it's just what I should do really, washing, ironing and everything.

Alternatively, there might be an increasingly empathetic recognition of parental duties.

> When you're at school, you think 'well, my mam's in the house, she should do it all. I'm not doing it. But now, you work and you think 'if this is how tired I am, what's my mam going to be like, 'cause she works shifts'. (Stephanie G.)

Of the seven interviewees who chose to explain their increased domestic labour primarily in terms of desire to contribute, six were female, while the sole male representative readily set his modest increase in the context of total non-participation at school. Two young men spoke of greater involvement deriving from the application of 'DIY' skill acquired on schemes.

> After I've been on the scheme I can do things round the house. (Kevin S.)

> I seem to do more things now ... of my own accord, 'cause I've learnt these things I like to try them out, to see my own work. (Peter A.) (13)

Seven of the eighteen young workers (five of whom were female) engaging in more domestic labour were unemployed at the time of interview. Six of the seven explained this change primarily in terms of their being unemployed (see also ch.3). In part this reflected parental expectations that at least some of the ample 'spare time' should be 'usefully occupied'

> If mam's been at work and I forget to do the dishes, she'll say, 'why, I thought you could've had them done, you've had all day'. (Olwyn G.)

> My mother's out at work all day so it's fair enough for me
> to do most of the housework. (Lesley C.)

However, it was also the case that domestic labour was often regarded by parent and young workers alike as a weapon in the fight against boredom.

> Mam gives us jobs to do to stop us getting bored. (Carl R.)

> I help my mam, go messages, do the hoovering, tidy up. It's just to keep my mind occupied. (Mark B.)

> I do the lot during the day. It was my idea to fill in the time. (Diane P.)

The strength of this link between unemployment and greater domestic labour can be gauged by the fact that fifteen employed or scheme based young workers chose to suffix their descriptions of 'current' domestic labour with statements about having performed substantially more during spells of unemployment.

> I did three times as much as what I do now. (Robert P.)

> When I was on the dole, I was doing housework all the time, scrubbing floors, washing and ironing, getting tea ready for everybody coming in. (Alison B.)

The distribution of this effect between the sexes appeared to follow the general pattern with ten of the fifteen being women, suggesting that they were more likely to become involved in increased domestic activity, whether 'voluntarily' or not.

The assocation between unemployment and domestic labour calls into question the broadly 'neutral' impact of the transition upon the latter. For, other than for unemployed interviewees (none of whom reported engaging in less domestic labour), the overall impact tended towards a diminished level of particiation.

Of the twenty two young workers whose domestic labour had dropped since leaving school, seventeen fell in the lower category of participation, five (all female) within the higher. The major reasons given for the decrease revolved around the themes of response to the demands of work outside the home and changed status. These notions were not always easily separable. Thus, lower demands in recognition of fatigue might also carry connotations of reward for donning the mantles of contributing family member and responsible citizen.

> I don't think my mam expects me to do as much, 'cause I'm working and she sees us come in and she thinks I'm tired. I still help out, mind, but not as much as I used to. (Sharon O.)

> Once you've done a days work it seems a lot harder doing anything else. (Terry T.)

> I'm standing all day and I get tired. So when I go in I maybe just wash up or sometimes my mam has everything done and I have nothing to do. She just says 'sit down and get your tea'. (Donny S.)

Doing less sometimes came about by way of young workers being 'given less to do'.

> Mam's always told us what to do and I just do it before I go out. It just seems as if she doesn't ask us to do as much now. (Angela H.)

> I don't have to do as much work when I come in on a night as what I used to when I came in from school. So I get let off with that a bit. (Sandra J.)

> My mother was a bit strict about doing the work when I was at school. It's a lot slacker now. (John R.)

Alternatively, lower domestic workloads could be objects of continuing internal conflict.

> At school I'd always help my mam in the house ... but now everything she says, I'll complain. I always say 'I've been to work all day' and she'll say 'so have I'. I still do a bit but I begrudge it. (Karen H.)

For a few young workers, spending less time at home because of later working hours and/or going out more was an important factor in decreasing domestic labour.

Another outcome which probably reflected both the new demands of work and the advent of a more privileged position within the family was the transfer of domestic duties to younger sisters and brothers.

> When I was at school I used to wash pots and go to the shops but as soon as I started work I passed it on to my sister. (Nicholas N.)

> I used to have to do the washing and that before I went to school. But now my brother and sister does it. Those used to stay in bed and I just used to get up early. (Graham A.)

> Washing up, I've never done that since I left school. My sisters never used to do it and I did it all but now I've put my foot down. (Alan D.)

Laura H. found that making the transition brought about an expected degree of freedom from domestic labour, albeit in an 'indirect' way.

> I thought I'd have to do less when I started working, 'cause my dad always used to say 'I've been at work all day, you do the dishes'. So I tried that and my mam and dad, they're saying, 'we've been at work all day as well'. So the only way I get out of it is by telling my little sister to do it.

Of the forty one young workers reporting no significant change in their level of domestic labour, thirty could be placed within the lower category of participation and the remaining eleven in the higher. It is generally a more difficult task to explain continuity than change and interviewees were not, in this instance, asked why

things had remained the same. There emerged however, in their descriptions, considerable material which indirectly casts light on this issue. Perhaps one of the most important features was the increasingly voluntary nature of participation on the part of young workers. For while a minority still operated within a system of set tasks, the majority depicted involvement much more in terms of their own choice and/or ad hoc negotiation over particular tasks.

Emphasis was often given by 'lower' participants to the occasional nature of their domestic labour.

> I make my bed now and again, sometimes tidy and hoover. (Chris W.)

> Once in a while I get asked to do the washing up, or vacuum ... it's always been like that, very occasionally. I have to pull my weight every so often. (Douglas W.)

Similarly, the voluntary basis of participation was frequently made explicit.

> I just do it when I feel like it. I don't have set things that I have to do. (Lesley H.)

> I help my mam when I can, but I don't think my mam expects us to do anything round the house. She knows I'm working now, not very hard, but, I mean, I still get tired. (Steven D.)

While there was doubtless widespread chauvinistic objection to particular tasks, total rejection of domestic labour by young men seemed rare, with only three reports of outright refusal.

> I've never done that sort of stuff and I'm not going to start now. (Philip G.)

> They ask sometimes, but it's like flogging a dead horse. I'm not doing it. (Richard D.)

There were also five young workers who explained their lack of

involvement by way of being excluded from domestic labour.

> Between my mam and dad, everything in our house gets done.
> There's never anything to do. (Anthony L.)

> Mam's got it all done before I get in. (Alison B.)

> If I try to do anything she just tells us I'm getting
> under her feet. (Olwyn G.)

The 'higher' participants included three young workers who, in

the absence of one or both parents, had taken on something akin to

surrogate roles.

> There's just me and my dad, so I've always done a lot.
> (Chris V.)

Heather T., who lived with her brother, explained that

> he doesn't like housework, so he makes me do it, but it's
> not too bad. I don't really mind - yet.

For most, continuing high participation was explicable in terms either

of long-established routines which had been maintained, or of desire

among certain young workers to make this practical contribution.

> I still do the same. I've always done a fair bit.
> (Jacqueline N.)

> It's not that I'm expected to do it now, but I like doing
> housework at home and to help my mam. (Sharon W.)

> I've always enjoyed doing it. (Anne P.)

Patricia N., who said that she tried to help out in the same way

as before, sometimes found herself struggling to do this in the face

of the demands of work.

> I don't mind helping out. I enjoy it. It's just when I
> come in from work and I do feel tired, I feel guilty
> because sometimes I don't do anything for maybe a week and
> I'm not helping my mam.

In the context of the sexual division of domestic labour, Lloyd

(1981:190) has drawn the distinction between 'help' and

'responsibility', arguing that even when women receive help they usually maintain an underlying responsibility for ensuring that tasks are performed. For those making the transition from school to work, such responsibility was rare. Within the realm of 'help', however, the pattern of sexual division was already clearly, if far from universally, evident. Non-differentiation between the sexes probably owed more to adult-child divisions than to perceptions of gender role. Thus, similar treatment seemed to occur either because all children were excluded from domestic labour or that all would be allocated particular (usually 'sexless') tasks within the family. These phenomena appeared to be 'bounded' by the interactional(14) limitations placed upon the domestic labour of young men. Non-differentiation may have occurred at a fairly low level of participation, but became much rarer as it increased.

In concluding the chapter, it is useful to highlight certain emergent themes. the first concerned the interrelationship between the employment and domestic spheres. For many, transition brought moves in the direction of full adult status (eg greater power, independence, rights or privileges). While for this purpose schemes were generally regarded as equivalent to employment, the unemployed faced delays in or erosion of such advances.

Of crucial importance was the question of contribution, in part a matter of finance but also of 'useful occupation'. For the unemployed this often meant greater demands for domestic labour, but might also lead to restrictions on independence (eg of movement, consumption, leisure pursuits etc). Such restrictions were crucially mediated by

sexual divisions and prevailing gender expectation, particularly with respect to domestic labour. Thus, while unemployment often entailed greater domestic labour, this applied both more frequently and more extensively to young women. If changes of this nature were often imposed, it was also the case that voluntary contribution to domestic labour on the part of young workers came far more frequently from women. The different response to unemployed young workers was certainly not explicable in terms of financial contribution, for there was very little variation in 'board' payments according to employment status. Despite that fact that higher proportions of benefits were handed over relative to scheme allowances or wages, the former's 'unearned' quality may well have outweighed any credit thereby gained.

Finally, on the question of resources, the overall effect of unemployment and a scheme-dominated labour market must be remembered, especially in its effects both on the expenditure of young workers and the degree of subsidy demanded of their families.

## Notes

1  In adopting this focus, the extensive use of family background as a variable (and the resultant associations) throughout the study, should be borne in mind.

2  This group included some young workers who were not living with their parents or other relatives and were contributing to their 'current' households on an ad hoc basis.

3  It should also be remembered that as young workers from 'non-manual' background were more likely to be in employment, and that those in employment tended to make higher contributions, it might have been expected that payments would have been higher within 'non-manual' families. Although the numbers were too small to allow statistical confirmation of this, it is plausible to argue that the apparently 'neutral' effect of class upon contributions conceals a small inverse relationship between family income and board payments.

4  Sharon W. reported having arguments with her mother over how far board covered costs. The latter reckoned the coverage to be no more than half.

5  Three young workers pointed to the difference that pay made to getting up.

6  Similarly, the changes brought about within the family by the payment of board should be remembered here.

7  This was apparently not dependent upon the mealtimes of any other family members, but a discrete, specific change.

8  Five interviewees had moved household since leaving school, making comparison inapplicable.

9  Given the primary concern with change, there was no further attempt to examine the basis of these young workers' continuity.

10  Not all tasks are, of course, equivalent and the categorisations also took into account the nature of tasks and their demands. Tasks might be expected to last at least quarter of an hour or so, and therefore minor tasks, such as making a pot of tea were discounted unless performed virtually daily.

11  In the cases of the remaining seven respondents, living circumstances were such that notions of routine and/or comparison with earlier times were inapplicable.

12  Of the five young men in the 'higher' category, only one was

living at home with both parents, three living with single parents and one with grandparents.

Overall, while the extent of the domestic labour was not high, the evidence of this study would suggest that Leonard's view of participation rather underestimates the amount, although confirming the pattern of sexual division.

'Grown children living at home do very little dmestic work. Girls do rather more than boys, but even girls do very little' (1980:58). (See also Hunt (1980:19) for views similar to Leonard's.)

A local survey of Peterlee in the mid 1960s reported that boys spent on average 2.3 hours engaged in domestic duties, while the corresponding figure for girls was 5.5 hours (ERDC/PDC (1966:21).

13   Unlike Kevin, Peter also engaged in more routine (and less exclusively 'male) areas of domestic labour.

14   'Interactional' is used here as a reminder of the negotiation present within social relations, in this case referring to the combination of parental request or imposition and both response and initiative on the part of young workers.

Chapter 9


Leisure and Consumption


The concerns of this chapter lie with the question of changes in 'leisure activities' and the closely related area of consumption patterns. It might be expected that any such changes would be linked to two main factors, namely money available for expenditure and moves towards more 'adult' activities. For most young people, the transition is marked by the advent of their first regular income whose scale and origin both serve to promote more independent consumption (Finn (1984:19). Similarly, it is scarcely accidental that the transition coincides, albeit loosely, with the lifting of childhood prohibitions relating to transport, sex, drug use, 'adult entertainment' and suffrage.

The new-found spending power associated with the transition, tends, of course, to occur as a sudden and 'inescapable' change. Moves towards 'adult' activities are, by contrast, much more gradual. Where legal proscriptions exist, many 'jump the gun' or are at least 'champing at the bit', whereas others may be largely indifferent to their new rights once acquired. Likewise, in less formalised areas, there are widely differing perspectives on the age-appropriateness of particular activities, such as attendance at youth clubs and the like. Paralleling these differences are a range of attitudes among adults, from those welcoming 'anticipatory adulthood' to those concerned with

ensuring that legal entitlements should not encourage participation in practices which are essentially undesirable for young people.

Just as the perceived malleability, and hence vulnerability, of young workers has led them to be targetted for state intervention over unemployment, so those qualities have rendered youthful leisure activities a political and ideological battleground. Historically, this has been evident in the ongoing struggle over 'constructive' leisure (Blanch (1979), Pearson (1983)), where the contrast is drawn between the healthy, purposeful and organised and their opposites; and where the minimum requirement of political 'neutrality' is often bolstered by doses of nationalism, militarism and religion. The postwar rise of 'consumer society' (Mandel (1978:395), Clarke and Jefferson (1976:139)) has included a rapid growth in a distinctive 'teenage' market based on particular forms of music and fashion (Brake (1980:155)). Considerable academic and media attention has been given to the emergence of similarly distinctive youth subcultures and 'styles' (Hebdige (1979), Willis (1978), Clarke and Jefferson (1976), Mungham and Pearson (1976), Hall and Jefferson (1976), Brake (1980)). These have been regarded as providing members with both an immediate source of identity, and space to forge a more abiding sense of place in the world (Ashton and Field (1976), Brake (1980:27)). Analysis has focussed on the ways in which objects and symbols have been appropriated and reworked to create new 'styles' (Clarke and Jefferson (1976:152) (Carter (1984:191), and on the relationship between the latter and the 'existing codes' from which they derive (Hebdige (1979:130)). As Murdock and McCrone (1976) argue, the term 'youth

(sub)culture' has always, with its core notions of hedonism, irresponsibility and unbridled consumption, denoted a degree of opposition to dominant values. Not surprisingly, therefore, the rebelliousness embodied in youth subcultures has been a major topic of debate, whether rebellion is seen in terms of compensation (or revenge) for failure (Clarke et al (1976:29)), or revolt against the 'one sided bargain' which denies young people responsibility at work, but demands it of them outside (Carter (1966:174)). However, although subcultures may be influential beyond their circle of members, it is important to remember that

> the great majority of working class youth never enters a tight or coherent subculture at all. (Clarke et al (1976:16))

With broader concerns, Seabrook has offered a critique of the impact of consumerism upon young people ((1978), (1982a)). He contends that there has been a relentless and highly successful campaign on the part of capital to persuade consumers to seek satisfaction of wants through the purchase of commodities.

> What children first hear from the television is the desirability of everything, a hymning of commodities. (1978:96)

For Seabrook, this has led to a situation where the consciousness of many young people

> has been fashioned, not by work, not by place, not by kinship, but by a homogeneous culture of shops, images and reclaim, a display from which they are invited to choose and to become. (:173)

In turn, this erosion of non-market influences paves the way for increasingly nihilistic attitudes (1982a:33).(1)

Prior to the late 1970s rise in unemployment, the relationship

between leisure and 'dead end' jobs was often debated, with reference to the extent to which the former could act as compensation for the latter. While writers such as Carter (1966:174) and Robins and Cohen acknowledge the importance of leisure in making many forms of work more tolerable, they observe definite limits to this process. As the latter note,

> everything that takes place in free time remains a consolation prize for the unfreedoms of the labour process. (1978:8)

Maizels goes further, arguing that

> if work is a fundamental activity, then cynical attitudes towards it may influence attitudes in other spheres; and if work is perceived as 'killing time', then leisure may also be similarly regarded. (1970:320)

Needless to say, with the near-total disappearance of jobs, dead end or otherwise, such concerns have rapidly disappeared. However, as Clarke and Critcher observe, leisure tends to become

> a matter of public debate when large numbers are suddenly left with a lot of 'time on their hands' (1985:2).

They go on to note how such debate oscillates between 'dreams of a leisure society' and the 'nightmare of idleness' (:4).

In the context of this study, with its YOP-dominated labour market, and large-scale unemployment, the major issue might be that of how leisure was affected by those phenomena, not least under the implications of financial constraints for the rampant consumerism so often assumed by modern writers.

It has rightly been noted that most literature on the 'sociology of youth' is male-focussed and that the position of young women has been rendered marginal, either invisible or confined to limited

appearance as objects of (male) consumption (Nava (1984:1), Carter (1984:186)).

For those writers who have challenged this marginalisation, two crucial areas of omission or neglect have been highlighted, namely those of family control and relationships between male and female youth.

Evidence of the former was present in the previous chapter, in the issues of greater restrictions of movement and imposition of domestic labour demands faced by young women (Coffield et al (1986:129). Nava (1984:11) writes that

> on the whole, parental policing over behaviour, time, labour and sexuality of girls has not only been more efficient than over boys, it has been different. For girls, unlike for boys, the principal site and source for the operation of control has been the family.

The neglected question of teenage relationships between the sexes is also relevant in the context of leisure and consumption. Of particular importance are the ways in which male power is exercised, partly through greater access to material resources, but also through a set of practices and discourses relating to the policing of female sexuality, harassment, use of double standards and the like (Lees (1986:9), Nava (1984:14)). Although such issues did not fall within the scope of the present study, their importance in (subjective) experience should not be forgotten.(2)

## Anticipations

The small group interviews provided most of the material relating to the current and anticipated leisure activities of prospective

school leavers. Before looking at this, however, it is useful to make brief mention of some relevant data which emerged from the questionnaire.

Among anticipated 'likes', there were numerous references to the way in which earning ones own money allowed greater freedom in terms of consumption.

> I will be able to spend my free time and wage packet as I wish.

It might safely be assumed that in many mentions of 'meeting people' and 'making new friends', leisure considerations were present. There were also a handful of specific references to improved 'social life' as a result of working.

Among 'dislikes', by far the most important factor was the concern that long and/or unsocial hours and less holidays would curtail leisure activities.

> less social life

> Less leisure time

> Working on weekends

> If I have to get up early after a night drinking

> Working on the night of a Sunderland match

It is also worth remembering that the views of place, as presented in chapter 10, drew strongly on the latter's percieved leisure potential.

Within the group interviews, pupils were asked how leaving school and starting work might affect leisure activities and personal consumption more generally. Thus, the principal focus was on expected changes, rather than upon current activities per se, although

considerable information upon the latter was forthcoming.

For a substantial minority, the transition was not thought to herald any particular changes in activity.

This anticipated continuity usually derived either from absorbing hobbies, or from situations where the transition was not seen as coinciding with that from 'childhood' to 'adulthood', with the latter either to be delayed, or having already been embraced.

> I'm a radio ham. I spend all my time on it and I'll still be doing that after I leave here. (Paul)

> It won't affect me at all, cause I just walk and ride my bike around, and I don't smoke or anything. I don't think there's anything else I really want to do. (Sarah)

> I already spend most of the time with my boyfriend. We go to pubs and all over, so I don't think it'll change much for me. (Marie)

Depending on what was to be continued, additional purchasing power could be seen as a way of extending the scope or scale of activities, while offering those with inexpensive pastimes an opportunity to save (more of which below).

> I'd make more expensive model cars. I work on Saturdays in a models shop and go through to Newcastle to a model car club. It's quite expensive so the money'll come in handy. (Tommy)

> We just go down the baths and that, but you could spend more down there if you had it. (Veronica)

> I don't do very much really, so I'll probably just save it. (Ruth)

For a clear majority, however, the transition was perceived as bringing in its wake significant changes in patterns of leisure and consumption. This reflected not only expectations of greater independence afforded by earned money, but also in many cases

prevailing peer group attitudes towards age-appopriate behaviour, whether the need to drop the 'childish' or adopt the 'adult'. The major casualties of this process were thought to be sports participation, attendance at youth clubs and to a lesser extent, discos.

Among current activities, sports such as swimming and, for male pupils football had sizeable minority followings while numerous others such as judo, skating, golf, tennis, badminton, horseriding and athletics all received mention. It should also be noted that sports and leisure centres often served as meeting places for young people and were sometimes frequented by 'non participants' for this purpose. While many saw themselves curtailing or even abandoning their sporting participation, there were no suggestions of increased activity, thereby making the overall trend clear. This shift appeared to reflect various factors, including association of sport(s) with childhood, a implicitly 'undignified' or less attractive than newly available pursuits.

> You just start feeling daft, charging about like a load of kids. (Tracy)

> There's better things to do than playing football in the streets, like going to the pub. (Sammy)

Working longer hours and having less holiday were also cited as reasons for curtailment.

Youth clubs are, of course, specifically age-related in their focus, but while nominally catering for older teenagers as well as the younger, were viewed overwhelmingly as suitable only for the latter. By the fifth year as school pupils' use of youth clubs was fairly

limited and largely confined to specific events such as discos or to a much lesser extend, indoor games. Comments about plans to frequent different discos or find new venues for games of pool and the like made it clear that attendance would fall still further in the near future.

Going to discos was the most commonly mentioned activity for prospective leavers, albeit with widely differing levels of participation. Although this leading position applied to both sexes, attendance was noticeably higher among young women. (3)

However, there were signs that a trend towards falling attendance had already begun, and that this was expected to continue on leaving school. For some, discos were regarded in similar light to the youth clubs, as the preserve of younger children.

They're boring, just full of kids now. (Michelle)

I think discos are really for the younger ones. (Steve)

While a few interviewees thought they would be spending more time at discos having left school, rather more expected to spend less, although it should be noted that going to discos seemed set to remain the major leisure activity for many in the forseeable future. Implicitly, where the desire for change was expessed, this was not based on dissatisfaction with discos per se but with those locally and easily (in terms of age) available.

It's just the ones round here, they're crap. (Patricia)

Some places, they're dead strict who they let in. (Paul)

For some, expectations of greater financial resources promised less time spent at home, in friends' houses or hanging/walking/riding

about.

> Me, I just sit at home watching the telly, there's nothing
> else to do. (Gillian)

> I just knock about with my mates 'cause there's nowhere to
> go. (Malcolm)

If, as observed earlier, there were those who expected these activities to continue, the more prevalent view was that starting work would allow this to change

> I'd be out every night if I had the money. (Marie)

> Everything costs you, so you've got to have money. (Alan)

> You're not going to spend as much time on the streets if
> you can afford to go places. (Trevor)

Having concentrated primarily on practices which were expected to decline during the transition, it is time to turn our attention to new or growth areas of activity. Predictably, perhaps, considerable mention was made of 'forbidden' areas such as drink and sex. While current (regular) attendance at pubs was comparatively rare, it was clearly regarded, particularly by some young men, as an aspect of adult life to be adopted as quickly as possible. References to sex often came in the form of innuendo and repartee or in more general statements of intent regarding 'lads' or 'lasses'

> I'll be chasing the lads, me. (Liz)

> I'll probably spend most of my money on the lasses. (Mark)

If such interests were not new, they were thought likely to occupy a more prominent place in the future, assisted by greater freedoms and resources. However, it should be noted that, especially within the group setting, discussion of such sensitive areas tends to contain strong elements of 'image presentation', with the reality of

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sentiments and practices safely obscured.

Regardless of any engagement in new activities, many prospective leavers saw the transition as offering scope for broadening geographical horizons. Although this was often seen in terms of being more able to afford fares, a sizeable minority (overwhelmingly male) had set their sights on having their own transport. A few already spent considerable time 'playing about' with motorbikes and occasionally cars, while two young men already possessed bikes. The most common ambition was to acquire a bike, but there were a few who claimed to be aiming directly for cars.

> I would have to get myself a bike to go places. If I get a bike I won't have to rely on my dad to take us to Bishop or catch the bus ... means I can go and come back any time I like. (John)

> I'd like to get myself a decent bike on the roads. (Michael)

> I want a car so that I can go wherever I want. (Alan)

> If you can get a car of your own then you don't have to nick them. (Gary)

Apart from greater mobility within local areas, there was also some mention of travel further afield, including holidays in other parts of the UK or abroad. Again, this appeared predominantly as a male concern, although the seriousness of intentions remains unknown.

> I'd really like to go abroad. I'd like to go to America for a holiday. (Russell)

> I fancy going to Italy. (William)

> I'd like to go somewhere where it's sunny for my holidays. (Gillian)

Perhaps the most striking feature of planned expenditure was the high level of saving envisaged. In part, this was directed towards

specific objects such as holidays, transport, musical equipment and in the case of one young man already living in a flat, furniture. In addition, however, there was considerable saving of a more general nature. A few interviewees spoke of saving for fairly distant marriages.

> I'm just going to save up. Might get married sometime. (Sandra)

> It comes in handy if you get married. You've got the money to pay for the wedding and that. (Michael)

If projected spending on transport was an overwhelmingly male affair, that on clothes was a predominantly female one. Indeed this was by far the most frequently mentioned item of expenditure for young women.

In the light of the small group discussions it is useful to offer some comment on the strength of 'consumerism' among prospective school leavers. While there was abundant evidence of specific plans for commodity consumption, in the majority of cases these seemed fairly 'realistic' in relation to likely spending power, and concentrated on a fairly narrow range of commodities. Only in a handful of instances were ambitious spending plans outlined or a generalised desire to 'buy things' articulated. Thus, there appeared to be relatively little evidence for the consumption aspect of the 'instrumentality' couplet. Some interviewees expressed little or no interest in commodity consumption, while the majority tended to be modest in their stated plans.

Without overstating the extent of any deviation from 'mass culture', the particular character of the Durham Coalfield should be

borne in mind here. Apart from the effect of lower earnings upon consumption, the hegemonic influence of a strongly 'traditional' working class culture might also serve to subdue tendencies towards rampant consumerism (see ch 1).


## Experiences

In their individual interviews, the eighty eight young workers were asked what changes had occurred since leaving school in the way they spent 'spare time', and how their 'own' money was spent.(4) One specific question asked related to frequency of 'going out' (defined as attending a specific leisure venue and generally involving financial outlay) and how this might have changed during the transition.

By way of setting the response in context, it is worth commenting upon the likely influence of the interview situation. It might, for instance, be expected that interviewees' more intimate concerns, particularly those relating to sexual activity, would remain private. Similarly, the different audience and consequent form of image presentation occurring in individual as opposed to group interviews might be expected to lead to relative under-reporting of any 'deviant' activities, or the 'toying' with such activities which is often an important part of 'youth culture'.

Frequencies of 'going out' were as follows, with fifteen young workers reporting that they went out more than twice a week on average, thirty nine between once and twice (inclusive) and thirty four less than once.(5) Considered within these three categories,

there was relatively small variation according to sex, although young women were over-represented towards both ends of the spectrum, more likely to be out 'almost every night' or 'not at all'. This tendency reflected two particular factors, namely that 'going out' was often a cheaper affair for young women than young men (more of which later) and alternatively, that spending time either at home or at friends' houses fitted more closely to gender-prescribed norms and constraints (MacRabbie and Garber(1976)).

Clearly, frequencies of 'going out' depended in part upon the preferences and priorities of those concerned, and were far from reducible to the issue of available resources. Thus, there were some in full-time work who rarely went out and, conversely, unemployed young workers who did so regularly. However, in the previous chapter it was noted how board payments tended to be fairly 'fixed' regardless of income, thereby leaving unemployed interviewees particularly short of spending money. It was not, therefore, surprising to find a positive correlation between income and frequency of 'going out' (Table 9.1).

## Table 9.1

| frequency of 'going out'(per week) | Job | Scheme | Unemp'd | (N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| less than once | 5 | 18 | 11 | (34) |
| once-twice | 4 | 29 | 6 | (39) |
| more than twice | 5 | 9 | 1 | (15) |

$$x^2 \ 9.10 \ df4 \ prob. \ 06$$

The dampening effect of low incomes on leisure for those on schemes or unemployed was frequently borne out in the testimony of young workers. General attitudes towards the possibility of 'managing' on available resources have been dealt with in chapter 6. In relation to leisure activities, it was often declared that money received on Thursday had 'gone by the weekend' or that two trips out would empty the till (see Coffield et al (1986:62)).

> I'm always skint by Sundays. (Steven D.)

> It only lasts through the weekend. You just have to sit around through the week. (Graham A.)

> I only go out about two nights a week and that's pushing it. (Diane J.)

> If I go out two nights there's not a great deal left. (Peter R.)

Various coping strategies were outlined, such as planning outings with a budget in mind, minimising spending or borrowing.

> I generally see how much money I'm going to spend before I go out. (Audrey W.)

> I don't spend a lot when I go out so it doesn't make much difference. (Christime W.)

> If I go out I'm usually borrowing money to go out. (Angela F.)

Sandra J., while criticising those who claimed scheme allowances to be inadequate, nonetheless recognised the basis of her capacity to manage.

> It's not really that hard up as people seem to make it out to be ... I feel I can manage on it but, see, I don't go out much like lots of people do.

For a small minority, going out approached the impossible.

I never go out. I just can't afford it. (Susan P.)

I can't afford anything very much now. (Richard D.)

Young workers were also asked to compare current frequencies of 'going out' with those when at school.(6) Thirty of them indicated an increased frequency, eighteen decreased, with forty reporting broad parity. This aggregate increase was entirely accounted for by young men, with young women equally likely to have experiences movement in either direction. By far the major factor in explaining this particular 'sex difference' was young men's forsaking of the streets in favour of pubs and clubs (see below).

Given the correlation between unemployment and lower incidence of 'going out' (noted earlier), it was not surprising that the former should also be linked to declining incidence during the transition. Whereas 40% of those in jobs or schemes reported increased frequencies with 17.1% reporting decreases, the respective figures for unemployed young workers were 11.1% and 33.3%, which even allowing for the small gross numbers, shows a stark difference.

For those 'going out' more than while at school, the most commonly (almost universally) cited reason was that of having more money to spend, which in turn, had opened up new avenues for leisure consumption. Reference was also made to the changing source of money, the shift from pocket money to earned money enhancing a sense of free disposal. This process is the more significant because it occurs as a collective rite of passage for the whole school year group, facilitating peer group moves to new activities. The importance of this collective aspect was most evident where marked income differentials had placed friendships under great strain.

> My best mates are in work and it's very difficult. Like,
> they'll say oh, we'll help you out and that but you feel
> terrible so you end up just not going out with them.
> (Steven D.)

> My main three friends have all got jobs and they're going
> on holiday together and I'm left at home. So that's a sore
> point. (Elaine N.)

> I just can't afford to go out with my mates who are
> working. They gan all over but I can't. (Brian P.)

Perhaps one of the few 'goods' blown by the ill wind of mass unemployment was that few suffered the 'relative deprivation' of finding most of their friends in jobs:

Apart from financial considerations, the transition could contribute to greater 'going out' in other ways. Eight young workers described feelings of greater freedom resulting from no longer facing the demands of homework.(7)

> As soon as it's five o clock and you've left here, that's
> it. You've for nothing to do on the night, no sort of
> revision or anything any more. (Peter R.)

> I've decided that I'm not tied down any more to school ...
> my nights is my own where before I had to do homework,
> revision and things like that. (Alan B.)

In saying that 'you feel freer when you're not at school', Patricia N. had in mind not only freedom from particular demands but a decisive shift in social relations. She described how, on meeting ex-teachers she felt 'I was one of them, on the same level'.

Although rarely explicitly articulated, it could be argued that the subjective experience of release from previous forms of authority and the acquisition of a measure of self-confidence through earning were important factors in moves towards 'proscribed' activities.

For those 'going out' less than during their later schooldays, the major reason also appeared to be financial. This was not usually

a matter of absolute decline in 'disposable income', but tended to reflect new responsibilities such as buying clothes, greater expense involved in 'going out', desire to save for particular or general purposes and so on. In all, eleven young workers explained their situation primarily in such terms. Five also mentioned that since leaving school they had lost contact with friends and therefore had less opportunity and incentive to 'go out'.

> I've lost touch with most of my school friends. I bump into them an odd time and we have a good laugh, but it's not the same. (Anne D.)

> My mates are on schemes and they're getting worse. They're always tired, they're getting boring ... they used to be daft, absolutely crackers and now they're just ... getting normal. (Carl R.)

For some (mainly young women), decreased 'going out' was also partly explained in terms of there being a gap in provision for those who had left school but not reached the age of eighteen.

> There's not much to do if you're sixteen. Why, you can't really go into pubs and that. (Pamela J.)

> I'm not old enough to go out yet. You really have to be eighteen to go out drinking ... and if you do go in a pub when you're only sixteen you can't drink spirits or owt like that. (Ellen M.)

> Most of the discos are for over eighteens, there's nothing for us. (Lesley C.)

> There's nothing really for my age. At seventeen you're finished with youth clubs and you're not supposed to go to pubs, that's the gap I'm stuck in at the moment. Luckily, I can get into the pubs. There's nowhere else now.
> (Peter A.)

Two young workers attrubuted 'going out' less to work-induced tiredness.

I more or less stopped going out cause I was too tired. My legs were killing us, my hands were killing us. I just wasn't interested. All I was bothered about was getting to work next day, go home, have your tea, go to bed. (Carol P.)

If not always leading to such drastic decreases, tiredness was often a factor in limiting the frequency or duration of leisure activities.

I still go out but I come in earlier now than I used to when I was at school. (Nicholas N.)

I used to go anywhere, I didn't care so long as I didn't have to go home but when I'm out now all I think about is oh, I wish I could go home and go to bed. (Karen H.)

Changes in leisure activity during the transition were neither invariably 'immediate' nor 'linear'. There were instances both of 'new' activities not being taken up until long after starting work, and of them having already being dropped by the time of interview.

I suppose I could have been going out more for a while now, but it's only just recently I've felt like it. (Tracy J.)

I've had to stop going to the pub cause I can't afford it. (Stephen J.)

At first, I went out loads to pubs and that, but now me and my boyfriend just stop in. (Denise V.)

Overall, by far the two major 'new' activities were drinking and spending time with boy- or girlfriends (Leonard (1980:76). For those in their first two years after leaving school, pubs and clubs provided the new leisure venue par excellence. Thirty nine young workers described going to pubs and/or clubs as one of their major activities, often the major one. In the vast majority of cases, this had begun since leaving school and had usually increased in regularity even when

this was not the case. It would, however, be misleading to suggest extensive drinking among interviewees. Frequency of visits was rarely more than twice per week and often much less. It is perhaps a reflection on alternative venues that occasional (less than weekly) visits to the pub/club could constitute the main or sole form of 'going out'. In this context, it is important to remember the pubs' and more so clubs' wider place within local entertainment, as scenes for discos, live music and indoor games. Some young workers were careful to point out, (without specification), that they drank relatively little, or in the case of three interviewees not at all, making social use only of their hostelry.

Of the thirty nine young workers, twenty three were men and although there was considerable overlap, they tended to visit pubs or clubs more frequently than their female counterparts.(8) The former's tendency to drink more was both conveyed as 'common knowledge', albeit mythologised, and to some extent reflected in personal testimony.

> You know what lads are like, when they go out drinking. They're like fish, pint after pint. (Amanda K.)

> Most of my money gans in the pubs. (Robert P.)

> Drink, that's all I spend it on really. (Steven D.)

While a few went drinking with partners, majority participation occured via single sex groups, although such groups often served as bases for individual meeting and/or more general 'interplay' between the sexes (Coffield et al (1986:153)).(9)

> I go along with the lasses and then I meet my boyfriend later on. (Trish C.)

> We often meet up when I'm out with my friends and he's out with his. (Karen H.)

> We always have a bit of a carry on with the lasses down at
> the club. (Leslie G.)

Higher income since leaving school was clearly a vital factor in

permitting greater consumption of alcohol.

> I've started drinking a lot more now because I didn't have
> the money when I was still at school. (Steven D.)

> I couldn't afford to drink when I was at school and only
> on pocket money. (Sharon W.)

However, low income levels, particularly for those on schemes or

unemployed, were also a strict limiting factor.

> It's only since I got on full-time that I've been able to
> have more than an odd pint or two (Douglas W.)

> Now ... (full-time DK) ... I just go out when I want, buy
> drinks and that. Before I couldn't. (Sylvia R.)

Unemployed, Peter A. explained that he could drink only because

his father bought the drinks at their local.

Despite its legal proscription, for all but a few, drinking was

sufficiently 'taken for granted' that its reporting rarely carried any

air of embarrassment or bravado (Coffield et al (1986:132)). Karen H.

described her local pub as 'more like a youth club, really.

Everybody's our age'.

Similarly, interviewees who volunteered the information that they

'didn't drink' generally did so in the manner of people having made

free choices rather than observing a taboo.

Twenty eight young workers talked of spending time with a boy- or

girlfriend as a major facet of their leisure time. Seventeen were

second year leavers, which tended to confirm this as an increasing

activity during the transition. Twenty of the twenty eight were young

women, which is in line with the prevailing pattern that women usually become involved in relationships at an earlier age, and with 'older' men (Leonard (1980:87). Inevitably, these relationships varied considerably in duration, intensity and doubtless 'seriousness'. Those of longer standing had often become increasingly home-centred, with a high degree of integration into respective families.

> We're in most of the time, either round at his house or at mine. (Gillian C.)

> I used to play outside with my friends. I don't now. I just sit in the house with my boyfriend. I see him every night. (Kathleen H.)

Heather described how they would go to each other's houses on alternative evenings, visit relatives together and 'take turns going to each other's for Sunday dinner.'

She was one of five young women who said that they stayed in a lot because they were saving money with their boyfriends for future engagements or marriages.

> We've been going out for two years and we're saving for a flat. I wanted to get it for when I was eighteen, but it'll be more like twenty with the money we're getting. All we can do is buy bits and pieces to put in it when we get it. (Anne D.)

> We're getting married next year so we need to save a load before then. (Lorraine G.)

Although close standing relationships sometimes involved 'going out' regularly, financial constraints appeared to press those intent on setting up homes towards a strong emphasis on saving by staying at home. Among the less 'serious', there was generally a higher incidence of visits to pubs, cinemas and the like, or in three cases time riding around on motor bikes.

In a labour market dominated by YOP schemes and with large-scale unemployment, it was interesting to consider how the resultant low incomes might affect relations between the sexes, and in particular, the 'patriarchal' pattern of boyfriends 'taking out', ie paying for, girlfriends. Interviewees who indicated that they often went out with partners were asked who paid and whether this was affected by respective incomes. This latter point was especially relevant because while higher male pay was still the norm for the minority in jobs (see ch.6), the meagre rewards of scheme allowances and state benefits were standard payments to all recipients. The 'equalising' trend was given a further twist by the fact that schemes were not available for those over eighteen so that young women on schemes often had older, unemployed boyfriends. Of the twenty young women concerned, no less than eleven were in this situation, while a further five had boyfriends who were also on schemes.

Replies to these questions revealed that the male role as 'financier' of relationships remained strongly intact, ideologically if not always practically.

> He buys the drinks and that, never even asks us. (Trish C.)

> If I go out with my girlfriend on a Thursday, ... I'm like buying for two people. (Peter R.)

> Lads have to buy drinks for their girlfriend. (Alison B.)

> When you're courting, you don't need any money, really. (Amanda K.)

The prevailing view was that most young men regarded accepting drinks and the like from their female partners as a mark of shame and

were generally 'stubborn' in refusing to do so.

Lees describes a situation where

> girls are not expected - nor often allowed - to buy their
> round at the pub, indicating their subordinate status and
> if challenged, boys get the hump, because they think it's
> degrading and complain if a girl buys a round. (1986:77)

In the present study there was abundant confirmation of the

prevalence of such attitudes in the Coalfield.

> It's just the way most lads are, they like to pay their
> way, but they're too stubborn. If he said lend us a pound
> till tomorrow, I'd say fair enough: but he wouldn't ask.
> But I borrow off him, I don't mind asking but he feels
> awful asking me. (Laura H.)

> If you're going out with somebody and the lass pays the
> lad out, they don't really like it. (Pamela J.)

> A lass can depend on her boyfriend without feeling
> ashamed. Whereas I feel ashamed taking money off my
> girlfriend. (Alan D.)

> I buy him a drink occasionally and he goes wild, he hates
> it. (Alison B.)

Young women breaking this code were sometimes accused of

deliberately trying to inflict shame.

> Once he said he was going home because he was totally
> skint so I bought him a drink and he says 'what are you
> doing that for, showing us up, a lass buying us a drink'.
> (Karen H.) (10)

> If I want to pay, he feels really down, as if I'm making a
> glory of him not having any money. He says it diminishes
> his manhood, It hurts his pride a hell of a lot. (Angela
> F.)

One apparently common outcome of patriarchal relations and male

unemployment was that partners stopped 'going out:

> If he can't afford to take us out, he won't, and he feels
> it. (Denise V.)

> The boyfriend I'm going out with now hasn't got a job, and he doesn't like going out with us cause he doesn't like me paying for it. If he's got money, when he gets his dole, he'll go out. But any other night he won't. (Susan P.)

Female responses to prescribed roles varied, but there was widespread criticism, particularly directed towards their more extreme form. Some young women were highly tentative about any moves towards greater equality.

> I don't mind buying a little bit if I've got the money. (Denise V.)

Although both she and her boyfriend were on schemes, Trish C. made her offer to pay more conditional upon having more money. Others, however, combined stronger criticism of prevailing relations with a more thorough egalitarianism.

> I don't think it's right that a lad should pay for everything all the time. I think it's daft ... you should always go halves on things. I don't know who thought a lad should always pay. They could just as easy have thought up that a lass should. (Karen H.)

> I don't think he's got the right attitude cause I don't mind paying. (Laura H.)

> I think it's stupid, doesn't make any difference who pays. (Pamela J.)

Whatever their reservations about prevailing gender roles, most young women tended to be sympathetic towards the plight of young men, the latter's inability to act out their prescribed role and the hurt which this caused.(11) The only direct reference made to feminism was a critical one.

> I always think that ... (lads) ... should be the ones earning the money, being the breadwinner. I'm still old-fashioned like that, cause I think we do still rely on lads. It doesn't matter, all these women, the feminist groups and all that, I don't know how we would manage if

> they (lads) weren't there, cause I don't think we could do
> what they do ... women say they would like to work in the
> pit but they couldn't do it. It's just natural. (Elaine
> N.)

However, there were five young women who offered views which
penetrated beyond simple notions of different roles to highlight
aspects of patriarchal power. It was noted in a general sense that
young men liked to be 'better off' then their female counterparts.

> They don't like having the same as a lass, they always
> like to have a bit more. (Anne D.)

> He doesn't like the ides of me working and him not. (Laura
> H.)

Similarly, attention was drawn to the ways that payments could be
used to exert power within relationships.

> They like to think they're up there ... buying things for
> you and that. (Alison B.)

> We go halves on everything. I wouldn't want him to pay for
> us all the time. I would think he had power over us of he
> was paying. It would be like you're his puppet and I'm not
> having that. I want to be in control. (Lorraine G.)

Although most of the young men who spoke about roles professed
adherence to the dominant pattern, there was also glimpses of a
different form of 'penetration', namely that it was sometimes possible
and enjoyable to avoid obligations, as in the case of Steven D., who
told of being 'paid for' on one occasion with an obvious degree of
relish.

> I realised I had no money and so I rang up and she said
> she would pay for herself. Then we went out, she ended
> paying for more than what I did. It was canny.

Peter A. said that while unemployed, he had abandoned the

customary male role - 'these days, it's pay yourself' - while Denise V. said how her unemployed boyfriend was

> always getting at us, 'don't you think you should pay  the night, I've got no money'.

If drinking and relationships provided the major 'new' activities of the transition, dancing and sport retained prominent places in  the lives of many young workers.

Thirty five interviewees mentioned going  to discos as a  regular (at least fortnightly) occurrence, thereby  ranking dancing  alongside attendance  at  pubs  and  clubs   as  the  major   form  of  evening entertainment  outside  the  home.  Indeed  these  forms  increasingly operated in tandem,  either by  shared vanues,  or by  being  regarded sequentially  within  an  evening's  plan.  In  terms  of  levels   of attendance, approximate continuity during the transition was the order of the day for the majority, although there were some signs of falling attendance. (Twenty one of the  thirty five young  workers were  first year leavers).  Only three  of  the thirty  five said  that  they  had started frequenting discos since leaving school, in two cases  because of relaxed constraints by 'strict' parents. There were, however, eight interviewees who had  reported no  longer going to  discos as  one  of their leisure changes.  Within the  reasons given  for change  it  was sometimes possible to detect signs of 'outgrowing'

> It's always packed and stuffy. I'd rather be at home  with my boyfriend (Kathleen H.)

> I used to  go out a  lot but  it's a waste  of money.  I'd rather save up  and be  able  to buy  things or  go  other places.

Patricia N., whose boyfriend played in a rock group had also stopped going to discos.

> Now I go out with the group or I go to see other groups. I think I'm getting old.

More generally, it was particular venues rather than dancing per se which were 'outgrown'. This applied not only to a move away from youth clubs and designated 'under eighteen' discos to those based in pubs and (night) clubs, but also to travel further afield.

> We go all over the place now, not just round Consett. (Stephen J.)

As Robins and Cohen argue, there is often a strong desire among young workers

> to break out from restricted networks based on street and neighbourhood. (1978:55)

and this certainly applied to many interviewees within this study (see ch.10).

Sport was reported as an important leisure activity by thirty three young workers, twenty five of them male. For young men, participation was dominated fairly evenly by three sports. If playing football was predictably prominent, this was nearly matched by participation in rugby and the cue games of snooker and pool. For young women, the main activities were badminton and swimming, while members of both sexes spent time at leisure centres, often sampling a variety of sports. Because of the compulsory sporting activity in

schools, it is more difficult to gauge the changes occurring during the transition. The removal of this compulsion clearly produced a huge overall fall in participation, while those engaged in sporting activities after leaving school had very often had to make new arrangements to do so, eg joining clubs. Although a small minority reported having increased their involvement since leaving school, continuity or partial decline were much more common.

Six young workers (five male) stated that spectating at football matches was a regular pastime. Albeit with wide variations, this practice had increased slightly during the transition.

The predictable decline in youth club attendance appeared relatively small, probably because this process had largely taken place beforehand. Six young workers (five of whom were female) indicated that they still attended youth clubs (overwhelmingly for discos), while a further six mentioned lapsed attendance as a major transitional change. The clubs seemed to cater particularly for those who did not wish, or were not allowed to follow their peers in the drift towards pubs and clubs.

It's the only place I can go really. (Jean N.)

I go there cause we're too young for the clubs or owt like that. (Angela H.)

A more notable area of decline was in time spent 'knocking around'. Although five interviewees declared that they still passed considerable time in this way, eleven chose to cite no longer doing so as a significant change in their leisure pattern. Of sixteen references, eleven came from young men, suggesting this as a mainly, if far from exclusively, male affair. For some young people, this

particular form of 'street life' provided opportunities for mixing with a peer group in relative independence from adults and the latter's domains, and for being frivolous in ways which might not be tolerated 'indoors'.(12)

> Larking about on a night, being silly, costs you nothing, messing people about a bit. Not getting into trouble, fighting or owt like that, just having a lark about. (Carl R.)

> We used to just sit round the shops and talk and do daft things. (Paul J.)

Whatever the positive, fun elements of this there was also recognition of its basis on restricted availability of alternative spaces and options.

> When I was at school, we were just sitting in the bus stop all night, doing nothing. It's a lot better now you've got more money and you can go places. (Gary F.)

Gary's sentiments would doubtless have been echoed by others who contrasted their earlier situation with a currently greater capacity to 'go places' (usually meaning pubs and clubs).

The question of 'knocking around' brings us to the wider area of informal leisure time. It is worth recalling that for all but a few young workers, most evenings were not spent 'going out'in a 'formal' sense (Leonard (1980:78). From her 'previous night' survey, Maizels concluded

> that a typical night for substantial proportions of under eighteens, was an evening at home, watching television, listening to the radio or records, washing their hair, mending their bikes, chatting to the family and going to bed early. (1970:283)

Apart from the addition of new pastimes such as watching videos, this general picture would have been equally applicable to this study.

There were a few references to specific hobbies - looking after pets, knitting, playing musical instruments, CB radio, painting, having a 'weather centre' and flower pressing - and there were surely numerous others which were not mentioned, Most of these had begun before leaving school, and it is also quite likely that widespread low pay had served to dampen the development of any more expensive hobbies.

> If I had the money I'd love to buy a canoe and have a go at parachute jumping. (Terry T.)

> I really fancy stock car racing but I think I can forget that. (Leslie G.)

'Staying in' and 'going out' were not the only alternatives. Ten young workers spoke of spending most of their time at friends' houses, talking, playing records and the like, while a further four said that they frequently visited relatives' homes. Twelve of the fourteen were young women, reflecting both their greater use of 'home' as opposed to street for meeting with friends and the stronger familial 'orientation' engendered. Equally predictable, perhaps, was that all five interviewees citing babysitting as a regular activity were female. Babysitting had, in fact, declined a little during the transition, primarily because young working women had greater access to finance than when at school.

> Specially, now that I've got a job, it's not worth it. (Donny S.)

Other informal means of being outside the home included going for walks and riding bikes around the area.

> I take the dog for a walk every night. (Paul B.)

> I just go all over on my bike. (Ellen M.)

In questions relating to expenditure, as in other areas, the

focus was on perceived changes rather than on yielding a precise inventory. The most striking feature of replies was the high profile given to savings. Although the amounts and purposes varied enormously, the notion of saving was clearly an important one to many young workers. In all, forty of them referred to their practices and plans, successes and failures in the area of saving.

Although income levels would clearly have a major impact on the extent of saving possible,(13) they appeared to bear little relation to interest or involvement in saving per se.

Thus, there were employed 'spendthrifts' and unemployed 'hoarders'.

> Whatever I get I spend, simple as that. I can hardly manage now. (Sylvia B.)

> I've always saved. I used to save more when I was on a scheme but I can still save on the dole. (Anne D.)

However much the inclination to save cut across income levels, those who were on schemes or unemployed frequently experienced great difficulties in saving, especially if the amount aimed for was substantial.

> I try really hard to save, but it's not often that I manage to. (Lesley H.)

> I just shove money in the bank. I've got to save up until I've got enough to buy things. (Graham A.)

> I've always saved for things. At the moment it's a music centre. I've been saving up for ages for it and if only we got more money, I'd have been able to have it by now. (Susan P.)

Ten young workers dubbed themselves as 'habitual' savers, having no specific object(s) in mind, but feeling that they liked the idea of having savings to draw upon and often that this fitted relatively

easily with their chosen lifestyle of 'abstinence'.

> Even at school, the majority of the money I got went straight into savings. (Audrey W.)

> I don't spend much, don't drink, I just save it, but then I used to when I was on the dole. (Francesca D.)

Living in a fairly rural area, Andrew H. commented,

> where I live there're nothing else to do but save it. I'm not saving for anything in particular.

> The more I get the more I save, It's just the way I am. (Alan O.)

If some saving was of an avowedly 'general' nature, what of that aimed at more specific targets.

Five young women reported saving for engagements or marriage to current boyfriends (as noted earlier), usually entailing considerable curtailment of spending on entertainment, clothes and the like. Holidays and transport were the most frequently mentioned objects of saving, referred to by nine and eight interviewees respectively and often involving sizeable sums. Seven of the nine related to 'peer' rather than family holidays and clearly represented a step towards greater independence (see Clarke and Critcher (1985:175). Of the eight saving for their own transport six were hoping to buy cars, the remaining two motorbikes.

Saving for 'consumer durables' seemed rare with three references to videos and one to a music centre. Not surprisingly with low incomes so prevalent there were those who described saving for relatively minor items, whether clothes, records, attendance at football matches or simply 'going out'.

Where specific amounts of saving were given, the variation was

predictably wide. Weekly figures of one or two pounds were common (often with confessions of erratic observance) while there were four cases of those of schemes saving ten pounds or more. Young workers in jobs clearly belonged to a different league in terms of potential saving. Two young men saved twenty and twenty five pounds per week respectively.(14) Larger amounts tended to be deposited in banks or building societies with smaller ones kept at home either by young workers themselves or their parents.

Many aspects of changed expenditure patterns have been (implicitly) dealt with above, whether in the context of saving or of new leisure activities. Other areas of substantial outlay for minorities included driving lessons and cigarettes, referred to by seven and eight interviewees respectively. Uptake of driving lessons was closely linked to income levels in terms of both occurrence per se and frequency, reflecting both their immediate cost and relevance vis a vis the possibility of owning and operating transport.

> I don't have lessons very often, 'cause I couldn't afford
> a car anyway. Even if I could buy one, I wouldn't be able
> to afford the insurance and the tax, so its pointless.
> (Patricia P.)

> Now that I've got a job, I'm going to step up the driving
> lessons. (Diane J.)

Already mentioned briefly as an item 'saved for' on occasion, clothing was offered as a major area of expenditure by twenty seven young workers, twenty of them female, giving some credence to the conventional wisdom that 'lads spend their money on drink, lasses on clothes'. Four young workers admitted to 'frittering away' most of their money, usually on fruit machines or video games.

In terms of leisure and consumption patterns, the transition was a watershed for many, but by no means all young workers. Alongside those engaging in 'new' activities there was a substantial minority for whom the transition had brought little change. Such change as occurred reflected various factors, although the wide variations emphasise the need to view these in terms of their creating potential rather than as exerting a strongly determining influence.

Changes in working hours and demands had had a mixed effect on leisure participation, with on the one hand, fatigue sometimes curtailing late nights and the like, but on the other feelings of greater freedom for homework and parental control often having the opposite effect.

Other than for the 'lucky few' in jobs, new financial circumstances represented relative liberation in comparison with the old,(15) but the limits of this liberation were fairly obvious. For those in receipt of scheme allowances or moreso supplementary benefit, there was little scope for 'going wild' as consumers. Available income tended to exert its own 'dull compulsion' in the arena of consumption, with most accounts suggesting 'acceptance' of low income as an, albeit unpleasant, fact of life

Whatever the dependence of leisure and consumption on finance, changes in the former were far from reducible to those in the latter. While rarely openly acknowledged, the transition was clearly accompanied by considerable shifts in both prescribed and proscribed activities, with many young workers responding positively to these shifts by their participation in more 'adult' practices.(16) What,

then, can be said of the 'consumerism' of the study's young workers? For the majority outside employment, limited income imposed such constraintes as to make any strong 'consumerism' a practical impossibility. It was also noteworthy that many young workers exercised 'self restraint' beyond the limits demanded, attempting to save from very low incomes and practising considerable abstinence to do so.

Consumer horizons for the employed were much wider and purchase of cars, holidays and items such as videos and music centres gave greater credence to the notion of a widespread 'consumerism'. Here too, however, there was often non-earmarked saving which suggested at least a deferred rather than immediate consumerism and possibly a partial 'indifference' to full utilisation of income.

In relating the evidence of this chapter more generally to the transition in the Coalfield, various important factors emerge. One of those concerns the degree of penetration on the part of 'mass culture'. In the sense of further decline in 'traditional' local leisure pursuits, the break from the past was undeniable, with little apparent interest in leeks, pigeons and the like. In other ways, however, the particular form of working class 'traditionalism' associated with the Coalfield remained influential.

Albeit based in impressionistic evidence, the distinctive youth sub-cultures much beloved of sociologists were largely noticeable by their absence. The range of activities tended to be narrow, while local shops did little to encourage 'cosmopolitan' consumption. Without comparative data, it is difficult to gauge how far the strong

emphasis on saving and deferred gratification was distinctive, but given the relative poverty of those concerned, this emphasis was certainly striking. Gender roles, too remained 'traditional', although this probably true for most working class youth (Lees (1986)).

Perhaps the major difficulty in assessing the degree of cultural change arose from the severly limited resources available to most young workers. The pervasion of unemployment and schemes meant not only that certain choices were ruled out, but that lack of youth consumer demand would undoubtedly have affected supply. Shortage of money also brought greater dependence on parents. Here too, however, stoic resignation appeared to be the most common response.

## Notes

1    In similar vein, Mandel has argued that endless entension of commodity consumption leads ultimately to 'pure extravagance, boredom and disgust of life' (1978:397).

2    See Griffin on the impact of sexual harassment at work (1985:129) and the general importance of sexuality in the (female) labour market (:124,168).

3    See MacRobbie (1984) on the importance of dancing for young women, its meanings and provision of a channel, albeit limited, for bodily self-expression and control, pleasure and sensuality (:132-3).

4    Where necessary, prompts were offered about activities taken up or dropped, increased or decreased.

5    Of this latter group, nine interviewees stated that they 'never' went out.

6    Given the difficulty of tightly defining 'going out', there may have been some problems of direct comparability of activities and hence of interpretation, but generally interviewees found it fairly easy to indicate whether they 'went out' more or less than, or the same as, before.

7    Susan P. found herself 'lost' without the homework which had kept her occupied while at school. For Jean F., the problem was different in that she welcomed the release from homework but found herself without money to enjoy this freedom.

8    It is important to remember here the possible impact of parental and wider social attitudes regarding the acceptability of young women going to pubs and the like.

9    Attendance alone was a problem, particularly for young women. As MacRobbie notes, it would be likely to signify
either having no friends or being on the look-out and therefore morally out of line (1984:143).

10   To illustrate her boyfriend's stubborness, Karen H. recounted the following anecdote about buying petrol for his car.
I'll say if you come through I'll put some petrol in. 'No, no you won't.' I said it to him in front of my mam one night and he said 'shut up man' and I said 'what for?' 'Your mam'll hear.' My mam says 'I did hear, what's wrong with that?'

11    Lees comments on the tendency  for many young  women to  identify
      with   the   (sexist)   practices   of   young   men,   accepting
      'prerogatives' and behavious such as  harassment as 'normal'  and
      often excusing violence towards women (1986:79).

12    As Nava (1984:8) argues, one  of the purposes of YOP/YTS  schemes
      has been
        the removal of unemployed young people from the street  in
        order to minimise the possibility of disorder and dissent.

13    Lorraine K. said that she currently saved nothing but would  save
      a lot once in full-time work. Joan  H. was planning to raise  her
      weekly saving  from one  to  five  pounds now  that  she  was  in
      full-time work.

14    One of them had recently cut back from thirty five after buying a
      video worth about six hundred pounds.

15    As  in  other  areas,  favourable  comparison  with  school   was
      important in providing a cushion against likely disenchantment.

16    This would apply  not only  to  areas such  as drink  and  sexual
      relations but  also  to positions  within  say  clubs,  voluntary
      organisations and so on.

## Chapter 10

## Migration

Migration, and its relationship to unemployment has been set in historical context in chapter 1, and this setting will not be repeated here. It is intended in this chapter to consider the views of prospective and recent school leavers on the question of migration from their home area(s), which also serves to show how those areas were regarded as places to live and work.

Migration can occur for many reasons but, for those seeking work, decisions relating to moves must remain timed to prospects for the sale of labour-power. Yet, beneath this bland statement, lies a multitude of complex circumstances relating to perceived prospects in different areas and on varying time scales, non-work factors such as family, friends and community and so on. Nonetheless, in areas of mass unemployment debate on the issue of 'seeking work' inevitably has a spatial dimension, with willingness to move a key indicator of earnestness in the search. State 'regional policy' has long recognised the limitations of individualistic 'on your bike' solutions to spatial variations in unemployment, and has subsidised capital to bring 'work to the workers', even if the latter's interests have not always been paramount in the manner of subsidy (see ch.1).

During the 1960s, net migration from the north-east was officially portrayed as an indictment on the region, and the need for

it as something to be eradicated by economic revitalisation. In the 'Challenge of the Changing North' (NEPC (1966:63) it was argued that while migration is not in itself undesirable,

> when over many years, the numbers leaving the region are consistently more than those coming into it, we are justified in assuming that this reflects some deficiency in the opportunities or conditions offered here as compared with those elsewhere, and this has to be corrected.

However, as was noted in chapter 1, net out-migration has been a constant feature of the post war north-east, much of it state-sponsored.(1)

Within this situation, the position of young workers is distinctive for two main reasons, which have rather conflicting implications for migration. The first is that they have been targetted as a special group for whom 'unemployment is not an option'. While state counter-measures such as the YOP or YTS have been national programmes, their aim to provide places for all unemployed school leavers has meant that their local scale of operation has depended upon levels of unemployment - in effect a particular form of 'work to the workers'.

The second factor is that as young adults, generally without dependants, they can (at least hypothetically) and 'should' be more mobile than older workers. However, there are inevitably mixed views on the appropriateness or feasibility or migration for immediate school leavers, not least at a time when state social policies have increasingly attempted to treat young adults as dependent upon their families/parents.(2)

Anticipations
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Prospective school leavers were asked on the questionnaire 'would you like to work in your home area?' and to give reasons for their answers. Other than for those who had indicated that they would not wish to work in their home area, there was a supplementary question, 'if you could not get a job in the area, would you move away?'. Respondents were also asked to state whether there was any particular place to which they would like to move.

Before summarising and analysing responses, it is necessary to pass brief comment upon the main question and its interpretation. 'Home area' was not defined, and most answers gave no clue as to what area was presumed. It was, however, interesting to note (see below) that over fifty gave other places in the north-east as the places to which they would like to move. On occasion, the places could be as close as 2-3 miles, which suggests that home area was often, perhaps generally, interpreted as having a radius of no more than a few miles. A second factor was that a considerable number of respondents cited 'easy travel' as a reason for working in their home area, which may mean that living at home was sometimes taken for granted and 'working away' taken to mean somewhere else in the north-east.(3) It is also useful to bear in mind that there was no time scale stipulated in the question.

Table 10.1 shows that almost two thirds of respondents stated that they would like to work in their home area(s), while nearly a fifth declared that they would not.

## Table 10.1

### Would you like to work in your home area?

yes          276 (63.0%)

no            85 (19.4%)

don't know    64 (14.6%)

no answer     13  (3.0%)


Breakdown of these figures by fathers' occupation reveals a division between those whose fathers held jobs in classes 1-3 on the one hand, and those in classes 4-5 on the other. The latter group more often declared a preference for working in the area (Table 10.2).

## Table 10.2

|                    | yes (%) | no (%) |
|--------------------|---------|--------|
| Fathers' class 1-3 | 58.5    | 23.7   |
| Fathers' class 4-5 | 75.4    | 5.3    |

$$x^2 \; 10.10 \; \text{df1 prob. .00}$$

* $x^2$ based on absolute numbers


Analysis in terms of occupational aspiration shows a similar but weaker relationship, with these aspiring to 'higher' jobs more

inclined to move. However, the 'break' appeared between classes 2 and 3, 'above' which 57.7% answered 'yes' and 20.2% 'no', while 'below', the corresponding figures were 69.7% and 15.0%. These figures did not reach (.05) statistical significance.

Predictably, aspirants to the forces showed a pattern of response radically different from all other groups with more (46.3%) answering 'no' then 'yes' (34.1%). It may, in fact, be surprising to see so many 'yes' replies, but it should be remembered that the forces are often seen as a way of leaving the area (and its unemployment) while remaining 'based' there, with the latter sentiment responsible for the verdicts. The predominance of forces aspirants from Peterlee accounted for it being home to a markedly higher percentage of would-be migrants (27.4%) than were to be found in Bishop Auckland (16.5%) or Consett (16.8%). There was negligible variation according to the sex of the respondents.

The supplementary question was answered as follows (Table 10.3).

## Table 10.3

### If you could not get a job in the area, would you then leave?

| | |
|---|---|
| yes | 280 (79.3%) |
| no | 40 (11.3%) |
| don't know | 16 (4.5%) |
| no answer | 17 (4.8%) |
| (not applicable | 85) |

With certain exceptions, analysis of these figures reveals patterns of association broadly similar to those for the inital question, thereby augmenting rather than diminishing the correlations. This becomes evident with examination of the number of respondents answering 'no' to the second question, and so stating their opposition to leaving the area in the strongest possible terms. The total of forty represents 9.1% of all replies, while the figure for those from 'non-manual backgrounds' was, at 6.4%, slightly lower than for their manual counterparts (8.8%). However, the equivalent figure for those whose fathers were unemployed was markedly higher than both at 15.4%.

If the results are considered in terms of the aspirations of respondents, it is found that whereas 7.1% of those aspiring to non-manual jobs answered 'no' (to both questions), the corresponding figure for manual aspirants was 13.2%. It should, however, be noted that the gross numbers were small, and that neither association (with background or aspiration) reached (.05) statistical significance.

More young men answered 'no' to this question than did young women, the respective percentages being 14.9% and 8.9%. This measure of reluctance to migrate showed little association with the location of prospective school leavers.

245 respondents named preferred place (or areas) to which they would migrate, of which sixty three destinations came from 'first time' migrants. There was considerable divergence between first and second time migrants, with the former tending more frequently towards venues abroad and the latter more often favouring short range moves (Table 10.4).

Table 10.4

|  | | 1st time | 2nd time |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preferred destinations | | migrants | migrants |
| North-east | 55 (22.4%) | 9 (14.3%) | 46 (25.3%) |
| London/SE | 68 (27.8%) | 15 (23.8) | 53 (29.1) |
| Britain (other) | 72 (29.4) | 14 (22.2) | 58 (31.9) |
| Abroad | 50 (20.4) | 25 (39.7) | 25 (13.7) |
|  | 245 | 63 | 182 |

$X^2$ 19.72 df3 prob. .00

In terms of relationship with the background of respondents, distance of migration (at least in its extremes) was positively correlated with inclination to migrate, so that those from non-manual backgrounds were most 'adventurous', those whose fathers ' were unemployed most 'parochial' (Table 10.5). (3) (See also Taylor (1966:96)

Destinations varied little according to the occupational aspirations of respondents, other than for those intent on the forces. The latter eschewed local moves almost entirely, while nearly half of the suggestions were abroad. It is, of course difficult to gauge exactly what was being envisaged in these statements, ie the assumption of living or simply working abroad. Both sexes offered fairly similar responses with one major exception, namely that more young women offered local (north-eastern) destinations than did young men, the respective percentages being 30.1% and 12.8%. Taken with the

finding that more young men were opposed to migration itself, this suggests a situation where young women were readier to move but wished to remain closer to home, with young men more inclined to either remain in their home area or move a considerable distance away. (4)

As in other area of the questionnaire, reasons given by respondents were post-coded. the 'customary' pattern of non-manual aspirants offering more reasons for their verdicts also applied to the questions on migration. For those preferring to stay, the main reasons given were as displayed in Table 10.6.

## Table 10.6

### Reasons for staying

|  | N |
|---|---|
| family | 106 |
| friends/social life | 68 |
| easy travel | 64 |
| familiarity | 45 |
| like people in area | 39 |
| like area | 33 |
| cost, accommodation | 28 |
| identity, attachment to area | 25 |
| miscellaneous | 66 |
| total number of reasons | 276 |

Not surprisingly in an area of very high unemployment, attention was concentrated upon factors outside work, which could be seen as falling into three main groups. The first was upon social networks, particularly those of family and friends, but also to some extent a wider 'community'. Family was mentioned by one hundred and six (38.4%) of would be 'stayers', more frequently by young women (44.4%) than young men (32.1%).

I wouldn't want to leave my family.

I would stay to be with my family.

I would miss my relatives.

I would not leave because your family would want you.

A number of those with single parents wrote of not wishing to leave the latter, or of 'helping out'.

My mam would be left by herself if I worked away from my home area.

I wouldn't like to leave my mother on her own.

If I could get work I would stay in the area to help my mother out.

Friends (including boy- or girlfriends) were the second most common factor, referred to by sixty eight (24.6%) of those preferring to stay

All my friends live in the area. so does the girlfriend.

I would rather stay so at times when I wouldn't be working. I could go out with friends.

I want to stay in this area for a bit yet to stay with my mates and have drink and a good time with them.

The association of friends with staying in the area was sometimes expressed negatively in terms of the difficulty of making friends elsewhere.

> If I had to work away from it would be hard to make new friends.

> You would have to make new friends and this may be difficult. Therefore your life will be very lonely.

> I am very lazy and don't want to leave the area with having to find ... new friends.

Thirty nine respondents referred in a more general way to 'liking the people' in their home area.

> I like the people round here.

> I find that the people in my area are generally friendlier than in other areas.

A second set of factors could be identified relating to perceptions of special attachment to the area, whether this was seen in terms of familiarity, a sense of identity or simply positive appraisal of the area's characteristics (Coffield et al (1986:142)). At least one of these factors was mentioned by eighty nine (32.2%) of 'staying' respondents. By far the most distinctive feature of this group's composition was that fifty six of its members were male. Thus, while only 23.2% of young women mentioned this form of attachment, 41.8% of young men did so.(5) One possible explanation for this is the hegemonic 'masculinity' of Coalfield culture, which might consequently have evoked greater affection from young men. (6)

Conversely, women in the Coalfield have tended to distance themselves from this imagery to a considerable extent (Townsend and Taylor (1974:44). The tradition of greater female migration based on domestic service should also be remembered here.

Low in-migration to Durham (see ch.1) has created a situation where a massive majority of residents have been 'born and bred' in the

area. Thus, knowledge of that area and conversely ignorance of others seemed to have combined to strengthen the local attachment (Coffield et al (1986:117,123)).(7)

> I know my way around the area very well.

> I know people and know where I am in the area.

> I only know my way round Peterlee and I would get lost if I moved out.

> If I left the area I would not know my way round and could find myself 'lost'.

Feelings of identity deriving from being locally 'born and bred' were often made explicit.

> I want to stay in the area because I have lived here all my life.

> I have been brought up in this area and would like to stay.

> I have lived in Consett all my life and ... have adapted to it.

Similiarly, there was recognition of 'cultural differences' which militated against moving (Taylor (1966:167)).

> I wouldn't move because of starting again and the difference in cultures.

> In the area I am familiar with the social conditions and the way people live. I think it is important to be in an area where you are accepted as being one of a group of people from the same area.

> Easy to understand dialect.

Although statistically, expressions of 'attachment' were fairly uniform between the three locations, Bishop Auckland seemed to attract most of a handful of eulogies about particular places.

> There will never be another Bishop Auckland. It's a great place, plenty to do.

In small group interviews, views tended to be extremely mixed on the question of whether there was 'anything to do' in home towns. Verdicts within the same groups would range from 'loads' to 'nothing at all'. These interviews also revealed that affection for local areas could go hand in hand with recognition of 'objective' deficiencies.

> It's a hole, but it's my home and I like it. (Carol)

> I like the slagheaps (laughs) ... no, I think it's just knowing everybody and what's going on. (Veronica)

> It doesn't matter what other people say, you love it, you're used to it and it's your home ... you've never known anything else. (Geoff)

Six respondents chose to link the preference for working locally with concern for their community.

> I would like to help the 'home' community.

> If I became a police officer I would like to help the community which I have been brought up in. I would like to make Peterlee a better area.

> I would like to stay in the area to help other people, help rebuild the place. (Consett)

The third group of reasons advanced for remaining in the area were largely practical, focussing on easier travel and the convenience of living at home.

> Bus fares will be too expensive out of the area.

> Quicker to get home.

> It is cheaper to pay board than it is to rent a place.

> Working away would have to live in lodgings.

> Home comforts.

> I like my mum's cooking.

Others offered the view that decisions about moving away would

have to wait until they were older, and presumably more capable of coping with the move.

Table 10.7 shows the main reasons given by those stating that they did not wish to remain in their home area.

Table 10.7

Reasons for leaving

|  | N |
|---|---|
| unemployment | 44 |
| travel/new places | 35 |
| dislike of area | 18 |
| different people | 17 |
| necessary for chosen job | 13 |
| independence/freedom | 9 |
| miscellaneous | 15 |

total number of reasons 85

Apart from the thirteen respondents who felt it necessary to leave the area to pursue their chosen careers, forty four (51.8%) of those expressing a preference to leave mentioned unemployment as a contributory factor.

There's not much hope of getting a job here.

Too few jobs for too many people.

The town is full of unemployed boys and girls.

> Not much opportunity in Peterlee.
>
> There are not many jobs in Bishop Auckland.
>
> Consett has not got very good job prospects and everyone goes for one job.
>
> Jobs are hard to get and anywhere would do just to get one.

Reference to unemployment as reason for out-migration was strongly associated with aspiration to non-manual occupations. While 67.6% of would-be non-manual migrants mentioned unemployment as a contributory factor, the corresponding figure for manual aspirants was 32.0%.(8) In interpreting this evidence of differential 'enterprise' or what Mann (1973:62) terms 'relocation propensity', it is important to bear in mind the situational logic of those concerned. As was noted in chapter 1, the labour market in Durham (and especially its 'Coalfield' area) has remained overwhelmingly manual. In turn, this strengthens the requirement for many non-manual aspirants to look beyond their locality for opportunities. Particularly for those intent on recognised 'careers', the rewards for moving and penalties for staying were likely to be greater than for those aiming for less specialised markets. An additional factor is that movement is generally easier for those whose occupations have a geographically wider labour market, because of national advertising, regional college courses and the like.

The implicit assumption that areal unemployment was unlikely to improve was sometimes made explicit, in an extremely poignant way.

> There are no jobs where I live and there will never be any jobs.
>
> There are no prospects here and I would probably lose my job after a while anyway.

Perhaps the strongest statement on the effects of unemployment came from one prospective leaver who preferred to move

> because there are almost no jobs to be got in the Derwentside area. I also want to leave Consett because it is a depressing area and is like an industrial area with no-one at work. This place makes me vomit.

Against this, a few of those preferring to stay in the area had argued either that things might or would improve or that unemployment was as bad elsewhere.

> This area could have more prospects for a job than others.

> There is a lot of unemployed people but this will pass.

> The country is all in the same condition.

Reluctance at 'having to leave' was openly expressed by six respondents

> I would like to stay if there were some more jobs.

> I prefer this part of the country but there are better prospects of finding work away from home.

Other than issues relating directly to (un)employment, reasons for leaving revolved around dissatisfaction with the home area and/or desire for new experiences and contacts. Comment could be couched in terms of local deficiencies or distant attractions (Taylor (1966:136).

> To get away from everything, because I don't like it here.

> I can't stand the area where I live because they are all vandals and rogues.

> I am tired of seeing this area. I would like to see somewhere new and exciting

> Working away would give a refreshing · change of environment.

Specific mention was made of moving to places which were 'more beautiful' or where 'there is more going on' and in one case, 'somewhere which would be a more suitable place to raise children'.

Images of the Durham Coalfield as a 'poor' area were also in evidence.

People get more money in other places.

The standard of living is better in other areas.

While, as has been seen, family very often provided a reason for staying in the area, nine respondents cited family problems and/or the desire for independence as reason for leaving.

Away from your nagging parents

Personal problems at home, eg continual arguments.

Freedom from my parents.

Would give me a chance to stand on my own two feet.


## Experiences

Although the situations faced by the young workers and prospective school leavers in this study showed many similarities, certain differences should be borne in mind. In particular, the former's age and greater (potential) degreee of financial independence made decisions about migration a little less 'hypothetical', and rendered both prospects and obstacles more immediate and concrete. It should also be remembered that the majority of young workers were 'occupied', even if mainly on YOP schemes.

Young workers were asked questions similar to those on the questionnaire, namely whether they wished to leave or remain in their home area(s) and if intent on staying whether failure to find employment would change their minds. Respondents were also asked to expand on the reasons behind these choices and also to offer more direct opinions on their home area(s). As all those interviewed had

remained within their locality since leaving school, this sample bias must be acknowledged, although one suspects that independent migration within the first two years of leaving school would have been comparatively rare.(9)

Responses of the eighty eight young workers to the question of preferring to leave or stay within home area(s) showed a similar pattern to those of prospective school leavers (Table 10.8).

Table 10.8

Respondents preferring to stay within their home area(s)

| | |
|---|---|
| yes | 62 (70.5%) |
| no | 14 (15.9%) |
| don't know | 12 (13.6%) |

Of the sixty two interviewees 'opting' to stay, seven held full-time jobs, so that the matter of whether they would move if unable to find work did not apply. From the remaining fifty five young workers, thirty two (58.2) said that in such a situation they would move, with twenty three (41.8%) stating that they would not. These figures stand in marked contrast with those for prospective school leavers,(10) and demonstrate a considerably greater reluctance on the part of young workers to migrate. The reasons given for decision did little to explain this difference, which probably arose from a combination of young workers' greater awareness of the practical difficulties of moving and their involvement in, and access to the 'shadow' labour market of the YOP.(11)

Professed inclination to migrate showed minimal variation according to the sex, employment situation or location of respondents, nor to the time elapsed since leaving school. It did however, seem to be associated with the educational qualifications and moreso, the class background of respondents.

Of the twenty three most intent on staying in their home area(s), sixteen had 4CSEs or less, with seven having 5 CSEs or more.(12)

If responses are considered in terms of fathers' occupations there appeared to be a fairly sharp dividing line between classes 3 and 4 (Table 10.9).

### Table 10.9

| migratory intention | Fathers occupation | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | class 2,3N,3M | class 4,5 or unemp'd |
| leaving | 12 | 0 |
| leaving if unable to find work | 22 | 7 |
| staying | 9 | 9 |

$$x^2 \quad 9.40 \; df2 \; prob. \; .01$$

Comments about home areas were subsequently classified by the researcher as 'positive', 'negative' or broadly 'neutral', with the result as follows (Table 10.10).

Table 10.10

Views on home area(s)

'positive'  38

'Neutral'  25

'negative'  25

As might be expected, these opinions showed strong links with decisions to leave or remain in the area.(13) Links were, however, far from 'watertight', with a small minority of would-be migrants expounding positive views of their localities, and negative comment coming from 'stayers'.

Despite the association between areal imagery and migration decisions, their respective patterns of association with other variables were by no means identical. In particular, imagery did vary according to the sex and location of interviewees, whereas decisions on migration did not.

As in the case of prospective school leavers, young male workers professed more affectionate views of their home area(s) than did their female counterparts, although this difference fell short of (.05) statistical significance (Table 10.11).

Table 10.11

Views of home area(s)

|  | male | female |
|---|---|---|
| 'positive' | 21 | 17 |
| 'neutral' | 14 | 11 |
| 'negative' | 8 | 17 |

$\chi^2$ 3.96  df2  prob. .15

With regard to location there was a sharp division between Consett and Bishop Auckland on the one hand and Peterlee on the other. As can be seen from Table 10.12, Peterlee was regarded markedly less favourably than the other two locations.

## Table 10.12

|  | Peterlee | Bish. Auck. | Consett |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'positive' | 6 | 14 | 18 |
| 'neutral' | 12 | 8 | 5 |
| 'negative' | 10 | 8 | 7 |

If Peterlee is compared with the other two towns, the $X^2$ value of 8.06 df2 yields a probability of .02.

It is useful to set the data of Table 10.12 in the context of de-industrialisation and its 'phases'. In particular, it is important to consider the relationship betwen 'objective' and 'subjective' imagery. In chapter 1, the importance of nostalgia was noted, with love/hate ambivalence resolved over time in the direction of idealised 'love'. This factor may well have contributed to the eulogistic way in which the south-west Durham town of Bishop Auckland was sometimes described. 'Nostalgia' would have had less time to settle in Consett, but the campaign to save the BSC works (albeit unsuccessful) may well have stimulated awareness of place and something of a sense of embattled loyalty. It was certainly the case that many Consett respondents were painfully aware of the town's 'disaster area' quality, yet felt strongly attached to it.

In examining the position of Peterlee, it is important that its status as a New Town is taken into account. Undoubtedly, some of the negative images held of it derived from unfavourable comparison with neighbouring pit villages in its felt lack of community and flat-roofed housing. However, its location in east Durham was also important for it was here that mining was still sufficiently alive to promote worries about dangerous work, environmental ugliness and the like.

Opinions on home area(s) showed no association with educational qualification, which suggests that the greater inclination of the more qualified to migrate does not stem from views of home per se. Like migration preferences, however, such opinion was related to the background or respondents, with less favourable views expressed by those whose fathers held jobs in classes 2,3N, and 3M.(14)

Before examining in more detail the content of young workers' opinions about how home area(s) and migration from it, it is useful to recall certain characteristics of the Coalfield referred to in chapter 1. In particular, the modern pattern of constant and substantial net out-migration had created a situation in which migration figured prominently on the agenda for those in communities where the vast majority of inhabitants had strong 'roots'. Thus, awareness of 'decline' and its effects often co-existed with strong affection.

Reasons offered by young workers for or against migration were broadly similar to those given by prospective school leavers, but this should not be taken to mean that transition did not change certain attitudes towards this issue. Rather, small minorities of interviewees

reported changes in both directions, some more, some less inclined to migrate in the light of their post-school experiences.

For those preferring to stay, family and/or friends were a major influence, referred to by forty seven respondents. Occasionally assumed ties to family were such that the question about migration was interpreted as referring to the whole family. Peter H. stated that he was 'stuck in the area with my parents living here' while a rather startled Graham L. replied 'not by mysel'.'

The majority of comments simply indicated that for many young workers family links militated against moving from home.

> There's no way I'd leave. I'd miss my parents too much (Anne D.)

> I wouldn't go away from home. (Sandra J.)

> I divn't like being away from home. (Leslie G.)

A few interviewees made explicit the notion of temporary dependence. Lesley C. said

> I've often thought of going somewhere, but then I think I
> still need my parents there at the moment, cause it's only
> my mam gives us encouragement and I think at the age I'm
> at now I still need it.

The direct importance of family as a counter to factors encouraging migration was frequently acknowledged.

> I've been thinking about it, but I don't know if I'll be
> able to move away from home. I like to be with my mam.
> (Denise V.)

> I'm just too attached to home. I turned down the chance of
> a nanny's job in London cause I get homesick if I'm away
> more than a day or two. (Angela F.)

> I'd like to work abroad, why, I'm saying I would but I
> just don't want to leave my family and friends and my
> home. (Sylvia R.)

Six young workers thought that their parents (usually mothers) would not allow them to leave.

I don't think my mam would let us go. (Steven D.)

I've thought about getting a job down London but I'm not sure that my mam would let me go. (Sharon W.) (15)

Loss of existing friendships and the perceived difficulty of making new ones elsewhere were mentioned by twenty seven young workers.

I've got a canny few friends here. (Paul J.)

All my mates are here. (Anthony L.)

It would be horrible moving somewhere else and then starting all over, getting to know everybody. (Jean N.)

I'm shy and I don't think I'd get to know anybody if I moved somewhere else. (Susan P.)

Four young women stated that they were staying because boyfriends (in one case husband) wished to remain in the area.

Occasionally family of friends might be offered as the sole reason for staying.

I'd miss my friends but nothing else. (Trish C.)

It's only my family that keeps me here. (Christine W.)

Roughly twice as many references to family and friends came from young women as from young men, which suggests that these factors weighed more heavily for the former as reasons for staying. Perceptions of home area(s) on the part of would-be stayers clearly demonstrated the 'paradoxical' combination of recognition of 'objective' weaknesses and 'subjective' appreciation of the friendliness and familiarity in home communities. Leaving aside, for the moment, the matter of employment prospects, images of conditions

in the Durham Coalfield were largely negative, even among those preferring to remain there. Only a tiny minority regarded local facilities at all favourably and some of them tended to damn with faint praise, fulsome lauding being extremely rare.

> Bishop, it's really great. (Geoff K.)

> A lot of people play it down and give it a bad reputation but it's not the dirty, scruffy place, like everybody thinks. (Douglas W.)

> It's OK for football. That's about all. (Terry T.)

Eight young workers chose to describe their home town(s) as 'dirty' or 'scruffy', while no less than twenty five dubbed them 'boring'. Sylvia R. said of Peterlee,

> it's dead boring, for it being a new town, there's nothing in it,

while Heather T. said of Bishop Auckland, 'there's nothing to do for young people'.

Five young women (four from Bishop Auckland) commented on the way violence marred social life.

> There's nearly always fighting at the discos and they're closing a lot of them. (Lesley H.)

> I think it (BA)'s awful, nothing but trouble, fighting going on all the time. (Gillian G.)

However, at least half of these various denunciations were qualified with more affectionate remarks.

> Not that there's much here, but I like it. (Patricia P.)

> Sometimes I get a bit depressed and wish I'd never lived in Peterlee, cause there's nothing to do, but I still like it. (Tricia K.)

> Why, there's no social night life, but I don't know, I just like it. (Richard D.)

> I want to stop here. I know there's nothing here but I
> want to stay ... I don't know why, it's not as if it's sin
> city. (Karen H.)

If any reason was given for liking home area(s) in spite of their

deficiency, it was invariably related to local people.

> There's nothing to do, I just like the people. (Geoff W.)

> It's not picturesque but it's what I like. It's just the
> people, I like the people. (Olwyn G.)

Young workers were not specifically asked about their places of

birth and upbringing, but many chose to state that they had been 'born

and bred' in their 'current' locality, and it is likely that an

overwhelming majority of interviewees had been. Almost all had

recognisable 'Geordie' accents. 'Belonging' to their particular

town(s) was overwhelmingly viewed as a reason for staying.(16)

Local familiarity appeared to combine with limited knowledge of

other places to promote belief that nearside grass was greener or at

least that known devils were preferable to the unknown.

> I've lived here all my life. I don't think I'd like to
> live anywhere else. (Susan P.)

> I've lived in this area all my life and you sort of get
> used to where you live. (Geoff R.)

> It's just that I've been brought up here. (Julie M.)

> It's the only place I know. (Kathleen H.)

> Maybe you're brought up in this environment, I suppose you
> don't know no different. (Chris W.)

> I don't really know what it's like in other areas so
> that's why I suppose I would like this area more. (Alan
> B.)

Apart from such general allusions to attachment, there were also a number of more specific references to the perceived qualities of local communities. Five young workers spoke of places where 'everybody knows everybody' (Taylor (1966:294)).

> I know everyone here and ... everybody's friendly. (Jean N.)

> You know everybody. If you left you wouldn't know a soul. (Diane J.)

For a further five, their home area(s) enjoyed a level of friendliness not found elsewhere - 'elsewhere' usually meaning 'down south' (Coffield et al (1986:186) Taylor (1966:87)).

> It's great. I think people are more friendly up here. I mean, I've been down south ... on holidays and they just seem snooty towards you as though they own the place. (Patricia N.)

> People are dead friendly here. Even if you don't know them very well they start speaking, more than what they would do any other place. You can make friends out of complete strangers up here. (Audrey W.)

Philip G. commented that, down south, 'nobody talks to anybody', and Geoff W., in explaining his disinclination to move said

> I just like Consett. I'm proud of living here, don't like cockneys of anywhere else like that ... I just don't like them, they think they're great.

Alongside labels of 'southerners' as arrogant, snobby and unfriendly, Michael F. added that of their being 'soft'.

> All right, a lot of people have to live with the hardship up here, but then again, Consett's always lived with the hardship. Anybody coming up from the south, from London, if they moved up here tomorrow they would want to go back down south because they couldn't stick it. But we can ... we can show to people that we can stand the hard times.

With relatively unstructured interviewing, it is difficult to gauge the extent of belief in north-easterners as more hardy, friendly and down to earth then 'southerners', but it seemed likely that at least a sizeable minority subscribed to such views. Favourable references to local 'community' and its characteristics were not uniform across the three locations, with Consett (perhaps 'benefitting' from the 'unifying' effects of the BSC closure) attracting markedly more than the other two.

Although there was no testimony directly linking incidence of unemployment with 'community', it was certainly the case that awareness of unemployment added to the 'objectively' negative view of home, against which the 'subjective' strength of community survived.

Quite apart from the practical and material difficulties for the unemployed in moving away, there is also a sense in which their need for alternative sources of strength becomes greater. In addition to support from family and friends, familiarity and identity with an area may help to provide this. Similarly, when accustomed to finding work via contacts, attempting to do this locally may still be a more attractive (and realistic) proposition than placing faith in the more distant mechanisms of state and private capital.

Even among those inclined to stay there were few illusions about employment prospects, nor of the deadening effects of unemployment.

> It's getting a bit dull, doing the same things every day.
> There's no jobs, If you were working you'd have money and
> be able to do more get around a bit. (Graham L.)

> With the company shutting down you never see nothing
> happening now. (Gary F.)

Geoff R. thought he detected  small signs of revival in  Consett, observing that

> it's gone a lot quieter  now than it used to  be when  the
> works were open. When it first closed it used to be  dead.
> But since they've built the new bus station it's picked up
> a lot.

Two young workers  from Shildon, near  Bishop Auckland  commented that the former would become a  'ghost town' if BREL workshops  closed (which they did in 1984).

Five interviewees helped to  explain their decisions  to stay  in spite of  unemployment by  suggesting  that prospects  elsewhere  were little, if any better.

> Most of  the  country's  just  as  bad  unemployment-wise.
> (Peter R.)

> I have thought about it but there's no jobs anywhere round
> the country ... so there's no point in leaving. (Brian M.)

> It's the same everywhere, no  better, no worse.  (Nicholas
> N.)

Roughly  three  quarters  of  all  comment  on  the  effect  of unemployment on  migration decisions  came  from young  men,  although there is  no way  of  assessing the  extent to  which  this  reflected difference in concern over employment or in choices of explanation.

Unemployment elsewhere  was  not  the  only  obstacle  to  moving mentioned, others being the cost

> I couldn't afford it. (Diane P.)

> If you get into trouble, you'd have no money to get out of
> it, (Paul C.)

and difficultly in finding accommodation.

Robert P. said he would leave the area for a good job,

> if I had the keys in my pocket of the place I was staying
> at and I definitely had the job. I wouldn't like to go
> away to look for one.

Similarly Peter R. stipulated that job and accommodation

> would have to be lined up. Otherwise, it's such a big step
> to take with so little money.

Five other young workers made similar remarks to the effect that,
while willing to move in order to work, they did not regard migration
'on spec' as feasible.

As was noted earlier, a small majority of would-be 'stayers' said
they they would be prepared to migrate if unable to find work, albeit
with considerable reluctance.

> I'd give it serious thought about moving down somewhere
> there's plenty of painting. (Kevin S.)

> I'd leave the area to get a job. I'd go anywhere.
> (Denise N.)

> I wouldn't leave unless I had to, but I would if I had to.
> (Graham A.)

By virtue of providing 'security' in terms of employment and
accommodation, the armed forces were often viewed as offering the most
practical escape route from local unemployment, and held the
additional advantage of allowing a home base to be kept for leave.
Alison B., who said that if she left, it would be to join the WRAF,
argued that

> it would get us out of here, but I'd be able to come back
> a canny bit as well.

It should also be pointed out that a number of young workers had,

despite wishing to remain in their home area(s), nonetheless applied for civilian jobs some distances from home. Nine in the study reported such applications, and it is almost certain that there were many unreported attempts. Six of the nine were young women who had sought domestic posts in the south-east.(17)

Even if such thoughts were not translated into action, migration was often 'considered' as an option when the local situation appeared grim.

> Sometimes I get depressed about jobs ... I think about it but I never do anything. (Arthur F.)

> I'm always thinking of leaving here and getting a job somewhere else but I don't think I'd ever do it. It's just when I get fed up, I just think if I went somewhere else it might be better ... but I don't know whether it would be or not. (Pamela J.)

There were also seven young workers who felt that their jobs (in two cases schemes) were keeping them (or allowing them to remain) in the area.

> Before I started this job (scheme DK), I was thinking about leaving. (Sean D.)

> If it wasn't for this job, I'd be down in Sheffield now. (Lorraine G.)

> I'm glad I've got this job cause I was brought up here and now I can stay. (Donny S.)

Among those indicating a desire to leave the area, the need to escape unemployment figured prominently, being mentioned by eight of fourteen would-be migrants, three of whom stated that it was their only reason.

> I'd like to go somewhere else and see if I can get a job. (Trish C.)

It's just that there's no jobs. (Jacqueline N.)

Just the jobs, 'cause I love the area, really. (Brian P.)

Peter A., who expressed willingness to go anywhere to get a job said that he would always return if the availability of work made this possible.

> I could move away for a few years but I don't think I could permanently live away ... I couldn't go away for good and forget all about Consett, I've have to come back sometime.

> It would just be for a job. Chances are I'd be back as soon as I could. (Audrey W.)

Negative views of home area(s) as boring and run down were, however, much more common, among would-be migrants.

> If I was given the chance to move as far away from Peterlee as I could I would take it. There's nothing here. (Stephanie G.)

> There's not a lot really to do. I mean, you can't go to a decent pub or disco in Consett. It's just all trouble and it's getting worse all the time. I think it's ... with all the people that's been finished in Consett. Nobody's working and everything's just getting worse. I don't think anywhere's as bad as Consett. I've never lived away but ... I don't like Consett. (Laura H.)

> Peterlee ? the houses are dropping to bits. It's a wreck. (Amanda K.)

The desire to travel was referred to by eight would-be leavers.

> I've just lived here all my life and I'm just bored with the same routine, the same places ... I just want to travel a bit, just to see the world, I'd love to go abroad. (Sharon V.)

> I'd like to move just to get out and see other places. (John R.)

For those keen on travel, factors such as familiarity with home area(s) or 'tight-knit community' were regarded as reasons for change rather than continuity.

Once you know the place, you know it. (Paul B.)

I've been here seventeen years and I feel like a change. (Diane J.)

It's terrible here, everybody knows everybody. (Lorraine G.)

Similarly, family, which for the majority acted as a force against migration, had the opposite effect for a small minority.

I want to get away from home. (John R.)

I could do with being where you've got no-one to get on your back. (Stephanie G.)

Those offering 'don't know' verdicts to the initial question on migration fell into two camps, namely those who had 'never thought about it' and those who were ambivalent when weighing factors such as desire to escape unemployment and for travel against those of wishing to remain with family and/or in the home community.

In this chapter, there has been an examination of attitudes towards migration from the Coalfield held by (prospective) school leavers. In particular, there has been a concern to relate this longstanding debate to the situation faced by young workers in the early 1980s. This entailed widening the focus beyond immediate youth labour markets to look at perceptions of home towns and areas.

Whatever the hopes of the regional 'modernisers', it was clear that the three Coalfield towns (all category A settlements) were viewed in 'objectively' negative terms, as environmentally poor places, lacking in employment opportunities and facilities. If for some, this scenario was sufficient inducement to leave, for many more home towns (especially in west Durham) were the objects of considerable affection. Such sentiment existed in spite of 'objective'

images and rested on family and friends, and the familiarity of 'community'. Another important feature was subscription to a view of cultural distinctiveness, at least in the north-east, if not always a specific Coalfield phenomenon. In this view, the natives were regarded as friendly, hard working and stoical, in contrast to the 'snobbery' and 'softness' of southerners.

Patterns of (likely) migration appeared to show strong continuity with local traditions, revolving around those wishing to join the armed forces, young women entering domestic employment and those of both sexes aiming for (the higher reaches of) the service sector. Throughout there was noticeable division between the sexes, with young men apparently more attached to notions of identity and culture, and more reluctant to leave than young women.

## Notes

1   Apart from relocation grants etc, remember NCB policies.

2   The recreation of dependence is most obvious in the restrictions placed upon benefit entitlements for those under eighteen, but can also be seen as part of the hidden agenda in the regulations relating to bed and breakfast accommodation for the young unemployed, alongside their ostensible aim of forcing mobility in the search for work.

3
Table 10.5
preferred destination

| father occ'n | north east | abroad |
|---|---|---|
| non-manual | 16.4% | 26.2% |
| manual | 21.1 | 19.5 |
| unemployed | 29.3 | 14.6 |

$X^2$ 3.44 df2 prob. .19

4   It was interesting to note that the only negatively expressed preferences related to London and the South
      Never London and surrounding areas.
      Definitely not down south.

5   The $X^2$ value for analysis by sex was 10.89 df1 prob. .00.

6   See chapter 12 for the basis of this imagery in heavy industry, hard drinking, sports fanaticism and the like.

7   As a corollary to the prevalence of 'born and bred' young people, it was also apparent from small group interviews that travel beyond the area tended to be very limited.

8   This divergence owed little to the former offering more reasons for departure than the latter. Unemployment accounted for 32.5% of all reasons given by non-manual aspirants but only 19.5% of those by their manual counterparts.

9   See chapter 1.

10  The $X^2$ between the respective yes:no ratios was 29.12 df1 prob. .00.

11  Most prospective school leavers seemed to have only cursory knowledge of the workings of YOP and consequently viewed employment and unemployment in more polarised terms.

12  A condensed cross tabulation of intent to stay or leave with educational qualifications yields a $X^2$ value of 4.15 with one

degree of freedom (prob. 04). Condensation occurred with divisions between 4- and 5+ CSEs and professed intent to stay, even if unemployed.

13   $X^2$ 21.92 df4 prob. .00.

14   The $X^2$ value was 8.78 df2 prob. .02.

15   Amanda reported having had a definite offer of a nanny's job in London but her mother had stopped her even after long arguments. I really wanted to go. I was all set.

16   In the north-east the term 'belong' is widely used, signifying 'to come from' ie s/he belongs Consett would indicate someone from Consett.

17   Two said they had been successful (at least for a trial basis) but had subsequently withdrawn, in both cases because of the hostility of their parents to the move.

## Chapter 11


### The Politics of Youth Unemployment


In preceding chapters, this study has considered various aspects of the lives of young people in Durham making the transition from school to work. Much of their testimony might be regarded as carrying political messages, albeit at differing levels of generality, and with varying degrees of awareness on the part of the messengers. In this chapter, however, attention is focussed more directly upon 'youth unemployment', and upon what might be done to alleviate it. Questions in small group interviews began in an open-ended (and colloquial!) fashion. ('Is there anything you think could be done to help with youth unemployment?')

Themes introduced by interviewees could then be taken up, but when conversation dried up, opinion was sought on the YOP. A further 'set' question was whether respondents felt that 'lads' or 'lasses' were affected more by youth unemployment.(1)


### Anticipations

The picture which emerged from small group interviews was that while the dire state of local employment prospects was universally known, unemployment as a phenomenon often appeared highly mysterious. Clearly, such an abstract issue may have been of little relevance to those whose primary concern was to find work, but it was also likely that lack of knowledge or comprehension may have added to feelings of

helplessness. Opinions which were offered tended to be sharply divided on most issues and usually fitted Fox's description of practical ideology as a 'ragbag' (1971:125), or Hoggart's 'bundle of largely unexamined and orally transmitted tags' (1958:103).

It should be remembered here that schools were (on the admission of teachers) overwhelmingly shy of discussing unemployment, so that views were more likely to have rested on media accounts or information derived from personal contacts.

Whatever doubts there may have been regarding the causes of, and solutions to youth unemployment, prospective school leavers rejected almost totally any notion that it was due to the qualities of young workers. 'I just think they want somebody to blame'.

Thus, even where there was recognition of the value of training and experience in enhancing prospects, this was seen in terms of an abnormally difficult labour market rather than deficient labour-power. Another apparently 'universal' belief was in the appropriateness of state intervention, although varied opinions were expressed as to the adequacy of intervention to date.

A sizeable minority felt that state measures (especially the YOP) were as much as could be expected.

> I think the government are doing about all they can. It's just the world situation. (Peter)

> They already do everything ... bricklaying and all sorts. I don't think there's anything else they can do. They're doing their best. (Phillip)

Favourable views of the YOP were similar to those catalogued in chapter 5, highlighted its desirability vis a vis the poverty and boredom of unemployment, its provision of experience and/or training and the possibility of retention in full-time employment. There was also mention of its 'public order' role.

Good for keeping people off the streets. At least on a six
month government scheme you know where they're at, working
and not roaming the streets smashing up places. (John)

Gives them money to save them breaking in places. (Alan)

Among those sympathetic to government performance, there seemed
to be implicit acceptance of the latter's limited powers over the
labour market.

A small majority were critical of either or both specific policy
measures and more general economic performance. Criticism, often quite
venomous and highly personalised, tended to rest on notions of very
sizeable state powers being ill-used for sins of omission and
commision.

Kick the government out, they've been making unemployment,
closing down small firms. (Brian)

They should get her out, Thatcher ... there was plenty of
jobs before she got in. (Carol)

Shoot Maggie Thatcher ... she's horrible. Since she got in
the pound's gone down and she's made England a laughing
stock. She's a stuck up, nosey old what not. (Alex)

Shoot Maggie Thatcher. She's always trying to close places
down and she gets away with murder. If she stopped doing
that and started leasing more, getting some of those
factories open through at Aycliffe there'd be no more
unemployed people round here. (Tony)

For some, the continuing expansion of industrial estates had
served to highlight the 'anomaly' of idle productive capacity
alongside mass unemployment.

The other week I was walking through the industrial estate
and there was at least ten big factories empty, where they
could take on hundreds ... nobody's bought them or rented
them. (Graham)

Over on the Greenfield industrial estate there's been five
new factories and none of them can open 'cause of Maggie
Thatcher. (Andrew)

Criticisms of the YOP were, again as in chapter 5, that it was based on 'cheap labour', offered minimal help towards full-time employment and indeed caused unemployment by encouraging the substitution of schemes for jobs.

> It's just like having a disprin ... killing the pain for so long because at the end of it you've got nothing. (Paul)

> It's ridiculous. You could get on but they're just avoiding paying money. As soon as they get rid of one they get another one in and they're not paying a penny. (Sandra)

Overall, the government were held more responsible for substitution than were employers on the grounds that the latter's behaviour, while far from welcome, was rational, or even inevitable. As Russell put it,

> if you were an employer what would you do, have free labour or pay somebody out of your own pocket to do exactly the same job. (2)

There were a few suggestions that schemes should be scrapped. Other specific policy suggestions, of which there were relatively few, also appeared to command at best small pockets of support. Perhaps the most popular was the notion that older workers should give way to the young.

> I think they should be moving older people into retirement and getting younger ones in. That would knock all the dole queues down (William)

> They should bring retirement down, and then we can take over all them old people's jobs. (Marie)

There were also proposals for changes in expenditure, diverting money into 'job creation', presumably conceived as some form of subsidy.

> Build new factories instead of cutting taxes ... just to
> set a couple of hundred people on, at least they wouldn't
> be on the streets. (Charles)

> Cut down spending on school and cut down on the law,
> buying police cars and that ... then there'd be more for
> jobs. (David)

Notwithstanding appreciation of the scale of unemployment, there were still those who put forward views that unemployment was too 'cushy' and that corrective action was needed.(3)

There were also some suggestions that benefit levels were too high, although this tended to be hotly disputed within discussions.

| Sandra | I think the dole's too high. |
|--------|------------------------------|
| Robert | You what? |
| Sandra | I do - it's too tempting to not work. |
| Tracy | You're crackers. |

Occasionally, a regional dimension to unemployment was introduced, attacking government and private capital for the southward drift of jobs

> I think they should bring more jobs up North, they take
> too many jobs down south. Companies all go down south
> 'cause the pay's better there. The goverment's down there
> and we seem to get left with less to do here.

The following passages are useful for setting such concerns within a broader perception of north-south divisions - of being forgotten and historically betrayed.

> It doesn't hit them when they're down south. It doesn't
> hit them that we're up here. We're so far away from them,
> we're the remotest part before you get to Scotland and
> with us being between the midlands and Scotland they just
> like to forget about us and shove us in a corner. (Carol)

> I think they're got this fixed idea of what the
> northerner's like, and no matter what you do they'll stick
> to it. We're just the lower working class. They forget
> that some of the best things have been produced up north.
> We've got some of the best records for industry, yet they
> still take all the jobs down south. (Geoffrey)

It is useful to examine more closely the ideas in these quotes. The theme which binds them together is that while exploitation is certainly recognised, it is apparently experienced on a regional rather than class basis. Government culpability is thought to be considerable and the former's location in the south assumed to reflect and foster pro-southern bias. Southern prejudices and short memories have led to injustice in the distribution of jobs, with northerners the losers. Insofar as class is acknowledged, this occurs along stereotypical lines with the north seen (at least supposedly in southern eyes) as 'working class', implicity contrasted with a more middle or upper class south. Ennis (1986) has provided a useful analysis of the ways in which 'regionalism' has been promoted as an ideology within the north-east. The central elements in this endeavour have been first, the presentation of a culturally unified and internally 'classless' or 'working class' region and second, the location of problems 'externally', whether in the hands of fate, or more terrestially, in the south. Like all ideologies, strength rests on the plausability of its partial truths - in this case the 'discrepancy' between industrial heritage and 'record' and present distribution of jobs, and in the fetished world of aggregated statistics.

As Ennis has noted (1986:26), the importance of the metropolitan-provincial axis is not new. However, it does seem that political debate about 'north-south' division has grown in recent years. This changing emphasis is noticeable, for example, in the 'State of the Region Reports' (NECCA), where analysis has increasingly been offered in terms of north-south comparison, or more specifically in the contrast between north-east and south-east.

There are parallels here with what Nairn terms the 'neo-nationalism' of Scotland and Wales, of which he remarks

> located on the fringe of the new metropolitan growth zones, they suffer from a relative deprivation and are increasingly drawn to political action against this. (1981:128)

In discussion of the incidence and effects of unemployment for the sexes, the most popular, though by no means overwhelming view, was that both were similar and equally grim. Where suffering was regarded as unequal this usually took the form of prospective school leavers arguing that things were easier for the opposite sex. This might be taken as indicating a lack of self-confidence over employment prospects, spiced with a dash of sexual rivalry. To justify these verdicts different interpretations were placed on broadly agreed 'facts'. Young men argued that factory jobs, the main avenue of employment, were predominantly 'female'.

> I think it's worse for men, because women can get jobs in the factories or on production lines. (Neil)

> Nearly all the lasses I know at this school is getting jobs at factories. (Alan)

The male 'breadwinning' role was also brought into play.

> Man have got to have a big income for their families so it would be more frustrating for them and bad for their consciences. (Sharon)

Young women focussed strongly on the greater range of opportunities open to men, often utilising pitwork to show the limits of moves towards equality of opportunity.

> There's always more jobs for men anyway. (Michela)

> There's more men's jobs than women's in this area, so I think it's worse for women. Men can work down the pit but we can't and there's lots of jobs like that round here. (Liz)

> I still think there's more jobs for lads ... like we can't
> go down the pits, well  we could with equal  rights but  I
> don't think any of us would. (Victoria)

Similarly, it was also pointed  out that, given  their degree  of
reliance  upon  factories   for  employment,   young  women   suffered
disproportionately from the steady stream of factory closures.

> I think  it's harder  for  lasses. I  mean,  there's  only
> clothing factories and  typing, secretaries  and loads  of
> factories are closing down. (Ruth)

These debates provided useful insights into perceptions of change
and continuity in the Coalfield labour market. However 'selective' the
interpretation, both 'camps' had their valid points.

For young men, there was recognition of the progressive  collapse
of traditional 'male'  industry and  the  fact that  much of  the  new
(factory) industry  has provided  jobs  for women.  Conversely,  young
women  were  well  aware  of  the  restricted  range  of  (normative)
opportunities  open  to  them  (with  pitwork  a  crucial  symbol  of
exclusion) and of the tenuous nature of employment offered by the 'new
industry'.

Surprisingly perhaps,  there was  little  reference  to  domestic
labour, either as a means of 'usefully occupying time' or as a  burden
from which employment  offered (partial) escape.  Sarah, however,  did
offer the view that

> women might feel  more  pressure on  them to  get  married
> 'cause their parents might  not want to  support them  any
> more.

## Experiences

For the eighty eight young workers in the study, youth unemployment was a much more directly experienced phenomenon than for prospective school leavers. Most of the fomer had been unemployed and had worked in schemes with future unemployment a likely fate. Even the small minority with full-time jobs were aware of the majority plight. The question asked in their interviews were broadly similar to those asked of fifth year pupils, namely with focus on possible 'solutions' to youth unemployment and on its effects across the sexual division of labour.

On the question of what might be done to alleviate youth unemployment it seemed that most respondents found it a bemusing issue, offering at best very limited suggestions. For some, this undoubtedly reflected a reluctance to appear foolish by opining on such an important topic. However, there was also a considerable amount of self-confessed ignorance about and/or disinterest in 'politics' (Coffield et al (1986:192)). Twenty five interviewees said that they had 'no idea' about what might be done in relation to youth unemployment. While two expressed embarrassment at 'not being able to think of anything', there were also three who laughed at the very thought of offering any views.

In a labour market so dominated by schemes, it was perhaps unsurprising that a majority of specific measures proposed related to schemes. Apart from numerous calls for higher allowances, there were ten respondents who proposed some form of expansion - usually longer

duration of placements, with three requests for wider coverage within the labour market. In more critical vein, thirteen young workers cited abuses of schemes which should be rectified by the government. these were essentially the same abuses as those cited in chapter 5, namely that many schemes offered little or no training, and provided employers with successive sources of cheap labour to supplement or replace existing workers. The suggested solutions were for the government and/or employers to pay higher allowances and for the former to utilise its 'watchdog' role to ensure proper training and some prospect of retention. The question of 'substitution' led a further nine young workers to argue that schemes should be stopped, so that resources could be transferred (usually in the form of subsidy) to 'proper jobs'.

> If they stopped these altogether and then used the money on proper jobs, that would be better, start building things up. (Geoff W.)

> If they stopped government schemes then there'd be more money for apprentices and firms would need apprentices instead of people on government schemes. (Brian P.)

Patricia N. contended that money saved could subsidise other jobs. Instead,

> all these factories are closing down. So they go on the dole and they need more money to pay people on the dole. So that money could have been saved to help the firm stay open. That's what I don't understand.

She went on to say that the number of schemes was

> getting a bit out of hand. In a couple of years I think all jobs'll be government schemes. This country'll just be government schemes.

Other measures had few proposers, although the 'voluntary' basis of proposals should be borne in mind here. Five young workers argued that the answer to youth unemployment lay in removing from the labour market those for whom work was perceived as least essential, namely older workers and married women (Lonsdale (1985:84)).

> Take all the married women and older people out of the shops and give the young kids a chance ... people who've been working there for years and years or they're fifty, fifty five ... who don't need to work. (Patricia P.)

> They should get the married women out, that's what's stopping everything. They don't need to work, 'cause they've got their husbands to support them. Then they're leaving babies with their mothers and that's all wrong. (Amanda K.)

There were three suggestions that more 'disciplinary' measures such as wage cuts or compulsory community service should be introduced.

> If people would accept less wages than there would be more jobs, 'cause they could afford to take on more people ... I think everybody should do something for what they get, unemployment benefit ... maybe sweep a street, clean a few windows for some old people. (Carol P.)

Lesley C. saw potential in unemployed people starting their own businesses, though she thought this impractical for people of her age group.

Perhaps the most dramatic proposal was Anthony L's 'Luddite' solution.

> Smash all the machines so that kids have more chance of a job ... sounds a bit silly but the more machines there are, the more people are going to be out of work. Next, they'll have a computer talking to me and you'll be out there saying I used to talk to people.

Apart from these specific 'recommendations', there was a considerable amount of comment, sympathetic and hostile in fairly

equal measure, directed towards the government. As with their school counterparts, those young workers sympathetic to the government emphasised the latter's relative powerlessness and well-intentioned efforts (Jackson and Handy (1982:23). 'I think they're doing everything they can'. Relative powerlessness was attributed to various factors. State powers could be seen as inherently limited in terms of 'job creation' or as curtailed because of expenditure constraints.

> There's not much they can do really, is there? (Brian M.)

> There's not a lot they can do, 'cause there's just no jobs around. (Denise V.)

> They can't spend more money on us to get jobs can they, 'cause they're hard up as it is. (Brian P.)

> There's nothing really much they can do at the moment, the state the country's in ... They haven't got the money, that's what they say ... I don't know. (Peter H.)

Steven D. maintained that the problem of unemployment was essentially beyond the control of any particular government.

> I feel sorry for them myself. I mean, people condemn Maggie Thatcher, but I think if Labour or the Young Socialists were in, the same would have happened.

Others commented on the scale of unemployment and how recovery would require a long haul, although responsibility for the demise was sometimes laid at the government's door.

> You can't just give three million people jobs can you. (Carl R.)

> Once they get the Company knocked down, they'll maybe build more factories and there'll be more jobs but I think that'll be four or five years yet before it starts to pick up round here. (Gary F.)

> I don't think there's a lot they can do now ... too much unemployment now, it's too late. (Julie M.)

They've got themselves in too much of a mess now. (Laura H.)

Critical views expressed by young workers also bore similarity to those voiced by fifth year pupils. These included strong personal attacks on the prime minister.

> There's nothing really unless they get rid of Margaret Thatcher ... she's never done owt right. (Paul B.)

> I would just like to blow Maggie Thatcher up. It's all her fault. (Patricia N.) .

> Talking to Thatcher is like talking to a brick wall. (Anthony L.)

Chris W. was particularly upset at Thatcher's claim that YOP trainees were satisified with their lot.

> If she tried to work forty hours a week for twenty five pound she'd soon know. Same with Mark Thatcher, 'you've got to get off your bottom to find a job' and he's got all that money. Here the lads are lucky if they can get out once a week.

Others pitched their criticisms at the class politics and prejudices of the Tory party.

> They just do everything for rich people. She (MT) doesn't know what the working class are like. She's never had to deal with that type of person. I think she just takes a guess at what they're like. (Elaine N.)

Michael F., attacking the closure of Consett steelworks which 'had always made a profit' (4) continued,

> they're always the same, Tories, whenever they get in, working class people suffer. They take it out on the working class, like, a lot of the schemes are just cheap labour.

For some, it seemed that concentration of efforts at industrial regeneration on the industrial estates only served to make the weakness and instability of the local economy more visible.

> I just don't like this government at all. They're putting
> nothing into getting firms going ... there's factories up
> here but there never seems to be anybody working in them.
> (Graham L.)

> All these firms are always talking about expanding and
> taking people on but it never seems to happen. There's so
> many companies like that on these new industrial estates
> and you can be there six months and the company's changed
> it's name three times ... it goes bust, changes its name
> to another name. It's all backed by government money.
> (Peter R.)

More generally, the government was blamed for 'closing everything down' while two young workers drew attention to the wastage of expenditure on nuclear weapons at the expense of employment.

With some exceptions, expressed views on the phenomenon of (youth) unemployment appeared to indicate that many young workers felt they knew little about it and often showed little interest. Of course, the difficulty of answering such abstract questions unprepared should not be underestimated. Nor, as has been seen in other chapters, were these answers exhaustive of comments on the 'politics of youth unemployment'. However, the difficulty of proposing counter measures was often openly admitted and might be inferred from many other responses.

In many ways, this is predictable. As noted earlier, teachers from the school covered in this study readily admitted that they fought shy of discussing unemployment because of its 'negative' connotations, while none included any political education in their curricula. It should also be remembered that the MSC has fought a determined battle to keep its schemes for the young unemployed 'free of politics' (Jackson (1985:162)).(5)

Although there has been no shortage of media coverage of youth

unemployment, the focus has rarely been on causes and cures. TV programmes such as '16 up' and 'Inside YTS' have allowed some debate on the merits of training schemes and there has always been a current of media coverage portraying the plight of the young unemployed in a sympathetic light. Generally, however, in their concern to be 'constructive' media presenters have often concentrated on 'job-finding advice', or on acting as a form of surrogate Jobcentre.(6)

These efforts may have helped to dispel some of the worst myths about feckless youth, but kept the spotlight firmly on the young unemployed rather than the labour market which was somehow taken as a 'given'.(7)

Quite apart from any difficulties in obtaining information about youth unemployment, it must be recognised that for many, perhaps a majority of interviewees, 'politics' was of little interest.

When the main concern of most unemployed workers is to find work rather than understand unemployment, this is not altogether surprising. There is, in addition, recognition of the difficulty of exerting influence. As Mills has argued,

> indifference may be seen as an understandable response to
> a condition of powerlessness ... there is a felt lack of
> power between the individual's everyday life and what is
> going on in the distant world of politics. (1956:347) (8)

It might be expected that abstract ideas are of greater interest to those with the power to act upon them, and less likely to suffer from the consequences.

In view of the considerable dissatisfaction catalogued in this study and the largely negative perception of the YOP, it may be asked

why such complaints did not lead to more active opposition or greater rebelliousness. As has been pointed out in various contexts, oppression even where fully recognised does not automatically lead to revolt (Slater (1977:22), (Hobson (1978:91)).

Furthermore, as Roberts observes (1984:63), the unemployed are

> offered no ideologies linking their personal predicaments
> to political action.

This point is of particular relevance for those making the transition in the Durham Coalfield. For what has been evident throughout this study is the way in which traditional cultural forms have been 'clung to' tenaciously, even as the economic base from which they derived was slipping further over the horizon. 'Work' remained of central importance, with unemployment (and schemes) to be endured with stoicism.

Such ideological 'fixation' is not, of course, unique to the north-east, but it is in the latter's particular set of historical circumstances that it becomes painfully acute.

Even disregarding issues of consciousness, the barriers faced by the young workers in this study were considerable. Many were isolated in their workplaces, with strong pressures towards pragmatism, seeming the most immediate escape route from unemployment, which often placed a great premium in conformity. Once again, as Roberts writes, interest in campaigning against youth unemployment is a minority affair and that while many argue that the politicians 'do something'

> the majority find it simpler and earn much greater respect
> by devising individual escapes than by uniting with their
> unemployed fellows. (1984:63)

Such tendencies were reinforced by the transitory nature of the

YOP population and their individual placements.

Recent memory of the unpaid demands of school should also be reckoned as making a raw deal at least marginally more palatable. Oppositional feelings were often in evidence, most strongly captured in the various 'terrorist' threats towards Margaret Thatcher.

Petition signatures and even attendence at protest rallies were fairly easy to come by and there was sizeable spontaneous support for the YOP strike on Derwentside (see ch 7). What was crucially lacking, however, was any ready means of translating these into sustained action.

It also appeared that, in most cases, oppositional feelings did not lead (or attach themselves) to any recognisable political perspective. One reason for this may have been that none of the dominant political ideologies provided a ready home for such sentiments. The gap between the two is described by Hall et al (1978:155) in terms of

> the contrast between general ideas (which the hegemonic culture defines) and more contextualised or situated judgements (which will continue to reflect their oppositional material and social base in the life of the subordinate classes).

The authors also point to the way in which 'ruling ideas, tend to form the outer limits and horizon of thought in a society' going on to say that subordination is not merely a mental process but a product of relationship with the dominant institutional order which embodies those ruling ideas ( :154). This was evident in the comments passed upon government performance in relation to youth unemployment.

In line with Habermas' proposition that 'the state apparatus

vacillates between expected intervention and forced renunciation of intervention' (1976:62) views were bounded, on the one hand, by 'minimalist' notions of state intervention and on the other, by demands for much greater intervention. The latter, however strongly expressed, were almost invariably 'social democratic' in nature, arguing for employment through subsidy to capital. Employers themselves were largely absent from young workers' testimony, portrayed either as a background 'given' or as useful recipients of state aid.

Thus, while the question of remedial action on unemployment was generally assumed to be a political issue, potential action was clearly circumscribed by the perceived strength of civil society.

It should be noted that markedly more comment was passed by young workers from Consett than from the other two locations. This seemed to have derived from the BSC closure and its aftermath which had made unemployment and state-led regeneration much more of a 'live issue' in the town.

Youth unemployment was seen as more of a problem for young men than young women by both sexes and 'across the board' in terms of class background, qualifications and location.(9) Thirty eight interviewees took this view, against only ten who regarded it as a greater problem for young women. Forty young workers said that it was much the same for both sexes.

A number of young workers argued that unemployment was worse for young men because the jobs they wanted (ie 'trades') were impossible to get, while women's jobs were easier to come by. Ironically, the

most popular illustration of the latter, namely shopwork, was almost impossible to find employment in.

> A lass can always work in a shop serving behind the counter. (Joan E.)

> Lasses don't mind working in shops but lads think it's poncy. (Carol P.)

For the majority, however, the extra problems faced by young men derived from difficulties in fulfilling expected gender roles and supposedly more 'volatile' temperament. Thus, the impoverishment of unemployment had to be considered in the light of sexual partnership.

> It's a bit rough if they've got girlfriends to take out. (Patricia P.)

> Lads get married and they have to bring wages home, don't they. (Donny S.)

> Lassses get married their husband goes out to work so they don't really have to work (Michael M)

> Personally I don't think ... (lasses) ... need a job really ... 'cause a lass is only going to be a housekeeper, no matter how well she's been trained. (Andrew H.)

It was sometimes assumed that lads suffered because, in the usual way of things, they were more active.

> I mean they like to be out and about, drinking and that. (Sandy B.)

> Lads ... why, they do more, don't they? (Graham L.)

> It's worse for a lad having no money, if they want to go out, or they've got a car. (Patricia P.)

> Lads go out, lasses just stop in the house. (Norman G.)

Robert P. explained the fact that lads but not lasses were to be seen 'kicking around the town centre' via the notion that the latter 'haven't got as much to do' adding 'they cannot play football'. Donny

S. also thought that lads 'would feel terrible' if losing out in job competition with lasses. However, in relation to her own competitive situation with young men she was more straightforwardly 'meritocratic'. 'Whoever works the best, they're entitled to get kept on'. According to Chris V. work was more important for a man 'because of pride'. No less than twenty one young workers suggested that lads became more bored and frustrated than did their female counterparts, with twelve explaining this in terms of the latter's domestic duties keeping them occupied.

> Lads get bored quicker than the lasses. Why, a lass can ... help round the house, but a lad, it just gets them down. (Denise V.)

> Most lads can't stand it if they're not working, lasses are used to not working, they're married and housewives, lasses are all right. (Stephanie G.)

> Lasses can help their mams do the housework ... the shopping. Lads, you know what they're like they say 'Im not doing that and they get bored more. (Diane J.)

> Lasses usually stop at home anyway when they grow up. (Chris V.)

'Ironically', most of these polarised stereotypes were alluded to by those whose own mothers worked.

What was noticeable here (as in Donny S's comments on retention) was the gap between general and situated judgements. Thus, abstract propositions could be adhered to even when contradicted by personal experience or attitudes.

Eight interviewees (all female) argued that young men tended to react more aggressively to their boredom, resulting in a variety of outbursts.

> They get sick and then they get ratty. (Denise V.)

> Lads get bored and start breaking into places. (Patricia
> P.)

> If they're just sitting around, they get more violent than
> lasses and start vandalising things. (Tracy G.)

> If they're got nothing to do, people start causing trouble
> roaming the streets, especially the lads, 'cause for
> girls, walking the streets it's just not done, where lads
> it doesn't matter. (Lesley H.)

Those arguing that unemployment was more problematic for young
women advanced one of three propositions. The first was that they
faced more restriced opportunities both in job and schemes. A second
was that expenditure on clothes necessitated more rather than less
money vis a vis young men, the third that domestic labour was an extra
burden rather than a partial relief.

> There's a lot less things a lass can go in for. (Sylvia
> R.)

> I think it's worse for lasses 'cause they like to spend
> more on clothes. (Nicholas N.)

> Lasses get given more to do when they're on the dole,
> housework and that. (Trish C.)

Interestingly, it was suggested by six interviewees that young
women were markedly more positive than men in their efforts to find
work. No-one suggested the opposite.

> Lasses try harder. Lads give up, they're weak willed.
> (Lorraine G.)

> The girls tend to try harder to get jobs. Some of the
> lads, they're just lazy. (John R.)

> A lot of lads are not bothered, they just go down the
> beach, walk round the town looking for a girl or
> something. (Susan W.)

Taken in the abstract, youth unemployment appeared often as a
somewhat mysterious phenomenon of dubious interest. While there was

considerable variety in the views  expressed about possible  remedies, this variation was nonetheless contained  within distinct  parameters. Many views were 'fatalistic' believing that current measures were  all that  could  reasonably  be  expected  and  that  the  situation  was essentially 'beyond the control'  of government. One  variant of  this line was to advocate extension of 'current' measures (longer  schemes, more retention etc) and/or the correction of 'abuses' within them.

There was very limited support  for ideas of the 'radical  right' such as a  more disciplinary  approach to the  unemployed  themselves. There were those, however, who saw solutions to youth unemployment  in terms of removal from the labour market of those such as older workers or married women, who 'didn't need to work'.

'Keynesian' solutions  based on  state  subsidies for  jobs  were perhaps the most popular of alternatives to 'current' politics.  These proposals were sometimes linked to the abolition of schemes, with  the savings gained thereby being available for subsidy. Analysis in  terms of class was rare and often couched in the form of personalised attack on  Margaret  Thatcher  (Seabrook  (1982b:116),  Coffield  et  al (1986:192)). Indeed, some of these venomous attacks were likely to  be rooted in 'regionalist' concepts with  Thatcher's 'southernness'  more of a problem with than class or politics per se.

As noted  earlier,  there  was  little  sign  of  the  widespread dissatisfaction felt with unemployment and the YOP translating  itself into concerted action. Anger there  certainly was, as the  'terrorist' comments show, but  'riots' and  the like were  and remain,  extremely unlikely responses to un- and  sub-employment. Neither has there  been

much indication of growing political radicalism. Rather, there was a strong sense that the 'stoical' aspect of traditional Coalfield culture (aided by family and 'community') would provide both personal 'moorings' and maintenance of a degree of social order.

## Notes

1    This too was asked in an 'open-ended' way, inviting responses either in terms of incidence of effects of unemployment.

2    This echoes Hoggart's notion that 'we're all rogues under the skin is the assumption ... I'd probably do the same if I had the chance' (1958:113).

3    'People should have to work in a church or a graveyard cleaning it all up and that for the dole'. (Andrew)

4    This emphasis, which was influential in the anti-closure campaign itself, demonstrates the way north-east 'regionalist' ideology easily runs into a cul-de-sac, falling back on old notions of 'pride' and 'hard work' long by-passed by the modern international division of labour. Such ideological notions, developed at a time of local economic prosperity, have become increasingly out of touch with current realities of economic management and employment decision-making. Put simply, their economic base has been cut away.

5    See chapter 7, for the MSC's definition of political as anything advocating a new strategy.

6    Radio One's 'Action Specials' would be an example of the first, while Tyne Tees TV's 'Job Slot' provides an example of the second.

7    At times, the desire to be positive led to matters being portrayed in an unduly optimistic light. When the NCB closed its apprentices' workshop and re-opened it as YOP training centre, the Evening Chronicle wrote.
'About 100 North East dole queue kids are being given a big chance to find work - thanks to the Coal Board.

The MSC's meeting of a regional target of 25,000 places was heralded with the headline 'YOP is tops for North School leavers' while the following article sang the praises of the MSC and its achievements.

8    In her postwar study, Jephcott noted
'the widespread belief that politics are just a racket' (1948:122).

9    These comments came in reply to a similar 'open-ended' question as was asked of prospective school leavers.

## Concluding Comment

There are two linked purposes in this brief final 'chapter'. First, mindful of the study's setting in the early 1980s, there is a need to offer some 'updating', both in relation to national and local developments. A second aim is to consider the study's findings in the context of debates introduced earlier, particularly those of work orientations, labour market divisions and the (impending) arrival of post-industrial society. Some statistical and factual updating has already been provided in chapter 1, where several factors were noted. It was demonstrated there that the economic problems faced by the north-east region and the Coalfield area had worsened and that the latter's youth labour market had continued to shrink. Dependence on schemes had grown, while the number progressing from them to employment had remained low, despite extension of scheme length to one and subsequently two years. Although in its infancy, the introduction of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative appeared to have had little impact on the local educational scene.

As the (largely negative) experience of schemes chronicled within this study related to the YOP, it is useful to offer some comment on the likelihood of change with the introduction of YTS. The latter attempted (at least officially) to take on board and rectify some of the criticisms levelled at YOP. In particular, the often poor quality of training under YOP was recognised and various improving measures were incorporated into YTS. One was that large companies (generally

assumed to offer better training) should be encouraged to participate more fully in YTS than was the case with YOP. A second feature was that all trainees should have the opportunity of at least 13 weeks 'off the job' training. A third was that there should be an emphasis on 'transferable skills' and the acquisition of these should be more closely monitored and recognised by the award of certificates. However, studies of the operation of YTS have tended to suggest both that the rhetoric of improved training far outstrips the reality and that to some extent this is intentionally so.

Despite the emphasis on the involvement of large firms, a majority of Mode A placements have been arranged via MSC-accredited managing agents whose sources appear to be virtually identical to the discredited providers of YOP places (Finn (1985:122). As Short contends

> the YTS which was implemented looked much more like the
> old YOP than the dreamed-of high-quality training scheme.
> (1986:45)

The MSC's major bureaucratic training initiative has been the introduction of 'occupational training families' (OTF) and 'profiling' whereby trainees are assessed in terms of their acquisition of specific skills from within the OTF appropriate to their work setting. Various important criticisms have been raised in relation to profiling. In particular, it has been justifiably argued that many of the specified 'skills' are of an incredibly basic and menial nature. Atkinson has described this as a process of 'colonising everyday life' (cited Gleeson (1986:57)). In similar vein, Finn (1984:54) writes of trainees

> they are not really in need of many of the social and life
> skills on offer from the MSC and its training programmes -
> of 'coping', 'resisting provocation', 'taking orders',
> 'getting on with fellow workers' amd so on - because they
> have already had many of these experiences and learned how
> to deal with them competently and realistically.

Elsewhere Finn (1987:179) has argued that the harsh realities of
low-level skill training are hidden by the complexity of bureaucratic
classifications and the rhetoric of skill acquisition. He further
suggests (on the basis of evidence from leaked documents) that the MSC
has deliberately set out to undermine traditional notions of skill
because of their 'restrictive' effects and to replace them with
emphasis on 'competence'. The principal MSC concern here lies with
motivating and monitoring 'the bottom 40%', adapting them to the
narrow requirements of the semi- and unskilled labour market (Finn
(1987:138-9). Thus, it can also be seen that profiling attempts to
cast a false homogeneity across work with widely varying skill content
(Buswell (1986:74)).

In an attack on the 'new vocationalism', Cohen (1984) argues that
the emphasis on transferable skills is aimed at the production of
'abstract labour', and attempts to weaken workers' control under the
guise of equipping all (:113). Central to this endeavour is the
fostering of competitive individualism, holding out the possibility

> for individuals to triumph over even the most adverse
> circumstances, provided they work at it hard enough,
> follow certain advice and act consistently in their own
> self-interest. (:125)

As Whickham (1986:63) contends, the major trend within YTS has
been that of growing centralisation and tightening the grip of state
and capital over the scheme's operation. The rhetoric of 'training'

has been used to mask this growing subordination to the narrow interests of employers. Yet, the MSC's project is not without its (internal) contradictions. Perhaps the most important of these derive from its effect on youth employment levels. In a cautious analysis Raffe (1983) argues that despite helping some individual young workers and effecting some occupational redistribution at the expense of older workers, the overall impact of schemes on youth employment has been negative due to the substantial incidence of substitution. Not only has the MSC's response to substitution been consistently feeble (Finn (1987:144), but the latter has been actively encouraged by the incorporation of first year apprenticeship training within YTS and the 'additionality' principle which allowed employers three additional trainee places for every two jobs offered (Jackson (1985:140). Given the failings of YOP, it was scarcely surprising that the MSC dropped any employment aims from YTS (Raffe (1983:292)). Yet the political importance of (youth) unemployment guarantees that success will continue to be measured in terms of trainees gaining employment and that widespread failure to do this will lead to increasing practical and ideological pressure upon the MSC. Already, these failures have led to the extensions of YTS and recently the introduction of the Job Training Scheme (JTS) which operates along similar lines to YTS but 'caters' for the 18-25 age group (many of them YOP/YTS graduates).

Further contradictions arise from the MSC'S formal (and politically necessary) commitment to 'equal opportunities' and its reliance on private capital in the operation of YTS. Writers such as Marsh (1986:161), Whickham (1986:57), and Cockburn (1987:36) have all

offered clear demonstration that the 'ghettoisation' of young women workers on schemes has continued with the passage from YOP to YTS. Thus, the MSC's commitment to equal opportunities for women has remained firmly rhetorical (Whickham (1986:55).

Such rhetorical confinement is equally applicable to the question of racism (Finn (1987:149) (Solomos (1986)). Pollert notes how YTS was held up by the MSC as an opportunity to break discrimination (1986:177). Yet it rapidly became clear that young black workers, already suffering from the wider racism of the labour market, were systematically discriminated against within YTS. This took the form of exclusion from Mode A schemes (especially those with prestigious large employers) and lower rates of retention from schemes (:190). Faced with such evidence even from its own research, the MSC quickly backtracked, arguing that

> it would be wrong to look to training schemes of any kind
> to solve more widespread problems of discrimination in
> employment (cited (:178).

Instead, the effects of racism were to be construed in terms of 'special needs', to be met, not by any challenge to racism but by offering black youth further 'work preparation' in Mode B schemes (:181).

Alongside other forms of labour market division can be placed the regional effects of uneven development. As Lewis and Lunn indicate, in areas of high unemployment where reliance on schemes has been greatest, outcomes have been less favourable. They note that whereas in the south-east 66% of YTS trainees moved to employment and 17% to unemployment, the corresponding figures in the north-east were 40% and

40% (1987:3)). As in other arenas, the practices of the MSC appear to compound rather than diminish such inequalities. Davies (1984:5-6) points out that the most positive resources, such as those associated with growth industries, have tended to be concentrated in more prosperous areas, while concerns in the depressed regions have been more 'basic' ie focussed on work socialisation. Evidence from many of the non-WEEP schemes encountered in the present study tends to support this view.

Another form of 'update' is possible from the study by Coffield et al (1986), providing as it does acccounts of the lives of young workers (aged 16-28) in the Coalfield area.

The authors depict a situation where employment histories are fragmented (:87), experience of sackings, redundancies and long-term unemployment common (:86, 101, 59) and survival on low incomes or benefits increasingly difficult (:60). Throughout the variety of schemes and jobs experienced, training had been minimal (:112). While the study's participants could not be taken as entirely representative of Coalfield young workers, the degree of divergence was not particularly great. What was clear was that for those who had outgrown YOP/YTS schemes, gaining any form of regular, let alone rewarding, work was extremely problematic. The bleak picture drawn contrasts somewhat with the more benign view offered if ostensibly similar experiences in Liverpool and London by Roberts et al (1984). They argue that unemployment is not always or even usually such a soul-destroying experience as is often assumed and that many young workers quite enjoy the flexibility of opting in and out of casual labour, education and so on. Apart from any differences in research

approach or interpretation between these studies, perhaps two of the crucial variables would be the strength of 'work consciousness' and the relative lack of opportunity for such flexibility in the Coalfield area, where even the 'informal economy' was weak (Coffield et al. (1986:54). In terms of the young workers figuring in the present study, it seemed that many of the problems faced in the early years of transition would persist and often deepen with the passage of time.

It is now time to return to the relationship between study findings and debates on labour market changes, and it is initially the question of labour market divisions which is addressed. Perhaps the most obvious contextual factor to note about the Coalfield labour market has been the steady drift from 'primary' to 'secondary' sector employment. This shift is evident in the rapid disappearance of jobs in coal, iron and steel and engineering and their replacement by branch plants and small-scale factory production, both of which have largely shared the characteristics of the secondary labour market. While growing female employment is clearly welcome, it has occurred as part of this eroding shift and overall decline in workers pay and conditions.

In the youth labour market, the key feature has been closure of recruitment to jobs in either sector, and the advent of schemes to manage the resulting unemployment. Consideration of how schemes relate to the wider labour market is hampered by the lack of accurate statistical breakdown, although the broad contours are well enough known.

It is important to remember YOP's origins as a 'remedial' scheme

and the haphazard voluntary process by which it came to cater for a majority of school leavers. Growth occurred particularly among small employers from the secondary sector, although this has changed somewhat with the advent of YTS.

Analysing the fit between schemes and the wider labour market sectors is a complex affair and the following comments are clearly impressionistic, although I believe fairly accurate. The most obvious link has occured through WEEP (later Mode A) schemes based on employers premises. However, the relationship between those schemes and their hosts has varied considerably. In some instances, where 'probation' prevailed, trainees would, in effect, become part of the firm's internal labour market, although ease of passage to employment would be subject to wide variation. Where permanent substitution or 'altruistic' training were the practice, trainees were clearly not part of employers' internal labour markets, although they may have gained a toehold within that segment of the labour market in terms of experience.

Within YOP, placements in the primary sector were both comparatively rare and unlikely to be on a probationary basis. 'Altruistic' training took place overwhelmingly in the primary sector, including the use of redundant training capacity (as in the case of the NCB and BSC). Prospects of secondary sector placement leading directly to employment ranged from high probability to near-impossibility, partly according to the segment concerned (eg the contrast between factories and shops) but also dependent on the practices of individual employers.

If the status of WEEP trainee often masked virtually total detachment from internal labour markets, there was no such disguise for their non-WEEP counterparts. With recruitment low, and WEEP forming a layer between them and the labour market, the bleak outlook for non-WEEP trainees was all too clear. Again, there was wide variation of work undertaken. Where training quality was high, prospects of WEEP places, and possible employment, rose, but where 'make work' and baseline socialisation were the order of the day, they became even more remote.

McKie's working paper 'Gaining Access to the Labour Market via the Youth Training Scheme' (1984) provides a useful account of how far this situation in the Coalfield has changed since the move from YOP to YTS. As in other areas, this move has brough certain changes but the underlying similarities are very strong. Perhaps the major change under YTS has been the greater participation of large employers from the primary labour market, who have increasingly ceased direct recruitment and/or incorporated it within YTS. This can be seen as the culmination of a process already well advanced under YOP, namely the disapperance of the school-leaver labour market. With this 'rationalisation', schemes have come to be more comprehensively 'wrapped around' the labour market and its divisions. Thus, as McKie points out (:13)

> entry to and participation in certain schemes acts as an allocation process for the few jobs available in the primary labour market. Trainees on other schemes compete for available employment in the secondary labour market.

Within the latter, many of the same divisions catalogued in the present study had persisted. Retention from retail schemes remained

'non-existent' (:22), while Mode Bl schemes (Training Workshops and Community Projects), although often providing good training continued to offer little as 'job-finding' routes (:26).

In terms of other labour market divisions, there has been no evidence to suggest that the near-total sexual segregation within schemes has changed under YTS. However, although there is ample evidence of widespread racism (and 'tribalism') within the Coalfield area (Taylor (1966:89), Seabrook (1982b:116, 128), Coffield et al. (1986:196), the absence of young black workers meant there was negligible opportunity for actual discrimination.

On the question of orientations to work, perhaps the most noteworthy feature in the study was the high degree of cultural continuity in a situation where much of the material base of that culture had disappeared. While Hill rightly questions the appropriateness of the term 'traditional' for any section of the modern working class (1981:205), there appeared to be strong surviving elements of working class Coalfield culture in the testimony of participants.

This was noticeable in various ways, from the valuation of practical learning and dismissal of formal education, to the stoic endurance of unemployment and modest expectations of working life. 'Traditional' patterns of sexual division were widespread. Although the lack of opportunities for display of 'instrumentality' must be remembered, it seemed too, as if its relative weakness was also rooted more deeply in class/areal culture. Work was valued highly, but this should not be simply equated with a highly developed 'work ethic'

(Rose (1985)). Rather, it represents (the legacy of) accommodation to unpleasant necessity, endurance of which brought, at the least, respectability, and at best, prestige within the local community. It should also be remembered , here, that such 'affluence' as existed among Coalfield workers was generally tied to declining and/or unstable industry, and that the base for growth of 'privatisation' was significantly weaker than in most other areas of the country.

In relation to debate on 'post-industrial' society, there is clear evidence (see chapter 1) that in the Coalfield area any post-industrialism would more closely approximate to the 'collapse of work' scenario than to the communication/knowledge/technology variant. As Nairn argues in 'The Break-Up of Britain', with the metropolitian South set to become increasingly a service-zone for international capital,

> the situation will arise where unnecessary to offshore success, the industries and populations of the Northern river valleys will be shut down or sold off. (1981:388)

He goes on to suggest that transformation of peripheral regions into assembly stages or branch units provides the ideal complement for the City-Southern strategy which aims for a

> Southern hegemony permanently liberated from the archaic burden of the Industrial Revolution's relics, the subsidies that prop them up and the trade unions that agitate for them. (:391)

This analysis fits well with the evidence of a static or declining service sector and rapid fall in the key area of research and development (see chapter 1).

As has been noted, the MSC response to youth unemployment has entailed no challenge to labour market divisions, be they sexual,

racial or regional. Indeed, it can be argued that its operations have accommodated to employer dispositions to such an extent that divisions have been reinforced. State strategy on youth unemployment has continued to be punitive, blaming high wages, the cushion of benefits and the manifold deficiencies of young labour power. In attempting 'correction', the endeavour has been sufficiently extensive for Finn to argue that

> the government has embarked on an extremely ambitious
> attempt to remake the British working class. (1986:54)

The contradictory position of workers having no 'right to work' but nonetheless a duty to 'actively seek work' has been mentioned earlier (see chapter 3). This contradiction sharpens as unemployment grows. On the one hand, denial of any right to work must be reasserted in the face of criticisms of unemployment, while on the other, focussing on the duty to seek work simultaneously diverts attention from the capitalist economy to its victims and legitimates both measures for managing/training the unemployed and attacks on benefit receipt. In the management of youth unemployment, both these elements have been present with the MSC attempting 'resolution' by aiming

> to produce a generation of young people who are basically
> skilled and willing to work, but who can also maintain
> these qualities in suspended animation through any periods
> of unemployment they experience. Finn (1987:190)

In similar vein, Dale (1985:7) writes of aims which go beyond training to include

> the need to adjust ... (young people) ... to a new status,
> somewhere between work and non-work.

There are clear parallels here with Gorz's 'non-class of non-workers'. It is of course, in areas of high unemployment, such as

the Durham Coalfield, that these contradictions are sharpest and the need for 'suspended animation' greatest. Yet we have seen that the destabilising effects often associated with mass unemployment were little in evidence. The predominant response was adaptive and 'stoical', a matter of 'getting on with it'. As Coffield et al (1986:76) write,

> even though unemployment was often a depressing and demoralising experience, most were determined that they were not going to be totally overwhelmed by it.

The relative homogeneity and stability of community life was evident and important in several respects. One was that both contemporary and historical experience of unemployment were more widely shared, while generational conflict as expressed in the development or adoption of youth sub-cultures was less in evidence in the Coalfield than in most parts of the country (see chapter 9). The mono-racial make-up of local society meant that racism could not readily be translated into racial conflict. Similarly, in the Coalfield area itself, there were few 'flashpoints' such as those where the young unemployed might congregate in major centres of consumer traffic (Willis (1984:21)).

While the basis of this stability may have been different in several respects (and perhaps stronger), the position of young workers in the Coalfield showed strong parallels with that described by Willis in the West Midlands. In particular, this applied to the way in which despite (or because of?) patterns of transition having been decisively broken, there were powerful cultural forces for continuity, manifest in attempts to preserve or restore the old pattern of transition

(:20). In the Durham Coalfield (and the north-east generally) this endeavour rests strongly on sense of place, of historical achievement and betrayal, and stoic endurance. How this pattern will survive as the process of uneven development gather pace remains to be seen.

In drawing this study to a close, it is useful to summarise its implications for study of the transition. It has been argued throughout that analysis must be firmly a wider social context which must take cognisance of the spatial alongside other forms of division.

Yet perhaps the most important lesson to be drawn relates to the importance of culture (established in the context of particular material conditions but not reducible to them) in shaping response to change. In the case of the present study, this was manifest in the high degree of stability and 'continuity' in the face of a near-total collapse in local (youth) labour markets.

There appeared to be clear evidence of a local working class cultural 'hegemony', enshrined institutionally in the working men's clubs, a politically dominant but conservative Labour Party and so on. To talk of 'hegemony' is, of course, misleading, as the vulnerability to the effects of the capitalist economy and its uneven development was painfully obvious. Rather, it must be seen in terms of the existence of an 'enclave', wherein cultural and institutional forms provide something of a buffer against the impact of mass culture and ideological domination. In turn, this can be seen as a source of both strength and weakness. Strength derives from the relative lack of consumerist pressures, competitive individualism and the presence of a sense of belonging and attachment to community, all of which could

serve to cushion the dislocating effects of labour market collapse. Yet weakness was also present in the narrowness of horizons and parochialism and in the rigidity of cultural and institutional forms which allowed little space for alternative oppositionist or radical development. In this sense, the absence of 'youth culture' was clearly double edged, with stability countered by loss of 'critique'.

Returning to the question of theoretical models, there are two major factors worthy of mention. The first is that evidence from this study shows how the links between 'base' and 'superstructural' change are, to say the least, far from direct - with collapse in the labour market producing neither adaptive reorientation nor legitimation crisis. A second point is that this complexity requires analysis which not only goes beyond the institutions of school and work, but also that of family, to acknowledge the importance of wider political and cultural forms.

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

SCHOOL-LEAVERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Initials:

Sex (please tick appropriate space)    Male ___   Female ___

What job does your father do?

What job does your mother do?

Do you have any older brothers or sisters? If so what are their jobs?

What job would you like to do when you leave school?

If you cannot get that particular job, are there any other jobs you would like to do? If so, what are they?

What things do you think you will like about work?

What things do you think you will dislike about work?

When you choose a job what will be the most important things about it?
Choose the most important three from the following list and number  in
order of importance 1, 2, & 3

Good working conditions     ____
Meeting people     ____
High wages     ____
Good prospects for promotion     ____
Interesting work     ____
Travelling distance     ____
Any other (please specify)     ____

Would you like to work in your home area?

Please give reasons for either wanting to stay in the area or wanting to leave it.

If you would like to stay, but could not get a job, would you then leave?

If you left the area is there any place or area you would most like to go to?

Have you ever worked in
           a) a Saturday job
           b) a holiday job
           c) a work experience programme

If the answer to any of these is yes, please give details of the type of work done.

Could you write about this work saying  what you learned from it,  and
what you liked and disliked about it?




Would you like to join a trade union when you start work? Please  give
reasons for your answer.

## Appendix B

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the schools' sample according to the social class of respondents' parents. Alongside the percentage figures for the whole sample are set those for each of the three locations.

### Table B 1(a)

Respondents' fathers by social class (%)

| Fathers' class (R-G) | Sample | Bish. Auck. | Consett | P'lee |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class 1/2 | 17.8 | 15.2 | 20.5 | 17.7 |
| Class 3N | 7.3 | 8.5 | 5.6 | 8.0 |
| Class 3M | 36.5 | 34.1 | 34.8 | 42.5 |
| Class 4/5 | 13.0 | 19.6 | 6.2 | 13.3 |
| Unemployed | 17.8 | 13.4 | 26.7 | 11.5 |
| Other | 7.6 | 9.1 | 6.2 | 7.1 |
| Ratio of manual: non man'l | 1.97:1 | 2.25:1 | 1.57:1 | 2.17:1 |

### Table B 1(b)

Respondents' mother by social class (%)

| Mothers' class | Sample | Bish. Auck. | Consett | P'lee |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class 2 | 12.1 | 11.6 | 14.9 | 8.8 |
| Class 3N | 18.5 | 20.7 | 18.6 | 15.0 |
| Class 3M | 7.3 | 7.9 | 5.6 | 8.8 |
| Class 4 | 14.6 | 12.8 | 11.2 | 22.1 |
| Class 5 | 6.6 | 5.5 | 8.1 | 6.2 |
| Unemployed/h'wife | 35.2 | 35.4 | 37.9 | 31.0 |
| Ratio of manual: non-man'l | 0.93:1 | 0.81:1 | 0.74:1 | 1.55:1 |
| N= | 438 | 161 | 164 | 113 |

Gauging how 'representative' the samples were of their locations was difficult for two main reasons. The first was the age factor. No information was asked about parents' ages, although it would probably be safe to assume that most fell into the 35-45(50) age range.

Unfortunately, district census figures for social class are not broken down on the basis of age, so that there was no readily available profile for the particular age 'cohort'.

A second problem was that, while each of the towns was the major centre in its district, the two were by no means co-terminous. (At the extreme, Peterlee accounted for less than a quarter of the population

of Easington District). Census data for 'urban areas' offer class breakdown only in terms of heads of household rather then separately for the two sexes.

Broadly, the 'expected' pattern based on available data would be of a situation where the ratio of manual to non-manual work was lowest in Consett and highest in Peterlee.

In terms of fathers' employment, this pattern was partly in evidence in that the relevant ratio was markedly lower in Consett than in Peterlee.

However, the figure in Bishop Auckland, instead of being somewhere between the other two (and probably nearer to Consett) marginally exceeded that in Peterlee.

The other obvious feature in terms of spatial variation was the very high rate of male unemployment in Consett (double that in Peterlee or Bishop Auckland), although this was very much in line with broader figures. It is also worth noting the very low incidence of semi- or unskilled work among fathers of Consett respondents.

For mothers' employment, the 'expected' pattern was conformed to much more closely, although the incidence of manual work among women in Peterlee was perhaps even higher than anticipated, clearly demonstrating the dominating influence of factory work on the town's female labour market. Perhaps reflecting the age range and relative independence of children, 'activity rates' were high with roughly 60% of mothers employed and doubtless many more seeking work.

Appendix C

For the eight eight young workers interviewed for this study, breakdown of parental social class was as follows (Table 1).

Table C 1

Social Class (R-G) of parents (%)

|  | Fathers | Mothers |
|---|---|---|
| Class 2 | 6.8 | 3.4 |
| Class 3N | 11.4 | 17.0 |
| Class 3M | 43.2 | 4.6 |
| Class 4 | 9.1 | 13.6 |
| Class 5 | 4.6 | 17.0 |
| Unemployed/h'wife | 10.2 | 33.8 |
| Other | 14.8 | 11.4 |

It is, of course, important to remember that all those interviewed had left school (usually at 16 years of age), and thus it was not surprising to find parents in non-manual work (and especially in class 2) under-represented. For fathers, the ratio of manual:non-manual work was 3.12:1 while the corresponding figure for mothers stood at 1.72:1. Of the latter, no less than 22.7% were engaged in some form of domestic work outside the home.

There was considerable variation between areas. Fathers' employment in Peterlee and Bishop Auckland was overwhelmingly manual (88.6% of all jobs), while that in Consett was evenly split between manual and non-manual, Similarly, for mothers, there was a higher incidence of non-manual employment in Consett than elsewhere.

In terms of educational qualifications, 24 young workers held 0 levels, 19 had five or more CSEs, 24 had four or less CSEs, and 21 had no formal qualifications. Despite the variations in family background betwen areas, there was little variation in qualifications between areas, although more interviewees in Bishop Auckland were without qualifications than in Consett or Peterlee.

At the time of interview, 14 young workers were in employment, 56 on schemes and 18 registered as unemployed (although one worked as a 'self-employed mechanic'). The eight young men in work were employed as follows: two trainee miners, a NCB craft apprentice, three apprentice engineers, a trainee manager in a clothing factory, and a clerk in a draught office. Of six young women employed, one was a hairdressing apprentice, two clothing factory machinists, one a clerk/typist and two in other forms of factory work (TV assembly and coil manufacture respectively).

Of the 56 schemes, 30 were WEEP schemes with distribution as follows: clerical (8), shop (6) factory(5), engineering (2), hotel and catering (2), riding stables (2), hairdressing (1), painting and decorating (1), building (1), care work (elderly) (1), mechanic (1).

Categorising the 26 'non-WEEP' schemes is more complex in that most were multi-activity based, often with rotation of tasks. Seven

were in designated Training Workshops, including ex-BSC and NCB facilities for apprentice training. If some training was of high quality, some schemes offered work with minimal skill training, including unskilled labouring tasks related to site clearing, gardening and the like. Most were clearly divided along lines of sex, with young men engaged in such as plumbing, joinery, mechanical or electrical work and young women in sewing, cooking and work with children or the elderly. Painting and decorating figured largely in many schemes, where young were often involved in 'non-profit making' activities such as painting such was the degree of task overlap between these and Training Workshops that the term 'general' is used here to describe these schemes. In addition to positions 'currently' occupied, the study's young workers also had collective previous experience of 8 jobs and 79 schemes. Previous jobs were as follows: cinema projectionist (2), apprentice hairdresser, mechanic, building labourer, teaboy, fireplace manufacture, operator of market stall.

Of the 79 schemes, 56 were WEEP schemes distributed as follows: shop (14), clerical (14), factory (9), garage/mechanic (5), building (4), hairdressing (3), farm (2), plumbing (1), butchers (1), engineering (1), printing (1), hotel (1).

The 23 non-WEEP schemes included 4 Short Training Courses and 4 Work Introduction Courses, with the remaining 15 being 'general' schemes. Apart from working experience, 12 young workers had initially remained in education, whether at F.E. colleges or at school.

To provide a reference point for later interview material, the post-school 'careers' of the study's yoiung workers are set out below, arranged alphabetically by christian name. This is immediately followed by the worker's location with (BA), (C), (P) standing for Bishop Auckland, Consett and Peterlee. The first figure following the name indicates the time (in months) since leaving school (or the fifth year), while subsequent figures relate to months spent in particular settings. Jobs as opposed to schemes appear underlined. Uncompleted schemes, courses etc are marked*, while monthly figures are approximate and may not always total exactly.

Alan B.        (P)      (10) unemployed (3), Training Workshop (7).

Alan D.        (P)      (22) unemployed (5), Short Training Course (4), garage (6), unemployed (3), hotel (4).

Alan O.        (P)      (23) fireplace manufacture (6), <u>fireplace manufacture</u> (12), <u>trainee miner</u> (5).

Alison B.      (B.A.)   (11) unemployed (3), hairdressing (6), hairdressing (2).

Amanda K.      (P)      (19) general scheme (5), unemployed (1), clerical (2*), clerical (6), unemployed (4).

Andrea K.      (C)      (18) clerical (12), art course (2*), unemployed (3), clothing machinist (1).

Andrew H.  (B.A.) (11) farm (3*), <u>apprentice fitter</u> (8).

Angela F.  (B.A.) (11) unemployed (1), factory (2*), general scheme (8).

Angela H.  (C)    (22) unemployed (and sick) (16), Work Introduction Course (6).

Anne D.    (B.A.) (6) bakers (3*), unemployed (3).

Anthony L. (B.A.) (19) unemployed (8), Work Introduction Course (3), unemployed (3), induction course (3), unemployed (2).

Arthur F.  (B.A.) (11) unemployed (4), general scheme (7).

Audrey V.  (C)    (21) unemployed (1), clerical (6), reception (6), unemployed (3), clerical/care work (4).

Brian M.   (P)    (10) unemployed (1), Short Training Course (welding) (3), unemployed (3), engineering (3).

Brian P.   (C)    (17) unemployed (1), factory (6), unemployed (9).

Carl R.    (P)    (6) unemployed (6).

Carol P.   (P)    (18) unemployed (1), <u>apprentice hairdresser</u> (16), unemployed (1).

Chris V.   (B.A.) (11) unemployed (5), clerical (6).

Chris W.   (C)    (22) unemployed (1), shop (6), shop (2*), building (6), general scheme (6).

Christine W.(P)   (19) unemployed (1), general scheme (9), general scheme (2*), shop (6), unemployed (1).

Colin Y.   (P)    (10) unemployed (3), fitter (3), <u>fitter (NCB)</u> (4).

Denise N.  (C)    (17) F.E. course (15), unemployed (2).

Denise V.  (C)    (23) F.E. secreterial course (12), clerical/reception (6), shop (5).

Diane J.   (B.A.) (7) shop (1*), factory (6), <u>factory</u> (0).

Diane P.   (B.A.) (6) unemployed (6).

Donny S.   (B.A.) (23) unemployed (12), factory (6), factory (4*), <u>factory</u> (1).

Douglas W.      (C)     (19) school  (4),  unemployed  (5),  clerical  (6), clerical (draught office) (4).

Elaine N.       (P)     (21) F.E.  college (5*),  unemployed  (3),  general scheme (8), clerical (5).

Ellen M.        (B.A.)  (6) unemployed (1), stables (5).

Francesca D.(B.A.)  (13) unemployed (6), Training Workshops (7).

Gary E.         (C)     (22) Short  Training Course  (4),  unemployed  (1), engineering (6), engineering apprentice (10)

Gary F.         (C)     (10 unemployed (2), Training Workshop (8).

Geoff B.        (P)     (6) building (6).

Geoff K.        (B.A.)  (11) general scheme (11).

Geoff R.        (C)     (10) clerical (6), unemployed (1), clerical (3).

Geoff W.        (C)     (9) general scheme (6) general scheme (3).

Gillian C.      (B.A.)  (12) unemployed (7), Training Workshop (5).

Graham A.       (P)     (11)  Training  Workshop  (2*),  unemployed  (2), induction course (1), engineering (6).

Graham L.       (C)     (17)  unemployed  (1),  shop  (6),  building  (5), building (3), (redundant), unemployed (2)

Heather T.      (B.A.)  (24) F.E. college (11), unemployed (2), hotel  (6), shop (4).

Jacqueline N.(B.A.)(23) clerical  (6),  clerical  (4*),  unemployed  (3), general scheme (9).

Jean N.         (C)     (11) unemployed (4), general scheme (7).

Joan E.         (C)     (19) cinema projectionist (3), cinema projectionist (12), unemployed (1), clothing machinist (3).

John R.         (B.A.)  (11) unemployed (1), engineering apprentice (10).

Julie M.        (B.A.)  (6) clerical (6).

Karen H.        (B.A.)  (12) factory  (1),  unemployed  (1),  clerical  (6), clerical (4).

Kathleen H.     (P)     (10) unemployed (1),  general scheme  (6),  general scheme (3).

Kevin S.        (B.A.)  (6) painting and decorating (6).

Laura H.      (C)      (10) clerical (6), unemployed (2), clerical (2).

Lesley C.     (P)      (6) unemployed (6).

Lesley H.     (B.A.)   (23) F.E. college (10*), unemployed (10), clerical (6), unemployed (1), clerical (3).

Leslie G.     (C)      (9) unemployed (2), general scheme (7).

Lorraine G. (P)        (23) F.E. college (3), general scheme (9), clerical (5), clerk/typist (5). Also part-time job at recreation centre.

Mark B.       (B.A.)   (6) unemployed (6)

Michael F.    (C)      (24) unemployed (1), teaboy (12), unemployed (4), induction course (1), unemployed (1), Work Introduction Course (3), unemployed (2), Work Introduction Course (0).

Michael M.    (B.A.)   (11) shop (3*), general scheme (8).

Nicholas N.  (B.A.)   (6) factory (6).

Norman G.     (B.A.)   (11) unemployed (3), general scheme (8).

Olwyn G.      (C)      (6) unemployed (6).

Pamela J.     (C)      (11) shop (3), clothing machinist (3), clothing machinist (5).

Patricia N. (C)        (22) F.E. college (11), unemployed (6), general scheme (5).

Patricia P. (C)        (24) F.E. college (1*), shop (6), unemployed (3), market stall (8), general scheme (5).

Paul C.       (P)      (10) unemployed (2), factory (1*), construction (2*), Training Workshop (5).

Paul B.       (C)      (18) unemployed (2), shop (6), general scheme (3*), butcher's (6), unemployed (1).

Paul J.       (P)      (24) unemployed (4), building (6), unemployed (7), trainee miner (7).

Peter A.      (C)      (22) unemployed (1), shop (6), general scheme (12), unemployed (1), general scheme (2).

Peter H.      (P)      (6) farm (2*), unemployed (4).

Peter L.      (B.A.)   (6) stables (6).

Peter R.    (C)    (21) school (17), (part-time job in club), clerical (4).

Philip G.    (B.A.) (18) <u>panel beater</u> (12), unemployed (6).

Richard D.    (B.A.) (17) unemployed (2), Short Training Course (3), unemployed (11).

Robert P.    (P)    (22) unemployed (3), Training Workshop (2*), garage (6), unemployed (5), general scheme (6).

Sandra J.    (B.A.) (6) unemployed (1), shop (5)

Sandy B.    (B.A.) (11) unemployed (1), hairdressing (6), <u>hairdressing apprenticeship</u> (4).

Sean D.    (C)    (22) unemployed (3), garage (6), unemployed (2), garage (6), unemployed (3), garage (2).

Sharon W.    (P)    (10) unemployed (1), catering (3*), shop (3), hotel (3).

Stephanie G.(P)    (11) unemployed (3), catering course (6), factory canteen (2).

Stephen J.    (C)    (21) unemployed (4), plumbing (6), unemployed (2), general scheme (9).

Steven D.    (C)    (23) school (12), (building work - part time), unemployed (4), Training Workshop (7).

Susan P.    (P)    (11) unemployed (4), Training Workshop (3), shop (1), shop (3).

Sylvia R.    (P)    (23) unemployed (4), Training Workshop (6), factory (3), <u>clothing machinist</u> (10).

Terry T.    (P)    (23) school (12), clerical (6), printing (1*), factory (3), <u>trainee manager (factory)</u> (1).

Tracy E.    (P)    (22) unemployed (1), general scheme (12), unemployed (1), general scheme (8).

Tracy G.    (P)    (10) F.E. college (6), factory (4).

Tracy J.    (P)    (10) unemployed (3), induction course (3), unemployed (1), Training Workshop (3).

Tricia K.    (P)    (11) unemployed (4), shop (2*), shop (5).

Tricia L.    (C)    (17) unemployed (3), care work (elderly) (6), unemployed (8).

Trish C.    (C)    (11) hairdressing (6), unemployed (2), shop (3).

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